Childhood Education and References for Sustainable Education

AIMS OF EDUCATION

Education is a purposeful activity. By education we intend to bring certain desirable changes in the students. Education is a conscious effort and, as such, it has definite aims and objectives. In the light of these aims the curriculum is determined and the students' academic achievements are measured.

Aims of education are not fixed, eternal and universal. These are changeable and relative.

Idealism stands for absolute, ultimate, eternal and universal values. It advocates high ideals of life, which are mainly spiritual in nature. Idealism pleads "knowledge for knowledge's sake."

In an idealist society, education is for the general and moral development of a person.

Pragmatism does not believe in absolute and eternal values: philosophy of life is always reflected in the aims of education. Plato considered that the guardians of the state should have high philosophical ideals. Locke emphasized "the disciplined and well-ordered mind." Hegel stress on idealistic aim of education, i.e. glorification of the state and the fulfillment of the will of the absolute. Marx was a materialist. So he emphasized material aim of education, i.e., the practical economic needs of man. In a materialist society, educational aims are based on the materialistic outlook of the people. In such a society moral or spiritual values have nothing to do with education. The idealist society tries to glorify those values and emphasize moral upliftment/grows of personality.

Historical Evolution of Aims of Education

In Ancient India the ideal of life was spiritualistic. Educational aim was determined by the conception of life. Thus the aim of education was self-realization or the realization of Brahma or the Absolute. In ancient Sparta education was not individualistic but socialistic. Each man was born not for himself, but for the state. The state itself was a school. The immediate aim of this state-controlled system of education was to train the youths in military barracks away from home, to develop a hardy mind in a hardy body, to produce courageous soldiers. Individual liberty was thus not allowed. Education was primarily physical.

Athenian education aimed at harmonious development of personality physical, intellectual, moral and aesthetic. It secured harmony between the individual and the state, between physical and mental development, between thought and action. Its immediate aim was to develop a beautiful mind in a beautiful body.

Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, the Greek idealists, discarded extremely individualistic aim of education.

Socrates emphasized on the acquisition of universal and eternal knowledge or truth. Plato advocated harmonious development of all the powers of the individual and equated personal realization with social solidarity. Aristotle championed the ideal of harmony between the individual and the society, between intellect and character and theory and practice.

The ancient Romans had no interest in the acquisition of purely theoretical knowledge. Their outlook was materialistic. Their highest aim of life was the attainment of material success. The aim of Roman education was, therefore, to produce a worthy citizen of the Roman state, able to enjoy the rights and perform the duties of a citizen.

Due to religious, social, psychological and pedagogical reasons, a new theory of education, known as theory of mental or formal discipline came into vogue. John Locke was the historical representative of this new doctrine. According to him, the aim of education should be to produce a sound mind in a sound body. The aim of education would be to discipline all the faculties such as memory, imagination, perception, thinking etc.

A true individualistic ideal of education came into existence in the 18th century. J.J. Rousseau's concept of negative education emphasized education according to nature. The child was regarded as the important and the central factor in the field of education. The aim of education should be therefore, spontaneous natural self-development of the child's nature in close contact with nature. Kant was greatly influenced by the individualistic concept of education and defined education as the process by which man becomes man through his voluntary efforts.

