CONFLUX

JOURNAL OF EDUCATION

Volume2, Issue 12, May 2015

A PEER REVIEWED INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL

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STRATEGIES, METHODOLOGIES AND ESSENCE OF HOLISTIC EDUCATION

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Abstract

Holistic education focuses on the fullest possible development of the person, encouraging individuals to become the very best or finest that they can be and enabling them to experience all they can from life and reach their goals. These experiences or achievements can be rare, special and deeply meaningful experiences for the individual or could represent a position, role or vocation that they perceive as unique or special and is an important goal in their life. Understanding that support which once came from traditional families, religion, or old tribes no longer exists, holistic education seeks to modify learning of human goodness, personal greatness, and the joy of living both in trials and in successes. Pressure from competition in school, after-school activities, and the social pressure to look a certain way, as well as the violence which typically accompanies school children both physically, psychologically, and emotionally, takes away from a child's ability to learn. Holistic education rectifies this. The purpose of this paper is to discuss strategies, methodologies, and essence of holistic education.

Keywords: *Holistic education, Features of holistic education, Methods and tools used for holistic education, Necessity and effects of holistic education.*

INTRODUCTION

Holistic education is a clear departure from the knowledge transmission approach to education that has been familiar in the past. Holistic education prepares a student for lifelong learning in which the educational focus moves towards the life skills, attitudes and personal awareness that the student will need in an increasingly complex world. It proposes that educational experience promote a more balanced development of – and cultivate the relationship among- the different aspects of the individual such as intellectual, physical, physical, spiritual, emotional, social and aesthetic, as well as the relationship between the individual and other people, the individual and natural environment, the inner-self of students and external world. It conceptualizes questions regarding the biggest challenges in life and how to overcome obstacles, achieve success, and what basic concepts need to be learned first in order to accomplish all of those later on in life. Taking into account such necessity of holistic education some strategies, methodologies are taken into account and all this becomes an essence of holistic education.

TEACHING STRATEGIES OF HOLISTIC EDUCATION

Holistic education promotes several strategies to address the question of how to teach and how people learn.

The Idea of Holism:

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The idea of holism advocates a transformative approach to learning. Rather than seeing education as a process of transmission and transaction, transformative learning involves a change in the frames of reference that a person may have. This change may include points of view, habits of mind, and worldviews. Holism understands knowledge as something that is constructed by the context in which a person lives. Therefore, teaching students to reflect critically on how we come to know or understand information is essential. As a result, if "we ask students to develop critical and reflective thinking skills and encourage them to care about the world around them they may decide that some degree of personal or social transformation is required."

The Idea of Connections:

The idea of connections is emphasized as opposed to the fragmentation that is often seen in mainstream education. This fragmentation may include the dividing of individual subjects, dividing students into grades, etc. Holism sees the various aspects of life and living as integrated and connected, therefore, education should not isolate learning into several different components. Martin (2002) illustrates this point further by stating that, "Many alternative educators argue instead that who the learners are, what they know, how they know it, and how they act in the world are not separate elements, but reflect the interdependencies between our world and ourselves".

The Idea of Transdisciplinary Inquiry:

Along the same thread as the idea of connections in holistic education, is the concept of transdisciplinary inquiry. Transdisciplinary inquiry is based on the premise that division between disciplines is eliminated. One must understand the world in wholes as much as possible and not in fragmented parts. "Transdisciplinary approaches involve multiple disciplines and the space between the disciplines with the possibility of new perspectives 'beyond' those disciplines. Where multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary inquiry may focus on the contribution of disciplines to an inquiry transdisciplinary inquiry tends to focus on the inquiry issue itself."

The Idea of Meaningfulness:

Holistic education feels that meaningfulness is also an important factor in the learning process. People learn better when what is being learned is important to them. Holistic schools seek to respect and work with the meaning structures of each person. Therefore, the start of a topic would begin with what a student may know or understand from their worldview, what has meaning to them rather than what others feel should be meaningful to them.

METHODOLOGIES ADOPTED BY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS THAT PREACH HOLISTIC EDUCATION

The methods of teaching used in a holistic approach are many and varied. Most activities of such an approach are interactive and changeable. The structure is not forced or stern. Rather, there is flexibility in rules and the learning environment is adaptable to the students needs within any given circumstance. Students are engaged by and participate in whole group, small group, and individual activities that help build confidence, strengthen awareness, and improve academic and social skills. Holistic lesson plans are developed and organized as a way to provide the learner with experiences that allow for natural exploration and active involvement. (Hubbard, 2008)

Followings are the major methodologies accepted by educational institutional that preach holistic education.

Live Workshops:

Education through experience is the main motto of holistic education. Everything is made live in the form of workshops. Scholars from various disciplines interact with the students and conduct real-time workshops rather than imparting the bookish knowledge. Children or students literally do what they learn and learn what they do. This make the children gain experience in each and every subject they learn.

