

REIMAGINING LEARNING THROUGH DESCHOOLING ENHANCING ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COGNITIVE SKILLS AMONG SCHOOL DROPOUTS

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Abstract—Education plays a significant role in every individual's life. It is a major tool to develop creativity and thinking skills among the learners. Earlier, children educated themselves through self-directed play and exploration methods without any academic pressure. In the present scenario learning methods of students have become more structured with books and classrooms and in the process their creativity and cognition skills have decreased and it led to drop out from the schools. As time goes on, the educational system needs a change for the students without any external pressure. The real education is all about cultivating the creativity and learning practical life skills. Deschooling is an approach that helps students to think beyond the traditional concept of learning and understand their role and responsibility in their lives. The real education is all about cultivating the creativity and learning practical life skills. The study aims to motivate school dropouts to make them realize the importance of education and develop their cognitive and English language skills through the Deschooling approach.

Index Terms—Education, Deschooling approach, School Dropouts, English Language Skills

I. ORIGIN OF THE STUDY

The study originated with the reading of a post on social media, about a parent named Nithya, who was educating her twin daughters with a Nature Paradigm. The parent allows the children to involve themselves in the learning process without sending them to school. The children were activated to self-learning and language acquisition through awareness by having a perception of a new connection to the world around them. The case in the study directed a path towards the present analysis which explores the idea and concept of deschooling. The study understands the philosophy of deschooling and explores the possibilities in the Indian context. Though there are different educational boards in India and various types of learning and teaching methods, students lack critical and creative thinking. Deschooling is an approach which helps students acquire knowledge naturally by experiencing the learning process in an unstructured manner.

II. OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the possibilities of Deschooling in the Indian context
2. To understand the problems of school dropouts
3. To advocate the Deschooling approach to the dropout Students
4. To make dropout students understand the significance of education and English language

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

The secondary sources served as a platform for the study. According to Hart, (2000) a philosopher named Ivan Illich published a book entitled Deschooling Society. Hart states that Ivan Illich's radical ideas highlighted the structured learning of schools and he advocated that self-motivated learning could only occur beyond the four walls. Hart mentions Illich, whose ideas still hold good and relevant to this day.

Amrita Sastry (2016) discusses the idea of deschooling in contemporary times. Amrita states that the belief that learning happens only in structured classrooms is problematic because it ignores the informal aspect of learning which happens in the child's life through various activities of socialization. Amrita points out that socialization is a constant process which does not stop as one enters the formal domain of schooling. Amrita also describes that the main problem with the educational system is that "educationalists give importance to the tag of certification" and consequently the contribution of students is restricted.

The study extends that deschooling is an approach to unstructured learning and exploration. Dropout students are interested in studying but the structured classroom and academic pressure make them drop out from the schools. The present study aims to fill the gap between early research studies by focusing on school dropouts giving them an educational awareness and developing their cognitive and English language skills through brainstorming intervention.

IV. DESCHOOLING APPROACH

Deschooling is a term used by both Educational Philosophers and proponents of alternative education. It was popularized by Ivan Illich in his book Deschooling Society published in 1971. His major challenge was based on the view that 'education is all about learning, not about schooling'. Deschooling helps students to acquire knowledge naturally and it is designed to develop the child's sense of freedom. Deschooling method believes that every child is unique, and students' progress has to be free from any external pressure. It permits them to identify the concept of learning and understand their part and responsibility in their life.

V. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DESCHOOLING APPROACH IN INDIAN CONTEXT

Education plays a vital role in everyone's life. It teaches everything and makes us explore various fields. Indian education has different boards, different curricula, syllabi, and different teaching methods. But, most of the schools follow rote learning and discourage creativity among the students. The main problem in Indian education is that students focus only on textbooks and they completely lack in other skills. Students are taught to read and grasp thousands of books without understanding them; it makes them to be more competitive. Once the examination is over, the information gathered easily goes away and spoils the creativity skills.

Deschooling is an alternative method to regular schooling and it is all about natural way of Acquisition. Indian Educational system seems to be producing Zombies. since in most school's children seem to be spending the majority of their time preparing for competitive exams rather than learning or playing. The present education system is not empowering children, they lack conceptual clarity, and deep understanding and are conditioned only to pass exams.

