

Lecture No. 06

Learning Environment

The term “learning environment” is one of the most often used in the field of education. One of the most general definitions of learning environment is “a space where the resources, time, and reasons are available to a group of people to nurture, support, and value their learning of a limited set of information and ideas”. Galbraith (1989, 1990) has suggested that the educational climate consists of both the physical environment and the psychological or emotional climate (for example, what takes place during the first session to establish a supportive, challenging, friendly, informal, and open atmosphere).

Classroom activities for Effective Learning Environment

Classrooms are meant to implement the curriculum developed as per requirement of the educational policies and plans of the government. The effective implementation of the curriculum is assessed on the basis of the objectives that have been achieved by that implementation. Learning environment can be examined from three perspectives and include a number of classroom activities.

1. Setting up and maintaining the classroom

The physical space of the effective learning environment for the classrooms that is organized into number of interest areas involving different activities such as Blocks, Dramatic Play, Toys and Games, Art, Library, Discovery, Sand and Water, Music and Movement, Cooking, Computers and Outdoors visits. Interest areas offer multiple opportunities for students to explore, discover, and grow. In each, the arrangement of furniture and the materials involves students not only in learning but also in caring for the classroom and what is in it. This also creates the feeling of belongingness in them.

2. Establishing a structure for each day

The managed routines and schedule create a sense of order in effective classrooms. Students being well aware of their responsibilities and obligations respond well to the teachers’ instructional delivery techniques. They also know what to expect, and they understand what is expected of them. With the assurance that their environment is predictable and familiar, they can settle into learning and function as part of a group. The order around them creates a sense of order inside them. Therefore, the orderly classroom activities help them to inculcate order and organization their life also.

3. Creating a classroom community

The classroom community is only established when the teacher has an ability to involve the students in the effective activities. Therefore, it is based on the social/emotional environment of the classroom. Here teachers relate to students in positive ways and helps them do the same with one another. The positive social climate helps children feel good about school and learn to the best of their ability.

Types of Learning Environments

Traditional schooling is based on an educational setup that has been around from many decades. Here the purpose of education was to prepare people for jobs for specific areas. And so the organized classroom evolved, where students sat and received their training

from a skilled teacher. Now with the evolution of technology the world is changing more rapidly. This demands different types of learning environments from the educational leaders and managers. Some of the types of learning environments have been discussed below.

I. Passive Learning Environment

Such traditional education is rooted in the stimulus-response method of behavioral psychology. The leader, or teacher, presents the stimulus and then assesses the students to see if they have learned the appropriate information.

The example of passive learning environment:

- 1) Teacher presenting stimulus: "Whales have blow holes."
- 2) Teacher providing guidance: "They get their oxygen through these blow holes."
- 3) Teacher soliciting response: "Do whales breathe through their nose?"
- 4) If a student replies yes, the teacher presents the stimulus again: "No, they do not. Instead
- 5) of having noses, they have blow holes to take in oxygen."
- 6) If a student replies no, the teacher moves on: "Yes that is correct, instead of having a
- 7) nose, they breathe in through their blow hole. Now let's explore..."

In this scenario, the student is a passive participant in the process the information learned is impersonal. Clearly, the teacher is in control of the learning process; his or her interests dictate what and how fast the students learn. The teacher keeps the classroom well organized so it can accommodate large amounts of learner, and all the students receive identical training.

II. Active Learning Environment

The new paradigm for active education puts the learner in control of the learning process. Students can pursue topics that interest them. The process of learning becomes as important as the result. The goal of active learning is to give students the ability to explore on their own, not to simply spoon-feed them specific facts. Here the students are now in charge of their learning. They can each explore the topic that most interests them, customizing their educational experience. The teacher no longer needs to be a subject expert, an impossible task in this age of so much information. Instead, the teacher now oversees the learning process.

Many techniques can be used to make the learning environment passive or active some examples with their elaboration are as under, we can use these techniques as per learning outcomes and needs. Selection or planning is merely depending upon the teacher. Examples: lecture or demonstration of scientific experiment, art technique, dramatic method, Discussion/Problem-solving, Information Presentation/Demonstration etc.