

UNIT 3 SCHOOLING AND DEVELOPMENT

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3.0 INTRODUCTION

I have been amazed to discover that town-bred people seldom know the points of the compass, never know which way the sun goes round, cannot find out which side of the house is out of the wind, and generally destitute of knowledge which every cow or sheep possesses.

Bertrand Russell (1926: 178)

In the last two units, we have discussed physical, cognitive, social, moral and emotional development of children in middle childhood. One important characteristic of the development that we need to take note of at this point is that all the aspects grow and develop simultaneously. A physically maturing child is also maturing socially and cognitively, emotionally and morally. The development does not take place like a sequence where physical development precedes social development and when the child is mature socially and physically, then only other developmental milestones follow; instead a growing child grows in all respects at a time. Societies and families influence this development greatly. One way of molding and shaping child is schooling whereby intellectual and cultural resources are devoted to the formation of educated and civilised man.

Schooling is all about the development of abilities by explicit instruction. The concept of schooling refers to the institutionalised nurturance of children's abilities through

education. Middle childhood is the appropriate time to develop skills through practice and planning. Secondary abilities (like writing and playing violin), differentiated from primary abilities (learning mother tongue and sense perception) need instruction and practice. Schooling refers to the formal methods adopted within a society to maximise the learning of secondary abilities. The group we are concerned with has already spent two years in kindergarten. They know little bit about reading, writing, and numbers; through nursery rhymes they already have their first lessons in singing, pronunciation and learning by heart. In this unit, we will discuss the contribution of schools to children's development between the kindergarten education and more specialised education after fourteen. What are the things they learn and what are the things they ought to learn? What are the things that are ideal for this age group to learn? In what ways schools can produce good human beings, good citizens without adopting cast iron rules?

3.1 OBJECTIVES

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

- Elucidate Aims of schooling;
- Describe the various forms of education at school;
- Explain Value education, physical education and performing arts;
- Analyse the order of various information and skills; and
- Describe the importance of educational trips and learning by doing.

3.2 SCHOOL AND THE LIFE OF CHILDREN

Writing about the education of young children, Russell (1926) has discussed the following aims of education:

- i) Cultivation of intelligence is one of the major purposes of education.
- ii) To discover special aptitudes in children so that they may be carefully developed in the later years.
- iii) Everybody should learn the base subjects which need not be further pursued by those who are bad at them. Two principles determine the curriculum in the early school years: First, what children ought to know. Second, order in which the subjects are to be taught - teaching the easiest subjects first.
- iv) Anything involving severe mental effort should not be undertaken before the age of seven.

John Dewey (1859-1952), an American philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer, intensely discusses the need of education to be centered at the life of the child. Education should adopt the spontaneous ways that the children themselves adopt to learn from their surroundings. Dewey strongly opposed the idea of 'drawing out' something from the minds of child. The young child, he writes, "is already running over, spilling over with the activities of all kinds. He is not purely latent being whom the adult has to approach with great caution and skill in order gradually to draw out some hidden germ of activity." The role of education is that of giving direction to their activities. Dewey has enumerated following instincts that one needs to recognise and shape by various facts, materials and conditions:

Social Instinct: shown in conversation, personal intercourse and communication.

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Language Instinct: the simplest form of the social expression of the child- the greatest of all educational resources.

Constructive Instinct: the instinct of making, expressed first in play, in movement, gesture, and make believe and later becomes more definite, seeks outlet in shaping materials into tangible forms.

Investigation Instinct: the child has not much instinct for abstract inquiry. It grows out of the combination of the constructive impulse with the conversational. There is no difference for a child between experimental science and the work done in the carpenter shop.

Expressive Instinct or art instinct: grows out of the communicating and constructive instincts. It is their refinement and full manifestation. For example, they make the construction adequate, full, free and flexible, and give it a social motive.

Schooling should aim at providing a full bloom to the instincts in a healthy way. By recognising the fields of interest it furthers the development in the direction which may give a child purpose of life.

