

'Rigorous Learning' or 'Learning with Entertainment'

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Abstract

The Purpose is to find out a better approach for learning, be it 'Rigorous Learning' or 'Learning with Entertainment'? The Design/methodology/approach is evaluating both the perspectives taking into account the challenges that will be faced in practical implementation. The main findings suggest that, it will be a good approach to strike off a balance between the two approaches, 'Rigour' and 'Entertainment'.

Keywords: *Rigorous Learning', Learning with Entertainment', environment.*

Introduction

Meaning of rigor - Rigor in general sense is defined as "strictness, severity or harshness."

While dictionaries define the term as *rigid, inflexible, or unyielding*, educators frequently apply *rigor* or *rigorous* to assignments that encourage students to think critically, creatively, and more flexibly. Likewise, they may use the term *rigorous* to describe learning environments that are not intended to be harsh, rigid, or overly prescriptive, but that are stimulating, engaging, and supportive. In education, *rigor* is commonly applied to lessons that encourage students to question their assumptions and think deeply, rather than merely memorization and information recall. It teaches students to think logical and rational for any lesson.

While some educators may equate rigor with difficulty, many educators would argue that academically rigorous learning experiences should be sufficiently and appropriately challenging for individual student and not simply difficult. Advocates contend that appropriately rigorous learning experiences motivate students to learn more and learn it more deeply, while also giving them a sense of personal accomplishment when they overcome a

learning challenge whereas lessons that are simply “hard” will more likely lead to disengagement and discouragement.

Learning with Entertainment

The term ‘Learning with Entertainment’ or ‘Edutainment’ basically implies a type of learning where there is a simultaneous combination of gaining knowledge along with joyous learning. It helps to ease up the entire process of learning because it removes the stress quotient from the minds of the learners. It will help to catch the attention of the learners in a sense that they will become curious to learn what is being taught to them.

Rigorous Learning

What are rigorous learning goals?

Rigorous learning goals are specific standards set by teachers and administrators to which students must adhere. Rather than using broad or general ideas like grade-level reading and math, students should be given an objective for each class or content area, the purpose of that objective, and a weekly or even daily agenda. Students are often involved in setting individual goals that help them advance or reach the learning goals.

Rigorous learning is the bridge from our classrooms to our students’ future, long-term success. Rigorous learning is developing in students the skills, knowledge and attitudes that will enable their success in the increasingly complex world in which they will live and work. To achieve rigorous learning for all students requires instructing each student in a way that is relevant to him or her. It includes nurturing, caring of all students and teaching interpersonal skills. It includes instilling in all students the skills they will need for the careers that will allow self-sufficiency as adults.

Rigorous learning in different environments:

Implementing a rigorous learning environment differs from classroom to classroom and student population to student population. An effective rigorous learning curriculum takes into account the many different types of students that teachers are working with, and challenges each of those types differently and appropriately. For gifted students, teachers should design a curriculum that

challenges them at an accelerated pace. Many children who fall into this group often lose interest in classwork and activities because they feel that the pace of instruction is too slow. If anything, gifted students should be challenged at a level beyond their current capabilities in order to push them to fully recognize and achieve their potential.

On the other end of the spectrum, students who function behind their current grade level or who are average learners still need rigor in order to maintain the necessary level of classroom engagement. However, learning experiences to master standards for these students should be specific to their needs. For instance, in such classes students might be required to participate in an extensive amount of reading, writing, public speaking and collaboration with their classmates. This will provide frequent and consistent practice in the areas where these students are behind, which will in turn make it easier for them to perform on grade level in other subjects like math and science.

Rigorous learning techniques

Teachers and administrators who want to introduce more rigorous learning standards in their classes should consider the following techniques:

- **Engagement:** Regularly engage oneself with students on both an individual and class-wide basis. Clearly explain the standards they are expected to meet, and why those standards are in place.
- **Feedback:** Keep students informed about where they stand in relation to meeting set goals. Provide constructive feedback and focused practice to help students who are falling behind get up to speed with the expectations of the lesson plan.
- **Diversification:** By having students work in a variety of groups, they will better learn from one another, and it will be easier to assess the progress that students are making in their studies

Should a teacher focus on 'rigorous learning' or 'learning with entertainment'?

Students' lack of enjoyment of learning has been mooted as a cause of multiple failures in education. David et al. (2003) links high levels of boredom in secondary school students

particularly with ‘disengagement and alienation, marked by a chronic cycle of absenteeism, failing classes, suspensions, and transitions between schools’. Lack of enjoyment is therefore implied to be a cause of failure to learn. Much discussion of the relationship of enjoyment to learning assumes that learning is contingent on a willingness to engage and to persist, and that this will not be forthcoming unless the learning task is assessed as potentially enjoyable, resulting in motivation to start, and experienced as enjoyable, resulting in persistence. Some studies appear to show a high correlation between entertainment and learning. Other studies argue that the two are antagonistic. Amongst the issues are the phenomenological difficulties with conceptualising enjoyment and learning, leading to methodological complications:

The grounds for the direction of causality are weak – namely that enjoyment tends to be a direct and immediate experience, whereas learning is a time-dependent process. This suggests enjoyment is temporally prior to learning, and for x to cause y, x must precede y. However, it is equally plausible that students’ enjoyment of a topic grows as they feel more knowledgeable about it. Enjoyment could therefore be conceived a parallel experience as a result of learning.

