

EDUCATION PLUS

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Albert P'Rayan

When we open newspapers or turn on news channels, we are bombarded with reports of international conflicts, wars between nations, the killing of innocent people, communal violence, societal unrest, violent crimes, and various forms of injustice.

Consuming such news often disturbs our peace of mind and leads us to believe that a lack of peace is widespread and the norm.

In the 2023 Global Peace Index (GPI), an annual report prepared by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), Iceland maintains its position as the most peaceful country for the 16th consecutive year, followed by Denmark, Ireland, New Zealand, and Austria.

Conversely, Afghanistan ranks as the least peaceful country, followed by Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. India occupies the

126th position out of 163 countries covered by the IEP.

What can be done to strengthen the ideals of peace? Now, more than ever, peace is imperative. It is everybody's responsibility to cultivate an understanding of peace and to promote discussions on its importance.

Incorporating peace education into the school curriculum can be a crucial tool in nurturing harmony and ultimately achieving peace within society.

What is peace?

Before exploring the concept of peace education, it is essential to understand the essence of peace itself. The interpretation of 'peace' varies according to individual perspectives. For individuals enduring conflict in Palestine, peace could signify the absence of turmoil or the cessation of war. For Dalits in India, who have historically suffered injustice, peace could mean the attainment of justice. For those who have been denied human rights and stripped of human dignity, peace could mean leading a dignified life.

Peace can be achieved through various means: the power of law, dialogue, and love. Each society has its own set of values deemed crucial for fostering harmonious coexistence. When a society embraces these values, peace becomes attainable. Moreover, peace and happiness share an intricate relationship; a peaceful nation is often a happy one.

Iceland serves as a prime example, ranking not only as the most peaceful country but also the third happiest in the world, trailing only Finland and Denmark. Iceland's commitment to prioritising the peace and happiness of its citizens, along with its lack of a military budget or armed forces, clarifies why it consistently secures the top spot among peaceful na-

tions worldwide. In 2016, Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, and the University of Iceland jointly established a Peace Centre

aimed at promoting non-

violent communication,

eradicating interpersonal

violence, and fostering

peaceful relations between states and organisations.

The conventional defini-

tion of "peace educa-

tion" is "the process of ac-

quiring values,

knowledge, attitudes,

skills, and behaviours to

live in harmony with oneself, others, and the natural environment." As Fran Schmidt and Alice Friedman (1988) express it: "Peace education is holistic, embracing the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth of children within a framework deeply rooted in traditional human values."

According to R.D. Laing (1978), peace education seeks to address conflicts and violence on various scales, from global and national to local and personal. It aims to explore ways to create more just and sustainable futures.

Based on these definitions, the objectives of peace education include enabling students to become aware of the importance of peace and its societal impacts, nurturing an appreciation for concepts like peace, human values, democracy, human rights, and justice.

Integrations

It is not essential to offer a dedicated peace education course; instead, it can be integrated in various ways. Textbooks could include engaging authentic texts centred around themes such as social harmony, interfaith dialogue, intercultural understanding, democracy, human rights, inclusivity and diversity. When teachers initiate discussions on these subjects, students can cultivate empathy, gain insight into others' emotions, learn to respect differing viewpoints and develop their negotiation

skills. Exploring the values expressed in the Preamble to the Constitution can help students understand its significance. Additionally, activities promoting cooperation and collaboration can further nurture students' compassion and courtesy.

Nowadays, the analysis of news stories across various print, electronic, and online platforms shows that viewpoints are frequently disguised as news, with many reports framing conflicts between communities or countries in terms of 'winning' and 'losing'. This influences news consumers and fosters animosity towards certain communities or countries. It is crucial to raise awareness of bias in news reporting to enable them to become critical thinkers.

Additionally, it is important to help students understand how peace journalism, an approach rooted in factual reporting and dedicated to exploring peaceful resolutions, can contribute to maintaining harmony and peace in society.

Mahatma Gandhi, a profound advocate of peace and non-violence, emphasised, "If we are to teach real peace in this world...we shall have to begin with the children." Are our educators ready to inspire young students and empower them to become ambassadors of peace?

The writer is an ELT resource person and education columnist.
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Give peace a chance

Incorporating peace education into the curriculum can be crucial in nurturing harmony and ultimately achieving peace within society



PIXABAY

The objectives of peace education include enabling students to become aware of the importance of peace and its societal impacts, nurturing an appreciation for concepts like peace, human values, democracy, human rights, and justice.

