

Beyond grades, why skills matter more than scores in today's world

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The National Education Policy of India (and in many other countries) has its focus on competency-based education. Schools can implement this through the use of criteria-based assessment and reporting, not percentages. International curriculum such as IB identifies prescribed key concepts and related concepts. The concepts prescribed by IB ensure the development of a rigorous curriculum. The International Baccalaureate (IB) model enables

teachers to organize diverse topics into comprehensive critical concepts and understandings within each subject group. With a concept-based teaching approach, educators utilize knowledge to facilitate the comprehension of transferable concepts and understandings. Knowledge is the foundation and support for deeper and conceptual thinking.

The key concepts, from each subject group, provide an interdisciplinary breadth to the programme. These concepts which are incorporated are broad, organizing powerful ideas that have relevance within and across subjects and disciplines. They facilitate connections that can transfer across different cultures and time periods.

The focus of “Approaches to Learning” in IB is on the cultivation of effective study skills, commonly referred to as the art of learning, how to learn. Beyond useful techniques, the goal is to nurture the intellectual discipline and habits of mind that will result in critical, coherent and independent thought, and in the capacity for problem-solving and decision-making.

Learning is most effective when students can relate their educational experiences to their personal lives and to their

knowledge and understanding of the world. Under the IB curriculum, students develop an awareness of our shared responsibility of the planet and a sense of universal humanity through developmentally appropriate explorations of such contexts.

The IB planning highlights integrated learning by focusing on the transdisciplinary structures in Early and Primary Years and then moving into interdisciplinary structures in MYP, rather than just considering each subject as a silo as is the case in traditional multidisciplinary curriculums.

All of the above prepares students for future challenges and the requisite skills needed for jobs yet to be invented, NOT marks.

How can skills impact in improving their academic scores?

In a globally interdependent world, complexity is the cornerstone which defines the socio-political and environmental issues of the day. Competing views, perspectives and ideologies pull the human mind into myriad directions. As educators, we are responsible for equipping our students to navigate this complex, dynamic and increasingly polarized world.

Hence, skills building is imperative not only for improving academic scores but also for equipping our young learners to wade through the murky waters of day-to-day living.

With the prevalence of AI-led technology, educators need to have a deeper conversation on what knowledge and skill is? Content is readily available in every domain. What needs to be focussed on, is, knowing what content should be used, how to use it and what is said and the 'unsaid' in the content the student consumes. The ability to think beyond the content and analyse varied perspectives to arrive at one's own, self-critique, art of questioning, having the requisite vocabulary, problem-solving ability, presentation, articulation and being attuned to the ever-changing technologies are the attributes which the students should acquire as they navigate through schools and colleges.

Are we equipping the next generation – children and young people –with the proper skills and tools to better deal with the world of tomorrow?

The endeavour to equip the next generation with the aforesaid-mentioned skills and tools is definitely there. However, the end paves the 'journey'. As long as our assessments are 'standardized'

and 'exam/test' oriented, there will be the struggle to meet the demands of the standardized content versus the needs of the times we are living in.

Personalised learning

Developing Critical, Creative and Conceptual Mind

Focus on the SDGs

Deeper and more nuanced understanding of Equity, Empathy, Respect and Culture .

Are what we are working towards – a connected learning environment where all the stakeholders of the school ecosystem are working in tandem to develop a system where these could become a part of the school [ethos](#) and curriculum.

What skills should be added to students' skill set?

Real world problem solving.

How to face interviews, how to talk to people, how to present ideas without going off topic, being confident, making one's presence felt.

Tapping into the personal interest of students' / student agency

Giving non-mainstream subjects equal importance.

Financial literacy.

Sex education.

The key to intellectual development is the synergistic interplay between the factual and conceptual levels of thinking. The greater the amount of factual information, the higher is the need to rise to an advanced level of abstraction to organize and process that information which is the need of the hour.