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2020: A YEAR OF TURMOIL BUT ALSO HOPE IN EDUCATION

- Improved student agency
- The game changing role of parents in education
- New education allies

EXCLUSIVE

8 ROUNDUP EDUCATIONAL TRENDS FOR THIS YEAR

Role of Digital Literacy in the Educational World of 2020

Editor's Note

The year is ending and many of us feel like it was a total waste due to the pandemic. However, that is simply not true. For a lot of people, 2020 has been a year of self-reflection and has given them ample time to spend at home and reevaluate their priorities.

For the educational world, the year was revolutionary. Online education, which was already on the rise, saw a sudden jump, and all institutions were forced to take the help of the web. Many struggled but eventually, we got around to it and are now used to the new normal.

Keeping these valuable lessons in mind, let's take a look at the trends that became popular during 2020 and shed light on what to expect from the new year. Is it going to be a continuation of 2020 or will we some other historic event changing our lives completely.

" Cheers to a new year and another chance for us to get it right

Jeff Wright, Editor in Chief

CONTENTS

What will 2021 be like?

2020 has been a year unlike any other: a global pandemic, the deepest global recession since World War II, rising inequality around the world, and a contentious presidential election and protests over racial injustice in the U.S. While virtually all sectors of the economy were affected, education systems around the world were severely hit, with more than 188 countries fo

With the way the world has been affected, we doubt that learning in institutions will ever be the same again. The world has completely transformed post corona and with the way global events are progressing, we might see some additional change in trends in the next year. Therefore, it is better to be informed when resuming school so that you have an idea about how to prepare for the year that follows.

ROLE OF DIGITAL LITERACY IN THE EDUCATIONAL WORLD OF 2020

If 2020 has taught us one thing, it is that we heavily rely on technology for all our basic needs. Digitization practically helped the world survive last year and now, more and more businesses are relying on digital literacy for communication.

The facet of education was widely affected and institutions had to switch to online classes entirely, a feat that was previously considered unachievable. Institutions that were proficient in digital literacy found it easier to adapt to this mode of learning as compared to schools that merely relied on traditional means.

So, what was the reason for the excellence of the former? The answer lies in digital literacy.

2020: A YEAR OF TURMOIL BUT ALSO HOPE IN EDUCATION

2020 has been a year unlike any other: a global pandemic, the deepest global recession since World War II, rising inequality around the world, and a contentious presidential election and protests over racial injustice in the U.S. While virtually all sectors of the economy were affected, education systems around the world were severely hit, with more than 188 countries forced to close schools in March—and many remaining closed throughout the rest of the year.

As the world contemplates a new year with the promise of a COVID-19 vaccine and a return to normalcy, we must ensure we don't simply revert to pre-COVID-19 ways of operating. Below we review six trends and strategies that, if continued, should help us leapfrog toward a more equitable and relevant learning ecosystem for all young people in 2021 and beyond.

Improved student agency

Prior to the pandemic, the ability to learn independently was not a skill many schools deliberately cultivated in children. But "learning how to learn" is an essential one—both now at a time when children aren't learning under the constant supervision of an adult, as well as in the future when they will have to navigate multiple jobs over the course of a career. COVID-19 has underscored that the factory model of education is insufficient, and that schools must also intentionally develop 21st century skills like problem-solving to prepare children for lifelong learning.

THE GAME CHANGING ROLE OF PARENTS IN EDUCATION

Before the global school closures in March, the education community spent relatively little time focused on the role of parent engagement, but we are increasingly seeing that this was an oversight. When parents are involved and supportive of their children's learning at home, all children—but especially children from low-income communities—benefit.

New Education Allies

The pandemic has impacted not only children's ability to learn but also their physical and socio-emotional needs. Fortunately, a wide range of actors outside the school walls—from families to food banks to employers—are stepping up to support children's holistic development and enable a learning experience in and outside of school.

School Emergency Preparedness

The COVID-19-induced school closures in mid-March caught school districts by surprise, leaving many scrambling to provide remote learning activities. Given that COVID-19 is unlikely to be the last large-scale school disruption, it's imperative to build a more resilient education ecosystem.

Public Support For Schools And Teachers

As students struggle to learn from home, gratitude for teachers, their skills, and their caretaking role in society has skyrocketed. Schools are at the heart of the social and economic recovery, and teachers around the world are developing creative solutions to continue learning—empowered to unleash their ingenuity and take risks. It's hard to imagine there will be another moment in time when the central role of education is so well understood, which presents a tremendous opportunity for the education community to capitalize on this support and transform key elements of education systems.

To Sum Up...

As we look to 2021, our wish is that as schools reopen their doors, we build on these trends and strategies to ensure that all children can thrive. We hope that a decade from now, we look back at 2020 as a moment that propelled education systems into new, more effective ways of providing quality, relevant teaching and learning experiences to students in and out of school.

