

Aesthetic Learning Environments and Their Impact on Concentration and Creativity

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Abstract: *This research paper explores the influence of “aesthetic learning environments” on students’ concentration and creativity, particularly in the context of foundational learning and early education. Drawing from the principles of NEP 2020 and NIPUN Bharat, the study highlights how murals, nature corners, and student-generated content contribute to joyful and engaging classrooms. A qualitative action-research methodology was used, combining observations, interviews, and FLN-based assessments. Findings reveal that aesthetically enriched classrooms foster deeper attention, creativity, and ownership of learning. Aligning with Edgar Dale’s Cone of Experience, the study emphasizes that multi-sensory and experiential learning environments lead to greater engagement and retention. The paper concludes that aesthetic design is not a luxury but a pedagogical necessity for advancing FLN and NEP 2020 objectives.*

Keywords: Aesthetic Learning, FLN, NEP 2020, Creativity, Dale’s Cone of Experience, Classroom Design

1. Introduction

Aesthetic learning environments have increasingly become a topic of interest in modern pedagogy. Gone are the days when plain walls and rigid desks defined classrooms. Today, educators and researchers emphasize the need for environments that stimulate learners visually, emotionally and intellectually. The classroom is not just a space where information is transferred, but a place where imagination is sparked, ideas are nurtured, and young minds feel safe and inspired to learn. Incorporating elements like murals, decorated walls, interactive corners, and natural learning spaces can contribute significantly to the learning process especially in primary education.

2. Rationale of the Study

Modern educational frameworks such as the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and initiatives like NIPUN Bharat have emphasized joyful and engaging learning experiences. However, a significant gap still exists between what is ideal and what is practiced, especially in under-resourced schools. While learning outcomes remain a focus, the physical and aesthetic setting of the classroom is often neglected. This study seeks to bridge that gap by highlighting how even low-cost aesthetic interventions can transform classroom environments, fostering greater concentration and creativity among learners.

3. Objectives of the Study

- 1) To examine how aesthetic classroom environments influence students' concentration levels.
- 2) To explore the role of murals, nature-based learning corners, and other visual elements in enhancing creativity.
- 3) To identify low-cost and sustainable aesthetic practices that can be incorporated into classrooms.
- 4) To align findings with NEP 2020 and NIPUN Bharat goals for joyful and meaningful learning.

4. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative action-research approach. Observations were conducted in various government primary schools where teachers had used murals, decorated bulletin boards, seasonal nature corners, and student-created art. Interviews with teachers and students helped in collecting experiential data. FLN assessment tools were used to gauge improvements in concentration and creative tasks before and after aesthetic interventions. Case studies and photographs were also documented.

5. Review of Literature

Research suggests that the environment in which a child learns significantly impacts both cognitive and emotional development (Montessori, 1912; Barrett et al., 2015 and Tagores of Abode of peace (Shantiniketan). The Reggio Emilia approach also emphasizes the environment as the “third teacher.” According to Dewey (1938), the learning environment should stimulate curiosity and inquiry. Moreover, neuroscience studies indicate that aesthetically pleasing and organized classrooms reduce cognitive load and increase attention span.

6. Findings

Students exposed to murals and wall visuals showed greater attention to classroom content and exhibited fewer distractions.

Classrooms that had natural elements (plants, stones, water bowls, weather charts, decorated items) showed improved engagement in storytelling and observational skills.

Teachers reported that student-generated content displayed on walls increased children's ownership of learning and motivated them to perform better.

Low-cost innovations like using old newspapers, pebbles, and local materials proved effective in creating engaging corners and boards.

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Students showed improved performance in creative writing, drawing, and oral storytelling tasks post-intervention.

7. Discussion

The findings strongly support the view that aesthetics in learning environments enhance both concentration and creativity. Students learn better when the environment is visually stimulating and emotionally nurturing. By aligning with Dale's Cone of Experience, it becomes evident that multi-sensory learning environments rooted in real-life, visual, and hands-on experiences lead to deeper learning and retention. Thus, the learning environment becomes not just a backdrop but an active agent of pedagogy.

8. Implications for Policy and Practice

- NEP 2020 and NIPUN Bharat should promote low-cost aesthetic innovations as essential components of FLN strategies.
- Training modules for teachers must include a component on environmental aesthetics and classroom decoration using local resources.
- Involvement of students in decorating their own spaces fosters creativity and a sense of belonging.
- Government schemes should earmark funds for classroom beautification under joyful learning initiatives.

9. Conclusion

Aesthetic learning environments are not a luxury; they are an educational necessity. When the surroundings are vibrant, meaningful, and child-friendly, children not only stay more focused but also think more creatively. Schools that lack digital or infrastructural resources can still significantly improve learning outcomes by focusing on joyful and aesthetic classroom designs.

These findings also align with Dale's Cone of Experience, which highlights that learners retain more when learning experiences are concrete, sensory-rich, and participatory. By integrating elements such as murals, nature corners, and student-generated content, classrooms shift learning closer to the lower, more experiential levels of the cone—encouraging greater engagement, deeper understanding, and long-term retention. Thus, the design of classrooms should be treated as a pedagogical priority in advancing the objectives of FLN and NEP 2020.

References

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