

Ideas and Guidelines for Heritage Education Activities

Heritage Education is not merely recreation for students but should be an important part of their learning process. It will help them understand history and society and will inculcate values of respect for diversity and tolerance. While it is important to highlight aspects of national heritage, it is also important to bring local heritages into the purview of heritage education programmes. Very limited resources are required for the most basic heritage education programmes. More involved programmes require some investment. But most heritage activities, like heritage walks and heritage clubs, require little capital investment but can go a long way in helping the child experience culture and heritage and bring alive many of the things she reads in her history textbook.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Heritage walks in historical areas of cities/towns/World Heritage Sites.
2. Nature walks/excursions to local parks, areas of bio-diversity, even agrarian sites
3. Site visits to museums, interpretation centres, and archaeological sites.
4. Essay competitions on literature (in English and local languages) and talks by writers. Students should be encouraged to read and write creatively in their local language. An introduction to the heritage of the language would be very useful – this can be done by a writer or a poet in the said language or a teacher who is fluent in it.
5. Small research projects for students that can be put up as mini-exhibitions/bulletin board displays on heritage
6. Involving students in documenting local living heritage like festivals, performing arts or craftsmen and women
7. Establishment of heritage clubs for heritage debates, quizzes, discussions and activities like presentations, field trips and documentation
8. Adopt-a-Monument scheme where students/heritage clubs can adopt a local monument, clean up its environs, investigate its local official and oral history, study the monument and make drawings of its details as well as overall plan, understand the challenges in its conservation and upkeep and campaign for its preservation.
9. Painting and drawing competitions for students at built heritage sites.

10. Workshops with artists and craftsmen and women, both traditional and contemporary to help students understand the basic vocabulary and techniques involved.
11. Workshops with experts which involve hands-on learning. For example, a local classical or folk musician could conduct a workshop over five sessions to introduce students to the basic vocabulary of their musical form so that whenever students have occasion to hear the music, they can understand its basic outlines.
12. Traditional recipes may be collected by the students from their parents and grandparents and a show-and-tell can take place introducing the importance of the recipes and their relevance to certain occasions like festivals or seasons. Comparisons of names for different fruits, vegetables and spices in different local languages can be done.
13. Encouraging students to trace and write their own family histories and traditions, to understand historical change through this
14. Site visits for students to crafts centres, textile loom units, handicraft workshops and factories to understand craft and industrial heritage.
15. Students may be asked to create a nature trail in their own school premises (if possible), marking trees, plants and other flora.
16. Theatre workshops in which students are encouraged to learn the nine emotional states and how to express them, how to make and use traditional puppets as well as other aspects of Indian performance theory.