8 Roundup Educational Trends For this Year

With the way the world has been affected, we doubt that learning in institutions will ever be the same again. The world has completely transformed post corona and with the way global events are progressing, we might see some additional change in trends in the next year. Therefore, it is better to be informed when resuming school so that you have an idea about how to prepare for the year that follows.

To make things easier for you, we have compiled a list of educational trends that you refer to when beginning your learning.

1. Self-care is crucial

Staying at home was a good reminder for everyone that in times of crisis, we only have ourselves to rely on for the greater part. This is why it is important to make sure that one is functioning fully well in order to take care of their professional and personal lives. Therefore, you need to put yourself first in situations of stress, no matter what your role in the online world is. If you are a student, you are allowed to feel overwhelmed due to the assignments and ask for a break when required. Similarly, if you are an instructor, taking a day off just to chat with students about the current situation and its impact can be a good way to connect with them beyond the classroom.
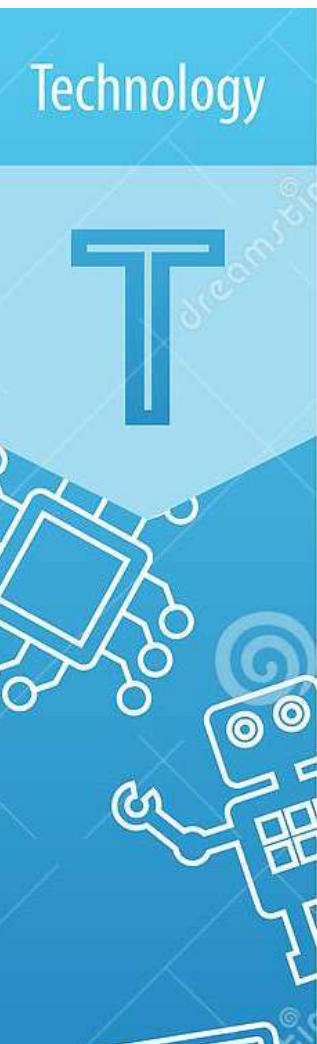
2. Combine school and home

For the parents of the younger generation, the school was especially hard because they had to attend the classes with their little ones while managing their own work lives. Blended learning is a new round uptrend that might find its way in 2021 too, as predicted by the Forbes contributor, Enrique Dans. This model suggests that students engage with both, school and home and this results in a more balanced way of education rather than putting pressure on one single party. Furthermore, teachers can accommodate the schedule of parents and give homework that involves practical learning to compensate for the online phase.

3. Good news for kids with special needs

In the last decade, there were continuous efforts by education experts to make learning more and more inclusive. The rapid increase in technological tools employed in the classroom made their task rather easy. Children who have conditions that set them apart from neurotypical kids can be provided with specialized tasks that fit with their pace. Institutions that tried to make use of the technology in order to increase inclusivity, saw that it yielded positive results. Therefore, the e-learning format might continue or even become the norm when we move to the hybrid phase.

4.It's time to STEAM

Academia is familiar with the abbreviation STEM which encompasses science, technology, engineering, and mathematics but 2020 has taught us the importance of arts. When we are isolated inside our homes with no one to share our day with, art in all forms came to our rescue. From movies and music to painting and dancing, most of us found solace in these outlets. With this, institutions realized how crucial it is to have arts in our curriculum that could allow students to express themselves in creative ways.

5. Hour to Excel

Stemming from the importance of arts in education, experts believe that it is pivotal to give students an hour where they feel free to practice their desired activities. This change in schedule would lead to a higher rate of productivity among students and develop a genuine interest in the process of learning. The overall trend in classes is to make them more engaging so children stuck inside their houses do not feel emotionally isolated. The genius hour as the experts are calling it is a substitute for the break-in academics they used to get when traditional learning was the norm.

6. Learn in bits online

Long hours of continuous classes can be very tedious, especially if you do not have any source of entertainment. This is why Bits Learning, according to Jade Blue from Cambridge University Press states, "takes into account the contemporary demands of learner lifestyles that might hinder long periods of focused study and time spent in the classroom." If the online phase continues to dominate 2021, then it would become absolutely necessary to encourage Bite-sized learning. Teachers and students have to collectively realize the importance of taking breaks and ensuring sensitivity for mental and physical health.

7. Introducing sensitivity in classrooms

When the dust settled after March 2020 and most students and teachers became accustomed to online learning, the buzzword that was used a lot was social-emotional learning. The situation that arose due to corona made it clear that social and emotional development is just as necessary as academic progress. Instilling problem-solving skills among kids while reaffirming the notion that life can be altered in ways unimaginable has to be included in the curriculum, especially now.

