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*To Kindle The Light*

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## **CHILD-FRIENDLY CLASSROOM** (Continue from last Issue)

In a child friendly environment, the most important thing for teachers is viewing children as competent and strong rather than needy and weak. In such a situation teachers avoid corporal punishment because they believe that it is very dangerous for children. The attitudes of teachers and students are also very important in a child friendly environment. They have to be friendly towards the children. Practitioners working with young children set the scene for the emotional environment that the children play in. It is important that they are able to represent a secure world in which children are encouraged to take risks knowing that they will be supported if necessary. Similarly, studies in non-Western contexts have also proved the importance of child friendly environment. Therefore, it is important to give more opportunities for young children to learn in a better way.

### **WHAT IS LEARNING?**

In the report to UNESCO by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century it was stated that education throughout life is based upon four pillars: **Learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be.** The concept of learning, and teaching, has changed dramatically over the past decades. Inclusive education, child-friendly schools and life-long learning are concepts that have been introduced an enabled millions of children who used to be out-of-school to come to school, feel welcome and receive help by educators to develop their intellectual, social, emotional and physical abilities.

### **TEACHING LEARNING IN A CHILD-FRIENDLY CLASSROOM**

New research tells us that **children learn in different ways** either because of hereditary factors, experience, environment, or their personal traits and characteristics. Consequently, we need to use a **variety of teaching methods and activities** to meet the different learning needs of the children in our classes. In a child-friendly school, the style of teaching and learning will be centred on what is best for the learner. It will be geared towards bringing out the best in each learner as he or she strives to master the prescribed knowledge, skills and attitudes in the curriculum. Child-friendly schools will encourage the use of different teaching and learning methods appropriate for the children and the subject matter. This promotes multiple paths to knowledge and skills acquisition. To facilitate multiple learning pathways, teachers will need to be reflective practitioners who:

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“  
Education is  
the most **POWERFUL**  
**WEAPON**  
which you can use  
to **change**  
the **WORLD.**  
”  
-Nelson Mandela



- Strive to understand why some children do not do as well as others;
- Use different techniques and strategies to get children to learn and succeed;
- Operate on the basis that children can follow different learning paths to achieve success.

Teachers as reflective practitioners are troubled when only half the class gets test questions right after a lesson, so they explore alternative teaching methods to help the failing half of the class raise their scores. As such, pedagogy in a child friendly school will be based on such facts as:

- Children learn by exploring and expressing opinions just as much as they do by memorizing facts and following set rules;
- Children need to challenge other opinions in the process of learning just as much as they need to take certain facts on trust from those who know better;
- Children need the freedom to use their inner resources to solve problems just as much as they need guidance in making the best use of their natural talents as learners.

Such principles will guide the range of teaching and learning styles employed by the teacher as a reflective practitioner operating in a child-friendly classroom. The broad focus is on the best interest of the child and how to bring out the best in every child.

Teachers are usually told to mount teaching aides, charts and other written elements on the walls of their classrooms. But a child-friendly classroom is more than just mounting stuff on the walls — much of which gets torn down at the blink of an eye. Child-friendly classrooms must promote peace and love too. Child-friendly classrooms are important elements in the learning process and it is the teacher who must spearhead the efforts of child-centred learning and child-friendly classrooms.

Education reform based on the child-friendly school model makes it possible to:

- Implement innovative classroom practices that greatly improve learning outcomes;
- Encourage the involvement, cooperation and participation of children, teachers, school heads and parents in the reform process;
- Cultivate incentives for improving the quality of education based on favourable working conditions that serve to motivate teachers, students and the community.

These working assumptions of the child-friendly school model are conditions for success in the sense that they need to be factored into education reform plans as ‘risks’. In other words, if the assumptions do not hold in practice, results from investing in child-friendly schools will be less than expected.

## HOW CHILDREN LEARN

No child is “uneducable.” Given the right conditions, ALL children regardless of their abilities, disabilities, backgrounds and circumstances can learn effectively, especially when they are “learning by doing.” Many of us, we learn best by “doing,” actively participating and hereby gaining experience. This is what we really mean when we talk about “active learning,” “children’s participation in learning,” or “participatory learning.” It’s getting children to learn new information through different activities and teaching methods. These activities

are often linked to children’s practical experiences in everyday life. This linkage helps them to understand and remember what they are learning, and to use what they have learned in school later in life. When we know the different ways children learn it will help us to develop learning activities that are more meaningful for ALL children, and for us.

### Learning by Sight, Sound, and Movement

What are your children doing when they first come into your class in the morning? Hopefully they are looking at you (sight), listening to you (sound), and watching what you, and others are doing (movement). In other words, they are learning!

