EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)

THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS IN YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

Ishita Kapur

Masters in Social Work, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

ABSTRACT

Great schools have the power to change lives. They transform the process of guiding students towards benchmark success into a transformative learning experience that helps young people chart a course for a bright future. This type of education is purposefully designed to foster creativity and critical thinking. It's a place where students are introduced to ideas that inspire them and encouraged to investigate possible career paths in which those ideas could take flight. A great school is one where students understand that true learning, learning that matters to them and helps them connect to their goals, occurs. Three essential priorities are critical in assisting educators in designing innovative schools that strive to be great for all students: young people must be at the centre of any school design process; great practise must be deployed with the needs of students in mind; and schools must grow alongside students, practising iteration to meet emerging challenges. Given the demands on school staff and government regulations that place a premium on academic accomplishment, focusing on holistic adolescent outcomes and school outcomes that improve both adolescent psychosocial well-being and societal well-being remains a priority. The key to making youth development in schools a success is to take a system-wide approach to efforts and outcomes, as well as to form strategic relationships with key community stakeholders who share a same goal of fostering positive youth development. Great schools make learning easier by making these developmental milestones fundamental to their mission and smoothly incorporating them into academic goals.

KEY WORDS: *youth development, psychosocial well being, societal well being, community stakeholders*

INTRODUCTION

We usually conceive of schools as places where students go to learn and grow. Schools, on the other hand, are first and primarily institutions where young people build their identities and begin to see themselves as self-sufficient adults. Young children, like adults, thrive in circumstances that provide a healthy mix of autonomy, support, and high expectations. They thrive in circumstances where they may pursue new interests, have substantial choice over how they spend their time, and feel valued for their contributions and viewpoints. Youth Development in school systems focuses on helping adolescents in developing multiple areas of expertise, self worth, personal contacts, individual personality, and the ability to care for and contribute to society, with the assumption that achieving such developmental tasks will result in increased adolescent psychosocial well-being.

Schools have potential as centrepieces in promoting youth development as (a) schools are places adolescents spend much of their waking hours; (b) school environments, both academic and non-academic, influence multiple areas of adolescent functioning including identity formation, cognitive and social development, peer relations, and vocational development; (c) positive school experiences and opportunities contribute to adolescent resilience and positive development (Olsson, 2003) and (d) most schools have resources and infrastructure suitable for systems-change intervention focused on positive youth development. As a result, school involvement and investment in positive youth development is a realistic goal, and our focus here is on characteristics of a school's environment that support positive youth development.

Some believe that promoting youth development could distract schools from their

EPRA International Journal of Research and Development (IJRD)

fundamental duty of academic instruction, given federal regulations emphasising assessments and standards. Schools that want to focus on both youth development and academic success are likely to stretch resources, especially if they have limited funds and manpower. However, positive youth development efforts are capable of nurturing learning environments that promote engagement and commitment to academic learning, thus meeting expectations of educationists (Roger P. Weissberg, 2004). Furthermore, improving connection between adolescents and school helps avoid behavioural problems in school and promote good development by providing crucial supports for healthy growth. Schools have the ability to provide positive places, and positive opportunities that promote development (Karen Johnson Pittman, 2003).

THE SIGNIFICANT ROLE OF SCHOOL

The importance of schools to youth development was emphasized by John Dewey and is well-specified in life course/social field theory (Kellam, Branch, Agrawal, & Ensminger, 1975). In this perspective, one or more main social fields are critically important in each stage of life, and in each social field there are defined social task demands. Success or failure in regard to social roles is marked by the adequacy of behavioural responses of each individual to the specific social task demands faced within each main social field at each stage of life.

The social task demands are defined by and the adequacy of responses are rated by, natural raters, such as parents in the family, teachers in the classroom, or significant peers in the peer group. Not only the individual's performance, but also chance and the fit of the individual in the social context play roles in success or failure. Aggression, academic problems, and other early antecedents to problem outcomes must be viewed, therefore, as residing not merely in the child, but also as the social fields of family, school, and community (David Osher, 2014). Teachers provide a positive adult presence in the classroom by recognising students for positive behaviour, providing concrete feedback, and praising students for significant achievements. Teachers also support when they hear without judging, encourage students to think about values, tell students their efforts are appreciated, encourage students, or provide help (J M Richman, 1998). However, efforts to build support in schools are only effective if students recognise and use the resources that are available to them. Thus, in order to effectively create change in the classroom, it is necessary to check in with students to determine their perception of support.