Deschooling method believes that every child is unique, and students' progress has to be free of any external pressure. It allows them to reorganize their perception of learning, and reframe their understanding of their role and responsibility in their own life. Deschooling is an approach used to make students forget about the competitive world, rote learning etc., it is a concept as an alternative learning method to achieve education for all. It is a life-learning approach, it makes students think themselves, this approach helps students to be flexible to explore new things, and they can easily adapt to the environment wherever they go. Deschooling makes them away from the stress and packed learning. Education is not about books, classrooms, or blackboards, it is a kind of developing knowledge. The deschooling approach helps students to explore the unexplored; it makes students experience everything, which is to visit, view, and listen and makes students learn by conceptualizing and by understanding the world and society.

Deschooling approach simply means understanding that life and learning are not different, learning happens everywhere but freedom is more important for an individual to explore and gain knowledge. Deschooling is not the abolishment of schools and going fully informal. It is a reduction effort focused on institutionalism and school domination in education.

VI. DESCHOOLING APPROACH TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

For ages, it has been perceived that human beings either learn or acquire a particular language. However, learning and acquisition are two varied processes. The early studies prove that learning a language is artificial; on the other hand, acquiring a language is a natural process. In today's context, the English language has become more important all over the globe. It is no more a choice but a criterion by

itself. India is known as a multilingual country and English being a second language has turned out as a difficult subject for learners. Thus principle tells that language can be learnt well through its functional aspects rather than the theoretical rules.

Deschooling approach is based on the belief that learning is actively involved and it suggests that humans construct knowledge and meaning from their own experiences. The approach inspires students to regularly assess how the activity is serving them to improve their understanding, by this they can improve their creativity. Knowledge is constructed based on personal experience, when they experience it frequently, children automatically find their ideas gaining in a great manner, by this they ideally become expert learners which makes them learn a language actively. So, the Deschooling approach can make a learner more independent, innovative and critical thinker, by this a child can find it easy to learn or acquire the English language without any external pressure.

VII. LEARNER-CENTERED DESCHOOLING MODEL FOR SCHOOL DROPOUTS

This research paper emphasizes that deschooling approach will definitely provide school dropouts with a flexible, learner-centered environment that promotes the development of both English language proficiency and cognitive skills through meaningful, real-life experiences rather than rigid classroom instructions. Inspired by Ivan Illich's concept of deschooling, this approach will encourage school dropouts to acquire English language by engaging in authentic activities such as community interactions, storytelling, role-plays, digital learning, watching educational videos and participating in peer discussions. These activities expose them to practical language use while simultaneously fostering higher-order cognitive skills, including critical thinking, creativity and communication. For instance, a school dropout interested in automobile repair can learn English by watching YouTube tutorials, reading simple repair manuals, discussing technical terms with peers, and explaining repair procedures in English. This process not only improves vocabulary, listening, speaking, reading, writing skills but also strengthens analytical thinking and the ability to apply knowledge in real world contexts. Thus, deschooling approach transforms learning into engaging, self-directed, and context based experience, enabling school dropouts to develop essential linguistic and cognitive competencies that enhance their employability and lifelong learning.

VIII. SUMMATION

The study understands that learning happens not only through schools it can be explored anywhere in the milieu. The Deschooling approach is an alternative method of learning and it will help students to acquire knowledge naturally and it is also designed to develop the learners sense of academic freedom. By shifting the focus from formal classroom instruction to self-directed, experiential and community based learning, it enables learners to acquire language skills in authentic and meaningful context. This particular

approach not only addresses the educational needs of marginalized learners but also empowers them with the competencies required for lifelong learning, employability and social participation. Therefore, integrating deschooling principles into alternative education programmes can create equitable learning opportunities and support the holistic development of school dropouts.

Thus the Deschooling approach creates a meaningful and concrete mindset in the learner's learning process and progression.

IX. THE SCOPE FOR THE FUTURE STUDY

1. The study can be extended with quantitative analysis or mixed methods with a larger sample size.
2. Future research may specifically examine the effectiveness of deschooling approach among girl children who have dropped out of school in the rural communities.
3. Comparative studies can be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of deschooling with conventional or alternative educational models for school dropouts.
4. Further research can explore the impact of digital learning within a deschooling framework.

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