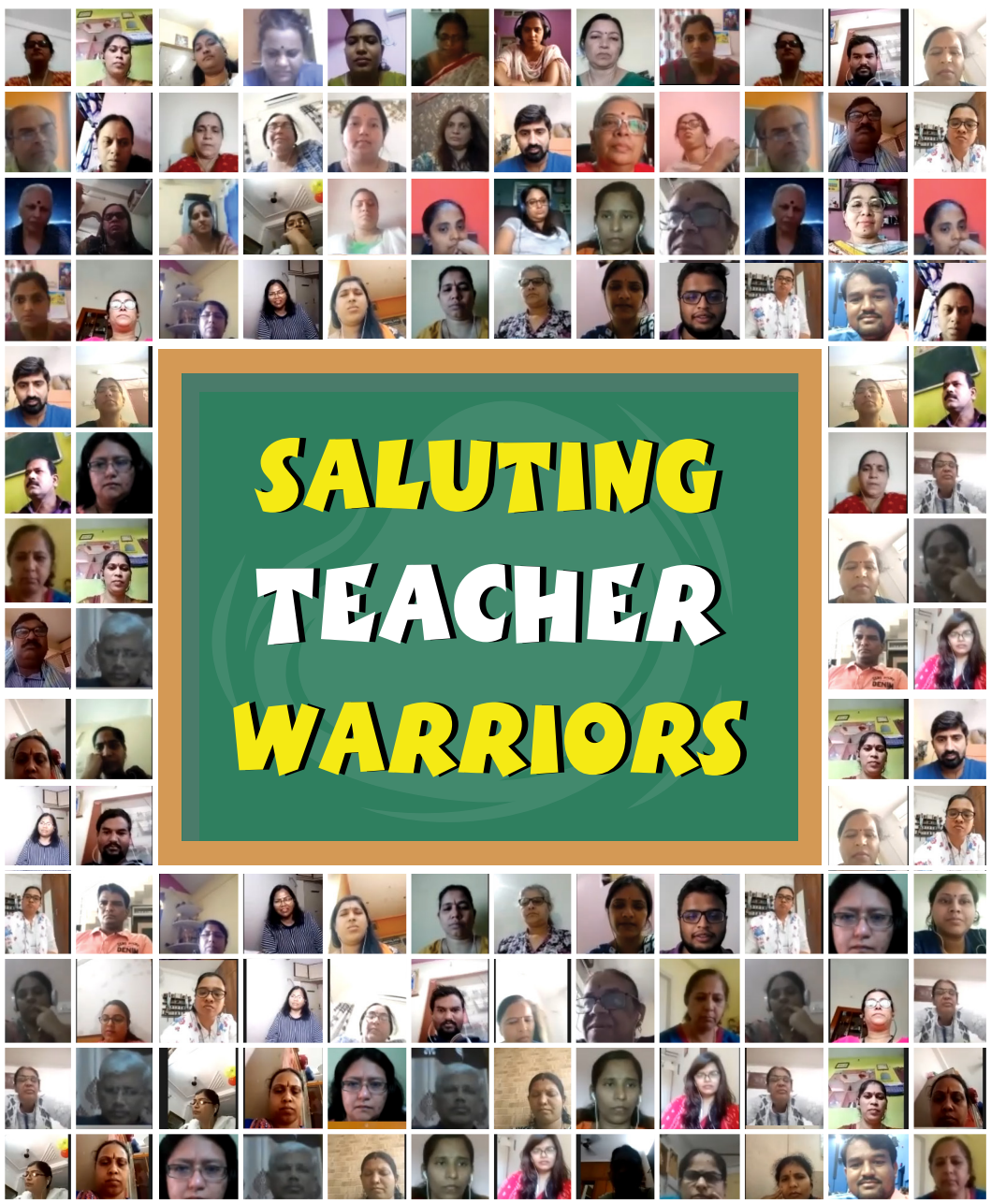


# The TEACHER.in

A Not-for-Profit initiative by Greycaps



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# In this edition

05

## Important Pedagogical Concerns Teachers Need to Address for Effective Online Learning

*G. Balasubramanian*

10

## Enabling Teachers to Perform Better

*Dr. Anitha Ramachander*

13

## Education News

15

## Exploring New Frontiers TheTeacher.in Webinars

18

## Multimodal Literacy

*Nagamani*



You can scan the code by using any free-to-download QR reader available on the App Store, Play Store and Windows Store. Wifi/Mobile data will be required.

