

The TEACHER.in

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Growth of Institutions Through Teacher Excellence

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Adapting to 21st Century Learning Skills

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January 2020

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RASHMI MARIAN FURTADO
Senior Editor, TheTeacher.in

Fighting the “stereotype war” in our schools

A rather delicate topic to start the new year, but I believe this is something that should be addressed immediately. So, what better time than a new year to start afresh. Many studies, world over, have documented that we raise our daughters to be perfect and cautious, while we raise our sons to be brave and adventurous. Many might reason that this is done to protect the girls. What we don't realise is while trying to protect them, we make them dependent and timid instead of independent and brave.

I read this incident in an article, where a professor had given a particularly difficult code to the class to create. Majority of the boys had tried their best but could not get it right. They came to the professor showing the progress they had achieved and told the professor, “Sir, there's something wrong with the code. We are not able to get it right.” On the other hand, the girls who had also tried their best with no success, asked the professor, “Sir, we are not able to get it. What's wrong with us?” The girls had a blank screen to accompany their query. The professor knew better and understood what had happened. He used the ‘undo’ command, a couple of times and realised that the girls had come very close to the correct code but deleted the entire work because it was not perfect.

I would like to believe that many of us have come across similar situations in our class and life. Why do our girls lack the courage and self-belief, while our boys are adventurous and raised to succeed? There are studies that show how most boys and men apply for a job if they meet 60% of the criteria while the girls and women do not apply unless they meet 95% or more. On an average, I am onstage for more than a 100 days every year, as an anchor, a resource person, a trainer, chief guest, etc. 90% of the times I have been the only woman on stage. This got me thinking if we truly raise our girls to succeed.

Why do our girls get straight A's in their academics but don't succeed as much in a 'business idea' contest?




I always believed that any issue that is deep rooted in our culture, upbringing and society can be solved by taking steps at the grassroot level. In this case, a 4Ps approach will help.

The 4Ps stand for Parent, Professor-Teacher, Profession, Person. At our homes as **parents** let us raise our daughters to be brave and adventurous rather than only being merely perfect, cautious and docile! In our schools, let us stop **teaching** our kids from textbooks that only show pictures of mothers in kitchen and fathers at work. Let our teachers and educators focus on raising courageous young girls. Push them to take risks and assure them that come what may we will be there to support them. When we show a picture of a firefighter, let us show a lady. Let us stop assigning genders to **professions** and open our minds to give the girls a chance, encourage and support them at every step.

This new year let us resolve to teach our girls to be brave, confident, allow them to make mistakes and not be merely perfect. It is time we give a thought to why there are plenty male chefs but very few women CEOs? Why the number of male nurses is increasing far faster than female pilots? Let us educators make a difference! Let me end invoking what the great educator, Dr.YGP told us at TheTeacher.in for our teacher's day edition 2019 **"There is nothing a man can do, that I can't do better"**.

Yours Positively!



 @RashmiGreycaps
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 Rashmi Furtado

Rashmi

If you have a similar experience to share, do write to me on rashmi@greycaps.com

A natural writer, teacher and a passionate content creator, Rashmi has authored the Cu and Rio series and created the Keystones program on Values Education from Greycaps. She is one of the founders of TheTeacher.in. She is a sought after speaker at educational conferences, facilitator programs and for motivational talks to students at schools across India. She holds a Master's Degree from the prestigious NIT Suratkal where she also taught before joining Greycaps. Rashmi is also a popular quiz host for schools, colleges and large corporate audiences. She has co-hosted the Tata Crucible quiz, Canara Bank National School Quiz and Travel Quest by Thomas Cook.

There is nothing a man can do, that I can't do better.

-Dr. YGP

ART EDUCATION: NEED FOR A NEW PERSPECTIVE



G. BALASUBRAMANIAN

G. Balasubramanian is a doyen of school education in India. He has held several positions of leadership at CBSE, including Director Academics. He was the brain behind the introduction of several innovations at CBSE, which included frontline curriculum, communicative approach to language teaching, Information Technology, alternatives to homework, etc. He is also an author, poet and a sought-after speaker at educational conferences world over.



This article has been taken from G. Balasubramanian's official website balaspeaks.in

For long, art education has been one of the most marginalised subjects in our curriculum and in the totality of the educational architecture. It has always been treated by the schools and the parents as of no utilitarian value as against the subjects that would empower the learners to win bread and butter. The 'elitist' approach to study of certain subjects had brought certain kind of classicism to a few disciplines at the cost of several other subjects and art has been no exception. The intrinsic value of art education has neither been clearly brought out to the school community nor an appropriate resource, both human and otherwise, has been inducted to scaffold the holistic learning with the spirit of Art.

Pablo Picasso remarked, "The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls." He adds, "Every child is an artist, but the problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up." As art is associated with imagination, intuition, creativity, fantasy and novelty, an education system that is top-down in its approach, that which promotes only the legacy of knowledge rather than synthesis of knowledge, where the learning is preached rather than facilitated, art stands to suffer through



a competitive strangulation by several other disciplines. Detailing what a good piece art should do, A. Cruz observes, “Art should disturb the comfortable, and comfort the disturbed.” Art, in its several manifestations, both as performing and utilitarian, has the unique power of reaching out to the human emotions, impacting them, nursing them, nurturing them and facilitating the human cognition and experience to expand their universe continuously and to express their inner soul with a meaning that is absolutely unique to the individual. This purpose of art is achieved by all its forms and representations – painting, dance, music, sculpture, theatre, and others. Nandalal Bose, one of the pioneers of modern art say, “Art is life-long meditation and not a hobby.” Its medium of expression is restrained by structures and strategies, but its soul encompasses all expressions of life.

Art Education, therefore, forms a vital aspect of the human learning. No wonder, the National Policy of Education in its draft, has called for an inclusive and integrated approach to art education, by seeking it to be a



part of all the disciplines of learning – languages, mathematics, sciences and others. It is indeed a step in the right direction. Before one engages to specialisation in a discipline of art, it is important to develop ‘sense and sensitivity’ to an engagement with art. This process has to start from the early childhood learning. Further, scientific evidences and neurological researches have

gone to prove the role of art education in bringing effective synergy between the right brain and left-brain faculties, and to facilitate the power of synaesthesia of the brain. Thus, art education, both directly and indirectly, promotes all creative faculties of mind and to help the learners to engage with more innovative thinking. It is also indicated through a survey that many Nobel Prize winners appear to be practicing music much better than the general public. The words of Pythagoras, the great mathematician, goes to prove this point with clarity. “There is geometry in the humming of the strings and there is poetry in the spacing of the spheres.”

