DESIGNING 21ST CENTURY LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

Learning at all levels helps one for environment of knowledge. In modern development in the field of learning has let to vast revolutionary changes. The learning environment has to incorporate effective changes to benefit the future generation. Reading, Watching, memorizing the facts only for the sake of examinations is not learning at all. The Technology makes learning more interactive, collaborative, and unconstructive, we need to develop the competency and the skills of the learners. The educators school leaders, researches, students, parents, entrepreneur, computer programme and all those who are working together should involve in creating a new environment in learning. These deliberations will mainly focus on the learning models, the communication channels and usage of technology to bring a new dimension the behavioural cognitive, constructive and social dimensions of learning. The team interaction and learning methodologies will pave a new way to design an effective learning environment of 21st century.

Introduction

The modern education system plays increasingly sophisticated pedagogical demands on teachers. The Teachers need to take decisions about how, when, and with whom they should select and use new technologies in their teaching. Today's youth are growing up in a digital world and the web acts as a transformative medium. Schools and colleges for long have been the sole medium for imparting information and aiding in the acquisition of knowledge. But with the technological development and fast expanding knowledge, new avenues of education have come up. These media disseminate information which the schools can no longer but needs to be integrated into the teaching – learning process. New designs of models are required to enhance the learning environment of tomorrow. This presentation may highlight certain possible ideas which may be incorporate to create the best learning environments in near future.

Educational Design Principles:

The below discussed Educational Design Principles encompares the body of knowledge concerning well designed learning environment. Each Educational Design Principles embraces an underlying premise that all learning environments should be learner – centered, developmentally and age appropriate safe, comfortable, accessible, flexible, equitable and cost effective.

Educational Design Principle No.1:

Plan for Learning to Take Place Directly in the Community

A variety of social and economic factors have created an environment in which many educators recognize that learning happens all the time and in many different places. The school building is just one place where learning takes place. While the school building is being seen more as a community center, the idea of embracing the whole community as a learning environment has evolved in a complementary fashion. Education programs can, and are taking advantage of educational resources in urban, suburban and rural settings alike.

Educational Design Principle No.2:

Cluster Learning Areas

Cluster learning areas around central cores of shared instructional support and resource spaces. Learning spaces should serve as "alcoves for learning" off centrally located shared resource space. The core should include informal meeting space, seminar and shared conference rooms, a small computer hub and teacher offices. Each cluster may support traditional disciplinary teaching (history, math, arts) or interdisciplinary teaching. Each cluster may contain grade-level groupings or multi-age groupings of learners.

Educational Design Principle No.3:

Provide Space for Sharing Learning Resources

For students and educators to be successful, the availability of resources by students and faculty is important. Students that do not have access to learning spaces, teachers and resources will be at a disadvantage. The reality of limited resources in today's schools suggests strongly that sharing all available learning resources would be optimal.

Educational Design Principle No.4:

Design for a Variety of Learning Groups and Spaces

Learning takes place in many different kinds and qualities of spaces. The self-contained classroom can no longer provide the variety of learning settings necessary to successfully facilitate Twenty-first century learning.

Allow for as wide a variety of group learning sizes as possible. Nest learner groupings from an entire "family" of 100 learners, to five groups of 20 learners, to groups of 12, 4-6 and 1-2 learners. Create a variety of adjoining learning spaces and arrangements in keeping with the educational program goals of the school.

Educational Design Principle No.5:

Regard Teachers as Professionals

Cluster teacher offices together to form a grouping of more than four teachers. The location of teacher offices should be adjacent but not central to instructional areas – teachers are not the center education, learners are. In place of the old "teachers' lounge," provide conferencing rooms where larger groups of teachers can meet formally to exchange information and teaching experiences, among themselves and with school visitors. Include a balance of formal and informal/break-out meeting space, with support spaces such as kitchenettes, storage and private restrooms.

Providing shared facilities for school faculty will create opportunities for teachers to reflect, form and communicate ideas central to their development as professionals. In the factory-model school which has been the model in our country for decades, teachers are more like labourers than professionals, and students are the products of their labours.

Educational Design Principle No.6:

Weave Together Virtual and Physical Learning Spaces

Information technology is rapidly becoming ubiquitous in our society and has become an essential tool for business and industry. Information technology is precipitating a variety of changes in both the organizational and physical structures of our schools. In the goal of integrating information technology into present school curricula, a variety of changes are being experienced. With respect to curriculum content and structure, technology is driving the curriculum in many schools to become more integrated between disciplines. With respect to instructional processes, technology is driving the movement toward self-directed learning and individualized instruction.

Educational Design Principle No.7:

Maximize Natural and Full Spectrum Lighting

Natural light and artificial full-spectrum lighting have been found to minimize mental fatigue as well as reduce hyperactivity in children. Studies have shown that students tend to react more positively to classrooms that have windows. Further, it has been found that fluorescent lighting may be related to greater amounts of stress and hyperactivity in learners. By installing full-spectrum lighting and maximizing controlled natural daylighting, schools may not only improve student performance but also achieve more responsible economic and energy conscious buildings.

Educational Design Principle No.8:

Establish a Variety of Outdoor Learning Environments

Outdoor settings are often a missed opportunity for learning and can be a valuable resource and laboratory for exploratory learning not possible in built environments. So Establish a Variety of Outdoor Learning Environments.

Conclusion

The future generation is blessed with an ocean of opportunities to learn and progress in all the fields. The teaching community need to shoulder a greater responsibility by providing all the possible ways and means to make the learning process more fruitful in all the perspectives. The learning environment will be of very conducive in nature if all the above said designs are followed with utmost care and responsibility.