Align with your goal

Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This career counselling column may help



OFF THE EDGE
Nandini Raman
I have done a B.Ed. in Physics and a BCA but do not have a B.Sc. in the subject. Can I become a teacher in a government school? Gaurav

Dear Gaurav,
How and where did you do your B.Ed in Physics with a BCA and not a B.Sc in Physics? Is your B.Ed degree valid? Do you want to teach the students Physics or Computer Science? What age group or class do you wish to teach and, most importantly, what are you eligible to teach?

To be a Primary Teacher (PRT), Trained Graduate Teacher (TGT) or a PostGraduate Teacher (PGT) in a government school, you need to qualify for the Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET) conducted by the CBSE or the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) exam conducted by concerned state government. For PRT, the minimum eligibility is a Senior Secondary School certificate with 50% marks or its equivalent, a pass in the CTET or TET and a two-year diploma in education (D.Ed) or Bachelor in Elementary Education (B.E.Ed.). To be a TGT, you need a four-year Integrated degree from NCERT's Regional College of Education in the concerned subject with at least 50% aggregate, or a Bachelor's

degree with at least 50% aggregate in the concerned subjects and a B.Ed. from a recognised university and a pass in the CTET or TET. A PGT requires a two-year Integrated PG course from NCERT's Regional College of Education in the concerned subject or a Master's degree from a recognised university with at least 50% aggregate in the specific subjects and a B.Ed from a recognised university.

Check the specific requirements of the government schools you want to teach in and reach out to the education authorities for more specific information on the academic qualifications required.

I am in the last semester of the Hotel Management course at IHM. To work abroad, should I first pursue PG? If so, which institutes should I look at? Guneep

Dear Guneep,
Pursuing a PG abroad depends on your career goals and finances. Identify and understand your long-term goals. If this involves advanced qualifications, pursuing a PG may be beneficial.

Otherwise look for international job placements in hotels, resorts and establishments abroad. Check with your institute's placement cell for leads or research online. Look up the websites of international hotel chains for job openings. Consider international internship programmes. Are you open to event management, cruise line services, bartending or luxury hospitality? These may have international opportunities.

For your PG, you could consider a Master's in Hotel or Hospitality Management, an MBA in Hospitality Management, a specialised Culinary Arts Programmes or

Event Management and/or Tourism Management programmes. Some well-known institutes are Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL) in Switzerland, Glion Institute of Higher Education (in Switzerland and London), Les Roches Global Hospitality Education (Switzerland, Spain, and China) and Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration (the U.S.). Look for programmes that have strong industry connections, internship opportunities, and alumni success stories so that you gain practical experience and build a professional network. Be aware of the language requirements in the country you plan to study in and evaluate finances (tuition fees, living expenses, and potential return on investment) wisely.

I am in the final year of my degree in History. I want to try for UPSC. Should I do an M.A. or opt for professional streams such as LLB or enrol in a coaching programme? Hari

Dear Hari,
What do you like or see yourself doing in life? Choosing the right course depends on your career goals, interests, and core strengths. Each option has its advantages.

Doing a M.A. in History may be beneficial for your UPSC preparation. It will also enhance your analytical and research skills. An LLB will be advantageous if you are interested in administrative or legal services and opens up diverse career paths, including legal practice, judiciary, and administrative services.

Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line Off the Edge

Aritro Dasgupta

The definition of the word 'classroom' has evolved significantly over the last few years. Today's classroom could be in a posh private school, an underfunded government college, an overcrowded coaching class, or even in the comfort of home. Wherever it is, a classroom must steer clear of divisive issues and forge a new path toward nation-building. However, "steer clear" should not mean the suppression of discussion. Instead, it should be about exploring the broader concepts so that the students may be resourceful enough to decide for themselves.

Hate speech is clearly one such area where a classroom needs to be proactive enough to dispel misconceptions, especially those going easily viral in the ongoing digital age. With total access to social media, many popular, but largely incorrect, themes enter mainstream thinking. Classrooms need to be bold enough to take on these misconceptions and dismantle them, using not emotion alone but indeed hard data. As a teacher, one of the areas in which I lay maximum emphasis is the source of information. Whatever a student's views on a topic, they must be backed by reliable

No room for hate
How classrooms can counter hate speech in the age of social media



data from some reputable or official source. Unfortunately, youngsters and adults often fall for crowd-pleasing mentions on social media.

While a lot of misinformation exists across social media outlets, none is as deadly as those that promote hate speech. Such hate speech can be categorised as derogatory and often downright inaccurate remarks about any religious, linguistic, tribal, caste, or even gender group. Sometimes, it could be a combination of these or intersecting points. A lot of potential hate can be countered by providing effective examples of people who 'look like us' and have done well abroad. These

could be examples of people like Ajay Banga, Sundar Pichai, or Satya Nadella, who have all risen to the top due to diversity in cultures being embraced.