Self Assessment Questions

- 1) Which of the following is NOT the aim of schooling in middle childhood?
 - a) Cultivation of intelligence
 - b) Discovery of special aptitudes in children
 - c) The easiest subjects should be taught first.
 - d) Specialised subjects should be taught
- 2) The instinct to use paper and pencil shows primarily
 - a) Expressive instinct
 - b) Social instinct
 - c) Language instinct
 - d) Constructive instinct
- 3) Curiosity is another name for
 - a) Expressive instinct
 - b) Social instinct
 - c) Investigation instinct
 - d) Language instinct

3.3 BASIC SCHOOL SKILLS - THE 3RS AND A C

By the time a child is six years old he knows how to read and write; certain accuracy in sense-perception and rudiments of drawing, singing and dancing and a power of concentrate upon educational activities is developed. But the child will not be very perfect in all these respects at six years of age. Further teaching is required in all of them for some years to come.

3.3.1 Learning to Read

Reading is a basic intellectual skill that is associated with modern schooling. All the education is based on the ability to read what has been given in the books. A child's performance in other subjects also depends on the successful comprehension of what is written. Reading is taught in progressive steps. First, associating names for things

develop before six years age. Second, alphabet and letter sound associations are learned. Next, the child learns to pronounce common letter groups. The reading of simple text follows it. A fifth and sixth grader is generally fluent in reading like an adult. Good reading includes clear pronunciation, adequate voice modulation, recognising the emotional overtones in text, recognising the pauses and maintaining adequate speed so that a listener may follow what is spoken to. These skills can be developed by enacting the literary works, like stories and dramas. There may be some pronunciation mistakes when a child reads a word for the first time, but as he learns how to pronounce it, it is not prone to be forgotten. It is learnt forever. Development in reading can differ for different learners. Poor reading comprehension can be improved with the help of some techniques. But some children may not be motivated enough to learn this intellectual skill at the beginning. Reading text may be extremely boring to them. For such children reading books of their interest at home by mother or father or other family members may be a better way to develop an interest for reading rather than forcing it through school work.

3.3.2 Learning to Write

Writing skills, like reading, are developed by practice and an organised plan. There are differences between various thinkers on how to teach writing. Some favour the spontaneous development through expression of thoughts and activities at school. Others favour the study of literature for developing good writing skills. The refined skills of writing, Dewey suggests, comes when the language instinct is appealed in social way. The child always has something in his mind to talk about, a thought to express. Reading and writing as well as the oral use of language may be taught on the basis of the fact that the language is guided by realities.

The other point of view, supported by Russell, considers reading of literature necessary for good linguistic skills to be developed. Russell believes that expression of thought in speaking and writing should come without effort, in spontaneous manner, but it is difficult in a society that has lost its primitive aesthetic impulses. In such societies it is essential to produce a habit of thought which can be generated by intimate knowledge of good literature. Reading of literature purports other objectives as well that we will discuss later.

However, there are some ways to encourage good writing skills:

Writing exercises should be based on the activities of children, either personal or classroom activities.

Children should know writing for different purposes takes different forms: to record ideas, to write something imaginative, to ask for information, to have fun and so on.

Before giving assignment, teacher should discuss the purpose of the work and can also give some points to be elaborated.

Once the child begins writing, it should not be interrupted.

Children should be given time for revision, to reorganise and re-evaluate the piece.

Display or publish all papers, avoid giving importance to top students.

Plan reading and oral exercises around writing activity.

3.3.3 Developing Math Skills

“Arithmetic is a bugbear of childhood - I remember weeping bitterly because I could

not learn the multiplication table" (Russell). But, Russell adds, if it is tackled gradually and carefully, there is no need of the sense of blank despair. In Russell's views, arithmetic affords the natural introduction to accuracy. The answer to a sum is either right or wrong, never 'interesting' or 'suggestive'. This aspect makes arithmetic an important element in early education. But its difficulties should be carefully graded. Not too much time at a stretch should be devoted to them.

The formal teaching of geometry and algebra begins only after middle childhood.

Success with numbers also improves the speed with other school work. Training computation skills with abacus to the groups of children from first graders to fifth graders have shown tremendous improvement in children's ability to add, subtract and multiply. Teaching mathematics with concrete objects can bring more productive results than teaching through paper-pencils.