Science Fairs and Exhibitions:

The institutions spent a lot of amount in gather people of same likes and interests at a single place and share their views on thoughts. Knowledge is the only resource that multiplies on sharing. Knowledge transfer is accomplished in holistic education due to many fairs and exhibitions.

Special Training Programs:

Training programs to develop various technical, managerial and behavioral skills are conducted often by these institutions. Some of the most significant training programs are leadership training, team building training, communication training, psychological training, orientation training and religious training.

ESSENCE OF HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT IN HOLISTIC EDUCATION

Educational development forms the significant part of life that determines future adjustment. Therefore, it is necessary to deal with it in greater detail. Unlike the present scenario where education has permeated into mere marks scoring exercise, the essence of holistic development is found in the following major areas.

1. Study Involvement

Study involvement is positively related to academic achievement. Following dimensions make up for the study involvement in students:

Interest in Studies

Study Habits

Classroom Behavior

Library Work

Career Orientation

Extracurricular Activities

Co-curricular Activities

General Knowledge

Study Orientation

Attitude towards Study and

Overcoming Exam Fear

2. Cognitive Abilities

Development of cognitive abilities depends upon the extent to which these areas are stimulated and nurtured during the life span of the individual. Cognitive Abilities include

Speed-Reading

Attention & Concentration

Learning Skills

Efficient Memory

Creativity

Perceptual Skills

Aptitudes and

Hobbies and Interests

3. Intellectual Capacity

While IQ measurement has become outdated we need to look at the different ways in which the intelligence of a person is used. Intelligence is the global capacity of an individual to deal effectively with the environment. Its growth is similar to that of height. A considerable increase is found in the first five years followed by a steady rate of growth until one reaches the age of around 18 to 21 years. By the end of this period very little can be done to increase intelligence. Hence, intellectual capacity should be nurtured in schools and colleges. Though heredity plays an important role in the intellectual development, an enriched environment can overrule the effects of inheritance at least to some extent. The following abilities are considered under intellectual capacity:

Verbal Ability,

Numerical Ability,

Comprehension

Abstract Reasoning,

Logical Reasoning

Performance Intelligence

Analytical Ability and Spatial Relations

4. Personality Development

There is a great misuse of the word personality by people simply because they feel that anything can be included under it. However, personality refers to certain characteristic traits of an

individual that determine considerable consistency in behavior. Personality development includes the following aspects:

Frustration Tolerance

Stress Reduction

Leadership Qualities

Psychological Well Being

Social Adjustment

Locus of Control and

Realistic Approach

5. Need Fulfillment

A log of wood would be no different from a human being if not for the needs that gear us up towards fulfillment and satisfaction. Need fulfillment takes into consideration the following dimensions:

Aspiration

Achievement

Cooperation

Competition

Autonomy

Self-Esteem and

Self-Actualization

6. Emotional Balance

We keep learning several emotions as we grow but we know very little about what to do with them. Negative emotions like anger and fear override our capabilities. Aggression, depression, and suicide have hazardous consequences. It is necessary to cater to the following sub-areas to maintain emotional balance:

Overcoming Loneliness

Restlessness

Helplessness

Emotional Regulation

Self-Confidence and

Emotional Intelligence

7. Communication Skills

Our interaction with the environment determines our effectiveness in whatever we do. Communication does not simply mean public speaking. It indicates how well we can organize our thoughts, feelings and perceptions and get across them to others around us. Simultaneously, it involves how receptive we are to others' internal behavior.

The development of following skills is necessary for effective communication:

Listening

Reading Ability

Writing Ability

Human Relations

Verbal Communication

Nonverbal Communication and

Overcoming Stage Fear

8. Social Maturity

Being the members of the society, we place ourselves in the web of social relationships. Our level of maturity determines how well we are influenced by others and how well we influence others. The following are the developmental aspects:

Group Behavior

Interaction Skills

Interpersonal Relationships

Attitude Development

Defense against Propaganda

Reducing Stereotypes

Independence and

Self-Awareness

9. Moral Development

The last but a highly ignored area of development is in inculcating the moral and ethical values of the society in which we live. Traditionally, home and religion used to take over these functions. However, the dissipation of joint family system and the dogmatism of religions have left a void in the following aspects:

Integrity

Honesty

Mutual Trust

Self-Respect

Self-Discipline and

Altruism

CONCLUSION

Holistic Education is a methodology which focuses on preparing students to meet any challenges they may face in life and in their academic career. The most important theories behind holistic education are learning about oneself, developing health relationships and positive social behaviors, social and emotional development, resilience, and the ability to view beauty, experience transcendence, and truth. Holistic Education takes current cultural influences such as the media and music and teaches younger people how to be human, since said cultural influences do not. It conceptualizes questions regarding the biggest challenges in life and how to overcome obstacles, achieve success, and what basic concepts need to be learned first in order to accomplish all of those later on in life. Thus holistic education is far beyond the styles adopted by conventional academic learning. With acts like terrorism, crime and violence increasing in the society, holistic learning, obviously is the need of the hour.

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