As integral to all forms of learning, art education has the capacity to activate all forms of intelligence- visual, musical, kinaesthetic, naturalistic and others. Pedagogical exercises need to be revamped to bring home this inclusivity and integration, so that the thought





dynamics of younger kids blossom with the ability to appreciate the unity in nature. Further, in a consumerist world, where every thought, meaning and product is dissected into their micro-existential level to see their utility, there is increasing evidence of lack of empathy, compassion, aesthetic sense and appreciation of both the unity as well as the diversity.

Art education is bound to elevate the thought dynamics to a more humanistic level and promote the above faculties along with the ethical considerations they deserve.

The objectives of art education should therefore have a paradigm shift:

- To understand and appreciate the diversity of the universe, and see the aesthetic architecture of nature.
- To empower the human mind to be more humanistic, empathetic, compassionate, nature friendly and expressive.
- To see the existence and inter-play of beauty of thoughts, concepts and processes as the undercurrent of all disciplines of learning.
- To understand and develop art as a self-engaging exercise for personal growth to celebrate cosmic exuberance and derive the joy of existence.
- To engage with art as an instrument of powerful interaction with community for cultural excellence and enhanced social consciousness.

One does hope that the New Policy of Education not only drives home the new perspectives to art education, but provides the much-needed freedom to schools to work in context. It is equally important to educate the parents and stakeholders for the benefits of this inclusive approach, to make them understand the words of Rabindranath Tagore about art - "What is art? It is the response of an individual's creative soul to the call of the real." ■



Growth of Institutions Through Teacher Excellence

HAMSA VENUGOPAL

Managing Director, New Baldwin International School, Bengaluru.



Hamsa Venugopal is the Managing Director of New Baldwin International School, Bengaluru. She has an MBA from University of Cambridge, London and, has 6 years of experience as a Research Analyst on Content Development for Kindergarten and Junior School. Her areas of expertise include teacher training, faculty development, management and Human Resources. Hamsa is the recipient of the 'Entrepreneur of the Year 2019' award for Women Education, by Academy of Universal Global Peace (USA).



● Who or what motivated you to get into the field of teaching?

The seed was sown very early in my life as I have parents who are great teachers. My parents are educationists and, growing in that environment with the two great people in my life, I wanted to follow their footsteps. I had decided very early that I would dedicate myself to be with students and make a difference in their lives. I want to give back to the community which has given me so much.

● As one of the key members in the leadership team of your school, what are some of the major challenges faced by you?

The major challenges faced by me is to encourage teachers not to resist innovation, and make them technology friendly.

Another challenge is to educate the parents to allow their children enjoy activity-based education in the primary and middle school level. The child should make his/her school life memorable.

● **In the current education scenario where artificial intelligence is taking over classrooms, what is the role of a teacher?**

We are in India, the second highest populated country in the world. The idea of giving quality education to all is the greatest challenge.

I am for Artificial Intelligence. It will be a great way to assist teachers. Teachers have to handle many responsibilities like evaluation, grading, setting of question papers, creating mark sheets and tracking the performance of every student. If anyone can minimise the above mentioned work, the teachers can concentrate on teaching, quality course development and skill development.

● **How important are teacher training programmes, in the betterment of teachers' proficiencies?**

Teacher training programmes are important factors to reach educational excellence. I am very convinced that the best way to take my institution to the next level is to provide excellent teachers' training programme. I am committed to doing this.

Every year and many times during the year, we provide opportunities for training our teachers.

I am very convinced that the best way to take my institution to the next level is to provide excellent teachers' training programme.

As professional development for teachers is important, it is become a necessity. These programmes have helped our teachers to become better in knowledge, teaching skills and innovation, that the learning curve of the students have become better.

Professional development programmes have helped our admin teams to become better and efficient administrators.

As I travel extensionally to study the education systems across the length and breadth of the globe, I impart the 'new' learn with my staff. I also collaborate with the right-thinking people in order to help our teachers become more skilled. So academic and non-academic trainings happen throughout the year.

● How can schools help children to prepare for the future?

We are at a time in history that rote learning and learning by repetition is not the order of the day.

Today, information is available at our fingertips - from media, school, parents, etc. The students need to develop critical thinking to analyse and evaluate what they see, hear, read, etc. This will equip them to face the future after their school life. Critical thinking also is thinking independently. It will help our students to make the right choices and decisions.

To enhance critical thinking in students, the teachers are asked to prepare lesson plans that enables the teachers into critical thinking, projects given and discussions that happens in the classrooms are tremendous ways to leading our students into critical thinking. These projects and lessons teach students how to agree and disagree respectively helping many students to come up with varied conclusions without being threatened to know if they are wrong or right for that matter.

We have adapted certain methods to teach our students to be able critical thinkers.

- We place questions on the notice boards
- We keep a response box
- Based on the responses received, the teacher divides the class into 'for and against' groups and moderates the discussion thereafter. The points are put on the board.
- Questions are asked - why, where, how

This method has been very fruitful in our institution.

● What is the role of a school leader in bringing the stakeholders together?

The school leaders play an important role in bringing the stake holders together. The school is one huge organisation comprising of students, parents, the local community, the administrators, management and even local leaders. The school leader should strive towards building strong relationships with the teachers, students, parents and the management. The leaders can use their perception, knowledge and fortitude to help and motivate students to develop skills and equip them to face the future. When we have such leaders, then they are definitely bringing the stake holders together.

● **What are some ways in which a school can encourage teachers to give their fullest?**

As a leader, I am committed to bringing out the best in my teachers. Periodical training programmes and other opportunities are provided to equip them to bring out the best in them.

Encouraging, providing and appreciating them for their contribution goes a long way.

