

Redefine, Reset and Reevaluate Education in the Covid context, Yearbook Article 2022

Historically, every major disruption has given rise to a transformation and major shifts in how we live and do things. It could be advantageous to self and societies to pause... To re-define, re-set, re-evaluate and re-look at what is truly important. A deep inward examination.

Education is that portal that focuses on intellectual, physical and social development which in turn positively effects and impacts the socio economic development of a country.

School education requires all students to master basic cognitive skills across literacy and numeracy. In the virtual classroom, our eLearning modules saw success because of a) interactive active learning strategies- including peer learning and b) frequent administration of formative assessments for and of learning, to constantly measure student engagement and learning and re-calibrate the teaching approach. The combination is an efficient and powerful learning model for both, self- directed learners and those with learning gaps, for adult learners and children.

There is the need to develop the metacognitive ability in students so they learn "how to learn". Problem solving and Design thinking needs to address real world problems and challenges a community faces. I would like to share a few stories of brilliance, courage and kindness- initiative by students- that have had a deep impact on their communities.

- Ration Square: A group of students supplied 300 kits of basic grains and raised over 3500 dollars to support the neediest during the lockdown.
- Another group worked together to distribute refreshment and water packs to the Bangalore police force.
- A few students collected and refurbished old phones to distribute to under privileged children -so they could use it continue their learning online during the pandemic.
- 14-year-old helped save 10 million litres of water
- And another student worked with single minded focus to conserve a lake that was polluted with chemical waste.

From water conservation, to garbage disposal, to protecting front line defenders, gender equality, digital illiteracy... these projects are evidence of

Education being relevant. As an educator, there is pride in the alignment of these initiatives to the sustainable development goals of the United Nation.

While pastoral care is at the heart of every teacher-student relationship, teachers had to don on the hat of counsellors and personal advisors. Although teachers are not mental health specialists, teachers nurtured their learners' social development, offered tremendous emotional and psychological support, stimulated resilience, and gave children and families hope for the future. The role of educator transcended into that of a healer.

In this milieu, we need to pause and think about what these frontline warriors may have experienced during the pandemic. I call our teachers and Principals frontline warriors because...

- they nurture, they build social and emotional intelligence
- they play a critical role in safeguarding the mental health and wellbeing of every child in their care

NEP 2020 exhorts- Teachers truly shape the future of our children, and therefore the future of our nation.

I laud the crafters and contributors to the National Education Policy 2020 for putting in place systemic reforms that aims to empower teachers through high quality Teacher Education Degrees, CPD programmes, attractive remuneration and teacher career management. Hopefully, the effects of NEP 2020, over time will make Teaching the profession of choice for bright and talented youngsters and restore the respect and status to the profession.

Let's continue to navigate through these still uncertain times. As always, the well-being of our students and staff is of the utmost importance to us. Together we will prevail.

Stay safe. Stay happy. Stay healthy.

Best wishes,
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Vice Chairperson