Self Assessment Questions

- 1) What do you mean by 3Rs in elementary education?

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- 2) What are the aims that reading skill fulfils?

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- 3) What steps will you take for the normal development of writing skills in the third and fourth grade students?

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- 4) Ask ten five grade students the words they find difficult to spell in Hindi and in English. Make a list of such words. On the basis of this list state,

- i) Do all children find the same words difficult?
- ii) What are the individual differences?
- iii) What are the differences between the difficulty in spellings in Hindi and in English?
- iv) Is there any relationship between writing correct spellings and intelligence? Elaborate with examples.

3.3.4 Computer Skills

Computer literacy has been added in schools as a basic skill together with reading, writing and arithmetic. There are two functions related to computers:

- Computer as a machine to be understood and mastered.
- Computers as an aid in teaching.

For the first purpose, it need not be included as a subject to be taught. Children can be provided these machines and some time to explore these machines. Teaching of computers as a subject should not be started before fourteen. Children enjoy working with and exploring these machines. As a teaching aid, it is a source of tremendous information. Care should be taken regarding the content children can access to and time devoted. Around the age of 11 or 12 most of the children today are familiar with various operations and functions of computers. But these computing machines may cause severe problems in the normal physical and social development if children give too much time to them.

While computers certainly reinforce learning and provide opportunity to explore, they don't seem to accelerate the acquisition of knowledge (Greenfield, 1984)¹.

3.4 TEACHING FOR KNOWLEDGE

Development of intellectual faculties is based on the development of intelligence. Russell defines intelligence as including both actual knowledge and receptivity to knowledge. He suggests that it is not possible to train intelligence without imparting information. Without intelligence our complex modern world can not exist, still less can it make progress. Intellectual development depends on the curriculum of young children: What is taught and how? How can we take maximum benefit from curriculum to make the child learn, not for exams but for the pleasure of knowing?

We have already discussed arithmetic, reading and writing. In this section, we take the subjects like: geography, history, science and languages. The first is geography. Geography is all about places, lands, forests, trees, rivers, mountains, weather and all about our Earth. Children's first love for the knowledge of this kind can be seen in their love for trains, airplanes and traveling.

When they learn this subject only through books and question-answers, the natural curiosity to a vast area of knowledge is lost. The knowledge is difficult to be imparted by instruction without curiosity.

Geography should be taught partly through the pictures and tales about travelers, and partly by cinema, showing what a traveler sees on his journey. Geography should be given a large place in the teaching of young children. Later on, they should be given books with pictures, maps and elementary information about different parts of the world. They should be instructed to put together little essays about the peculiarities of various countries.

At a slightly more advanced stage, history can be introduced. It should follow after geography because the sense of time is rudimentary at first. It should be started with the illustrated stories of eminent personalities. Stories about Rani Laxmi Bai, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, S. Radhakrishnan, Ramanujam, Newton, Columbus, Darwin and others, will be extremely interesting to young children. Necessary simplifications, pictures and cinema, if possible, will make the history a favourite to the young minds. Visits to the places of historical importance will be educative. Care must be taken in teaching history to not to introduce topics interesting to elders before the child is mature to understand them.

Two aspects are first relevant and interesting for the children to know:

The general pageant and procession, from geology to man, from savage man to civilised man and so on.

The dramatic story telling of incidents which have a sympathetic hero.

History tells about the journey of man from the savage life to modern advances: the discovery of fire, writing and printing, cities and architecture, agriculture and industries, scientific and technological advances, land and air travel; the conquest of human race fighting against chaos outside and darkness within: the rise and fall of civilisations, wars and racial divisions between nations; and the true conquerors who dispelled the darkness within and without: Buddha and Socrates, Archimedes, Galileo and Newton, Ambedkar and Gandhi; history creates a link between individual and the entire humanity.

Science Teaching: The teaching of science is very basic at this stage. Formal teaching of proper physics and chemistry begins only after fourteen. The sections ‘learning by doing’ should be practiced by every teacher to develop true spirit of observation and experimentation. Teaching of science contributes to the development of imagination as much as the poetry and stories, if taught properly it can contribute more to imagination than poetry and stories. Knowing about the sun, the planets, some rudimentary interest in the functioning of machines, man and nature, man and his body and health, knowledge all these things lay a strong foundation for curiosity and aptitude for science.