Giving them small rewards and acknowledging them for their contribution also helps. Above all, I like to be available for my teachers always.

Values are virtues that cannot be taught but caught.

● **How important is value education today in schools?**

With the current decline in the moral values across the world, homes and classrooms are the only places our children can learn morals from. So, value education is very important. It should become the integral part of our curriculum. It should not be taught as a subject but should be incorporated into all subjects and all lessons.

Value education classes help in building a strong bond between the teacher and the student. 'Values are virtues that cannot be taught but caught'.

● **Your message for teachers and school leaders...**

To the teachers I want to quote what Mother Teresa said -

"Everyone can rise above their circumstances and achieve success if they are dedicated to and passionate about what they do."

Teachers you are a gift to the society. I congratulate you, for committing yourself to teaching. Continue to learn and be empowered to empower the society.

To my fellow leaders, let us all work together to build a society where there is justice, peace, knowledge and innovation. Let our classrooms be the spawning for future leaders, entrepreneurs, scientists and above all, good and upright citizens. ■

Adapting to 21st Century Learning Skills

PRADNYA GOKHALE | Director of Academics, Kothari Group of Schools, Pune.

Pradnya Gokhale is an electronics engineer with a Master's degree in Education, and is pursuing her PhD. She is a team member working on Innovations in Education, with IIT (Bombay). She is a British Council facilitator and has conducted more than 50 workshops on different core skills. As the west zone British Council School Ambassador, she has mentored several teachers in Action Research across India. Pradnya is the recipient of the 'Gaurav Shikshak Puskar' by Schools Chapter of Azam Campus.



She has been the Principal of MKNS and Head of Curriculum Development and Teacher training at Kaveri Gifted Education Centre in Pune. She is currently the Director of Academics of Kothari Group of Schools, Pune.



What or who inspired you to come into the education space?

It was teaching academic subjects to the international tennis students of my brother-in-law's tennis academy that actually got me interested in teaching and in the education field. My basic background is engineering and my first assignment was with an electronic design firm. But on the request of my brother-in-law, I started helping him out when I had free time and I realised I was enjoying the task of teaching the students more than my design job. Then, there was no looking back.



As one of the key members of the leadership team of your school, what are the major challenges faced by you?

The school that I head is big in size and it is a challenge to handle 115 teachers, 1800 students and their parents. According to me, human

resource development is most challenging and daunting in all professions. But if one chalks out the mission and goals along with the team, life is much simpler.

Our school is in a true sense secular, and therefore managing the school calendar looking at everybody's sentiments was a great challenge. Secondly, the discipline is nowadays an issue and expecting high standards of discipline is very difficult to achieve. Being a true academician, I felt there was a dire need in training the teachers and giving them an exposure of newer pedagogies. My enthusiasm of teaching and learning matched the energy of some, probably 50% of the staff. But the rest were reluctant to work. The parents who actually spent quality time with their wards did understand our struggle of achieving high standards. But the rest of the parents who had no time to spend with the children felt the school not doing enough for their wards.



What according to you is the greatest misconception of teachers that people have?

Most of the people think that the teachers choose this profession not by choice but because they are not worthy of anything better. Secondly, they feel that this is the least paid profession.



How important is parent-teacher-school relationship in the development of a child?

If any school has to flourish and succeed in its vision and mission, all the stake holders should join in and work toward a common goal. So it is important for the school to involve the parents at various instances and all should unanimously work for the betterment of the child. The learning gaps for the child should be understood by the teacher and the parent. So that with joined effort of both, the child will be able to learn.



How important is it, in today's generation, to develop a positive temperament in children?

The gurukul concept in Vedic era instilled in the children the love and respect for their guru. As they left home, the guru was their whole and sole and so, they had respect for their teachers. The law of nature is that knowledge would only flow if the gurus are placed at a higher pedestal. It is equally important for the gurus to live up to the respect. The positive attitude is bound to come. In my opinion, the positive attitude towards school should be imbibed by the parents at home. If the parents laugh and scorn at the teachers, the wards would imitate the same. The teachers in turn will feel hurt and

not give their cent percent. A negative environment in the school is a barrier for learning.



‘Safety drills are very important to be taught to children in schools’.
Please comment.

Safety of the child is utmost important when he/she is at school. So, basic infrastructural safety standards should be maintained at school. In order to develop to their fullest - the mind, body, and soul of the learner, one should adhere to, to ensure learners can be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve and make a positive contribution to society.

How to be safe should be taught to the students when they are at school so that in case of any emergency, they would be prepared for it.



What do you think are the important factors for the professional growth of a teacher?

- First and foremost, the teacher should have willingness to change and adopt and, adapt to the 21st century of learning.
- If she/he continues to be the frog in the well croaking loudly, all the student will leave her/him alone in the well to fend for herself/himself.
- One should be able to identify their own strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
- Should be alert and keep abreast with newer pedagogies.



Your message to young, aspiring teachers...

First, the most important message for aspiring teachers is - you should learn to love children, be patient and love your profession. It is needless to say, ‘love yourself first’.

You will at all stages, wear multiple hats - that of a mother, a counsellor, a facilitator, an assessor, sometimes even a nurse. So do not shy away from all this. Apart from this, have the following goals:

- Set high expectations for student achievement.
- Use the most-recent educational technology.
- Plan instructional strategies.
- Apply higher-order thinking skills.
- Use cooperative learning.
- Apply classroom management techniques.

Remember, respect is got not asked for. ■



Learning Through Movement

Rashed Hashem

PERSON OF
THE MONTH



Dr. Rashed Hashem is an inspiring teacher from the United Arab Emirates who has dedicated his life in improving learning through non-traditional methods.

When Dr. Rashed was young, the use of physical violence as punishment was a common practise. The use of corporal punishment in the field of education sensitised him to become a teacher who would have a more patient approach with his learners. He completed his doctorate degree and became a physical education and health teacher at Al Moatasem Public School for Boys, Abu Dhabi, which is close to a nomadic tribal settlement.

Dr. Rashed's Work

Dr. Rashed found out that there were very few educated people in the settlement and in several cases, customs and traditions were the stumbling blocks in children's

education and their integration with the community. Moreover, he realised that there was a general lack of awareness on how to deal with students properly. Since then, Dr. Rashed started making several contributions to the teaching community.

