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Designing Learning Environment

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Over a period of time, learning has become the centre of education. Lot of focus was given on teaching in 20th century but gradually advances in cognitive science shifted the focus from teaching to learning. Teaching and learning are supplementary to each other, they cannot be thought in isolation. Learning sciences are importantly enriching our understanding of how child learn the best and is comfortable in retaining the knowledge. Classrooms, schools and education system cannot change overnight but at the same time absolute contrast situation is also not acceptable. Slowly if education stakeholders will become aware change will become self driven. Individual dots will become trends which is the need of an hour.

How People Learn

During early 21st century the concept of learning science became the priority. Learning in new defined term is **socio-constructivist** i.e learning should be actively constructed in social context. So we can say that learning environment should be encompassed around

- Intrinsic motivated learner
- Collaborative approach in social environment
- Contextual based

This indicates the nature of learning environment. Teacher needs to design the lesson plan as per the contextual base and try to put maximum efforts for active

learning. Non formal resources are to be explored and optimally used in teaching learning process. Education today has lot of dependence on formal resources. There is a huge gap in the core competencies developed by formal education and set of competencies needed to be employable. This reality is creating lot of problems and question marks on the reliability and validity of education standard. Nature of Learning, OECD (2010) describes ultimate goal of learning as the ability to apply meaningfully learned knowledge and skills flexibly and creatively in different situations. This is named as Adaptive Expertise This involves the intersection of domains of various subjects. Teachers need to consider these aspects of learning and rethink what is taught and how is it taught.

There are three generic pedagogical aspects which foster Adaptive Expertise:

- **Guided Learning:** Teacher being literacy designer develops lesson plan and defines learning objectives and teacher guided activities. It is mainly focused as classroom activities.
- **Action Learning:** Learners are in full action and learner centric pedagogies are incorporated in the lesson plan. It may be a blend of formal and non-formal approach.
- **Experiential Learning:** Learners experiences are at the center and learning outcomes are achieved from experiences explored by the learner. It is a non formal mode education pattern. It is the by-product of activities in which learner is involved.

To create nurturing learning environment blend of all three pedagogical aspects is necessary. Learner needs to explore various classroom situations.

Principles of Learning

Developing learning environment needs few guiding principles. They are as follows:

- **Learner centric learning:** Activities framed should be leaner centric and so cognition level needs to be considered. Environment needs to be making learner self regulated. Environment needs to foster Meta cognitive skills, monitor use of knowledge and be motivating. Environment should encourage active engagement of learner.

- Social nature of Learning: Learning takes place better in social environment. Various pedagogical approaches foster learning in social environment. Team work, projects, performing drama, field trips, preparing posters etc are the ways by which learning takes place in social environment and context. These are in formal and formal approaches. The task may take place in the classroom or outside the classroom.
- Individual differences are to be considered: Classrooms are diverse in nature. Each individual has different learning style. Students differ in many ways like pre- knowledge, ability, interest, motivation etc. Learning environment need the adaptability to reflect these individual differences. Personalized learning need to be designed to address individuals.
- Assessment for learning: Changing landscape of teaching-learning has given new dimensions to assessment techniques. Learning sciences gave birth to various learning theories. Assessment measures the rate of achievement of learning outcomes. It is very important to be clear about what is expected, what are learners doing and why are they doing. Assessment should be followed by feedback so to make learning environment more progressive.
- Building horizontal correlation: Each subject has its own domain. It is necessary that there is intersection among domains. Inter linkage of subjects extends learner's boundaries. STEM, STEAM are the approaches which promote co-relational studies.

Learning principles are the key shifts in education. All the principles should be present in a learning environment. These in general demand for high professional teachers who are not only competent in content but also masters' skills which are essential for creating curative learning environment.

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