

Role of Co-Curricular Activities in Character Modeling of Teachers and Learners

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Introduction

A Chinese proverb very aptly states, 'Tell me, and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.' The most important goal of education is to prepare children for life as adults and to impart knowledge, skills, qualities and attitudes which make them self-supportive individuals and productive citizens. Today many schools encourage activities not falling within the regular school programmes termed as co-curricular activities or extracurricular activities. These CCA activities include various activities like arts, sports, games etc. Some happen before school, some after school and a few may even take place on the weekends. They are the fun factors of a well rounded education system. An effective education system which connects arts and CCA helps students to see what they look at, listen to what they hear, and feel what they touch. One can trace the concept of Co-curricular Activity to our ancient literatures. Ancient scriptures of India like Vedas, Upanishads, Mahabharata, Ramayana, all inform us about gurukulas and ashram systems. Co-curricular activities like cleaning the ashram, collecting wood, milking the cows, wrestling, archery, dyeing clothes, cooking, singing, playing, warfare activities, etc. were quite common. Co-curricular Activity plays a vital role in shaping the life of a person, especially the learners. Co-curricular activities help in the development of the mind and personality. For the all-round development of the personality, intellectual, emotional, social, moral and aesthetic growth is of utmost importance. This growth takes place if curricula are supplemented with co-curricular activities. All round development essentially means intellectual, physical, moral, sensory and social development. To fulfill this objective of all round development, there is a prime need of striking a balance between syllabus, curriculum, and also co

curricular activities. A co-curricular activity essentially takes place outside a typical pen and paper classroom experience. It gives the students an opportunity to develop particular skills and exhibit their non-academic abilities. Co curricular activities render a number of values like:

1. Educational value
2. Psychological Values
3. Development of Social Values
4. Development of Civic Values
5. Physical Development Values
6. Recreational Values
7. Cultural Values, etc.

Engagement in the arts helps students to stretch their minds beyond the boundaries of the printed text or the rules. The arts free the mind from rigid certainty. Art helps to develop tolerance for coping with the uncertainties present in the everyday affairs of human existence.

Why are Arts and CCA necessary in school?

Students need to be thinkers, problem-solvers, demonstrate creativity, and work as members of a team. We need to offer more in-depth learning about the things that matter the most: order, integrity, thinking skills, truth, flexibility, fairness, dignity, justice, creativity and cooperation. The arts provide all of these. Arts also provide learners with non-academic benefits such as promoting self-esteem, motivation, aesthetic awareness, cultural exposure, creativity, improved emotional expression, as well as social harmony and appreciation of diversity. The importance of arts in schooling is:

1. Classroom lesson strengthens when some co-curricular activity is performed.
2. Develop co-ordination, adjustment, etc among children.
3. Provide life enriching experiences.
4. Develop habits of constructive competition, improve skill and competence.
5. Bring pleasant changes and develop joyful experiences.
6. Make one a responsible member of family and society.
7. Develop the capacity of organizing events and enable managerial and leadership activities.
8. Develop the ability of decision making.
9. Develop the sense of belongingness.

Every child is born with artistic sensibilities. A student who grows up with an artistic sensibility looks at the world from a different perspective. This sensitivity actually moulds his behavior, his interpersonal communication and his actions. Artistic sensibilities are to be nourished and encouraged at home, at school and ultimately, the society has to do its bit. A balanced society not only requires a good number of engineers, doctors and teachers but also artists, writers, actors, poets, etc.

Role of Arts and Co curricular Activities in schooling :

Creativity. Art can help students generate creative ideas. The arts allow students to express themselves. These activities give them a better insight and let them choose what they enjoy and what they wish to learn and stimulate playing, painting, acting, dancing, singing and speaking skills in students.

Motor Skills. Simple things like holding a pen, crayon, pencil, paintbrush and scribbling with a crayon are an important element to developing a child's fine motor skills. Arts help to improve the motor skills of a child and also lead to accurate movements in various activities.

