



INNOVATIONS STRATEGIES IN EDUCATION - AT A GLANCE

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Introduction

The present era is an era of academic globalization. Though internationalism in education has been age old, the current wave has a new aspect i.e. augmenting, collaboration & co-operation. We are living in a rapidly changing time. Actually, change is the basic/fundamental rule of nature but this change is always purposeful & provides various new opportunities & makes a co-ordination with emerging trend. All around the world a new kind of educational model is taking tentative steps toward the mainstream. This model is far better suited to provide the knowledge and skills that students will need to succeed in a new global economy than the traditional model still practiced in most schools. The new model embodies many ideas which are not new but are only now being seen as a real alternative to traditional schools. The reasons why these ideas are taking root have to do with the simple fact that the old mass-production model of education simply doesn't work for most, if not all, students. The old model was designed to weed out the "smart" students destined for college from those who would work in nonacademic vocations. But that kind of distinction is no longer valid.

Innovative Strategies

The following are innovation strategies (listed in no particular order). Each strategy is linked to one or more of three categories - pedagogy, organization and non-academic. Pedagogy refers to any strategy that requires teachers to adopt teaching methods or practices in order to implement it. Organization refers to the need for support



from the school administration, educational establishment or other governmental or constituent group to implement the strategy and Non-Academic refers to any strategy that has non-academic benefits (many proponents of New Paradigm schools believe that these benefits are just as important, if not more important, than the academic benefits of school). Many of these strategies require extensive preparation by teachers, the "blessings" of, and significant organizational effort by, the educational establishment and, in many cases, outside sources of support and funds.

Personalization

Personalization of learning is an important underpinning of the whole New Paradigm model of education. It starts with the idea that learners are not products that can be mass-produced by schools. The idea that each student has an "Individualized Education Program" is not new to those who specialize in educating children with learning disabilities. Personalization includes not only what will be learned in school, but also how it will be learned. Personalized learning environments develop not only an individual's cognitive and analytical skills, but are also concerned with the development of their other intelligences and creating responsible citizens.

Cooperative Learning

Education Week defines cooperative learning as, "A method of instruction that encourages students to work in small groups, learning material, then presenting what they have learned to other small groups. In doing so, they take responsibility for their own learning as well as their classmates". In other words, cooperative learning is a system in which students become both motivated and motivators. By shifting responsibility for learning from teachers to students, cooperative learning takes away the "us vs. them" mentality that the typical school organization naturally tends to encourage and creates in its place a new dynamic where students feel empowered and eager to succeed on their own terms and not only to please their teacher.



Peer Tutoring

There is a saying that the best way to learn something is to teach it. In schools across the world, students become better learners as they take on the role of teachers and mentors to younger children. Peer tutoring is also valuable because students can often forge stronger bonds with other students than with adults and are more easily able to develop interest and motivation in the younger learner.

Team Teaching

Strategies like Project Based Learning can work in isolated classrooms with a good teacher, but they are most effective when teachers of various interests and abilities work together as a team to deliver a multidisciplinary program for the students. Team teaching is also beneficial because it makes teaching a less lonely profession than it has traditionally been. By working closely with their peers, teachers themselves gain the benefits of cooperative learning. Students benefit from team teaching curricula, not hampered by a teacher's weakness in any given area because that might be a strength another teacher in the group possesses. Team teaching also facilitates the use of block scheduling that was discussed earlier.

Global Connections

Not all schools will be able to take advantage of the proximity of related industries as Dave Master was able to in Los Angeles. However, with the advent of distance learning, it is now possible to reach experts wherever they might be. Schools are increasingly using the distance learning capacities they are installing as part of their technology infrastructure to reach national and international experts. Such global networks are good not only because they bring expertise to schools they might not otherwise be able to get, but also because they forge relationships between students throughout the world based on common goals and aspirations. This program also permits students spread across six continents to communicate and work with each other.



Laptops and Wireless Technology

The following summaries the benefits of laptops and wireless technology for Anytime Anywhere discusses why wireless networks utilizing mobile computers are preferable to the still prevalent practice of putting a few desktop machines in the back of each classroom.

Ease of Movement: Laptops can be moved anywhere in the building and require no special furniture.

.Relaxed Fit: Laptops are easier to accommodate within existing classrooms because of their small footprint.

Strategic Deployment: Laptop computers can be deployed on rolling carts where they are needed most, creating one-to one learning opportunities that traditional methods of distributing computers throughout a school do not provide.

Flexibility: Laptops can be used within existing rooms and can be configured to fit the teacher's preference and the nature of the learning experience, whether that is team, group, or individual. Wireless laptops place no additional demands on furniture or space.

Cleanliness: Elimination of cables and wires means that 25 or even 30 laptops can be accommodated in a room without creating a mess.

Non-Academic "Life Skills" Curricula

Conflict Resolution: The ability to peacefully resolve conflicts is a vitally important skill. Most individuals are left to figure out for themselves the best way in which to deal with conflict - be it with members of the family, with friends or with colleagues. But many schools actually "teach" students how to deal with and resolve conflicts in their life. Not only is this important in building better citizens, but it also addresses the problem of conflicts interfering with a student's ability to get the most out of school.



Character Education: Since humans are not necessarily born with character traits like caring, civic virtue and citizenship, honesty, justice and fairness, respect, responsibility and trust worthiness, they need to be introduced to these virtues in school - particularly when they do not have adequate role models at home. However, it is not possible to "teach" character, because these are virtues that must be appreciated and practiced over time. Schools are finding that it is far easier to build character in non-traditional settings where students work independently and cooperatively in hands-on environments. By more closely duplicating the work environments of the real world, students are able to "practice" virtues and perfect them while their essential natures are still developing.

Conclusion

The most visible alternatives to the traditional model are offered by home schooling, charter schools and online schools'. These alternatives systems have strong advocates and are growing rapidly. As the alternative models continue to grow in size and respectability, the influence and size of the traditional education establishment will diminish. Some will argue that, in most communities, the traditional establishment will simply disappear as it becomes increasingly irrelevant. While no one can predict exactly when the vast majority of students in this country can expect to benefit from systemic educational change, few will argue that such systemic change that will benefit tens of millions of students is still at least several years away. The strategies themselves, while they are geared toward a student-centered model of education, can be incorporated within existing systems, They do not threaten current establishments, but rather, provide tools to make them better, thus increasing the chance that they will be adopted. Finally, real and sustainable school improvement can only happen what entire communities are both informed about and involved in the process of change.

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