



**HERITAGE
INTERNATIONAL
XPERIENTIAL SCHOOL**



Experiential learning in schools help students to struggle safely, fail constructively, and grow stronger.

Education must prepare children not just for university admissions or their first jobs, but for the challenges of adulthood and citizenship, writes academic Chris Stevens

Across the world, education is undergoing a profound shift, schools are no longer judged only by the grades their students achieve, but also by the skills, mindsets, and values they nurture. In a future defined by Artificial Intelligence (AI), global uncertainty, and rapidly changing workplaces, one truth has become clear: children need more than academic knowledge to thrive. They need real-world skills and a highly effective way to build them is through experiential learning.

For decades, school systems have prioritised examinations and standardised testing. While academic rigour is important, rote memorisation has its limits. A fact recalled for an exam may be forgotten within days, whereas a lesson learned through experience, whether by building a project, collaborating on a performance, or solving a real-world problem stays with a child for life.

This is where experiential learning makes a difference. It shifts the focus from teaching to learning.

Instead of being passive recipients of information, students actively investigate, reflect, experiment, and apply. This process not only deepens understanding but also builds resilience, creativity, and problem-solving abilities that go far beyond academic success.

Preparing for a Complex World

The workplace awaiting our students looks very different from the one their parents knew. With technology evolving at an exponential pace and global challenges demanding innovative solutions, careers will increasingly require constant reskilling. Against this backdrop, three skills stand out as essential. Firstly communication, as in an AI-driven world, the human ability to persuade, empathise, and collaborate will only become more valuable. Another skill is critical thinking since students must learn to analyse, question, and filter information, especially when digital misinformation is so prevalent. Finally, adaptability is crucial as the future is unpredictable. A mindset that welcomes change and sees challenge as opportunity will set young people apart.

These skills cannot be developed through textbooks alone; they require practice, reflection, and application in real-life contexts: precisely what experiential learning provides.

Building Education for Life

Education must prepare children not just for university admissions or their first jobs, but for the challenges of adulthood and citizenship. This means developing character alongside competence. When students face challenges, whether in the classroom, on a trek, or during a collaborative project they practice resilience, teamwork, and leadership.

Schools, therefore, must create opportunities for students to struggle safely, to fail constructively, and to grow stronger as a result. While understandable parental ambition often resists the idea of failure, it is through safe setbacks that children learn perseverance and innovation. True education is not about succeeding in controlled conditions but about thriving in unpredictable realities.

Equally important is student well-being. A high-achieving child who is anxious, overwhelmed, or disconnected will not succeed in the long term. Schools must become talking communities where it is acceptable to seek help, admit vulnerability, and adopt healthy habits of body and mind. Practices like mindfulness, physical activity, and strong pastoral systems all contribute to nurturing resilient learners who can balance both personal and professional challenges. In this sense, well-being is not an add-on; it is central to preparing students for life.

Tapping the Opportunity

India is uniquely positioned to lead this transformation. With one of the world's largest school-going populations and a willingness to embrace new ideas, the country can set benchmarks in experiential education. The National Education Policy 2020 has already signalled a shift away from rote learning towards more holistic and skills-based approaches. The real opportunity now lies in implementation.

Indian schools can lead by adopting multimodal assessments, digital portfolios, oral presentations, and project-based learning alongside traditional exams. By integrating technology as a tool to enhance, not replace, human teaching, and by creating active, engaged learning communities, they can inspire students to become life-long learners.

Experiential learning is not a passing trend; it is a necessity. Skills children need for the future, like critical thinking, adaptability, and collaboration, cannot be memorized, but must be practiced. Schools that place experience at the heart of learning are not just preparing students to clear the next exam, but to navigate life's complexities with confidence, resilience, and creativity.

Ultimately, education must go beyond preparing students to answer questions on paper. It must prepare them to answer the far more important questions that life will inevitably ask of them.

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