In summary, there is no body of convincing evidence which establishes that enjoyment is a necessary adjunct to learning, and what evidence there is suggests that the complexity of establishing a relationship may defeat current methodology. Given that enjoyment may be related not only to the learning experience as such, but be mediated by demographic factors such as gender and age. Filtering out the full range of variables which impact on affective states is very difficult. The students’ experience of other aspects of school or their life outside school and the individuals’ personality traits can also predispose learners to enjoyment or the contrary. As learning is an internal process which can only be inferred or reported, the data available is students’ perceptions; that is, they think they have enjoyed something (or not) and they believe that this emotion is linked to learning. Taking all these factors together, researching students’ enjoyment and learning and the relationship between the two is a difficult endeavour. Nevertheless, given the strong emphasis in policy discourse, there is a need for research to attempt to make progress in order to support the development and evaluation of policy and practice.

However a proper balance between the two can go a long way to bring about success in one's life and bring an over all development.

Entertainment and education: opportunities and challenges:

To be able to speak of the link between entertainment and education, we must consider a previous step: the relationship between education and the mass media, as entertainment reaches education through the media. More recently, there has been a growing concern to incorporate entertainment into learning. Gitlin (2003) argues that it is possible to gain knowledge and learn while being entertained through immersion in sights. In addition, new student profiles and the use of video games (Prensky, 2006; 2007) have helped to expand the concept. The neologism "edutainment" has generated a natural semantic field in which education and entertainment are combined. The fact is that the literature has often linked "edutainment" to software solutions applied to learning. Given this reductionist view of entertainment in education, this article argues that entertainment is a substantial element in the learning process. Only education that is attractive and consistent with new uses and social interests can become a means for improvement throughout the life of a 21st century citizen. We must dare to say out loud that the learning process should arouse enthusiasm and interest and be entertaining. The challenge will be to bring the worlds of education and entertainment together. The advancement of our knowledge and skills must now be stimulated, just as our leisure time and our consumption of goods and services are). The media, the internet and video games are the best tools for bringing education closer to entertainment, since their true essence is entertainment, which is why they are valued and used . After all, the studies on media consumption show that all citizens spend a significant portion of their time on traditional media, the internet and computer games (Muzet, 2006). Only an attractive education that is consistent with new uses and social interests can become a resource for improvement throughout the life of 21st century citizens; and only education that is integrated in daily life can become an accessible element for these citizens. If the 21st century requires an economy different from that of the 20th century, if the new century requires a society geared not only toward production but also toward reinvention, research and development of new products and services, then education must take a new leap forward toward lifelong availability, interest and attraction. Lifelong education is equivalent to personal R&D and the basis of

education must be modified for this programme of innovation and development to be implemented.

The Entertainment-Education Strategy in Radio:

With two billion radio receivers in the world, roughly one for every three people, radio reaches out to larger audiences worldwide than television films, print media, or other mass media. In Third World countries where resources are generally scarce, radio represents an especially viable medium to carry entertainment-education messages. Radio receivers are relatively inexpensive, portable, and carry educational-development information which can be tailored to meet specific local needs. Radio programming can be produced cheaply, quickly, and can be easily duplicated, stored, retrieved, and distributed on audiotapes. In various countries, radio entertainment formats such as soap operas, comedies, music programs, and talk shows have been utilized to convey educational-development messages.

In sum, the entertainment-education communication strategy in radio has been implemented previously in a number of countries, using a variety of radio formats, with generally positive outcomes.

The Entertainment-Education Strategy in Television

Entertainment-education television programs are having a tremendous impact on large audiences throughout the world, especially in developing nations. Television audiences have expanded rapidly in nations, One common characteristic of television in these developing nations is the growing popularity of entertainment programs such as television soap operas (Brown, 1992a). Soap operas are the most watched type of television programs in Latin America) and are rapidly becoming the most popular genre of television in Asia (Brown, 1990). More people now watch soap operas in India than the entire population of the United States. An average of 300 million television viewers watched the epic television serial, "Mahabharata," which through an entertaining story line educated viewers on such issues as morality and ethics. Television soap operas have been used to promote a wide range of educational-development goals.

Conclusion

The world is changing at a rapid fire pace. Technology is driving change at breakneck speed. And it's influencing everything—from how we communicate and get and share information, to how we get work done and engage in commerce. It's changed our relationships with each other and it's changed how we relate to and collaborate with those in other parts of the world. What does this mean? This means that in order to cope up with these changes, rigorous learning will to a certain extent play an important role.

Entertainment is not the goal of learning. Learning, rightly understood, aims at the academic, intellectual and social growth of human beings. School should be in the business of cultivating decent, wise, well-rounded adults from a few seeds of knowledge and adolescent soil. Naturally, that task only sometimes overlaps with entertainment. Entertainment is still important, indeed it might be the best motivator there is, and learning only happens when students are motivated to learn. There is no universal formula for making school “fun” or to make learning “cool.” It is the artistic skill of good teachers that brings learning and entertainment together in a way that inspires students into lifelong learning.

Clearly rigorous learning and entertainment can work well together, and the most effective learning models take both very seriously. The connection between rigorous learning and entertainment is well worth preserving.

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