REVOLUTION IN EDUCATION

AN EMERGENCY CALL FROM THE COVID - 19 CRISIS

ST. JOSEPH COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
Vaikalipatti

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NO MORE CLASSROOMS : STEP INTO ICE ROOMS

Abstract

2020 is truly a 'New Year' for everyone. None have thought about closure of Educational Institutions continuously for more than three months, staying at home with family and going out only for essential services, face mask marketed as apopular commodity, staying away from people with fear of infection and what not? Our attitude and life style have taken a turn in an unexpected direction. Life at present is no more the same as we lived so far. We have to accept the reality that, life wouldn't remain the same in future too. This critical situation creates an emergency to think for new lifestyles for survival. With the limited resources we have to carry out teaching – learning process intelligently, so as to frame a healthy futuristic world for this post-covid generation. This needs a paradigm shift in classroom setup. This is a sincere effort to suggest an Interactive Constructivistic Empowering (ICE) classroom, instead of regular classrooms.

Key Words

Paradigm shift, post-covid education, Interactive classroom, Constructivistic classroom, Empowering classroom.

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Introduction

Global Education is facing the worst threat of our lifetime, now. As per media informations, COVID -19 pandemic has caused 1.6 billion children of 161 nations to be out of school. This is a gigantic educational crisis, undoubtedly. In traditional classroom system being followed so far, there is a challenge before us whether students are prepared for life or for exams. The current scenario, has worsen the situation, driving us to face an emergency need to prepare children with life oriented education to survive in an information age and knowledge era. Inequalities in educational opportunities have to be handled intelligently so that we could assure an empowered future for the promising youth.

Emergency need and Emerging solutions

There is a common solution followed in all countries to surpass locked classrooms, is online learning. But it is we are all well aware of the fact that all children could not avail and afford online learning. Meanwhile, we have to be very particular that not even a single child must be deprived of their basic right of Education. Under the remote learning strategies and with a significant number of dropouts, we have to take punitive measures at the earliest to enhance effective learning system for all. If we depend only on online learning, limited numbers of children with better-off economic background are to be benefitted. Immediately, we have to think of incorporating new strategies and creative ways of teaching and learning. It may include, guided learning, mixed media learning and off campus learning. Ministries of all Governments are working at it globally.

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Paradigm Shift

Engaging children productively is of course, a critical challenge. Schooling isn't just learning Mathematics and Science; it is also a mode of building healthy social relationships and constructive interactions. To contribute to the society as a responsible citizen, young minds have to be enriched in social, emotional, and cognitive skills without any prejudice or bias. This task had been proved successful by the organized system of schools and classrooms with adequate infrastructural facilities. Considering these facts, we have to wait for the reopening of schools and regular class schedules.

In a study conducted in 2009 and published in 2010 in the European Journal of Social Psychology, it is mentioned that formation of a new habit in an individual requires 18 to 254 days. The result of the study shows that on an average, if a new behaviour is adopted for 66 continuous days we acquire it as an automatic and routine comportment.

Early to bed, early to get up, physical activities in public playgrounds are not practiced during this crisis in most of the homes. Elders who are so far advising about screen timing are willfully making the kids watch the screen of online classes. This change will be rooted in the behavior formation of the students. This creates a emergency need to think of classrooms, but not the traditional ones.

The role of parents has become sound along with the role of teachers, in the learning process. Social responsibility now has a wider reference. There is a well pronounced change in the role of teachers in education.

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Guru / Leader	Teacher	Mentor	Facilitator
Follower	Student	Mentee	Learner

We can observe that there is a paradigm shift, from LEFT to RIGHT, in the role of teachers and students and their participatory level. In the contemporary society, individual involvement and initiative for improvement is a must in personal life. Self learning and search for truth and knowledge could be facilitated by others. But it is our responsibility to empower ourselves utilizing all possible resources and skills. Therefore, there could be no more regular classrooms in future.

ICE rooms

To avoid the second wave of COVID- 19 pandemic, schools reopening may be delayed further. The classes will be filled with persons with altered lifestyle, attitude and mindset. The teachers have to prepare themselves for a new era, updating themselves to assign a new position and responsibility. We couldn't expect our regular classrooms.

Teaching- learning process will be effective with thinkers and contributors. Learning has to be self paced upto some extent. Depending on their willingness and the availability of resources and its accessibility, individual differences increase. Facilitating this situation instead of classifying students into grades and sections, we could adopt ICE rooms. Here I refer to an "Interactive Constructivistic Empowering" room as an ICE room.

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Interactive Learning

Listening to classroom lectures is passive listening. But Interactive learning is a direct, real-world method of relaying information in the system of schooling. Passive learning leads to rote memorization of information, formulae or figures. Implementing interactive learning strategies in classes enriches students and so they are motivated and are interested in the content.

This could be achieved by the use of technical innovations and digital extensions in teaching. Classroom add-ons could be utilized in accordance with the preference of the teacher in varied interactive exercises. Students are no more strangers to media and social networks. But students have to perform in a safe and secured environment under the supervision of teachers. The ultimate interactive class is the Flipped Classroom which should be well planned and practiced before execution.

Course materials could be floated in advance so that the students come to the class with prior knowledge. Thus there will be enough time for group activities and discussions.

Constructivistic Learning

Constuctivism is a cognitive approach which supports equal participation of teachers and students in teaching-learning process. Construvtivism synchronizes social interaction with cognitive experiences. The teacher has to choose effective learning resources and stimulate related experiences.