Pestalozzi introduced the psychological tendency in education and with it the child-centric movement in education received a new momentum and fillip. According to him, education was the process of the spontaneous unfolding of latent powers of the individual towards perfection. Herbart shouldered this task and he developed a systematic psychology of the methods of teaching. Froebel, the German idealist, regarded education as the spontaneous development of a joyful, creative self activity.
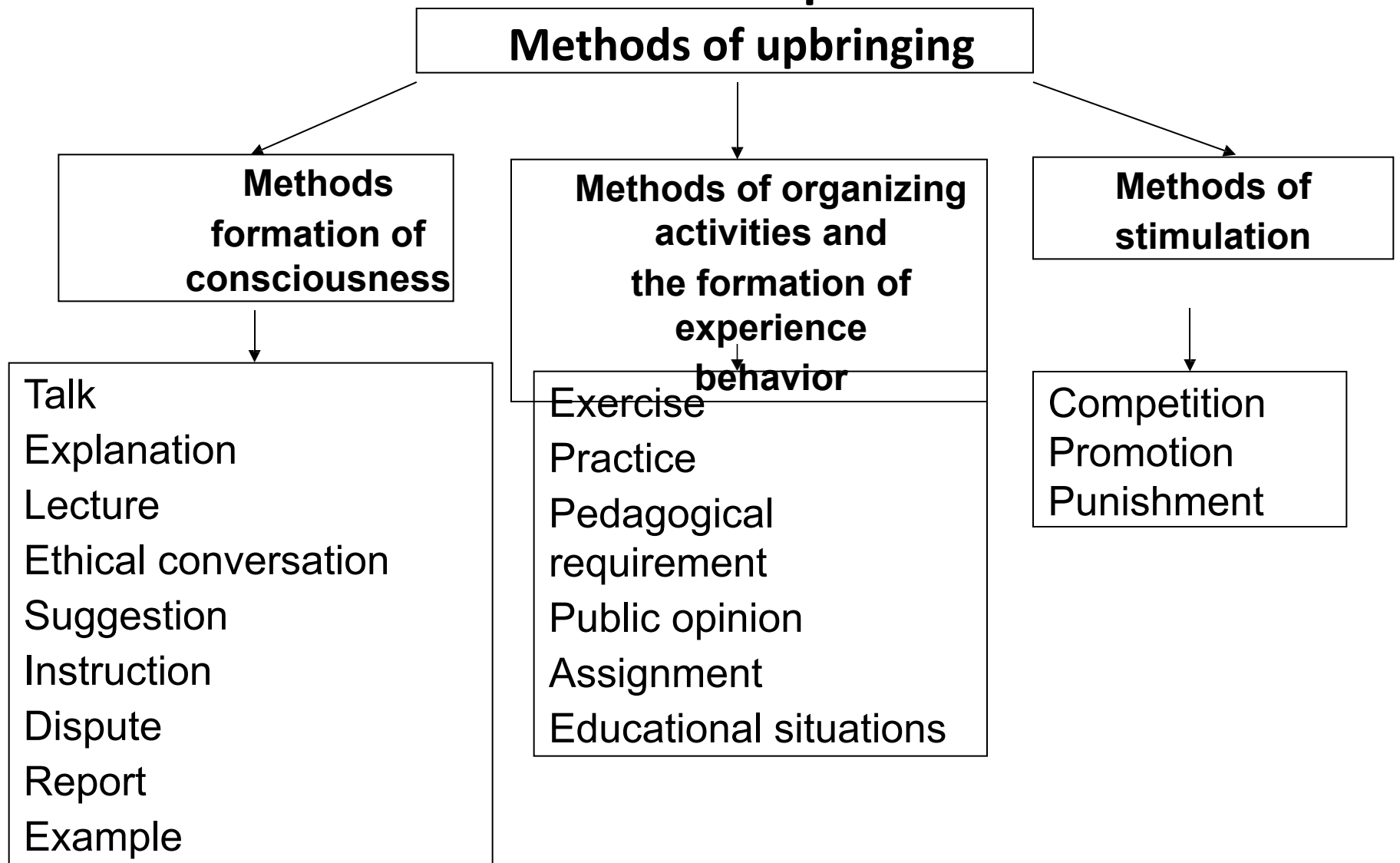
Joel Kupperman (1991) suggests three stages of character education, first, the formation of good habits without serious moral reflection, second a period during which students begin to question and to develop a moral perspective of their own, and third the formation of strong personal identity with the capacity to make moral judgments of one's own.

Methods are adapted accordingly; dogmatic but not authoritarian instruction with sensitivity to feelings for others is followed by a study of literature so that other lives can be appreciated, discussed and judged, leading to the life-long process of active involvement in making one's own character.

Bill Puka (2000) identifies six teaching methods. These are 1) instruction in basic values and virtues; 2) behavioural codes established and enforced; 3) telling stories with moral lessons, 4) modelling desirable traits and values; 5) holding up moral exemplars in history, literature, religion, and extolling their traits; 6) providing practical opportunities in school and in community where students can exercise these good traits. The methodology is indiscriminating in the sense that it can be applied in the delivery of the full range of approaches to character education from a total moral relativism to moral values objectively rooted in human nature.

The main classifications of methods of education. Characteristics of the methods of upbringing, the most effective in school practice

Methods of upbringing

Methods formation of consciousness

Methods of organizing activities and the formation of experience behavior

Methods of stimulation

Talk
Explanation
Lecture
Ethical conversation
Suggestion
Instruction
Dispute
Report
Example

Exercise
Practice
Pedagogical requirement
Public opinion
Assignment
Educational situations

Competition
Promotion
Punishment

What is Philosophy of Education

- All teachers have a personal philosophy that colors the way they teach
- Engaging in philosophy helps clarify what they do or intend to do, justify or explain why they do what they do in a logical, systematic manner

Sustainable Education

Childhood education means care, education and teaching for children from the birth to till the adulthood.

Finnish Mauri Åhlberg (2003) writes that sustainable development is a global goal, set in order to ensure the s survival and continuation of life on earth.