Language Teaching: Teaching of languages should be started at the very young age. In childhood it is possible to learn to speak a foreign language perfectly which can be difficult to be achieved in later years. Teaching of language should be free from mental fatigue. It can be possible with the games which depend upon the understanding the language and answering the questions and solving the puzzles, and with plays and acting. Languages learnt at this time are learnt perfectly and with less waste of educational time than at any subsequent period.

Literature: Teaching of literature aims at: training for memory when children learn poems and text by heart and the development of sensitivity to the beauty of language in speech and writing. Learning by heart should be associated with acting. The play will be in their thoughts for along time. Good literature is intended to give pleasure and if children cannot derive pleasure from it they are not likely to derive benefit. But the content should be chosen carefully.

3.5 VALUE EDUCATION

Education should aim at developing ideal character. Ideal character can be assumed to have many virtues. Four characteristics discussed by Russell seem to encompass all the rest: Vitality, courage, sensitiveness and intelligence. All the four qualities can be made common by proper physical, emotional and intellectual care of the young.

i) **Vitality:** Vitality is rather a physiological than a mental characteristic; it is presumably always present where there is perfect health. Where it exists, there is pleasure in feeling alive, quite apart from any specific pleasant circumstances. It makes it easy to take an interest in whatever occurs and thus promotes objectivity, interest in outside world and power of hard work. Vitality is a safeguard against envy, because it makes one’s own existence pleasant.

ii) **Courage:** courage is a major ingredient in a perfect character. Two forms of courage are: absence of fear and the power of controlling fear. Combination of self-respect with an impersonal outlook to life is the major requirements of universal courage. Parental love, knowledge, and art are some of the sources which take us beyond self. ‘The perfection of courage is found in the man of many interests, who feels his ego to be but a small part of the world’ (Russell, 46). This state can be achieved only when the instinct is free and intelligence is active.

iii) **Sensitiveness:** It is assumed to be a corrective of mere courage. Courageous behaviour should not be based on ignorance. Sensitiveness belongs to emotions. If sensitiveness is to be good, the emotional reaction must be in some sense appropriate. Pleasant behaviour and sympathy are desirable forms of sensitivity.

iv) **Intelligence:** Intelligence is an aptitude for acquiring knowledge. This aptitude is acquired both by exercise and information. The objective of imparting information is fulfilled through subjects as we have already discussed. The aptitude for acquiring knowledge can be developed by giving direction to curiosity that is the foundation of intellectual life.

vi) Curiosity about general propositions shows a higher level of intelligence than curiosity about particular facts. Curiosity must be associated with the habits of observation, belief in the possibility of knowledge, patience and industry. These things will develop naturally with proper intellectual education. Open-mindedness and co-operation develops with the development of intelligence.

All the above values can create a society with ideal characters. These qualities cannot be imparted through books. It is where the personality of teacher is important. Emotions are contiguous in character. These values automatically pass from the teacher to a disciple if a teacher practices these values and sincerely works for their cultivation without making his disciples consciously aware of the exercise.

There is one more thing that we often hear of, i.e. discipline. Discipline and order are important. But it depends more on our aim. Dewey says, “If you have the end in view of forty or fifty children learning certain set lessons, to be recited to a teacher, your discipline must be devoted to securing that result. But if the end in view is the development of a spirit of social cooperation and community life, the discipline must grow out of and be relative to it”. In Dewey’s views, school classroom is just like a busy workshop where there is no silence, there is a certain disorder, confusion, bustle that results from activity. Deeper and wider discipline, Dewey added, lies in constructive work directed towards a purpose.

3.6 OTHER SUBJECT TEACHING

3.6.1 Physical Education

Physical education completes the education together with education for knowledge and education of values. Sport activities at this age fulfill two purposes: inculcation of values and fullness of growth. Being part of a team and working for a common aim naturally instills co-operation. Budding powers of children find a full bloom through physical movements. Physical education is not only about sports it is about health and hygiene also: inculcating good habits, personal cleanliness and how to safeguard oneself from common diseases.