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENTS AND CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING

The school environment is an important factor when evaluating student well-being. Previous findings have shown that variables such as physical, academic, and social dimensions influence school environments (Cesar Tapia-Fonllem, 2020). Some research studies have found that peer settings and classroom environment play critical roles in children's behaviour development. Classroom environment covers a range of learning aspects that include the relationship that exists between learners themselves and their teacher. The classroom environment attempts to spell out the teacher's expectations on the children's motivation for effective learning, the strategies that should be employed for effective teaching, the kind of materials that would motivate children to have greater interest in learning, and the social behaviour that should be exhibited in a classroom (Obaki, 2017).

It is also important that the interests, developmental levels, and cultural and geographic backgrounds of the children in the classroom be considered in establishing environments (Bullard, 2010). In addition to helping support developmentally appropriate practices, a well-designed environment reduces behavioural issues, allowing the teachers to spend more time scaffolding learning. The environment can help prevent behavioural issues in three ways. One, children who are actively engaged in developmentally appropriate, interesting activities that they choose usually displays fewer behavioural issues. Because the well-designed environment provides children with many choices at different developmental levels, children's unique skill levels, preferred learning styles, and interests can be addressed. Second, the well-planned environment provides private retreats and activities that assist children to manage emotions. Thirdly, the teacher intentionally designs the layout of the environment to prevent common behavioural issues (Bullard, 2010).

BUILDING PARENT-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Parental involvement is clearly linked to children's academic, social, and emotional development, and building parent-school partnerships is one strategy for improving student success worldwide. Parental involvement literature is combined with research from the fields of complexity theory, systems theory, and organizational science to explore the challenges and opportunities that parents and schools face as they seek to improve achievement for all children. On the surface, parental involvement in children's schools seems

uncontroversial. Most agree that parents play an important role in their children's education and are indeed the first educators of children. Parental involvement is clearly linked to children's academic, social, and emotional development, and building parent-school partnerships is one strategy for improving student success worldwide. Yet despite extensive research, family involvement experts also agree that parent-school partnerships have not received the research attention they deserve and suggest the need for a more comprehensive theoretical framework to guide partnership development (Price-Mitchell, 2009).

Systems thinking focus on parent-school partnerships through perceived boundaries to explore where and how learning occurs at the edges of interaction between people in different systems. These boundary dynamics (MacGillivray, 2006, 2008) are crucial to school reform and understanding the relationships of those committed to educating future generations. Not only do parents and educators influence a child's learning, they also hold the keys to understanding and potentially solving many of today's social issues that hinder learning and motivation (Price-Mitchell, 2009).

ROLE OF TEACHERS IN SHAPING CHILDREN'S LEARNING BEHAVIOUR

Teaching effectively through the environment requires the teacher to be concurrently aware of the children in her classroom (their developmental levels, cultural backgrounds, interests, learning styles, dispositions, and behavioural nuances) and the early learning guidelines, curriculum standards, and program outcomes appropriate for her age group (Bullard, 2010). Effective learning occurs when children are actively engaged in the learning process or are paying special attention to what they are learning. The classroom teacher does not only observe but engages children in learning activities and posing questions to promote their reasoning abilities and widening their knowledge in the subject matter (Rheta DeVries, 2002).

Keeping children engaged help them to be more constructive than would be destructive if left unengaged. A teacher who engages his or her children in a meaningful learning situation is a resourceful and a facilitator. The teacher facilitates learning by giving his or her children examples on how he or she would like them to do the given work, provide the needed resources, and give guidelines on classroom behaviour. Changing children's behaviour is a process that takes a period of time. It may involve a teacher explaining clearly on the benefits of good behaviour and providing an opportunity for positive interaction in the classroom. Understanding children's needs, interests, and the skills to be developed would help the teacher to identify the type of learning areas to be developed in the classroom (Obaki, 2017).