# Teachers, you are warriors!



**RASHMI MARIAN FURTADO**  
Senior Editor, TheTeacher.in

What happens when the environment around a living being suddenly changes? Worst case scenario, the creature becomes extinct; best case scenario, it adapts! Dear teachers, it's time you go beyond your comfort zones and adapt! You are the warriors this world currently requires. Imagine a world without the right education and values. Imagine a world where no one is familiar with interpersonal skills, no one respects each other, no one has the guided education!

Covid-19, while is a pandemic, is a push that many of us required to upgrade ourselves and have the courage to take the leap of faith! In my February editorial, I had written about why educators need to upgrade themselves. A famous quote says, 'Who dares to teach, must never cease to learn!' This is the time we admit that we have a lot to learn on how to connect with our students. What we need to realise is, that we teachers are now entering their territory. The territory, they have mastered and to be with the masters in their territory, we must push ourselves to learn the ways that they already excel in.

This is a trying time for all of us, but you teachers are the only ones who can still make a great impact. Yes, you may stumble along the way. But what path is without some hurdles? Teachers you can keep all your students together. You can build an attitude of teamwork and



togetherness among your students. Remember, they naturally are bundles of energy and this time they not allowed to burn their energy by playing with their friends. Their creativity may take a hit, because they are working with their classmates on team projects and taking part in competitions.

There may be some methods that'll help us with the digital classrooms. First of all, if you are not comfortable with technology, make sure you practice with your friends, kids and colleagues. Have practice calls among yourselves and explore options on the digital platform you are using to make sure your aware of your environment. Have some ground rules established in the beginning of your class and make sure everyone follows it, including yourself. When you switch on your camera, be careful about your background. You can check your preview for the same. Have a checklist for yourself and go through it before your start your class. Have three to five minutes in the beginning of your classes to simply chitchat. Even corporate meetings today begin with friendly banter for couple of minutes. This will help remove the slumber. Look at it like a 3-minute power workout.

Some other methods to engage your students would be to have a 'Dress up day'. Fix a day and ask all your students to dress up in a

**Who dares to  
teach, must  
never cease to  
learn!**



costume for the next class. It can be something as simple as just a mask. We do understand expecting the kids to have detailed costumes at this time is unreasonable. As a teacher, you too participate in the dress up day! You can allow the students to enjoy the same for the first few minutes and then ask them to take off their masks and move on with your class.

Have a fun quiz, even 2 questions, on topics they like and don't expect you to address (say IPL) in between the class to break the monotony. It's very important to keep the children alert. You can also have weekly or fortnightly tests in the form of quizzes on the topics you have been teaching. This will ensure the students put in serious effort to learn everything you are teaching.




Schools need to continue with the programs that the students really enjoy. While you cannot provide them with a games period, make sure you continue to have their general knowledge period, values education and other activities that your students enjoy and can be implemented in the current scenario.

**Don't limit your  
challenges.  
Challenge your  
limits!**



I can't but conclude appreciating the truly amazing way in which you have all risen to this challenge, spent long hours of your summer break (was there one? you may ask) preparing lessons and yet marching on with a smile. The learning from this summer is perhaps this – Don't limit your challenges. Challenge your limits!

**Yours Positively!**

 @RashmiGreycaps  
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*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.*

# Important pedagogical concerns teachers need to address for effective online learning

## 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](http://balaspeaks.in)*



Online learning is an emerging social necessity. Given the various health concerns world over, the learners cannot get engaged in socialised learning systems for a couple of more months. That is also avoidable. Hence the learning paradigm shifts towards online teaching where the teacher becomes an enabler from a distant place; thus, a direct personalised interaction between the teacher-learner is getting marginalised. One consequent fallout will be a lack of emotional contact between the learner and the teacher as it existed a few weeks ago. This calls for a renewed relationship management pattern between the teacher and the learner. It would, therefore, be appropriate if teachers could understand the challenges they could face and adopt some simple strategies to make the learning effective, interesting and focused.

## 1. Diffusing any linearity in learning

A number of brain studies have indicated that learning is not a linear process. It is influenced by several inputs that impact, that emerge from the learner's eco-system. The duration of attention and the resultant focus could be much less than in a formal classroom as the freedom to learn in the online learning environment might add to the distractions of the learner. However, the nature of the content, the modus operandi of the pedagogy, the varieties in learning inputs, opportunities for thinking and effective tools of communication may enhance the attention and focus on the online platform. It would be ideal if the contents are captured in small learning capsules and delivered. The content has to be gravitating with diversified inputs that are based on concepts. The ability to relate to the texts on the screen will be much less as compared to the visual content. Learning, not being linear, efforts should be made to weave the content with a variety of illustrations, experiences, narratives that further the learning stimulation.