- He created a non-traditional learning environment in the school which helps students improve their learning levels through their actions.
- He is known to use his experience in sports to create innovative methods of physical therapies for students with disabilities.
- Dr. Rashed has established a laboratory for students who suffer from hyperactivity, where he uploads the entire curriculum on computer

devices that are stationed in front of treadmills, so that the students can exercise and learn.

Not stopping at his vision on expanding learning, Dr. Rashed has also established multiple innovative, first of its kind non-traditional educational laboratories in the United Arab Emirates. Some of the other innovative methods that were invented by Dr. Rashed include improving renewable energy, indoor gardens and health nutrition. These initiatives helped contribute to the improvement of the school's achievement in 2018.

Smart Carpet Laboratory

Dr. Rashed began promoting 'learning with motion' through an interactive digital platform called the 'Smart Carpet Laboratory'. Here, the entire curriculum is uploaded on a projector that is hung from the ceiling.

The Smart Carpet Lab is aimed at developing learning through movement. The syllabus is introduced to the students in the form of evaluative, applied and interactive activities, to help the learners with expertise and knowledge.

Outcome

- As a result of the efforts put in by Dr. Rashed, the students from the Al Moatasem Public School for Boys have achieved in various fields. In support of the Emirates Strategy for Youth Empowerment, about 90 students and teachers from the school participated in an annual tournament in which they won multiple medals.



Smart Carpet Laboratory

- Dr. Rashed has published several international conference papers on teaching using technology and sports.
- He has also delivered 18 scientific papers at international conferences.
- He is the first teacher from the United Arab Emirates to be appointed as the Goodwill Ambassador of the United Nations.

Awards and Recognition

Dr. Rashed won the Mohammed bin Zayed Award for the Best Gulf Teacher in 2018 and received the title of being the first teacher from UAE to receive a master's degree and a doctorate degree in Special Needs & Sports. He was one of the Top 50 shortlisted teachers for the 2019's Global Teachers Prize. ■

Credits – Zayed Centre for Mind Creation
YouTube video

globalteacherprize.org

EDUCATION NEWS

Major changes in CBSE board exams for 2020

The applicants who will be appearing for the 2020 CBSE board exam will notice some major changes in the exam pattern.

The Central Board of Secondary Excellence (CBSE) has decided to introduce internal assessment in every subject. These assessments will facilitate into revising the structure of question paper for the board exam.

The board will give more weightage to subjects like Maths, Languages and Political Science for the internal assessment. The questions will be more objective type. CBSE has even released sample paper and the marking scheme for 2020 on their official website. Some of the changes that will be reflected

in 2020 are -

- 25% out of 100 marks will be multiple-choice questions (MCQ) for the class 12 board exam.
- The number of internal options in a question will be increased by 33%.
- Internal assessment for the subjects maths, languages and political science will be for 10 marks.
- For English, 20 marks has been mapped for Assessment for Speaking and Listening (ASL), which will be conducted by external examiners.
- For class 10 board exams, the 20 marks internal



assessment has been divided into 4 parts:

- (1) Periodic Test
- (2) Multiple Assessment
- (3) Portfolio and
- (4) Subject Enrichment Activities.

Goa to impart lessons on harmony and brotherhood in schools

Schools and colleges in Goa will soon be imparting lessons on inculcating the spirit of harmony and brotherhood as a part of the civic responsibilities. The grant-in-scheme called 'Marg Suraksha' has been introduced by the government in this regard. According to the scheme, schools and colleges will have to establish civic clubs

that promote harmony and the spirit of brotherhood among students. The activities will be transcending religious, linguistic, regional and sectional boundaries. This will promote the feeling of oneness and care, to respect and love each other while teaching the students about harmonious co-existence with and others. This scheme is also aimed at promoting

awareness on road safety.

As per the circular, the clubs created for this purpose will have to prepare literature and materials, including



circulars and printables, on topics like civic responsibilities, citizenship, etc. The clubs will also have to organise seminars, conferences, talks and lectures on the topic.

'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' to be celebrated by CBSE

The CBSE (Central Board of Secondary Education) schools will be participating in the 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat' programme, which was launched on Ekta Diwas, on the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to foster national integration through a coordinated mutual engagement process between States, Union Territories, Central Ministries, Educational Institutions and general public through linguistic, literary, cultural, sports, tourism and other forms of people-to-people exchanges.

This activity by CBSE is said to be held throughout the year 2020. The students of these schools will soon have to learn 100 sentences in a language other than their mother tongue and English.

The exercise is done as a part of the board's initiative to celebrate the unity in diversity.

For the purpose of cultural integration, the board has paired States and Union Territories in groups of two, and in some cases three, where each participating school in the programme will become familiar with the culture and heritage of their partner state through various programmes and activities suggested

by the CBSE. The pairing is said to continue till 30 June, 2020.

The students who take part in the programme are said to receive certificates, badges, appreciation letter, etc. The schools will have to maintain a record of all the activities that are carried out as a part of the programme and upload the same with suitable pieces of evidence on the CBSE portal at the end of each month.

The main objectives of the initiative, as per CBSE circular, are –

- a.** To CELEBRATE the Unity in Diversity of our Nation.
- b.** To MAINTAIN and STRENGTHEN the fabric of emotional bonds between people of our country.
- c.** To PROMOTE the spirit of national integration through

a deep and structured engagement between all Indian States and Union territories through a year-long planned engagement between States.

d. To SHOWCASE the rich heritage and culture, customs and traditions of either state for enabling people to understand and appreciate diversity thus fostering a sense of common identity.

e. To CREATE an environment which promotes learning between States by sharing best practices and experience. ■



Over 200 teachers attend Educators' Meet, Kuwait

TheTeacher.in along with the IITIIM Alumni Association joined hands with The Indian Community School, Kuwait (ICSK) to organise an Educators' Meet for the teachers in Kuwait. It was the first overseas Educator's Meet by TheTeacher.in. The theme was happiness curriculum. The keynote speaker for the meet was former Director Academics CBSE, G. Balasubramanian. The Principal and Senior Administrator Dr. Binumon extended a warm welcome to the keynote speaker, G. Balasubramanian, all the guests, senior educators and teachers present there.