This, in a way, forces us to look around us and embrace diversity of opinion, ethnicity, religion, class around us as well.

Tackle ignorance

An unfortunate method that a lot of the educated class often takes to solve some of the issues around us is simply not talking about it, as if ignorance will lead to any inherent hate disappearing altogether. On the contrary, ignorance leads to a lack of empathy and a failure to recognise one's privilege.

The best example of this in our society is caste. In many educated families, this is barely spoken of as if the non-mention will remove the concept altogether. That is where classrooms come into the picture. Teachers need to be bold enough to discuss caste in a way that students come to know of it, yet choose not to discriminate.

A skill that teachers need to learn at work constantly is diplomacy. Many of these complex topics must be navigated covering all facts and figures yet ensuring that stakeholders do not take offence. Stakeholders could be the pupils, their parents, the school authorities, and society in general.

Fortunately, despite much provocation on social media, the Indian youth is still essentially an advocate of peace. Youngsters are far more likely to engage with Taylor Swift or Virat Kohli than with any rabble-rousing hate preacher. Classrooms must leverage this inherent goodness by providing the students guidance on what constitutes appropriate content to engage versus what does not.

The writer is a visiting faculty at Career Launcher.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) India Scholarship Award

Eligibility: Open to students studying in any year of a full-time UG Engineering programme (any stream) at an AICTE or UGC-approved institution, including lateral-entry students, who have cleared all regular credit courses in a single attempt and scored at least 60% aggregate or an

equivalent CGPA.

Rewards: Scholarships worth ₹10 lakhs

Application: Online

Deadline: May 31

www.b4s.in/edge/IET4

Oxford and Cambridge Society of India Scholarship (OCSI), the U.K.

Eligibility: Open to Indian

students who have secured

admission to full-time

academic programmes at

the Universities of

Cambridge or Oxford and

intend to pursue a course of study that falls into one of the specified categories.

Rewards: Up to ₹400,000 (one-time)

Application: Online

Deadline: May 31

www.b4s.in/edge/OCSI1

Global Scholarship Programme AIS

An initiative of AIS Technolabs Pvt. Ltd. to support students.

Eligibility: Open to citizens of India who have completed Class 12 and

have applied for a UG or PG

course in any subject from an accredited institution anywhere in the world and have completed at least one term in the respective course. The applicant must be continuing the course and should not have dropped out of college.

Rewards: An annual scholarship up to two years and other benefits

Application: Email

sunnyc@aistecholabs.com

Deadline: May 15

www.b4s.in/edge/GSPA6

Courtesy: Buddy4study.com

Manita Purbe

Many Indian students opt to study medicine in the U.S. This requires an understanding of the structure of medical education in that country. Unlike in India, where direct enrolment into MBBS is common after Class 12, students in the U.S. must complete a four-year Bachelor's degree or pre-medical degree first, then pass the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) to apply for admission to a medical school. Apart from the U.S., medical schools in Canada, Australia and the Caribbean Islands consider MCAT scores for admissions.

What it involves

The MCAT is a computer-based exam that evaluates problem-solving and critical thinking skills and analyses the applicant's understanding of scientific concepts and principles. To excel in the MCAT, assess your baseline with a full-length practice tests.

Prioritise application over rote memory and balance content review with timed practice. Emphasise accuracy over speed and build endurance. Try to simulate real exam conditions for adaptability, continuous self-evaluation and stress management.

Once a student enters a medical school, the first two years of the four-year curriculum focuses on pre-clinical studies, covering basic concepts, anatomy, diseases, and essential skills. This phase often involves lectures, small group discussions, and laboratory work. The next two years provide hands-on experience with patients in various medical specialities through clinical rotation.

To be able to practise in the U.S., aspiring doctors have to clear all three stages of the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE). This serves as a standardised benchmark for medical licensing authorities. Conducted by the Federation of State Medical Boards (FSMB) and the National



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Board of Medical Examiners (NBME), the first step is usually taken at the end of year two and step two at the end of year four and step three at the end of the first year of residency.

Preparing for the USMLE involves online resources and guidance from experienced mentors. Students can consult tools such as Kaplan, UWorld, Pathoma, Sketchy among

others. The First Aid for the USMLE and Kaplan Medical Qbook offer an effective combination of review material and practice questions. The USMLE also offers additional prepara-

tion resources, including insights into test formats, practice questions, and review materials and medical schools also provide practice exams to assess readiness.

