

Happiness Curriculum

Kapila Parashar*

Students study 'Happiness Curriculum' in the schools run by the Directorate of Education, Delhi, as part of their formal education. This unique and innovative curriculum was introduced in the year 2018 to humanise the school education. The focus of the curriculum is to introduce and develop the concept of sustainable happiness in students studying in Classes Nursery to VIII of the Directorate of Education, Delhi. The curriculum promotes leading by example rather than preaching.

BACKGROUND

Formal school education is centred on developing students in literacy, numeracy, sciences and skills to prepare students to face challenges and succeed in a highly competitive world. In the struggle to cope with challenges and to achieve best, the idea of happiness gets disoriented. What generally is thought of as happiness, does not actually provide happiness. A deeper reflection on the idea of true happiness led to the development of the happiness curriculum.

The Happiness Curriculum is based on the triad of happiness which helps students to understand the concept of happiness. In the triad of happiness, momentary happiness is the first aspect of happy living. Momentary happiness is experienced through senses, for example seeing a painting, listening to a song, smelling the aroma of a favourite food, eating good food, etc. This happiness lasts for a short time. A deeper happiness is the one that instills value in relationships with family, friends and society. Values of feelings such as respect, care, thankfulness and gratitude provide happiness for a longer time than the momentary happiness. Thus, this happiness is a deeper happiness. The Happiness Curriculum while acknowledging the importance of momentary and deeper happiness guides students to strive for sustainable happiness. Sustainable happiness helps students to develop harmony with self and in society. Sustainable happiness brings calm and peace by infusing a sense of balance in even

*Assistant Professor, DIET, Bholanath Nagar, Delhi

the difficult situations. Sustainable happiness helps students have a deeper self realisation, to have clarity of thought and to find purpose and interrelatedness in our daily living.

Objectives of Happiness Curriculum

The Curriculum Framework of the Happiness Curriculum mentions the objectives of the Happiness Curriculum as following:

1. To develop self-awareness and mindfulness amongst learners.
2. To inculcate skill of critical thinking and inquiry in the learners.
3. To enable learners to communicate effectively and express themselves freely and creatively.
4. To enable learners to understand their expectations in relationships, develop empathy, and ensure healthy relationships with family, peers and teachers.
5. To enable learners to apply life skills to deal with stressful and conflicting situations around them.
6. To develop social awareness and human values in learners to engage in meaningful contribution in society.
7. To develop holistic approach to education in a universal context.

Pedagogical Approach

The Happiness Curriculum is transacted through child centred pedagogy and students are facilitated to explore and

understand the idea of happiness. A number of innovative teaching-learning methods such as games, discussions, role plays and joyful activities. Reflection is also an important aspect of the Happiness Curriculum. Teachers use teacher manuals, there are no books prescribed for students.

A Happiness Class

The main components of Happiness classes are mindfulness practices, stories, activities and student expression.

Students participate in mindfulness sessions which help them to focus and be in the present. Mindfulness sessions also help them to be more aware of self.

Students listen to stories related to experiences of everyday life. After listening to the stories, they discuss and reflect on the questions based on the stories.

There are various experiential and joyful activities in the Happiness Curriculum. Students reflect on the process and outcome of the activities and construct their knowledge about the concept of happiness and happy living.

Students also get numerous opportunities for free expression which helps them to develop confidence in addition to applying the learning of happiness classes in their activities.

Specific days of the week are dedicated to each component of the Happiness Curriculum.

Outcomes of the Happiness Curriculum

Various studies have been conducted to find the outcomes of the Happiness Curriculum. These studies show encouraging findings about the Happiness Curriculum.

A Study conducted by Brookings Institution and Dream a Dream, found out that the Happiness Curriculum improves student-teacher relationship, classroom participation and mindfulness in students. Teachers were also found to collaborate better with their colleagues.

Another study conducted by DIET, Dilshad Garden found that various stakeholders accepted the positive impact of the Happiness Curriculum on student learning. Students' relationship with parents, peers and teachers has also improved.

The outcomes of the Happiness Curriculum in Delhi have attracted the attention of various stakeholders on national and international levels, and many of them have visited the government schools of the Directorate of Education to observe Happiness Classes.

REFERENCES

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