



Creating Joyful Experiences for Enhancing Meaningful Learning and Integrating 21st Century Skills

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ABSTRACT: As the twentieth century gives way to the twenty-first, the world is undergoing a profound transformation that may be described as a paradigm shift on a global scale. The way we view student learning has evolved. As a result of this shift in perspective, many countries have revised their curricula to become more learner-centered, incorporating elements of formal, non-formal, and informal instruction. Teaching and learning strategies that emphasize the three types of skills—learning skills, literacy skills, and life skills—are the most effective way to give students a head start on the 21st-century abilities they'll need to succeed in school and in the workplace. Meaningful learning will result when learners engage in knowledge construction conversation, articulation, collaboration, and reflection. The students learn meaningfully when they are will-fully engaged in a joyful task. Joyful Learning enables the learners to improve their 21st century skills as it helps students feel like they're making progress as they're studying, which is reassuring for a child. In the present research, the investigator has engaged learners (primary class students) in 'Classroom shows' related to subject-oriented presentations. Teacher instructor created a joyful learning environment for the learners to perform in a plethora of activities in the form of role plays, stories, songs, dance, recitation, games, puzzles etc. The Performance of learners was based on the assigned task integrating-communication, collaboration, critical-thinking and creativity skills. All the approaches be it Activity oriented, Experiential learning, Art Integrated learning were showcased. In the process, a student acquires the skills necessary for success in the real world through learning or some other method. The joyful experience leads to better understanding and engagement of learners. The intrinsic force is the joy which makes learning a joyful experience.

KEY WORDS: Experiential learning, Joyful Learning, Meaningful Learning, 21st Century Skills.

INTRODUCTION

As we enter the twenty-first century, the world is undergoing profound transformation on the order of a worldwide paradigm shift. Reference frameworks for living, working and societal organisation are being shifted. The globalisation of economic activity, political relations, information, communications and technology is at the core of the current societal shift. We know a lot more about what does and doesn't conform to a set of norms in the twenty-first century than we did in the past. Cultures, families, businesses, and educational institutions all have their own quirks. In the same way, the issues are persistent. The way we view the educational process has evolved since then. As a result, there has been a movement in many countries to approach their curricula to suit the needs of the twenty- first century learners, with many moving away from a focus on rote memorization in favour of a more personalised approach that incorporates both formal and non-formal learning methods. Specifically, giving students more control over their educational experience by allowing them to select their own coursework, study locations, and taking charge of their own academic growth.

OBJECTIVES

1. To explain meaningful learning with reference to 21st Century skills.
2. Creating joyful experiences in everyday classroom activities through engaged learners.
3. Selecting appropriate strategies for enhancing meaningful learning with joyful experiences.

MEANINGFUL LEARNING

From rote-learning (where the knowledge is absorbed verbatim without deep mental processing to integrate it to existing schemata) to meaningful learning, Ausubel (1968) envisioned a continuum (where material is assimilated into existing schemata,



which may need to be modified to accommodate the new ideas)[1] Meaningful learning, as contrast to rote learning, is grounded in constructivist principles, which emphasize students' active participation in the learning process as they construct meaning from their experiences (Piaget 1954; Huang et al. 2011; Lee and Hannafin 2016; Mayer 2002).[2],[3],[4],[5]. These guidelines imply that active participation by students in the development of knowledge and the attainment of meaningful learning is crucial (Schweisfurth 2011)[6]. According to Greene et al. (2004), students' motivation to engage effects both their choice of learning technique and their academic accomplishment, [7] and Lee and Hannafin (2016) agree that this is especially true for ICT activities. Meaningful learning will result when learners engage in knowledge construction conversation, articulation, collaboration, and reflection. The students learn meaningfully when they are will-fully engaged in a joyful task [4].

21st Century Skills

Learning in the 21st century holds the possibility of modernizing education to provide students with the skills they will need to thrive in the rapidly developing digital landscape. Literacy (information, media, and ICT literacy), life skills (such as creativity, innovation, critical thinking, problem solving, and teamwork), and learning skills (flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability, leadership and responsibility). The main focus is on the instructional strategies that will best prepare students for success in the modern workplace (Leahy & Dolan, 2010). Because of this, educators in the 21st century must move away from traditional pedagogical practices and instead become fearless advocates for the kinds of learning dispositions that will serve our students well in the workforce of the future. This necessitates a shift away from primarily relying on didactic methods of training in favour of those that are more open to trial and error.