These three - sight, sound, and movement - are important in helping children to learn. For some children with disabilities, their hearing, sight, or movement may be more limited, and they may learn at a slower pace, or in a different way than most



of their non-disabled peers.

As the old saying goes, “I hear and I forget; I see and I remember; I do and I understand.” This is very important! If we only teach children by having them listen to us, then only about one-third of our students are learning anything. The same is the case when we ask them only to copy something from the blackboard in their notebooks, it is not effective!

This means that when we are planning our lessons, we need to use visual materials (posters, drawings, etc.), tasks that involve discussion (hearing and listening), and to provide opportunities for movement of some form (for example, drama or sports, that is possibly linked to the different cultures represented in your classroom).

Remember that some children may have sight or hearing difficulties and will therefore not receive the same sensory input as the other children. Ask yourself, “What activities will be relevant to them, and how can I as a teacher adapt an activity to make it more relevant so that ALL my students can learn?”

### Multiple Ways of Learning

We know that some children learn best through reading and taking notes, others through studying visual materials, and still others through body movement (playing games, sports) or musical activities. Some like to work on problems individually, while others like to interact with others to find solutions. If we can observe or discover the many ways by which children in our inclusive classrooms learn, we can help ALL children to learn better, and we will gain greater satisfaction from teaching. Active and participatory learning can use the many ways that help children to learn. Seven pathways by which children learn include the following:

- **Verbal or linguistic**, where some children think and learn through written and spoken words, memory, and recall.
- **Logical or mathematical**, where some children think and learn through reasoning and calculation. They can easily use numbers, recognize abstract patterns, and take precise measurements.
- **Visual or spatial**, where some children like art, such as drawing, painting, or sculpture. They can easily read maps, charts, and diagrams.

- **Body or kinaesthetic**, where some children learn through body movement, games, and drama.
- **Touch**, children who are not able to see or hear well can learn better through touch (tactile learning).
- **Musical or rhythmic**, where some children learn best through sounds, rhyme, rhythm, and repetition.
- **Interpersonal**, where some children learn easily in groups through cooperative work. They enjoy group activities, they easily understand social situations, and they can develop relationships with others easily.
- **Intra-personal**, where some children learn best through personal concentration and self-reflection. They can work alone, are aware of their own feelings, and know their own strengths and weaknesses. When children learn, they may use several pathways to help them to understand and remember.

Therefore, it is important for us to use different teaching strategies that cover a combination of these learning pathways. We need to develop lesson plans and manage classrooms in ways that ensure active and effective learning for all children.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Environmental problems have attracted the attention all over the world during last two decades. People are becoming increasingly conscious of variety of problems like global warming, acid rain, pollution in air, water and land etc. No nation in the world has been spread nor any citizen untouched.

### ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

It is education through, about and for environment. Through environmental education teaching-learning can be carried out through environment. The objectives of environmental are three domains:

**(a) Cognitive, (b) Affective and (c) Psychomotor**  
**A. The objectives in the cognitive domain are as follows:**

- (i) To help acquire knowledge of biotic and abiotic environment
- (ii) To help understand the unchecked population growth and interpret them for the socio-economic development of the county
- (iii) To check unplanned resources utilization on the world
- (iv) To help diagnose the different causes of environmental pollution and to suggest remedial measures
- (v) To help diagnose the cause of social tension and



to suggest methods for avoiding them.

**B. The lists of the affective objects are as follows:**

- (i) To help acquire interest in the flora and fauna of the locality and distant.
- (ii) To know interest in the community people and also their problems.
- (iii) To value equality, justice and truth.
- (iv) To respect the national boundaries of all countries

**C. The objectives of psychomotor domain are as follows:**

- (i) To participate in afforestation programming
- (ii) To participate in programming aimed at minimizing air, water, soil and noise pollution
- (iii) To participate in programming aimed at preventing food adulteration.
- (iv) To participate in programming of rural and urban planning such as solar heaters, gohar gas plants etc.

**THE GOALS OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION ARE AS FOLLOWS**

- (i) To provide every person acquire knowledge and to improve their environment.
- (ii) To create awareness that includes making the individual conscious about the physical, social and aesthetic aspects of the environment.
- (iii) To create a new attitude or a pattern of behaviour of individuals, groups and society as a whole towards the environment.
- (iv) To help individuals skills for identifying and solving the problem of environment

**Definition and Goals of EE**

There are many definitions of Environmental Education (EE). For our purposes, we could understand EE in the context of the definition given below:

Environmental education is a process aimed at developing a world population that is aware of and concerned about the total environment and its associated problems and which has the knowledge, attitudes, commitments and skills to work individually and collectively towards the solution of current problems and prevention of new ones.

