



**HERITAGE
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XPERIENTIAL SCHOOL**



HOW WELL DOES AN INTERNATIONAL CURRICULUM PREPARE CHILDREN FOR THE FUTURE?

The international curriculum encourages students to develop and own the skills and capacities that employers in tomorrow's workplace will look for in their prospective employees. Here are a few benefits of an international curriculum.

We are at an inflection point in history where, in the next 15 years, the world will change more dramatically than it has in the last 150 years - thanks to the accelerated technology penetration in our day-to-day lives, driven by the 'Fourth Industrial Revolution.' In this evolving scenario, how do schools prepare their students to thrive in a transformed world with very different workplace requirements from today?

Thought leaders warn that children who are entering school today will most likely work in careers that we have not yet heard of. They will therefore have to be equipped with skills that employers are seeking in their prospective employees. Research points out machines will perform all repetitive tasks/jobs in the future, physical or cognitive, and humans will be required to engage in careers that need emotional, social, and creative intelligence.

In this context, collaborating with others across the globe to find creative solutions to complex problems; critical thinking and the ability to seek and create different types of information, allowing skilled judgment and decision making; an awareness and ownership of environmental stewardship and service orientation; negotiation and cognitive flexibility; and using technology to design, control and monitor situations will assume great significance in any endeavour to thrive in the workplace of tomorrow.

The World Economic Forum too recognises these skills and attributes as those that will be most valued in jobs in the near future.

In addition, a student from Mangalore no longer competes with her peers in Mumbai within the country. The pandemic and the ensuing lockdowns necessitated an acceleration in the pace of technology adoption. The digital economy has expanded boundaries and driven a fundamental shift in the nature of jobs. Physical presence is no longer a prerequisite to doing business. We have entered an era of "work from anywhere".

A growing number of people are entering the gig economy. These are freelancers/micro-entrepreneurs who rely on an internet connection and a device and can offer their services to anyone across the globe. Our children will compete with highly skilled manpower across geographies; they need to be at the global level of knowledge, skills, and capabilities if they are to thrive.

These are skills and capacities that a national rote learning and examination-driven education system is ill-equipped to impart currently. International programmes, on the other hand, have a strong philosophy rooted in internationalism and a global mindset. It is a curriculum that has been designed to be internalised by students and used, as citizens, to make a better world.

BENEFITS OF INTERNATIONAL CURRICULUM

The international curriculum promotes a way of thinking that is research-based and evidence-informed; it is conceptual rather than knowledge-based, designed to provide teachers with autonomy to interpret it. It is geared towards encouraging students to develop and own the skills and capacities that employers in tomorrow's workplace will look for in their prospective employees.

Students are encouraged to think, solve complex problems, ask insightful and challenging questions, and understand that no one answer is the right one.

A recent change was to center some aspects of the curriculum to focus upon diversity, equity, and justice and these concepts have quite rightly gained prominence over the last few years in line with crucial global discussions in this field.



Rather than follow a teacher-led directed learning system, international programmes enable students to co-create their own learning, to become self-motivated and lifelong learners. Emphasis is placed on engaging with people in an increasingly globalised, rapidly changing world while respecting differences and seeking to celebrate what we all value.

However, there is a great deal of focus on local content and context; learning about their own world and community in the contemporary context is accorded equal importance by the international curriculum. Students are also deliberately encouraged to reflect on their sense of identity and belonging.

When they are engaged with learning resources from across the world, they are challenged to understand that people, their cultures and values can be very different from their own - and that it is alright to be different.

They learn to collaborate with people who may have different values and viewpoints from theirs; this stands them in good stead when they go out into the world.

For instance, a student entering a university in the US already knows that the place will be culturally different and that she will have to work with people with values different from hers. International schools, therefore, lay the foundations for students to understand their own values, boundaries, and what matters to them before they move to all corners of the world.

USE OF FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT

Another important aspect of the international curriculum that is critical to the students' deep understanding and mastery of subjects is the assessment system. As opposed to the high-stake examination system followed by the national curriculum, here formative and summative assessment is used.

This allows assessment of the child on a regular, ongoing, and daily basis. It is much more robust because there is a clear link between educational objectives, learning outcomes, and assessment design, making it much easier to gauge a child's performance and preparedness for college life/future.

This approach dissuades students from competing with peers; instead, it encourages them to chart their progress and celebrate accomplishments through their own learning journey.



Students may also participate, along with the teacher, in setting the rubric for assessment; a high level of reflection is an important part of international programmes. It is an assessment that is truly meaningful in today's world since it is aimed at the holistic development of the child, including the nurturing of a spectrum of skills. It is assessment as and for learning and not simply assessment of learning.

Research on different disciplines of learning from around the world also informs the changes that are made to the curriculum. It evolves continuously to both keep abreast of and shape a world that is transforming in a complex and multi-dimensional way by incorporating contemporary knowledge and practices to serve future generations to come.

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