SAFE ENVIRONMENT OF SCHOOLS

A school's climate is created partly through relationships and interactions among all members of a school community (National School Climate Council, 2016), including students, teachers, parents and guidance officers (Jenny Povey, 2016). Structure improvements, innovative student support services, and social changes in the school environment are all strategies for boosting youth development. Improving architectural elements or places to ensure physical safety; regulating school and classroom size to provide a sense of inclusion and community are examples of structural alterations; improve schedules to increase students engaged in meaningful tasks; monitor places within school where adolescents spend time so these places are supervised and have a climate of support and belonging (Denise C Gottfredson, 2003). Encourage peer and adult involvement, such as cooperative learning and a cross-age buddy system, as demonstrated in the Child Development Project, and peer leadership.

GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES IN SCHOOL

Social and emotional learning interventions build the internal competencies that are critical for positive child and youth development, and although often viewed as an "add-on" to academic instruction, are in fact an essential part of education. Over the past two decades, researchers have produced increasingly compelling evidence that interventions promoting SEL improve academic performance. Zins, Weissberg, Wang, and Walberg (2004) reported that students who become more self-aware and confident about their learning abilities try harder in school. Students who set high academic goals, have self-discipline, motivate themselves, manage their stress, and organize their approach to work, learn more and get better grades (David Osher, 2014).

Important social emotional competencies schools can focus on are described in Table below. School-based efforts that promote youth development and reduce adolescent difficulties have the potential to increase emotional well-being and school performance. School wide social emotional learning efforts involves teaching adolescents interpersonal problem-solving skills such as recognizing social influences to engage in behaviour and generating alternatives, in addition to teacher training management, interactive teaching, and cooperative learning (J D Hawkins, 1999). Practices when put

into action across the school community, are opportunities that nurture positive environments for youth development (Mark T Greenberg, 2003).

IMPLEMENTATION AND SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

School Leadership: School leadership plays an important role in fostering relationships at the environmental boundaries that lead to generative learning and positive outcomes for children. School principals, teachers, administrators, and others who work with parents must embrace the role of boundary spanner, learning how to build relationships that hover at the peripheries between home, school, and community (Price-Mitchell, 2009). Reviews of international evidence point to the presence in effective and improving schools of both transformational and pedagogical/instructional leadership at all levels, but especially that of the head teacher, as being a critical determinant in the quality of the psychological, physical and social environments and conditions in which teaching and learning take place. This in turn influences the motivations, expectations, attitudes and conduct of students in classrooms and student outcomes (Christopher Day, 2016).

School self-evaluation for School improvement: School self-evaluation can be a fundamental force in achieving school improvement. This review establishes what the key debates are in relation to school self-evaluation, what principles and processes are associated with it, and what the implications are for school self-evaluation as a means of leading school improvement. The review also incorporates a framework for conducting self evaluation and case study examples from systems and schools that have previously undergone the process (Christopher Day, 2016).

Sustainable development of Youth: To ensure youth could play the positive role and make a difference in economic and social structures and achieve the desired developmental outcomes, authorities should focus on the education quality, the characteristics of their teachers and the skills they acquire during the teaching learning process. Therefore, the relationship between intellectual and social variables for this group should be strengthened to achieve a positive change we seek (UNDP, 2014). According to UNESCO, Education for Sustainable Development aims to help people to develop the attitudes, skills, perspectives and knowledge. So, they can make informed decisions and act upon them for the benefit of themselves and others in the present time and in the future (UNESCO, 2006). Furthermore, the main goal of education should focus on making positive changes in their behaviours, skills and potentials. Therefore, the goals of sustainable development and the desired change will be successfully achieved (al-braizat, 2016).

