

Best Practices in Education

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1. Introduction

My experiences pertaining to best practices:

- *Vidya vosagunu vinayamu ...*
- *Gayatri mantra ...*
- *My Case Studies in Kuppam Schools – findings*
- *My Training Practices – personal attention to trainees*
- *Curriculum Updation – Innovations in M.Ed (2011-12) Curriculum – Introduction of Internship for M.Ed students*
- *Flag Hoisting & Rendering every day prayers & uniform dress code*

2. Global Perspective

a) The imperatives for 21st Century education are (Nichols 2001:13-14):

- **Increased capacity and efficiency** - through enabling institutions to cater for the learning of a relatively large number of students at once.
- **Improved effectiveness** - by encouraging deep learning approaches and the adaptation of knowledge to the real world.
- **Easy accessibility** - by removing distance barriers and catering for a variety of learners' prior educational experience, physical abilities, and time commitments /lifestyles.
- **A competitive mindset** - education with the potential to be offered internationally, within industry, and at a distance; providing more choice and convenience for the student.
- **A resource-based emphasis** - enabling more student control over what, where, when and how they study and permitting non-linear learning; and
- **The personal touch** - with more interaction between students and between individual student and tutor, enabling a degree of customisation and the pursuit of

individual students' learning goals in addition to the prescribed course learning outcomes.

The six best practice principles identified by forum members are:

1. **Individualisation** – adaptability to the learning needs of the individual.
2. **Meaningful Interactivity** – providing opportunities for students to apply what they are learning.
3. **Shared Experience** – enabling students (and encouraging them) to learn from one another.
4. **Flexible and Clear Course Design** – preparing the entire course with a view to maximising student control while still providing clear expectations.
5. **Learner Reflection** – encouraging students to mentally engage with course concepts and to consider their progress.
6. **Quality Information** – providing actual content that is accurate and especially designed to facilitate understanding.

b) Marzano 13 Teaching Best Practices

Marzano Research Laboratory (MRL) conducted a study of best practices in online solutions and identified 13 strategies as best practices for enhancement of learning and presented in her article by Sarah Cornelius (2015). However, these can also be usefully implemented in regular programmes.

Marzano Dimension I: Strategies involving routine events

1. Communicating course/assignment rules and procedures
2. Providing students with all materials needed to complete an assignment
3. Clearly presenting the goal/objective for each assignment
4. Offering encouragement and positive feedback to students
5. Allowing students to keep track of their learning progress
6. Accessibility to students via electronic communication as well as face-to-face

Marzano Dimension II: Strategies enacted on the spot

7. Monitoring student work
8. Knowing every student by name and being able to recognize them outside of the online environment
9. Allowing students to progress through assignments at their own pace
10. Providing help to understand and practice new knowledge
11. Allowing students to ask questions during online courses/assignments
12. Treating all students equally

Marzano Dimension III: Strategies addressing content

13. Adding external resources to assignments aligned to local objectives

c) The Guidelines on Learning

These are based on Ken Bain's "What the Best College Teachers Do" and have been developed by the faculty of the University of New South Wales (UNSW Australia).

1. Effective learning is supported when students are actively engaged in the learning process.
2. Effective learning is supported by a climate of inquiry where students feel appropriately challenged and activities are linked to research and scholarship.
3. Activities that are interesting and challenging, but which also create opportunities for students to have fun, can enhance the learning experience.
4. Structured occasions for reflection allow students to explore their experiences, challenge current beliefs, and develop new practices and understandings.
5. Learning is more effective when prior experience and knowledge are recognized and built on.
6. Students become more engaged in the learning process if they can see the relevance of their studies to professional, disciplinary and/or personal contexts.
7. If dialogue is encouraged between students and teachers and among students (in and out of class), thus creating a community of learners, student motivation and engagement can be increased.
8. The educational experiences of all students are enhanced when the diversity of their experiences are acknowledged, valued, and drawn on in learning and teaching approaches and activities.
9. Students learn in different ways and their learning can be better supported by the use of multiple teaching methods and modes of instruction (visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and read/write).
10. Clearly articulated expectations, goals, learning outcomes, and course requirements increase student motivation and improve learning.
11. When students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning, they are more likely to develop higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.
12. Graduate attributes – the qualities and skills the university hopes its students will develop as a result of their university studies – are most effectively acquired in a disciplinary context.
13. Learning can be enhanced and independent learning skills developed through appropriate use of information and communication technologies.

14. Learning cooperatively with peers – rather than in an individualistic or competitive way – may help students to develop interpersonal, professional, and cognitive skills to a higher level.

15. Effective learning is facilitated by assessment practices and other student learning activities that are designed to support the achievement of desired learning outcomes.

16. Meaningful and timely feedback to students improves learning.

d) Children enjoy learning in Activity Based Learning Schools

Students at a primary school in Madhya Pradesh introduced to the concept of Activity Based Learning (ABL), an initiative of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan supported by UNICEF. Two significant aspects are found here and they are:

- **Child-centric education**
- **Peer learning**

3. Conclusion

Finally, it is tantamount to stating that there are no any hard rules for implementing the best practices. The best practices are dependent on the context. It is the wisdom and innovation of the administrator / teacher makes the difference in planning and implementing the best practices for the context concerned.

Thank you.