## 2. Organising the content

The content organisation for online delivery has to be articulated on the following four elements:

- Provoking the curiosity
- Element of novelty
- Gravitating attention
- Sustenance of attention and motivation



Any content that does not provoke the curiosity of the learner within the first two minutes has possibly forfeited its purpose. The presentation of the content has to provoke the sensory stimuli of the learner so that they can relate to the content. The element of novelty refers to the pedagogical novelty that would be embedded into the content, so that the learner finds a new value or purpose with this technological intervention, lest the learner identifies only its documentary value. Any novel content would certainly gravitate the attention of the learner and this is the time the online teacher exposes the learner to the universe of the content and its operational and experiential dimensions, so that the learner stands gravitated. Subsequently, the content delivery



should move to inputs that would not only sustain his attention till the successful delivery of the content, but it further motivates him or her to revisit the content for reinforcement.

### 3. Empowering Memory

In the online platform, we are not addressing to building a rote memory, but a conceptual stabilization in the memory that leads to understanding for effective application and reflection. Usually, most of the visual or auditory inputs suffer from a transient value and hence are captured only in



the short-term memory of the learner. Neuro-cognitive experiments have indicated that only a minor percentage of the cognition embedded in the short-term or volatile memory is transmitted to the long-term memory. This is usually achieved, according to the brain scientists, by following 'repetition – and spaced repetition'. Hence the online faculty should steal the opportunity of enabling the learners to engage repeatedly and at intervals revisit the concepts and their immediate universe. Further, it is claimed that 'Emotionally Competent Stimuli' have direct access to long-term memory as compared to stale packaged deliveries. So, it is important to find and provide opportunities for periodic excitement in learning. Such inputs of excitement need not be direct or formal but could be those which are auxiliary, scaffolding or secondary. Nevertheless, they have an outreach value and they relate to the learner to stay focused in the compass of learning.

### 4. Enabling 'AHA' experience

Technology-enabled platforms have a great opportunity to help the learner to move towards an 'AHA' experience. This is possible, on a virtual platform, because of an integrated approach to visual, auditory and sensory inputs to the context of learning. The synergy of the above helps in a meaningful and focused approach to seeking conceptual clarity, and also seek learning inputs and experiences which are not usually accessed through a largely auditory based classroom. Further, as the dominance of the teacher is much minimal in an online platform, there is either



participatory access to knowledge acquisition or a creative approach to knowledge acquisition. Either way, the learner's self-esteem is boosted and there is greater ownership to learning resulting in a sense of achievement, and consequent 'aha' experience. Further, there is a better opportunity of personal performance in the online platform as the normal 'conditioned learning' approach of a formal classroom is minimised.

## 5. Focus on the synergy of the right-brain and left-brain learning resources

Though the recent researches in neurosciences have clarified that learning is a whole brain activity, the argument of active engagement of the right and the left brain in a prioritised manner for a short duration of time, has not been negated. Brain scientists do recommend, therefore, the need for varied content that would engage and impact both the right and the left-brain faculties from time to time.



It would, therefore, be appropriate to design and deliver content that would enhance both faculties by periodic engagements, then letting a stereotype content for a longer duration. It is also equally important to design and deliver the content that would mindscape all the facets of intelligence as detailed in the MI pedagogy.

## 6. Facilitating learner engagement

In a number of content delivery platforms, the method of delivery often is unidimensional, just replacing the dominance of the teacher by the dominance of technology. Such an approach would have retrograde effects in online learning. Periodic facilitation for learner engagement through multiple strategies has to be embedded so that the learner doesn't feel ignored, marginalised or his interests subordinated in the process. The methods could be seeking differentiated response processes - through an edutainment strategy that motivates play, an intellectual engagement strategy like quiz, a creative engagement strategy as problem solving, or a logic provocation strategy like the crossword puzzles. There could be several other innovative approaches.

## 7. Facilitation for extended learning

One of the limitations of a formal learning environment is the attempt of teachers to limit the learning to textual content or a defined curriculum or the needs of an examination. All these, oftentimes, curb the curiosity of the learner for further learning or are suggestive of the small achievements one is expected to have in a specified period of time. In the online learning platforms, this psychological limitation can be diffused by introducing effective pedagogy and content strategy that could lead to a variety of referrals either immediately or subsequently to enhance and further knowledge. By igniting the curiosity of the learner to such extended platforms of learning, the entire process of learning can be modified to knowledge acquisition rather than examination-oriented performance. This could further trigger the self-learning competencies of the learner and the ability to reach out to content at one's will. Thus, the limitations of learning defined through time and space can be re-engineered to learning anywhere and anytime.