Joyful Learning

Through encouraging a sense of pride and success in one's own learning, Joyful Learning helps students acquire and hone 21st-century competencies. Games, storytelling, role plays, puzzles, hands-on activities, songs, and dancing are all great ways to bring energy and excitement into the classroom and keep students engaged. When pupils are happy while they are studying, we say that they are "joyful." That joy isn't only happening on the inside of their head; it's coming out in their own special, authentic way. This contributes to creating a "living" and long-lasting learning environment. Learning can be made fun in the right setting, and that setting could be a game. That being said, there is no one-size-fits-all formula for building a positive classroom climate, especially in the early grades. No matter how the setting is designed, the human brain is intrinsically linked to happy learning.

Creating Joyful Experiences

In the present research, the investigator has engaged learners (primary class students) in 'Classroom shows' related to subject oriented presentations.

- The Classroom Show started with a Prayer followed by Pledge.
- Then the Yoga asanas were performed by the whole class.
- The introduction round by students was taken up individually, wherein each learner introduced himself/herself with confidence and put forward their thoughts about themselves to the audience.
- The Thought of the Day and the Word of the Day were shared in all the three languages viz. English, Hindi and Punjabi, by the respective learners.
- The Subject Enrichment Activities in all the languages; English, Hindi and Punjabi were taken up. There was Mass recitation of the poems, 'The Team Work', 'Khilonewala' and 'Aao Sikhiye' by the students.
- Activities in English language included Pronouns and their types related to grammar topics in all languages were performed individually and in groups by the learners.
- The short skits based on the lessons in the textbooks were presented.
- The written aspect related to spellings was taken up on the slates.
- The subject of Mathematics and EVS was based on the Concept clarity of the learners with the help of poems.
- The group of learners performed the activities individually and in groups. By the Pictorial Presentation, learners recognized the text better by seeing pictures, figures on the given topics.

Thus by Power Point presentations, the topics were explained to the audience. The written aspects of the subjects (English, Hindi and Punjabi) in the form of 'spellings' and 'one word' answers were taken up on the slates to showcase the writing skills of the learners.



The role-play method was used to explore behavioural components of the learners through Life Skills activities. The audience watched as the students' IT abilities were exhibited 'Hands on' via the projection screen. The students created 'Thank You' cards for their parents and gave them to them with a feeling of gratitude. All of the students' dance performance served as the program's capstone.

Reflections

The feedback of parents was extremely encouraging and motivating for the students and the teachers.

Parent I: "Our heartiest congratulations to all the teachers for conducting this class show successfully. I appreciate all the students for their fantastic performance. Kids have shown immense level of enthusiasm and confidence in their performances. We enjoyed this show very much. Well done!"

Parent II: "The class show was very nice .It was a nice platform for students to explore their personality and boost their confidence. Very well organized!"

Parent III: "With your guidance, my child has become confident and capable. Thank you for being such an important part in our child's development. These kind of activities in school help our child to be more confident. Thank you for conducting Class show which help my daughter to develop confidence that she carries forward in her life. Thank you for your support and engagement."

Parent IV: "Thank you so much for your direction and dedication to make her kids (students) as capable as they can. A teacher is always right for students."

Parent V: "Today's class show was amazing, fantastic and interesting. I am very glad to see this class show. Thank you for supporting our children."

Parent VI: "We appreciate the efforts you put to make this show marvelous. These kinds of activities help children to grow and identify their capabilities."

Strategies for Enhancing Meaningful Learning

The teacher created a joyful learning environment for the learners to perform in a wide plethora of activities in the form of role play, stories, songs, dance, recitation, games, puzzles etc. The Performance of learners was based on the assigned task bringing together the skills of communication, collaboration, research, and innovation. All the approaches be it Activity oriented, Experiential learning, Art Integrated Learning helped the learner to develop competencies required in real-life scenario. This element created a differentiated learning environment. All the learners perform the activities in front of the teachers and parents in the class show which boost the confidence of learners and they learn from their peers also. The classroom shows reinforce learning in a joyful manner integrating 21st century skills which lead to:

- Transformation of perspective

By exercising Joyful Teaching Learning results in a huge transformation of perspective leading to constructivist approach, student-oriented, active engagement and integrated learning.

- Self-motivated learners

As the learners explore various concepts to articulate their learning and in the journey become self-motivated learners.

- Reflective thinkers

The learners actively enjoy the learning process and make a connection with themselves and the world around them.

- Authentic learners

The learners relate to their previous knowledge, immediate environment and also through the sharing of stories, songs, artwork, and musical compositions.

CONCLUSION

The positive effects of happiness on education are teamwork, self-assurance, and a sense of accomplishment. In a classroom when students are learning about a topic that they are passionate about, for instance, feelings of excitement, pride, and interest are readily obvious about mathematical processes, exploring flora and fauna, language activities like poems, dramatics and art integration respectively. Lesson plans can be designed to create joyful experiences for enhancing meaningful learning integrating 21st century skills.



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