

Innovative Pedagogy to Promote Enjoyable and Engaging Learning

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Rapporteur: Dr. K. Vijayan, DTE, NCERT

Introduction

NEP 2020 mandates that the learning should be holistic, integrated, inclusive, enjoyable, and engaging. In order to minimise rote learning and to encourage holistic development and 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, scientific temper, multilingualism, problem solving, ethics, social responsibility and digital literacy; curriculum, textbooks, pedagogy and assessment at all stages of school education shall be transformed. It stresses that in all stages, experiential learning will be adopted, including hands-on learning, arts-integrated and sports-integrated education, story-telling-based pedagogy, among others, as standard pedagogy within each subject, and with explorations of relations among different subjects. To close the gap in achievement of learning outcomes, classroom transactions will shift, towards competency-based learning and education. (Para 4, NEP-2020). In this process it is essential to understand the innovative ways of teaching and showcase, disseminate and replicate the innovative strategies of successful teachers. As part of the Shikshak Parv programme, the webinar on “Innovative Pedagogy to Promote Engaging and Enjoyable Learning” was organized on 13 September 2021.

Session Highlights

The chairperson of the webinar, Prof. N.V. Varghese, Vice Chancellor, NIEPA began by giving his introductory remarks. He pointed to the fact that although most of the children are in school, we are facing a phenomenon called schooling without learning. The challenge right now is to provide quality education to those students who are already in school. He also mentioned that Covid-19 has introduced a lot of changes in the field of education. At the same time, Covid-19 has introduced new dynamics and opened possibilities for technology-mediated teaching-learning processes. He stated that it has resulted in many reforms in not only teaching but in the

learning process, atmosphere and also in assessment of the students. He remarked that today, what we speak and learn is a globally connected activity. Many courses are available online and there is a possibility of looking back again and again. He emphasized that learning has become a globally connected activity and for this, preparation needs to be very different. Teachers need to prepare for the classroom that is very different, the way we interact with students is also very different and the socialization process that is a part of schooling has been affected as well. He added that many children are feeling uncomfortable staying at home for a long time and not being able to go to school and socialize with their peers and teachers. He concluded the introductory remarks by welcoming all the speakers, presenter and co-chair of the webinar.

The co-chair, Dr. T. S. Joshi, Director, SCERT, Gujarat, while introducing innovative practices in Gujarat said that they are organizing a sharing workshop for innovative pedagogy every year at the district level and state level. The state level Education Innovation Festival has been organized for the past eight years. SCERT Gujarat has also received funding from various institutions, including through CSR funds. He outlined the need for innovative pedagogy. He stated that teachers should have a zeal to do something new and creative. This zeal will give them the energy to engage in creative tasks and that energy will lead them to excellence. He added that while innovative methods increased during COVID times, there is a need to ensure that more and more innovative methods are adopted on a mass scale in our classrooms.

Prof. Varghese welcomed the presenter Dr. Joseph Emmanuel, Director (Academics), CBSE to give his presentation. Dr. Emmanuel elaborated the best practices in innovative pedagogy to be adopted by the schools. He shed light on the steps taken by CBSE to ensure that its affiliated schools adopt innovative pedagogy such as the implementation of art-based project work in CBSE affiliated schools, implementation of experiential learning like arts and sports integrated approaches, storytelling and gaming, introduction of course on design thinking, coding and data science, etc. Also, school leaders have been asked to prepare a pedagogical plan for making learning innovative and thus, joyful. He emphasized that pedagogy is at the heart of teaching and learning; the more innovative the teachers are, more effective will be the transaction in the classroom. He argued that the pedagogy needs to connect with the concept and content, along with the real-life situations so that it could promote lifelong learning and ensure development of 21st century skills.

Dr. Emmanuel explained that a shift in pedagogy is required in present times and outlined several steps to bring innovation in the classroom: challenging your beliefs and values, defining the current teaching and learning practices, enabling a deeper enquiry, empowering students with the capability to take their own decisions etc. He added that innovative pedagogies including storytelling, project-based learning, flipped classroom, collaborative argumentation etc. need to be incorporated in our classrooms. He ended his presentation with a famous quote from Mahatma Gandhi: “be the change you wish to see in the world”. Prof. Varghese thanked Dr. Emmanuel for his crystal-clear presentation. He reiterated that Dr. Emmanuel’s idea of creating a learning culture forms the centre around which all other activities elaborated in his presentation revolved around. He then invited the speaker Mr. Naresh Kumar, Lecturer Physics, GSSS Mahunag, Himachal Pradesh to share his presentation.