Other eminent guests present at the event were Mr. Azharuddin Amir Mohammed Honourable Secretary, Board of Trustees ICSK, Mr. Ashish Jain and Mr. Bhushan Joshi, of the IITIIM Alumni Association, Kuwait and Mr. Giri Balasubramaniam, CEO and Quizmaster Greycaps. Senior Principals and Vice Principals from reputed schools in Kuwait were present at the Educators' meet.

Mr. Giri Balasubramaniam, better known by his stage name 'PICKBRAIN', delivered the introductory speech throwing light on why it's important to celebrate teachers. Ms. Rashmi Marian Furtado, Co-founder and Senior Editor, 'TheTeacher.in', spoke about the vision of TheTeacher.in and welcomed all the educators to be a part of TheTeacher.in community.



Known for his innovative methodologies and advocacy of continuous learning in education, G. Balasubramanian addressed the teachers on Happiness curriculum. He spoke of the importance of a happy teacher. 'Only a happy teacher with a warm smile, can help implement happiness curriculum', was one of the insights he shared. From the ocean of experience that G. Balasubramanian has,

his inputs were invaluable. He had the crowd at the edge of their seats with his wit and humour, and priceless insights. The sight was that of a classroom of teachers eager to learn and try their best to create a high impact learning environment for students.



G. Balasubramanian fondly known as Bala-ji, is a storyteller in the disguise of a teacher. He referred to a quote that read, “Happiness is your nature. It is not wrong to desire it. What is wrong is seeking it outside when it is inside” and elaborated on the same. He said the contention that happiness is the true nature of human existence makes it clear that there is no point in seeking it outside. Possibly, one would have to unravel the true nature of the self that resides within. The most important exercise of human life, therefore, appears to be self-realisation, to find one’s true nature – the state of happiness. He also



spoke of some of his life experiences from when he was a teacher himself. He captivated the teachers with his stories and led them on a roller coaster of emotions from happy to thoughtful, exhilarating to introspective. He ended his session by explaining the true meaning of happiness and how the teachers can make their classes happy and learning happier.

TheTeacher.in which has conducted many Educators’ Meets in cities across India like Jamshedpur, Kotagiri-Ooty and Hyderabad found its international debut at Kuwait, hugely successful thanks to IITIIM Alumni Association joined hands with The Indian Community School, Kuwait (ICSK). TheTeacher.in intends to organise many more such meets across India and abroad providing opportunities for teachers to listen and absorb knowledge from eminent people like G. Balasubramanian. The vision of TheTeacher.in behind having such Educators’ Meets is to create enriching experiences for teachers. Kuwait truly was one such experience. ■

The Editorial Team

GREEN SCHOOL

The 'Waterbank' School

Uaso Nyiro Primary School, Kenya

The families that live in the larger part of Kenya deal with floods for a few weeks, followed by several months of severe drought. But the major problem faced by the community in and around these areas is water. It is not efficiently captured, filtered or stored. Due to the water scarcity faced in these semi-arid regions of Kenya, people living here suffer from issues such as ill-health and starvation.

With the opening of the Uaso Nyiro Primary school - Kenya's first of its kind education centre, it provided a relief to the community by supporting and providing water during the months of drought and helped them to overcome some of their problems. The school harvests rainwater during the course of the rainy season, in turn helping transform the drought-affected areas.

The Beginnings

Located in Segera, Laikipia County, the Uaso Nyiro Primary School was constructed by the Zeitz Foundation. The school was designed by British architects Jane Harrison and David Turnbull, who are also the founders of the non-profit organisation called PITCHAfrica. PITCHAfrica is a US-based social enterprise, which focuses on promoting high-yielding community integrated rainwater harvesting initiatives.

It was designed and conceptualised at a low cost scheme, where the building was built using local materials and labours.

What's in a name?

The Uaso Nyiro Primary School is also known as 'Water Bank School', as it is constructed with the idea of ensuring



that the students and families living near the school have clean water to drink and healthy food to eat. The school also aims to utilise community resources for the benefit of all the pupils, as they believe and work towards the motto - 'Hard work pays.'

Initiatives

Water Harvesting: The school saves up to 350,000 litres of water every year through its rainwater harvesting technique! To achieve this, the school has transformed its classrooms into a water harvesting programme in which the architects designed the classrooms as square blocks to increase the area to harvest rainwater.

The rainwater collected on the roof falls onto a yard where it goes to a filtration system made of clay. The clay filtration system is also fixed with sawdust and coated with a solution made of silver, which acts as an antibiotic.

Solar-powered filtration system:

The school building is installed with solar-powered pumps, tanks and filter banks which help filter large quantities of water stored in the reservoir underneath the central courtyard, which is pumped daily to meet the peoples demands.

Safety and protection: The school is surrounded by a tall enclosure wall. The perimeter wall not only protects the school, it keeps wild animals like elephants away and protects from strong winds. Apart from this, the wall also provides a 'micro-climate', allowing the school to work as both indoor and outdoor environment.

The school is naturally lit and ventilated, and furthermore does not consume energy.

Conservation: The school conducts several conservation programmes such as growing its own food resources and having a vegetable garden. It carries out training

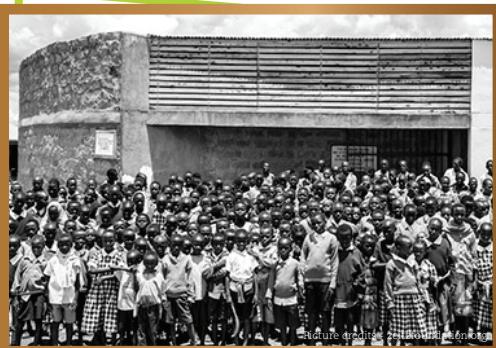


Vegetable Garden



programme for animal conservation, beehive and honey conservation, community agriculture, reforestation and cooking-fuel conservation.

Serves many purposes: Apart from providing classes, the school serves several purposes like a church, a performance space, centre of environmental practice, communal space for a community workshop and a courtyard theatre for the environment-based plays. It also addresses and shares the knowledge on sanitation, health and education.