Strengthen self Confidence. Getting on a stage and singing gives children a chance to step outside their comfort zone. As they improve and see their own progress, their self-confidence grows. The goal of co-curricular activities is to give fitness to students and inculcate a sense of sportsmanship, competitive spirit, leadership, cooperation and team spirit.

Visual Learning. Children need to know more about the world than just what they can learn through books. Art education teaches students how to interpret, critically evaluate, use visual information, and how to make decisions based on it.

Decision Making. The arts strengthen problem solving and critical thinking skills. Learning how to make choices and decisions will certainly carry over into their education and other parts of their future life.

Focus. Focusing is vital for the perfection of an activity. Engaging with arts will develop a culture of focusing in studying and learning in class as well as doing a good job later in life.

Collaboration. Many of the arts and co curricular activities require students to work together. They must share responsibility and work together to achieve their common goal. They become aware and learn that their contribution to the group is integral to its success.

They learn that they are accountable for their contribution to the group. Thus, students connect with each other better.

Improved Academic Performance. Their academic performance will improve and they learn to balance their co-curricular activities with their academics. They also better understand how to manage their time efficiently.

Overall Personality. It helps to enhance the all-round personality of the students to strongly face the difficult road of future life.

Students who participate in these activities show higher academic results, stronger relationships in schools and are more likely to lead a healthy and active lifestyle. Picasso once famously asserted 'Every child is an artist .The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up'. A creatively inclined student has a positive bent of mind and aesthetic approaches in every work he or she does. Above all, such a student gradually develops a balanced approach towards life. There's no doubt that the arts are fun for students. The arts also help children develop on many fundamental levels of their personal life. In short, art and co-curricular activities play a vital role in the 21st century education. Teachers and schools have to create an environment where creativity is generated. Teachers have to use of 21st century skills in imparting education in visual and performing arts and make classes more lively and dynamic.

Why Teachers Should Get Involved in Co-Curricular Activities?

The more teachers participate in leading co-curricular activities, the more they can help students of all academic, economic, and demographic types succeed. According to the Public Agenda, low-income and minority students are more likely to report that they would like an after-school program that focuses primarily on academic preparation. While many more affluent students can afford expensive tutoring in subjects they have difficulty with, less fortunate students rely upon schools and after school programs for additional learning. By sustaining co-curricular activities, teachers can provide a huge gift for lower income and struggling students. I strongly believe that given the right tools, students will thrive in taking charge of their own development, but to help them do this, we need to reassess our role as higher education providers. We should not just provide the opportunities for students to achieve good academic results but actively promote the benefits of a wider curriculum to students. After all, schools should be seen as a transformative experience through which students can prepare themselves to succeed in the many and varied roles they will undertake in future life.

Figure – 1: A Framework for ICTs (information, communication and technology) in Teacher Education