Sustainable development is development in which real long-term needs of both present and future human generations are met as optimally as possible.

Åhlberg (2003) proposes that there are three strands in Environmental Education:

1) education and learning about environment

(Diverse physical locations, makes teaching so interesting)

2) education and learning in environment

(learning resources and technology, means of teaching, modes of learning)

3) education and learning for environment

(creating positive learning environment)

The last one comes nearest to Education for Sustainable Development.

- Education for Sustainable Development, when at its best, is integrating best theories and best practices, testing constructed new theories both theoretically and empirically when it is possible
- Sustainable development is a concept that focuses the attention of human beings on the conditions of continuity of life.

Lakatos (2002: 20-21) writes that education is the key factor in ensuring sustainable development. It is the process of education and learning that leads to an ever-growing number of people, who are sensitive to environmental issues.

Lakatos writes that education for sustainable development trains teachers, who are capable of coupling their ecological, economic and environmental knowledge with other subjects and disciplines.
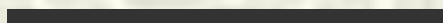
L.Vygotsky's theories are based on the social roots of development. He makes difference between two types of social factors: 1) cultural-historical and 2) interaction of individuals.

Cultural factors comprise institutions, working tools and sign systems, created previously by people, and that have developed differently in different cultures.

The interaction and development of individuals can only be understood in relation to these historic-cultural systems of social relations.

Vygotsky uses the term social situation of development assuming that a social situation determines the forms and the path that the child will follow in the course of development and learning.

Didactics

Didactics (Brotherus, Hytˆnen & Krokfors, 2002: 105) is a discipline, the study of teaching. The development of didactics is closely connected to the history of development of school teaching. The term school pedagogy refers to the relationship between school and society.

Didactics is a doctrine about teaching. It offers guidelines for the best possible way for reaching through teaching the goals, set by the curriculum.

Teaching is a comprehensive process, it is planning, action and evaluation.

Constructivism

Teaching is closely related to knowledge, learning and theories of learning.

Constructivist theory is currently popular as a basis for understanding learning. The notion is that a child constructs knowledge through learning and that earlier knowledge structures channel the adoption of new knowledge. Constructivism is a theory on learning. Learning is a psychological process within a human mind.

Constructivist learning is an unending renewal of the relationship between an individual and the environment.

Key concepts & definitions in designing sustainable education

Concept	Definition	Example
Aims (desired impacts)	The final impacts on peoples' lives or the environment that you wish to achieve	To reduce our individual and community carbon emissions & contribution to climate change; to contribute to a fairer, more prosperous and sustainable community; to improve well-being
Objectives (desired outcomes)	The changes you need to make so that you achieve your aims (desired impacts)	To increase personal agency; to encourage more sustainable living/behaviours; to increase community resilience/capacity to withstand external shocks; supportive and fair government policies
Outputs	The immediate and direct result of your activities that contribute to your objectives (desired outcomes)	To engage X participants in projects/ events/training from y and z demographic groups; to plant X trees, to facilitate swapping of Y items at a Bring & Take event
Activities	The programme & project activities and processes you undertake so that you achieve your desired outputs	Community engagement & awareness raising; action/learning groups on household energy use & lifestyles; community food, transport, waste reduction projects
Inputs	The key human, financial, technical, organisational and/or social resources that you need to undertake your activities	Volunteer capacity and availability; access to IT and other online resources; fund raised and available

Seminar tasks

1) Mechanisms of sustainable education
2) Methods and forms of upbringing process
3) John Dewey's Theories of Education
4) MEANING, AIMS AND PROCESS OF EDUCATION
5) How young people today understand their moral identity
6) How education contributes towards the formation of character
7) What are the key influences on young people's character formation.

Project Work

1. What do students consider to be appropriate virtues and values for life in 21st century society?

2. How do students understand those virtues and values?

3. Actively growing and changing as a person and a learner

4. What is the 'language in use' by young people?

5. Qualities of being a Learner (to be good or bad student)

6. How and in what ways do schools and colleges inhibit or develop the formation of virtues and dispositions of character in Sixth Form students?

7. The development of values, attitudes and personal qualities

8. Education for adult life: the spiritual and moral development of young people

9. Character education: the challenge and the model

10. Character Education: Lessons from Past and models for Future

The Montessori Method.

The Montessori approach is designed to support the natural development of children in a well-prepared environment.

Five basic principles fairly and accurately represent how Montessori educators implement the Montessori method in many kinds of programs.

1. respect for the child, 2. the absorbent mind, 3. sensitive periods, 4. the prepared environment, and 5. auto education.