Clinical rotations, also known as clerkships, are a pivotal part of medical education as students work closely with senior doctors. They also learn by engaging and monitoring patients on a daily basis giving them a preview of the everyday routine of a practising doctor.

Exploring departments

Students undergo rotations in different departments, including family medicine, ob/gyn, internal medicine, surgery, paediatrics, psychiatry and more. This allows them to explore the nuances of various departments, understand the challenges, discover personal interests, make informed decisions about their future trajectories and interact and build their networks with senior doctors and residents.

The residency marks the final phase and is usually considered the first step towards becoming a practising doctor in the U.S. Depending on the specialisation, residencies may range from three to se-

ven years. In some cases, the residents continue to super specialise in their area of interest.

The application process for residency is facilitated through National Residency Matching Programme (NRMP), which interviews applicants and uses an algorithm that matches them with suitable residency programmes and specialities.

Student's clinical exposure and practical insights could be key factors for assessment. Several prominent paths for physicians in the U.S. involve internal medicine, family practice, psychiatry, paediatrics, ob/gyn, anaesthesiology, and surgery.

With the journey to becoming a doctor in the U.S. spanning around 10-15 years – from pre-medical through residency to full licensure – aspirants need to be both patient and determined to achieve their aim.

The writer is Associate Vice-President, Student Acquisition, International American University of Antigua College of Medicine, Antigua

To work or not to work?

Is prior work experience a must to succeed in an MBA?

Edwin Moses

According to recent reports, 2024 is turning out to be a challenged year in terms of placement for Indian Business Schools. Theories range from the global economic slowdown to doubts about whether the salaries are worth the investment. This apart, one pertinent question that has come up often is whether MBA aspirants should pursue the course only after a few years of working.

For and against
The arguments in support are compelling and range from the lack of real-world context limiting the value of the course, not being able to understand the criticality of people and relationships in effective execution to lack of collaboration and teamwork skills. The other side argues that B-School education aims to fix these issues through well-proven pedagogies and exposure to internships and real-life projects.

However, the real issue is that more than 65% of MBA graduates quit or change their roles within 12-18 months of their first job. In the long run, not all live up to the promise of their degree. Thus recruiters often feel that MBA



graduates with prior experience may be more productive. However, this line of thinking has three limitations. One, there is no guarantee that the career path chosen after the MBA will be relevant to the prior work experience. Second, there is no proof that outstanding performance in B-Schools translates into career success. Finally, the harsh truth of employee retention is that people take jobs because of the company but leave because of their managers. Therefore, there is limited evidence that recruiting MBAs with prior work experience will resolve the 'real' challenges of the recruiters.

Identify passion: B-Schools need specific interventions to help students identify job roles that align with their passion and strengths. For example, students often say they want a career in finance but don't know whether it's in Banking or Capital Markets or Financial Analytics or in the finance function of a large corporate.

Focussed curriculum: B-School curriculums often provide functional knowledge and do not equip students to be successful in their first jobs. This must change! We forget that MBAs fresh out of school don't get hired to lead functions; they are hired into roles such as Key Account Managers or Credit Officers. Most B-Schools lack both the will and the know-how to create focussed courses that need to last for at least two terms

preparing students for these roles.

Industry link: B-Schools need to actively collaborate with industries to impart management education. Summer internships and capstone projects are not enough. What we need is a structured involvement of industry in designing and delivering a career-specific curriculum as well as research involving faculty and industry in solving real-world problems and bringing them into the classrooms.

Having said all this, one cannot deny that prior work experience can make a significant difference to learner outcomes in management education. But to believe that it is an elixir for all challenges facing recruiters from B-Schools is at best wishful thinking!

The writer is a Professor at Jagdish Sheth School of Management (JAGSoM)

Bridging the digital divide requires a multifaceted approach that simultaneously addresses issues of infrastructure, accessibility, and educational support

Vinay Singh

In India, the NEET and JEE exams are crucial for students who want to pursue a career in Medicine and Engineering respectively. However, for students in rural areas, the digital divide presents a formidable challenge, exacerbating existing educational disparities. This has to be tackled to ensure a level playing field and equitable access to education for all students.

The problem
While the digital revolution offers a plethora of resources and opportunities, it has largely bypassed rural areas where basic amenities such as electricity and Internet connectivity remain limited. This and the lack of devices hamper students' ability to engage with online learning platforms, access study materials, and participate in mock tests. Additionally, inadequate infrastructure and insufficient teacher training leave rural students at a significant disadvantage compared to their urban counterparts.