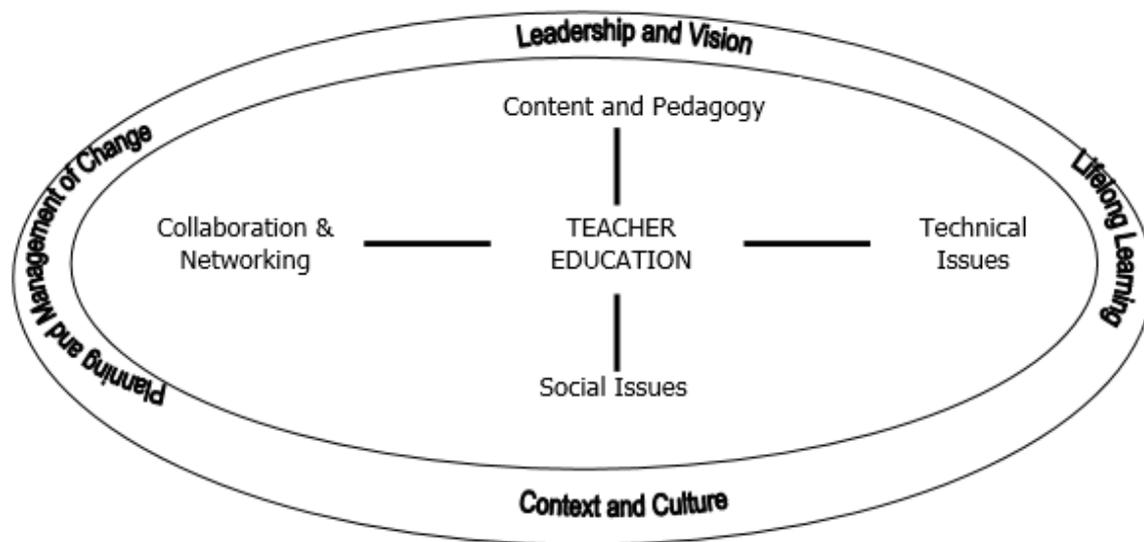


Figure – 1 shows that the curriculum framework is comprised of four clusters of competencies encircled by four supportive themes. The curriculum framework also suggests that each teacher is allowed to interpret the framework within his or her context and personal approach to pedagogy, which is always related to the subject discipline or content area, rather than to the technology itself. The model illustrates the interdependence of the themes and competencies – all themes interacting with all competencies.

Four Themes **Context and Culture** identifies the culture and other contextual factors that must be considered in infusing technology into the teacher education curriculum. It includes the use of technology in culturally appropriate ways and the development of respect for multiple cultures and contexts, which need to be taught and modeled by teachers. **Leadership and Vision** are essential for the successful planning and implementation of technology into teacher education and require both leadership and support from the administration of the teacher education institution. **Lifelong Learning** acknowledges that learning does not stop after school. **Planning and Management of Change** is the final theme, born of today's context and accelerated by technology itself. It signifies the importance of careful planning and effective management of the change process. These themes may be understood as a strategic combination of approaches that help teacher educators develop the four core competencies. The core competencies may be seen as clusters of objectives that are critical for successful use of ICTs as tools for learning.

Four Competencies The ICT competencies are organized into four groups. **Pedagogy** is focused on teacher's instructional practices and knowledge of the curriculum and requires

that they develop applications within their disciplines that make effective use of ICTs to support and extend teaching and learning. **Collaboration and Networking** acknowledges the communicative potential of ICTs to extend learning beyond the classroom walls and the implications for teacher's development of new knowledge and skills. Technology brings with it new rights and responsibilities, including equitable access to technology resources, care for individual health, and respect for intellectual property included within the Social Issues aspect of ICT competence. Finally, **Technical Issues** is an aspect of the Lifelong Learning theme through which teachers update skills with hardware and software, as new generations of technology emerge.

Teachers, Students, & Co-Curricular: A Winning Combination

Co-curricular activities exist for the purpose of helping students. There is a lot of evidence that supports the fact that co-curricular activity participation and student achievement are correlated.

Co-curricular activities can directly tie into the school curriculum and help students academically as well as benefit students in the socially. By being part of a group or club, students get the chance to interact with others whom they would not normally interact and form new social networks. The benefits of co-curricular participation are numerous for both teachers and students. But in the end, the results of this participation are the increasing academic and social success of the students who participate. Teachers may not receive as many direct benefits, but the goal of teachers and students is the same: better learning for all students.

Conclusion

Building on these study findings the support of CCAs in schools helps to develop learners' talents. However, the way co-curricular activities are practiced in schools show that they are not linked to academic activities rather as just a leisure activity for the students. Majority of respondents of the study believed that the practice of co-curricular activities in schools are very important for strengthening talents development or personalities; create path for future employment, ability for adjustment for social change, add creativity and improve health of students. Also, the study indicates that teachers' participation in co-curricular activities in schools had greater impacts in creating good image or acting as role model for motivating students to participate and develop talents in co-curricular activities. Moreover, the finding reveals that school administrators set strategies for promoting co-curricular activities in schools through motivation, assigning teachers' roles in supervising co-curricular activities

and mobilization of resources was very crucial in the development of students' talents in co-curricular activities.

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