Awards:

The Uaso Nyiro Primary school had been named a finalist in the 2013 Buckminster Fuller Challenge for socially responsible design. It has also won the international distinction as the recipient of 'The Greenest School on Earth 2013' Award by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) in recognition of the positive social and environmental impacts.

With the green initiative showcased by the Uaso Nyiro Primary School, it has resulted in the reduction of illness and malnutrition, and empowering the community to learn about health, nutrition and water. The school has truly lived up to its motto where through hard work anything is possible ■

Source: pa-moja.com

fastcompany.com

Flipped Classroom

The New Lecture Paradigm

ABHILASHA PANDEY | Teacher, Kendriya Vidyalaya, INS Shivaji, Pune.

Abhilasha Pandey is an educationist and a teacher for the past 14 years. She has been working with Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) since 2014. Currently, Abhilasha is posted at KV, INS Shivaji, Lonavala, Pune.

An avid reader, Abhilasha is interested in educational psychology, pedagogy and neuroscientific research pertaining to teaching- learning.



Attentiveness of a student in classroom setting is a nebulous concept & dependent on multiple factors, which are - subject content, teaching methodology, conceptual development level, peer group, etc.; most of which can effectively be managed by the teacher; except student's individual; or to be more precise, biological limitations. A 2016 article by Neil A. Bradbury discusses that the attention span of most students is approximately 15 minutes. The retention of material delivered beyond this span declines remarkably.

Modern Neuroscientific research provides two explanations for this. The first one is based on the concept of 'Cognitive Overload'. Every time a new information is presented to our brain, multiple neurons become active and use huge amounts of energy, resulting in fatigue. This goes on till the 'overload' leads to exhaustion, wherein the brain drops everything and we fail to remember anything at all. Next, this information is uncertainly encoded in our working memory, which itself can retain information for less than 10 minutes. Imagine a shallow water

can, filled with water and kept on a seesaw! Unless there is a consolidation followed by retrieval leading to reconsolidation, involving forming of synapses, the information remains imbalanced. Does this mean that the 40-minute classroom lecture paradigm has become obsolete and ineffective?

Probably not. A teacher in the contemporary scenario is better equipped than ever. She has technology, networking and neuroscientific research. These three tools can revive the lecture mode while ensuring that each of the 40/50 minutes of the classroom time is fully enthused with learning in terms of comprehension & retention. How?

Before going into that, let us discuss the relevance of classroom lectures in a scenario where videos, audios, animations and rich content are easily accessible to students online. This is apt enough to introduce the topic, build a fundamental understanding of concepts and allows the child to study at his/her own pace. And it is definitely not 40 minutes long.

Though research today abounds with techniques, I shall focus on first of three: Flipped classroom, Blended Learning and Interleaving.

Flipped classroom not merely changes the location of stage, allowing the

teacher to be available to the student when and where the child is comfortable to learn; but it frees up time. Time is the most precious element for a teacher rushing to complete a syllabus while simultaneously ensuring learning outcomes for the learners.

The Act I of flipped classroom is conducted at home. With the help of a prerecorded lecture of 15-20 minutes, the teacher can introduce the subject content to students at his or her home. How is it advantageous?

1. The content is brief and precise.
2. It begins and ends within specific attention span of students.
3. Unlike a live lecture, student has an option of going back on content which (s)he has missed or not understood. The pace of lectures is controlled by the learner and hence concepts can be revisited to ensure maximum comprehension.
4. A familiar face and audio input can help build a connection at a level that supersedes a stranger delivering lecture in video tutorials. Research supports that students learn better from teachers they like.
5. Questions that remain unasked or unanswered due to limitations of time or hesitation may be noted down by students and can be cleared in the classroom.

The Act II is in the classroom. The primary advantage here is of



time. Freed of introductory lecture, teachers can easily use available time to help learners work through their doubts and queries. While collective doubts can be dealt via interactive lecture mode, the individual doubts can be cleared via peer interaction or by the teachers themselves.

The distinctive advantage are -

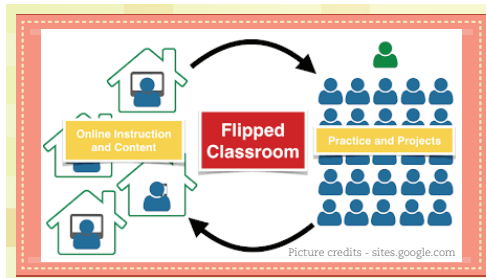
- **For slow learners:**

In a classroom, for every question asked, there are only 4-5 hands raised to answer. Even if the question is “Is it clear?”. Teachers cannot afford to wait for the ‘end of lesson test’ to assess learning outcome for each learner. Freed of confines of stage, teachers are able to move around the classroom, identify individual learning gaps, fill in gaps and plan teaching methodologies accordingly.

- **For fast learners**

Available time can be utilised for reinforcing concepts by letting fast learners assist in bridging of conceptual gaps of their counterparts. HOTS (Higher Order Thinking Skills) questions which are given for homework can now be given during freed up class time to further enhance critical thinking and application skills. Further, as students struggle to master HOTS, teachers can witness and guide them.

So how is flipped classroom helpful? It combines the advantages of pace and accessibility of an online learning platform with the emotional and individualised connection of



traditional classroom paradigm. Settings are virtual but interactions are real.

Aim of a teacher's job is to do away with her role in teaching learning process, making the learning process independent for learner. Besides being a more efficient teaching technique, flipped classroom accelerates this process by helping the learner understand his/her pace, identify weaknesses and be responsible for his/her own learning. The role of teacher becomes restricted to helping students only where (s)he struggles.

As this process occurs in the classroom, supportive presence of teacher helps overcome fear of failure. A word of caution however, the goal is to make learners independent; hence the urge to rush with help should be curbed strictly by teachers. Struggles are integral part of learning process. Making mistakes helps one identify them and this identification is a key step towards developing perfection. ■

EXPERTS SPEAK



Rama Ranganathan is the founder Principal of National Hill View Public School, Bangalore. She recently handed over the reins, after an enriching and fulfilling seventeen years, answering her calling to reach out and encourage creativity and nurture the quality of excellence among teachers and students alike, and prepare competent and able leaders and heads of institutions!