An equal chance



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The consequences are profound. Rural students often struggle to keep pace with the evolving curriculum leading to the marginalisation of talented individuals and perpetuating the cycle of poverty and under-representation in higher education and professional fields.

Addressing the issue requires a multifaceted approach that addresses infrastructure, accessibility, and educational support simultaneously. First is the urgent need to invest in robust digital infrastructure, access broadband connectivity and providing schools with adequate resources such as computers and tablets. Government initiatives and public-private partnerships can play a crucial role in bridging

this gap and ensuring that no student is left behind due to lack of access to technology.

Second, comprehensive digital literacy programmes must be implemented to empower both students and teachers with the necessary skills to navigate online learning platforms and leverage digital resources effectively. Providing training and support will help rural educators enhance the quality of education for students in remote areas.

Additionally, efforts should be made to develop content that caters to the specific needs and cultural contexts of rural students. These should be localised and in the language of the region. By making educational material more accessible and relatable, we can foster

greater engagement and learning outcomes among rural learners.

Further, initiatives such as mobile learning labs and community-driven learning centres can serve as valuable resources for rural students, providing access to technology and educational support in a conducive environment. By decentralising education and bringing it closer to the grassroots level, rural communities can be empowered.

It is up to us to ensure that every student has an equal chance to pursue their dreams and unlock the full potential of India's youth, regardless of their geographical location or socio-economic background.

The writer is Executive Director and CEO of Thomson Digital and Q and I.

Be a constant learner

With education evolving, awareness of the changes is crucial to be an effective teacher to offer better learning outcomes for students

Er. Koneru Satyanarayana

Teaching is an evolving skill, as education is a never-ending process. Today, teachers need to keep upskilling themselves to cope with the ever-changing landscape. Therefore, educational institutes must invest in their teachers' professional development and training, as it not only helps their personal development but also impacts the students.

Apart from teaching a specific subject, the teacher also trains students in knowledge acquisition,

skill development and cognition. In school, a teacher facilitates a child's early development and, in higher education, a student's professional development. To do this with the proper knowledge and skill, a teacher must be up-to-date with education dynamics and recent developments in the field. Therefore, regular training sessions on modern strategies and pedagogies is crucial, especially with the entry of digital tools in the classroom. Unless the teachers are aware of and know how to use these aids, they will not be able to help students learn.

Another important aspect is communication. A good communicator is an effective teacher and enables students to comprehend better. Other issues involve knowledge of innovative teaching methodologies, interactive assessments and the use of differentiation in class to create a positive learning environment.

Benefits
With education being an evolving field, awareness of the changes is crucial to be an effective teacher because this offers better learning outcomes for students. Such educators can

create better curricula, course material, and lesson plans as they are more in sync with the students' learning needs.

Professional development courses also allow teachers to learn organisational and planning skills, which will help them handle administrative tasks better and devote more time to students. Staying up-to-date with the developments helps them answer queries in a more knowledgeable manner. Keeping abreast of technological developments not only allows them to handle digital classroom tools but al-



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so keep pace with the students who are technologically adept.

That is why it is important for educational institutions to support professional development of their teachers. There are many ways this can be facilitated. One is to create opportunities for faculty to attend workshops or training programmes in their field. Another is to enable the teachers to present their research or work at seminars and conferences to discuss issues and solutions. Sponsoring their teachers to attend courses, mentorship programmes or arranging interactions with other institutes are other means.

The writer is Chancellor, KL Deemed-to-be University

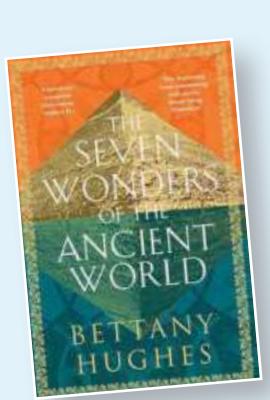
ON THE SHELF

The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World

Their names still echo down the ages: The Great Pyramid at Giza. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon. The Temple of Artemis at Olympia. The statue of Zeus at Olympia. The mausoleum of Halikarnassos. The Colossus at Rhodes. The Lighthouse of Alexandria. The Seven Wonders of the World were brilliant adventures of the mind, test cases for the reaches of human imagination. Now only the great pyramid remains fully standing, yet the scale and majesty of these seven wonders still enthrall us today.

walks through the landscapes of both ancient and modern time and explores traces of the Wonders themselves, and the traces they have left in history. This is a journey whose purpose is to ask why we wonder, why we create, why we choose to remember the wonder of others.

Author: Bettany Hughes
Publisher: Hachette India
Price: ₹169



In a colourful narrative enriched with the latest archaeological discoveries, historian Bettany Hughes