Mr. Naresh Kumar highlighted the various steps taken for making learning more enjoyable, collaborative and participatory in his school. He presented different innovative strategies used in and outside the classroom for helping the students to learn without ‘fear’, different subjects with special focus on mathematics. He further explained strategies such as Math Camp, Math Science Lab developed by students, Math Science Magazine, exposure visit to IIT and other institutions, Math Science Fair, art-integrated learning, origami activities, use of GeoGebra software and science animation. He emphasized that the most important aspect of all these innovations is the active participation and contribution of students in each and every stage of its development. He ended his deliberations by pointing out that learning is complete only when both, theoretical and practical aspects are evaluated together. Prof. Varghese appreciated the Mr. Kumar’s efforts and remarked that his innovations to universalize mathematics should be emulated by teachers across the country. He invited the next speaker Mr. Rudra Pratap Rana, Assistant Teacher, Koriya, Chhattisgarh to give his presentation.

Mr. Rudra Pratap Rana started his presentation by focusing on his initiatives during the Pandemic. He explained how and why he organized “Teaching Under an Umbrella (*chhatri wale guruji*)” on a bike during the pandemic last year. He was able to keep the students linked to education with this simple innovative practice. He also showed how he involved the community and how it changed the environment at the school. He highlighted that ICT needs to be taken up at all levels. He informed the audience that they have managed to arrange for a laptop and a

projector at his school and now they are comfortable using it. They have arranged for an E-rickshaw where academic songs and poems are played during the to-and-fro travel to school as well. They have included gardening in the school learning and teaching which has made the students more aware about many things around them. He mentioned that SUPW activities are also done in the classroom where students were taught basic tasks related to working of machines like hand pumps, fans, etc. and he hoped that, developing these skills will definitely make students self-sufficient and independent. Prof. Varghese remarked that this is a different kind of innovation where the students are taken out of the classroom for learning, and in this process the classroom itself is re-defined. Through the games, social work and hands-on learning, the teaching-learning process is linked to the surroundings. He requested the last speaker Ms. K. Revathi (National ICT Awardee), Primary School Teacher, Government Primary School, Pillaiyarkuppam, Kamarajarnagar, Puducherry to share her presentation on toy-based pedagogy.

Ms. Revathi shared some of the best practices she adopted for classroom teaching to make learning enjoyable and interesting for the students. She started by saying that each child is different and unique. The challenge before her was to facilitate children coming from diverse backgrounds to achieve the same learning outcomes. She elaborated how she explored toy-based pedagogy to make learning more innovative. The students showed great involvement and enthusiasm while creating toys for learning. They learnt to collaborate and to work in teams. She emphasized that handcrafted materials, puppets and other toys filled up the classrooms and made teaching and learning very fruitful and engaging. She shared her joy as a teacher by saying that when the characters from textbook lessons come into reality through puppet, children can actually play with those characters and learn along in an enjoyable manner without any stress. Prof. Varghese complimented the new teaching method adopted by Ms. Revathi, and that most importantly it leads to improved student learning.

Question & Answer Session

The presentations were followed by the question-and-answer session moderated by the chairperson. Prof. Varghese asked the speakers selected questions received on the MyGov portal from the public. Prof. put up the first question to the speakers - Teachers often complain that

these innovations are very good but they do not have enough time for them. We keep the time scheduled as traditional and we want to incorporate these new pedagogical processes. How is this possible? Mr. Kumar said that teachers have a limited time-frame for a class session, but if we see it from the perspective of children then we have enough time. So, teachers should utilize children's time in the classroom to make these teaching learning materials with them. Talking about his own experience, Mr. Rana responded that we did not do anything new, rather we used textbook content only for experiential learning. Children get bored of reading the textbook, so we as teachers just need to present the content in an innovative manner for creative teaching and learning. Further, Ms. Revathi stated that her teaching method she uses the same content as textbooks and teaches it through puppets to make the characters more relatable and real to children. She simply changed the pedagogical method from teaching only from the textbook to adopting toy-based pedagogy.

Prof. Varghese then sought a response on the next question - Teaching in school is very theoretical and it is not related to practical dimensions. In all these presentations we have seen that both these aspects are brought together. How do you develop creativity and imagination among the students? Mr. Kumar replied that it is very important for a teacher to bring a change in their own self and approach, and by following these students can learn significantly. For teaching learning to be more effective, teachers need to involve students with hands-on activity to promote practical knowledge among students. Mr. Rana highlighted that curriculum should include certain aspects that have some practical implications in a student's life. Students should be taught by giving practical examples. They should be given experiences based on what they are being taught. Ms. Revathi added that theory and practice can be connected by presenting videos to the students of primary classes.

Concluding Remarks

In his concluding remarks Prof Varghese commented that teachers find it difficult to synchronise the practice and theory. He mentioned that for innovation it is crucial for a teacher to reflect upon every activity after they perform it with students. Sometimes, these reflections are missing. He highlighted that there is a need to make a balance between experience, reflection and application. He emphasized the importance of replication of the innovative practices by the teachers and the

roles different academic organisations such as SCERT, DIETs, BRCs etc. need to play. He also said that how we use different resources such as teacher, students, finance, etc. judiciously to enhance learning and optimize outcomes should to be looked into. He added that the innovative practices presented today, all focus on these aspects. He concluded by thanking all the viewers for joining in and expressing hope that they can take forward the learning from today's webinar.