She has taught at all levels from pre-school to higher secondary classes. She is a teacher of English and History with over thirty years of valuable experience in education. She has been appointed by CBSE as a member of the Inspection Committee for Affiliation of new schools. She has been a mentor to schools across Bangalore for implementation of the CBSE Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation system. She has also held appointments as the Centre Superintendent for the conduct of the CBSE All India Secondary School Examinations and Head Examiner for evaluation.

Rama Ranganathan is also actively engaged in teacher training with a special focus on effective adherence to performance management for heads of schools and quality systems and creative teaching skills for teachers.

As an effective counsellor, she has been offering students, teachers, parents and others the opportunity to find the desired solutions to their problems through positive interaction, with a high degree of confidentiality!

“

What are the skills that need to be taught to students at their primary, intermediate and secondary school level?

At the primary school level, language skills developed through introduction to environmental studies, which includes humanities and social science, and general, physical and earth science, equips students with a wide range of vocabulary and language structure that enables them to read and write words and sentences, to comprehend textual matter and understand questions and to answer them appropriately, as also solve elementary mathematical operations. Mathematics also, at this stage, is primarily a language of quantities and its application in the basic operations in daily life.

Education is a continuum from pre-school to higher education and beyond! Early years of education form the very foundation of all learning for life. Pre-reading and pre-writing skills, and basic communication and social skills acquired at the Pre-School level, along with basic literacy and numeracy skills, will go a long way towards developing advanced academic and life skills through school years and beyond.

This integrated approach sets the stage for building all the life skills which the students require through scholastic years, college and university education and beyond. Some of the most essential skills developed at the Primary School level include:

1. Communication – listening and responding.
2. Creativity- Imagination and expression.
3. Curiosity and wonder
4. Experimentation, observation and making inferences
5. Critical thinking- questioning, reasoning and problem solving
6. Attention and concentration
7. Punctuality
8. Working independently
9. Time and resource management
10. Understanding money and its value
11. Collaboration and cooperation
12. Courtesy and empathy
13. Sharing and caring
14. Patience, trust and self-confidence
15. Self-respect and self-love
16. Care and respect for own belongings & surroundings
17. Personal grooming, health and hygiene
18. Physical and mental agility
19. Adaptability
20. Discipline and adhering to general and safety rules
21. Respect for age and authority
22. Decision making and taking responsibility

Meaningful learning is an essential study skill, best developed at this stage.

Meaningful learning is often mistaken for rote learning, in which one just memorises information without understanding. Whereas, it involves associative learning and relating to own experiences and thus encourages research and enables the student to apply active learning techniques such as concept mapping and hands-on tasks to understand information. Meaningful learning takes longer than rote memorisation and is typically retained longer. This skill is applied at all further scholastic levels and in higher education for review of facts with clarification.

Developing metacognition skills at the higher primary level leads to higher academic outcomes.

Start with the Think – Pair – Share technique. Help students to analyse their performance and to set realistic goals. Give clear, step by step, procedures and explain their benefits. Encourage students to keep a diary record of important and interesting learning points for reference. Allow them time to reflect on what they have learnt and the challenges they faced.

By the time students are out of Primary School, they would have developed the foundations of their personality. They would have become fairly independent in the way they function at home and at school following rules, laid down, with understanding and reasoning and believing in the safety zone they provide.

Hence the role of the Primary School Teacher is paramount!

Life skills development continues all through the scholastic years, primary school level to secondary school level. These life skills enhance positive personality traits in students, which reflect in their academic performance as well as in their interpersonal relationships in their professional and personal lives, later. They grow up to be balanced individuals with the emotional strength to deal with, success and victory as well as loss, defeat and failure, and to offer support and reassurance and help to solve problems. ■

Answer for ‘Skills to be developed at middle school and secondary school levels’, in the next issue.

Quiz of the Month

1. Which of the following countries did Maradona play football for?
 - a. Brazil
 - b. Argentina
2. Which of these countries hosted a cricket tournament called 'Nidahas Cup' in 2018?
 - a. Sri Lanka
 - b. West Indies
3. Which football club does Lionel Messi play for?
 - a. F.C. Barcelona
 - b. Liverpool F.C.
4. In which continent is the Kalahari Desert located?
 - a. Africa
 - b. Asia
5. With which country would you associate the 'rice paddy art'?
 - a. Russia
 - b. Japan
6. Who was the last Viceroy of India?
 - a. Sir Mark Cubbon
 - b. Lord Mountbatten
7. Which of these companies is named after a river?
 - a. Nokia
 - b. Samsung
8. Which of the following brands has a subsidiary called 'Flik Flak', targeted at children?
 - a. Rolex
 - b. Swatch
9. Which country would you be in, if you were at the Brandenburg Gate?
 - a. England
 - b. Germany
10. Vienna is the capital of which country?
 - a. Vietnam
 - b. Austria

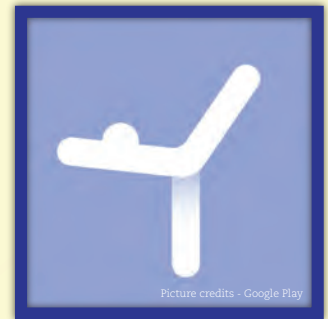
we RECOMMEND

Apps

DAILY YOGA

A teacher's job requires a lot of running around, preparation, patience and concentration. While it is rewarding at the end of the day, it is also tiresome and stressful.

Teachers may get the time and the opportunities to exercise their mind. But, when comes to physical fitness, they fall behind. For the same, the app 'Daily Yoga', comes to the rescue.



The App

Yoga does not only help us with our body, it also helps us with our mind. With multiple health benefits, yoga is also known to boost up the brain.