8.Turn Learning into a Game

Bonding sessions and interaction are crucial in classrooms as they promote collective learning and sometimes, give rise to healthy competition. Introducing gamification with subjects like mathematics and physics that are usually considered dry by students can make them appear more interesting. For instance, a lot of online activities that work with the reward system are available on play stores for group activities that are being utilized for maximizing involvement among students.

Final Words

So, the situation with the coronavirus has presented us with solutions that previously seemed impossible to accomplish. The learning modes have almost shifted by 180 degrees in the educational world and the chances are that if things continue the same way, we will see a sharp increase in these trends in the next year as well.

Role of Digital Literacy in the Educational World of 2020

If 2020 has taught us one thing, it is that we heavily rely on technology for all our basic needs. Digitization practically helped the world survive last year and now, more and more businesses are relying on digital literacy for communication. The facet of education was widely affected and institutions had to switch to online classes entirely, a feat that was previously considered unachievable. Institutions that were proficient in digital literacy found it easier to adapt to this mode of learning as compared to schools that merely relied on traditional means. So, what was the reason for the excellence of the former? The answer lies in digital literacy.

What is Digital literacy?

The phrase encompasses all activities that lead you to become tech-savvy but to put it simply, The American Library Association covers the phenomenon as "the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills". All the academic activities held online during 2020 can be put under the umbrella term of digital literacy.

11

Why has it become so important?

Today, all the classrooms look towards the internet as the primary source of information. If you know how to browse the web, you can find answers to almost all of your queries. This results in expanding the previously limited outlook of students. From exams being conducted online to holding research proposal meetings over zoom, it is impossible to ignore the importance of digital literacy.

Where does that leave the teachers?

When online school began in March 2020, teachers found it quite difficult to navigate their way through technology. Some of them did not own gadgets like microphones, webcam, and stylus that are key tools in operating the applications required for online education. This led to an unnecessary halt in learning and made the education world reconsider the required skills for a teacher.

So, with the help of institutions, and in some cases, students, teachers became aware of applications like Zoom and Google Classroom. But what is their responsibility now is a question most of them ask. Their primary argument is that students, especially the upcoming generation, are already well-versed in tech, so introducing the basics of digital literacy in classrooms is quite pointless. However, that is not the case at all. While students may know how to operate these gadgets better than most teachers, the responsibility that comes with leaving an online footprint is an aspect we all need to learn at some point.

So, let's look at the motives that teachers can design their course around, as far as digital literacy is concerned.

1. Genuine vs fake information

While the web is a vast place that provides answers for almost every problem, no matter how complex, the authenticity is often in question. For instance, if a kid finds a math-related solution on a website, the chances of them understanding the procedure would be quite low, especially if there is no external help from a teacher. Similarly, the genuineness of the solution could be doubtful because not everything on the internet is inherently true.

11

2. Teaching accountability is important

One thing that has massively reduced due to the culture of online interaction is accountability. Children need to be taught that their words and actions have consequences, even if they are said or conducted on an online platform. This falls under the responsibility of teachers who have to ensure that the internet is a safe place for everyone and taking advantage of being behind the screen under a pseudonym cannot prevent that. Whether it is cyberbullying or plagiarism, online crimes have seen a sharp increase in the last decade, and raising responsible and sensitive adults via thorough guidance is something that teachers should accommodate in their lessons.

3. Making the classrooms inclusive

The age of technology has made it extremely easy for teachers to accommodate every child's needs. While in traditional classrooms, children with disabilities are forced to follow the general pace, with online learning they can be included in the curriculum as per their requirements. For instance, if a student has trouble focusing on the words, they can be taught via visuals and audio, Similarly, if a child has a slower pace than the rest, they can be provided with necessary tools like specifically-designed tests to ensure every child is dealt with impartially.

4. Connecting with educationists worldwide

It is crucial to note that schools in countries with lesser resources suffered a lot during the COVID crisis. In some cases, the institutions lacked the necessary recourses for online education and found themselves at a deadened on how to excel in this mode of learning. However, as technology has minimized the distance, it was a good opportunity for schools all around the world to connect and support each other in ensuring that online learning is made efficient.

5. Privacy in Danger

Let's face it, we are all pretty concerned about the lack of privacy in the world where you see the products advertised on your screen before you even discuss it with anyone else. While the experts are working on making the environment secure, it is also important for teachers to ensure that all the malpractices like bullying are prevented. In the twenty-first century, this is one of the leading causes of anxiety and depression among students, and with the shift to the online phase, cyberbullying also saw a sharp increase. This is why students should be actively discouraged from engaging in such activities and one way to ensure it is by revising school policies that warn them of immediate serious consequences.

Final words

Teachers have a huge role to play in the lives of students, especially now more than ever because they are connected with students via the online world, a world that never goes offline. The next decade might even be more surprising and digitized than this one so it has become necessary for institutions to be equipped with the best resources to make sure their curriculum is advanced and well-suited for the times.

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