


Chapter 8

Integrating Experiential Learning in Indian Schools as Envisioned in NEP 2020

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ABSTRACT

The chapter aims to analyze the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 about experiential learning, investigate approaches for pedagogy and teachers' role in experiential learning in classrooms, investigate the opportunities and challenges for experiential learning, and develop a model and propose suggestions for effective implementation of experiential learning. A qualitative, documentary research methodology was adopted for this study. In conclusion, experiential learning, as envisioned in NEP 2020, marks a transformative shift from rote-based

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4957-2.ch008

instruction to learner-centric, practice-linked education. The study highlights NEP's emphasis on interdisciplinary, arts-integrated, and inquiry-driven pedagogies, with teachers as key facilitators. Despite opportunities for holistic development and 21st-century skill-building, challenges like infrastructure gaps and outdated assessments persist. A comprehensive model is proposed to embed experiential learning through curriculum reform, teacher training, and authentic evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a key driver in a nation's progress, with the youth serving as the foundation of a thriving society. Empowering students through quality education enables them to emerge as valuable assets to national development. However, true growth requires a comprehensive and enduring educational framework. Such a system, bolstered by effective teaching strategies, guides learners toward achieving their aspirations by imparting lasting and meaningful knowledge (Mehra & Singh, 2025). The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 advocates for the integration of experiential learning across all levels of education, promoting methods such as hands-on activities, art and sports integration, and storytelling pedagogy (Ministry of Education, 2020). Experiential learning marks a transformative approach in education, moving away from conventional lecture-based instruction and focusing on real-world experiences that connect classroom knowledge with practical application. It encourages active student engagement, real-world relevance, critical thinking, workforce readiness, and multidisciplinary integration (Aithal & Mishra, 2024). Experiential learning pedagogies have emerged as a critical dimension in reshaping contemporary education, particularly due to their ability to cultivate deep and lasting learning outcomes. Aggarwal and Wu (2019) categorize teaching strategies into a three-level taxonomy: the first involves traditional lectures, which are often short-lived in impact; the second includes case-based and project-based teaching that promotes deeper engagement; and the third encompasses experiential learning, where structured, real-world involvement leads to enduring behavioral change and cognitive development (Aggarwal & Wu, 2019). These insights are crucial for India's implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which calls for a transition toward experiential and competency-based education. The Indian context, with its vast cultural and socio-economic diversity, demands context-sensitive models that address both the opportunities and barriers in adopting experiential learning across its educational institutions.

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