3.6.2 Teaching for Pleasure

Dance and music are two recommended activities that are good for body and training for the aesthetic sense, besides being a great pleasure to children. “Collective dance is a form of co-operation that young children easily appreciate” (Russell). Singing should begin a little later than dancing because its rudiments are more difficult than dancing and because it does not give muscular delight like dancing. After nursery rhymes, they should learn beautiful songs. But more difficult singing should be reserved for older children and it should not be enforced.

3.6.3 Educational Excursion

Educational excursions or trips are meant to make children familiar about their surroundings, about processes involved in creating and producing the things that they use. How do they get things they eat? For this they need to know about agriculture. Teaching from books will never be complete until children see the process themselves. Stories about printing will be helpful only when they see the process. It is true about everything in their surrounding: from historical places to libraries; forests to fields, from villages to cities and so on. If the knowledge is imparted first through words and then children get an opportunity to see and experience, there will be the possibility that all the natural curiosity about the things to be learned has been lost. Words at this stage are still difficult to tell the children all the colors of life that they have before them. Small trips to nearby places will help a lot to maintain their curiosity and kindle their willingness to learn more. Dewey discussed an example of a child for whom it was very difficult to believe that the river Mississippi taught in the class is the same river that he sees everyday in his way to school. This difficulty can be related in conceptualising all that is in the books. If trips are not possible for certain topics, cinema and pictures can compensate for this.

3.7 LET US SUM UP

Middle childhood is the time for shaping children's abilities, giving proper direction to their curiosities and instincts, making them strong emotionally and intellectual. Children's mind is prepared to learn new skills, taking responsibilities and habits of observation. All these goals can be accomplished through schooling. Schooling is the process of preparing young minds for future life so that they can live a healthy, happy and useful life. The teacher is important for children at this stage. A teacher like an artist sets the notes of children's mental and emotional life perfectly. He acts like a leader who knows what decisions are going to be important for children. On the whole, in an efficient teacher's hands, the process of schooling prepare the child successfully for further specialised education.

3.8 UNIT END QUESTIONS

- 1) What should be aims of schooling in middle childhood?
- 2) What are the basic school skills that children acquire during middle childhood?
- 3) What subjects should be taught to the children at the ages between 6 to 12 years. Elaborate your answer with examples.
- 4) Write an essay on the contribution of schooling in the development of children. Contrast between ideal and practical state of affairs.
- 5) Write short notes on the following:
 - (i) Educational excursion (ii) teaching for pleasure
- 6) What do you mean by value education. Do you think that we need it now more than ever? In what ways do you recommend value education can be imparted?

3.9 GLOSSARY

Schooling

: the process of development of abilities by explicit instruction. The concept of schooling refers to the institutionalised nurturance of children's abilities through education.

Social instinct	: natural urge in children expressed through conversation, personal intercourse and communication.
Language instinct	: the simplest form of the social expression of the child. Language instinct provides the greatest of all educational resources.
Constructive instinct	: the instinct of making. Expressed first in play, in movement, gesture, and make believe and later becomes more definite, seeks outlet in shaping materials into tangible forms.
Investigation instinct	: the child has not much instinct for abstract inquiry. It grows out of the combination of the constructive impulse with the conversational.
Intelligence	: refers to both actual knowledge and receptivity to knowledge.
Value education	: education aimed at the development of ideal character.

3.10 SUGGESTED READINGS

Dewey, John (2008). *The School and Society* (first published in 1900). New Delhi: Aakar Books

Mukunda, Kamala, V. (2009). *What did you ask at school today?* A handbook of child learning, Harper Collins Publishers India.

Russell, B (1926). *On Education: Especially in Early Childhood*. London: Unwin Paperbacks

3.11 ANSWERS TO SELF ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS

1) d) specialised subjects should be taught, 2) a) Expressive instinct 3) c) Investigation instinct

Endnotes

¹ Greenfield, P. M. (1984) Mind and Media: the effects of television, video games and computers. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.