**The Ultimate Goals of EE are**

- To enable people to understand the interdependent

of all life on this planet.

- To increase people's awareness of the economic, political, social, cultural, technological and environmental forces which foster sustainable development.

**Objectives of EE**

The first inter-governmental Conference on EE held at Tbilisi in 1977 established the objectives of EE. These are to develop the following qualities in individuals and social groups:

- a. an awareness of the environment and its problems;
- b. basic knowledge and understanding of the environment and its interrelationship with man;
- c. social values and attitudes which are in harmony with environmental quality;
- d. skills to solve environmental problems;
- e. ability to evaluate environmental measures and education programmes;
- f. a sense of responsibility and urgency towards the environment so as

to ensure appropriate actions to solve environmental problems.

**GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF EE**

To meet these objectives, a number of guiding principles were framed for those involved in developing EE programmes and materials of various kinds.

The guiding principles laid down that EE should:

1. Consider the environment in its totality-natural and built, technological and social (economic political, cultural, historical, moral, aesthetic);
2. Be a continuous lifelong process, beginning at the pre-school level and continuing through all formal and non-formal stages;
3. Be interdisciplinary in its approach, drawing on the specific content of each discipline in making possible a holistic and balanced perspective;
4. Examine major environmental issues from local, national, regional and international points of view, so that students receive insights into environmental conditions in other geographical areas;
5. Focus on current and potential environmental situations, while taking into account the historical perspective; promote the value and necessity of local, national and international co-operation in the prevention and solution of





- environmental problems;
6. Explicitly consider environmental aspects in plans for development and growth;
  7. Enable learners to have a role in planning their learning experiences and provide an opportunity for making decisions and accepting their consequences;
  8. Relate environmental sensitivity, knowledge, problem-solving skills and values clarification to every age but with special emphasis on environmental sensitivity to the learner's own community in early years;
  9. Help learners discover the symptoms and real causes of environmental problems;
  10. Emphasize the complexity of environmental problems and thus the need to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills;
  11. Utilize diverse learning environments and a broad array of educational approaches to teaching/ learning about and from the environment with due stress on practical activities and first-hand experience. *(to be continue)*

### **GUIDANCE NOTE FOR TEACHERS ON HOW TO USE THE ACADEMIC CALENDAR FOR 2020-21**

1. Learning Outcomes are today mandatory in the teaching learning process with the amendment of Section 22 (2) Meghalaya RTE Act 2009, State Rules. They are learner-centric and important as they help ensure minimum learning standards for students of all grades (1-10) in key subject areas and are focused on core competencies; in other words, they help ensure a strong foundation for learners to build on.
2. The number of lessons for each Learning Outcome (LO) is indicative. Teachers are to plan their units/lessons taking into consideration the skills and only key concept/knowledge areas identified. Emphasis should be placed on mastery of skills and ensuring deep understanding of only essential knowledge areas.
3. Other than the prescribed textbooks, it is recommended that teachers explore various sources of information, including textbooks available, as long as they are reliable and address (a) the identified Learn

Learning Outcomes, (b) what learners should be able to do (reflected in the action verbs), and (c) what learners need to know/understand (reflected in the knowledge/concept areas).

4. Topics and sub-topics too are indicative and not exhaustive. Teachers may decide on the content areas to cover through Direct Instruction/ Teacher Driven Instruction (DI) and/ or Assignments through Project/ Inquiry Based Learning (PBL) after undertaking content analysis exercises based on the identified LOs for each Subject and Class for which students need to be assessed. Lessons can then be planned for home learning, online classrooms, remote learning, etc. depending on the situation.

5. All links included in this document are only available as long as the original content owners allow them to be accessible for public viewing in the concerned web portals.

6. All teachers are to identify their own links for the different LOs for sharing with parents and students. Please verify that all links work before sharing. Resources created like videos and audio files may also be shared with us at the email ID given at the Sl. No. 14.

7. Informal Assessments must be embedded in every lesson. Evidence of student mastery (how will we know when learners know it?) must be thought out during unit and lesson planning stage for every Learning Outcome and Learning Objectives identified in every lesson.

8. Informal methods of checking student understanding must be employed, and it is important to collect evidence of learning over time. Teachers are advised to work with students and document their learning continuously. Regular feedback and guidance to learners must be given priority. It is also important to let them know what they need to submit and when they need to do so.

9. Teachers should also use the Academic Calendar to plan out home learning activities where parents/ siblings/volunteers can provide support through various activities at home.

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