"To guide students' thinking, teachers must also understand how children's ideas about a subject develop, and the connections between their ideas and important ideas in the

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discipline" (Borko, 2004, p. 6). In a constructivistic classroom there is equal responsibility for the guide and the participant, Here, it refers to the teacher and the student. Individual development is attained through shared responsibility, Students are encouraged to explore, enquire, argue and clarify.

The theoretical findings of Atkin and Karplus focused on the formation of 5 E model of constuctivism which refers to Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, and Evaluate. This must be incorporated with diversified methods of assessment to make an ICE room more efficacious.

Empowered Learning

Education must ensure a holistic development of an individual. In all possible aspects a student must be shaped to be an empowered individual. Empowered learning supports individualized development to achieve what they intend for and what they deserve. An "empowered learner" is defined as "being motivated to perform tasks, and more specifically an empowered person finds the tasks meaningful, feels competent to perform them, and feels his/her efforts have an impact." (Fymeir, Shulman and Houser, 1996).

There are some practical tips which are to be personalized by the efficiency and experience of the teacher. First and foremost, the teacher must be able to identify the need and understand the interests of the students. Learning must not be limited within the four walls of a classroom or the cover pages of textbooks. Learner's readiness should be the priority in planning any activity. Let the students follow their own schedule in possible course work rather than blindly following instructions. Availability of choices make young minds more enthusiastic.

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Classroom environment should be periodically altered to welcome fresh ideas from anyone. This ensures motivated and empowered learners.

Empowerment is not just making them valid jobseekers in the competitive world. Invasion of technological advancement and accessibility of techno gadgets have exposed everything in the proximity of children. At this juncture, the most important aspect to be focused is formation of ethical value system, without which empowerment will be simply materialistic. In addition to personal achievements, life becomes meaningful upon its utilitarian value, for the welfare of others.

A Relative Trial

Comparing the preCOVID classroom with the suggested postCOVID ICEroom, it is apparent that in varied perspectives, ICErooms are more effective. Teaching will be productive, learning will be fruitful and children will develop as self-motivated, responsible individuals with integrated personality. In a fast changing world we could expect none other than ourselves to pave our path to success. Life is our own accomplishment. The upcoming generation must face the challenge of their life and must travel towards their goals. They have to reach out their destination in an honest way with their self effort. This makes them realize that there is no boundary to what we could achieve.

Amidst all these benefits, we have to consider the reality and accept the fact that in a society with unequivocal economic and social disparities ICErooms need more support from the Government, authorities and the institutional managements. The teacher must be a committed person and infrastructural facilities

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must be sufficient. Unless, the excellent solution for the emergency caused by the crisis will itself be futile.

Conclusion

There is no way to escape from the challenges put forth towards the existing system of education during this crisis. It demands policy revision, digitalized environment, shared responsibility, dedicated personnel and an overall change in mentality. The entire education system has great concern for the future of the youth. We have to meet with the gaps to overcome the crisis and handle the evolving threats so that no global citizen is deprived of their opportunities. All these efforts with a sense of exigency are to ensure quality education to all.

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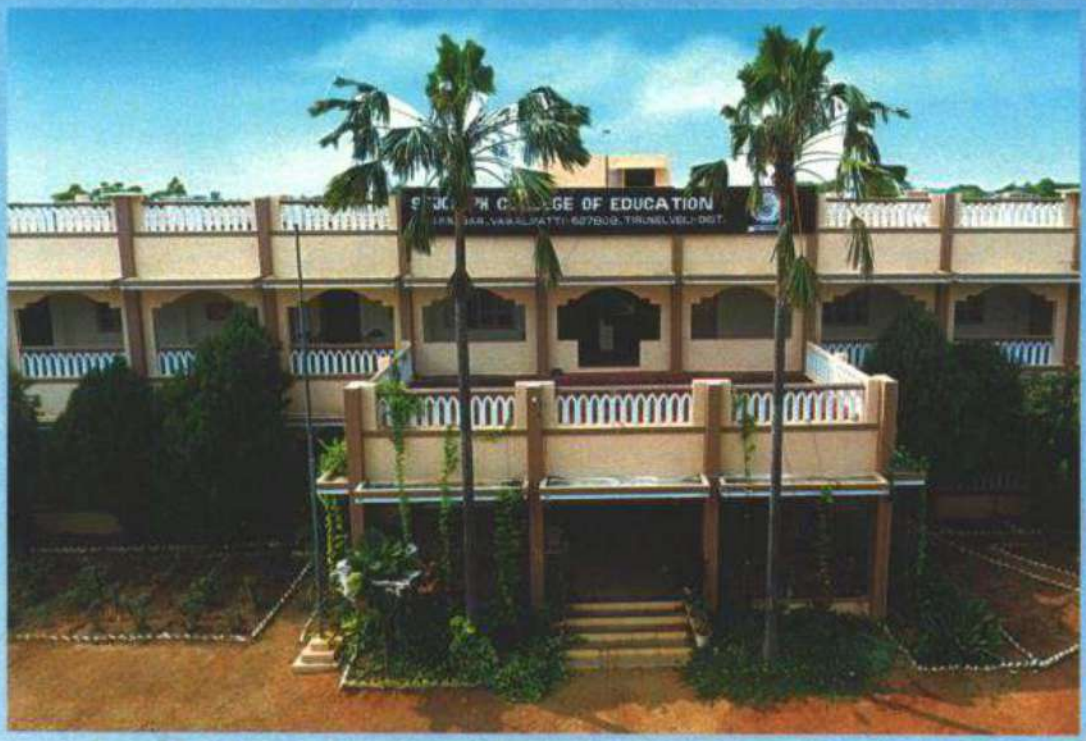

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