Table: *Areas to concentrate on when it comes to establishing and maintaining school-wide change*

1. Preparing a method for positive youth development
   - Identifying the needs for certain programmes and how the programming chosen will address these needs
   - Getting support from the system's stake holders
   - Staff and students should be more informed
   - Action-oriented strategy planning
2. Implementing youth development methods
   - Ensuring programme implementation compatibility
   - Stakeholders' collective involvement
   - Creating opportunities for skill development and building skills
   - Ensure that programming is task and schedule based
   - Preparing for long-term efforts
3. Ensuring positive youth development
   - Ensuring that what has been accomplished is maintained
   - All stakeholders must maintain their commitment
   - Enhancing and putting acquired skills into practise
   - Using evaluations to plan future directions and efforts

CONCLUSION

Because the purpose of development is to improve human abilities and capacities, it becomes evident that education and development have a beneficial relationship. Evidence shows that positive youth development guided schools provide learning

environments that support adolescents' academic, social, and personal competency. Education's objective is to instil positive qualities in youth and equip them with knowledge, skills, values, and traditions, as well as to enable them to be productive members of society. Educational outcomes are capable of meeting the world's current challenges and requirements, as well as keeping up with new scientific breakthroughs and technology. This can be accomplished through advancement-oriented education. Education is a critical component of all development strategies and programmes. It is also a crucial pillar in the process of long-term growth. This paper has shown that children and youth are more likely to concentrate in supportive learning environments with positive people, pleasant environments, and favourable opportunities. Youth should obtain appropriate education on all levels in order for the educational system to be successful. We must promote awareness of the significance of change in order to achieve sustainable development, and we must prioritise education. If we want to achieve sustainable development, we need to increase education and make it more accessible to the youth, who are the driving force behind developing societies. Finally, encouraging and sustaining youth development activities in schools results in positive schools with strong academic programmes that support all students' effective adolescent developmental outcomes.

REFERENCES

1. al-braizat, H. (2016). Youth Education and its Role in Achieving Sustainable Development Introduction. ResearchGate.
2. Bullard, J. (2010). Creating Environments for Learning: Birth to Age Eight. Pearson Education.
3. Cesar Tapia-Fonllem, B. F.-S.-V.-T.-B. (2020, March). School Environments and Elementary School Children's Well-Being in Northwestern Mexico. Retrieved from https://www.frontiersin.org: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00510/full
4. Christopher Day, P. S. (2016). Successful school leadership. Retrieved from https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com: https://www.educationdevelopmenttrust.com/EducationDevelopmentTrust/files/a3/a359e571-7033-41c7-8fe7-9ba60730082e.pdf
5. David Osher, K. K. (2014). School Influences on Child and Youth Development. SpringerLink.
6. Denise C Gottfredson, D. B. (2003). Characteristics of effective school-based substance abuse prevention. PubMed.gov.
7. J D Hawkins, R. F. (1999). Preventing adolescent health-risk behaviors by strengthening protection during childhood. PubMed.gov.
8. J M Richman, L. B. (1998). Social support for adolescents at risk of school failure. National Library of Medicine.
9. Jenny Povey, A. K.-D. (2016). Engaging parents in schools and building parent-school partnerships: The role of school and parent organization leadership. ScienceDirect.
10. Karen Johnson Pittman, M. I. (2003). Preventing Problems, Promoting Development, Encouraging Engagement Competing Priorities or Inseparable Goals? Retrieved from https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu: https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.471.1224&rep=rep1&type=pdf
11. Mark T Greenberg, R. P. (2003). Enhancing school-based prevention and youth development through coordinated social, emotional, and academic learning. PubMed.gov.
12. Obaki, S. O. (2017). Impact of Classroom Environment on children's Social Behavior. International Journal of Education and Practice.
13. Olsson, C. A.-B. (2003). Adolescent resilience: A concept analysis. Retrieved from psycnet.apa.org: https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2003-01667-003
14. Price-Mitchell, M. (2009). Boundary Dynamics: Implications for Building Parent-School Partnerships. The School Community Journal.
15. Rheta DeVries, B. Z. (2002). Developing Constructivist Early Childhood Curriculum: Practical Principles and Activities. Early Childhood Education Series. ResearchGate.
16. Roger P. Weissberg, M. C. (2004). Building Academic Success on Social and Emotional Learning: What Does the Research Say? Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 197-202.
17. UNDP. (2014). UNDP Gender Equality Strategy. Retrieved from https://www.undp.org: file:///C:/Users/HP/Downloads/GenderEqualityStrategy2014-17.pdf
18. UNESCO. (2006). Education for Sustainable Development. Retrieved from https://en.unesco.org: https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-sustainable-development