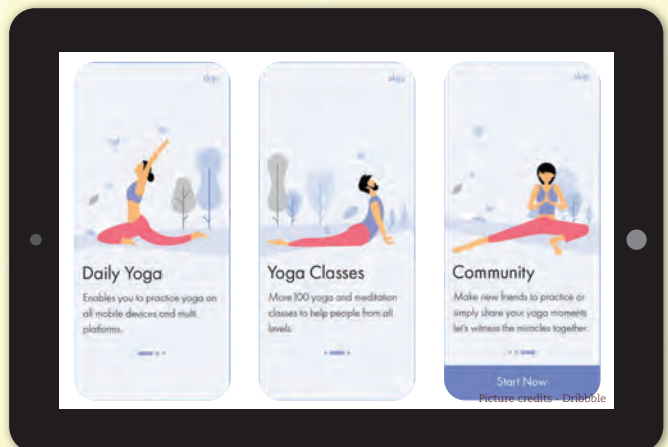
Daily Yoga is a true yoga application which is for both the beginners as well as the trained ones.

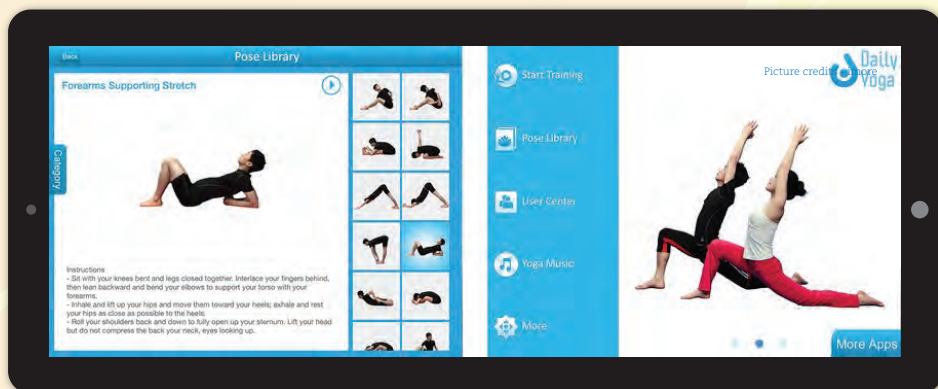
The app offers yoga courses, meditation classes and more than 250 guided yoga postures and asanas. The app mainly focuses on yoga for better sleep, stress management and weight loss. Altogether, there are nearly 20 experts who try to make it easier and convenient for users to practice yoga.

The app also keeps a record of all the practices that are done within the app.

Features

- There are more than 250+ yoga and fitness sessions, meditation soundtracks, 500+ yoga poses.
- There are live voice instructions.
- New contents are added each month.





- There are three different intensities for yoga.

Direction to use the application:

The user needs to sign up with an email id or Facebook login ID. After signing in, the app will give full access to all the features. At first, the app will ask if the user is a beginner, intermediate or advanced user. Later, it will present with a list of potential plans and sessions.

Navigations

Navigation of the app takes the user to 'home', 'exercises', 'audio options', 'community' and 'settings/profile'. The app has also a 'search' option where the user can view the catalog of exercises and asanas.

There is a timing section – 10,15,20 minutes so that the user can decide on how long he/she can fit in his/her schedule.

The app is available both on Apple Store and Google Play Store.

Reviews

The application has been voted as the 'Best Yoga App of 2015/2016/2017/2019' by Healthline. The app has also been recommended by 'The Wall Street Journal'. ■

Answers for Quiz of the Month - December 2019

- | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| 1. CDC | 5. Judaism | 8. Catillus |
| 2. France | 6. Naresh Goyal | 9. Puma |
| 3. Moscow | 7. Dadabhai Naoroji | 10. IMF |
| 4. Mikhail Gorbachev | | |

Game-Based Learning

Changing Classroom Dynamics



VARSHA PRASAD
Editor, TheTeacher.in

The process of teaching and learning has evolved a lot today. From the traditional classroom systems, we have moved on to a more tech-supported teaching methodology, to cater to the students of this day and age. An interesting trend in education today, is gamification and game-based learning.

What is fascinating is how play and games have been part of every species' learning process. It is an innate trait that is engrained in the DNA of all species. Research shows that animals learn to survive in the wild, through play. While it seems like they are 'playing', they are actually learning valuable lessons. For example, when we watch lion or tiger cubs pinning each other down on TV, it might look like they are having a fun time. But, these young cubs are learning to attack, tackle and survive in the wild. It is no different when it comes to humans. 'Play' is an integral part of learning. Children learn through playing – it can be in the form of role plays, where they imitate and play 'teachers', 'mothers' or others they see in their everyday life. At a preschool level, children are taught concepts through play. When they are taught to clap, jump, skip and hop, they are being taught to control their movements and body coordination. The popular game, 'Simon says' is nothing but teaching children the concept of attention and following instructions.

Today, with the help of game-based learning, classrooms have changed, keeping children involved and interested. According to researches, clubbing games and learning together have benefits that are manifold. The learners are engaged and are in a comfort zone as the method of learning is play. They even retain more information as there is a reward at the end of it. Through game-based learning, the context of the game, the game setting, the rules and regulations, and the opponents become the teacher. There is also an aspect of 'experiential learning' here, as the child learns through experiences acquired through the game played. Game-based learning is here to change the classroom dynamics.

Are we looking at a future where game-based learning and gamification will take over all other kinds of teaching methodologies in class?

Varsha Prasad
#ProudToBeATeacher

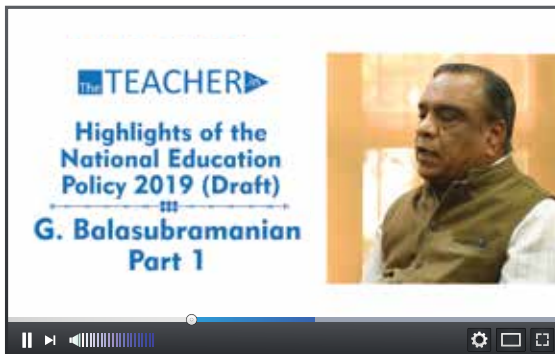
 Varsha Prasad
 varsha@greycaps.com

Varsha Prasad is leading THETEACHER.IN initiative from Greycaps, exclusively for teachers, as its Editor. She is also the Editor of TheTeacher.in magazine. It is created by Greycaps to celebrate the contributions of our teachers. She has played a vital role in creating many products, which ignite the curiosity of children, including the Global Awareness Program, also known as GAP in schools.



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- Celebrating Art & Literature

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