

Integrating Experiential Learning and Sustainability Practices in Work Education: A Model for Holistic Student Development

Vamanee S C

Navy Children School, Visakhapatnam

Abstract

This paper explores the integration of experiential learning and sustainability practices in the Work Education curriculum for middle school students. Emphasizing hands-on activities such as electricity circuit building, block printing, fabric upcycling, and medicinal plant exploration, the study demonstrates how practical engagement enhances student creativity, vocational skills, environmental awareness, and problem-solving abilities. Observations from classroom implementation, student projects, and inter-school competitions highlight the efficacy of competency-based pedagogy aligned with NEP 2020. The findings indicate that integrating skill-based, eco-conscious, and research-oriented approaches in Work Education can transform it into a dynamic platform for holistic student development.

Keywords: Experiential Learning, Sustainability, Work Education, Skill-Based Pedagogy, Eco-Innovation, NEP 2020

1. Introduction

Work Education is a core component of CBSE and NEP 2020 reforms, aimed at equipping students with practical life skills and vocational competencies. Traditional teaching often emphasizes rote learning, whereas experiential approaches engage students in hands-on, inquiry-based activities, fostering analytical thinking, creativity, and sustainability awareness. This paper presents a structured model for implementing skill-based, eco-conscious learning, highlighting real-life applications such as electricity circuits, block printing, and fabric upcycling.

2. Methodology

The study employed a qualitative and observational approach over the 2025–26 academic year:

1. **Subjects:** 120 students from Classes VI–VII, 35 Eco Club members.

2. **Activities:**

- Electricity circuit assembly and troubleshooting.
- Block printing as part of Skill Subject 920.
- Fabric upcycling projects.
- Medicinal plant identification and usage (e.g., Tridax, Moringa)

3. **Implementation**

- Classes conducted under an electric tower for real-world observation.

- Peer mentoring, differentiated instruction, and student-led research emphasized.

4. Data Collection:

- Student project portfolios
- Performance in competitions and exhibitions
- Teacher observations and reflective journals

3. Results

- **Enhanced Skills:** Students demonstrated improved circuit building, block printing, and design skills.
- **Environmental Awareness:** Fabric upcycling and medicinal plant projects increased eco-conscious behavior.
- **Teamwork and Leadership:** Participation in Buildathon, Annual Day, and Golden Jubilee events developed collaboration skills.
- **Research Skills:** Students learned to gather, analyse, and document information on plants and materials effectively.

4. Discussion

The integration of experiential and eco-conscious learning transformed Work Education from a peripheral subject into a core developmental platform. Students gained confidence, vocational exposure, and a problem-solving mindset. Leadership roles in exhibitions and competitions reinforced organisational and team skills. The methodology aligns with NEP 2020's vision of competency-based, skill-oriented education.

5. Conclusion

Incorporating hands-on activities, sustainability projects, and research-based learning within Work Education significantly enhances student competence, creativity, and environmental responsibility. This model can be adapted across schools to promote holistic development and real-world preparedness among students.

References

1. NCERT. (2020). National Education Policy 2020. New Delhi: Government of India.
2. CBSE. (2024). Skill Subject 920 Handbook. New Delhi: CBSE.
3. Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Prentice Hall.
4. Orr, D. W. (2004). *Earth in Mind: On Education, Environment, and the Human Prospect*. Island Press.