## 8. Assessment while learning

In a formal classroom, the strategies for assessment for learning is usually inadequate. There is a larger focus on assessment on learning.

The formative assessment practices appear to be very limited, stereotyped to the competency profile of the teacher. Further, both in terms of tools and assessment strategies they do not necessarily meet the actual need and profile of the learner and his learning style. The online platforms provide a huge opportunity for the teachers to remain adequate, well-prepared and empowered with a variety of tools to be delivered to the learner. Further, these can be positioned to meet the actual needs of the learner from time to time; and to draw a factual learning curve of the learner. Online learning also would help 'assessment as learning' to help the teachers to fix the learning inadequacies from time to time or in short intervals so that the requisite pedagogy for the individual learner can be strategised for effective learning. ■



# ENABLING TEACHERS TO PERFORM BETTER



**DR. ANITHA RAMACHANDER** | Director & Principal, Adarsh Institute of Management and Information Technology

*Dr. Anitha Ramachander is the Director and Principal of Adarsh Institute of Management and Information Technology, Bengaluru. She is a dedicated and committed professor, teaching courses in management for over two decades in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.*

*Dr. Anitha has 25 years' experience in the conceptualization, development and deployment of solutions. She has been recognized with multiple awards of which International Achievers' Award 2010-2011 for Education Excellence, Outstanding Women Achievers' Award 2013 and Outstanding Educator at South India Women Achievers Award (SIWAA) 2019 are some of them.*

*Dr. Anitha writes regularly for Deccan Herald.*

A Business Management programme is designed to impart business and management skills to groom students into effective leaders, innovators and entrepreneurs in today's competitive economy. The academic standards set by educational institutions provide

information on instructional approaches that have proven to be successful in complementing the students' learning. These approaches are student centric and reflect new views of the learners. In traditional settings, teachers in this domain assume an active leadership role and operate as decision makers, planners and collaborators who are more reflective, responsible and empowered, besides being specialists in the subject.



Picture credits - Leverage Edu

With growing universal importance of student achievement standards and greater emphasis on performance-based assessment within education, edification seems more receptive to a range of corporate-sector strategies. The teaching profession comes with tremendous challenges as it demands teachers to go beyond the traditional role to provide promising alternatives.

The faculty plays a pivotal role in the enhancement of academic standards by implementation of reform ideas. The reform movement affords an opportunity for faculty members to re-examine and analyse teaching and learning in the light of newer perspectives on educational practice. There is an emerging focus on raising the standard of teaching through teacher learning, while retaining focus on student improvement.

### Professional development

In addition to specific professional development strategies, effective opportunities for learning should be considered in education.

High-growth organisations have flexible structures that promote informal learning. This is an

educational strategy for faculty and students that implies consideration of alternative teacher roles. In an informal learning context, faculty members become facilitators, mentors or resource providers.



Teacher preparation and professional development need to be made industry-relevant. Professional development for faculty covers learning situations like attending conferences and being involved in research besides the full range of intellectual discipline, from conceptual understanding to the practical application of knowledge.

In view of the emphasis on student achievement standards, institutions must ensure that the professional development of the teacher is aligned with individual and organisational needs and goals. Teacher evaluation should be strongly performance based. Corporate companies evaluate work effectiveness in terms of results and performance. Similarly, faculty members need to be evaluated against stipulated performance standards and on an ongoing basis. The evaluation should be based on teacher's content knowledge and student betterment.



Such performance-based evaluation entails assigning tasks to faculty members based on their demonstrated level of skill and recommending appropriate remedial strategies to address weaknesses. Knowledge management in education leaves a lot to be desired. Faculty members have limited access to data and requisite training which in turn hampers their personal performance and that of their students.

Thus, as teachers learn more about content, pedagogy and reform, they develop self-confidence and self-worth. Challenges need to be faced to avoid becoming irrelevant. So, the need of the hour is to hone up one's skill-sets. Influence of collegiality, collaboration, and professional learning communities on teacher and student success is highly valued and promoted across all levels of education as positive avenues of constructive learning.

### Authentic learning experiences

The job description of a teacher includes developing and implementing innovative teaching techniques, preparing teaching materials, lectures and student assessment, among others. Growing emphasis on providing authentic learning experiences to faculty members has resulted in augmented teaching and learning.



The faculty members' success in making coherent instructional decisions depends on developing a position or stance on professionalism, collaboration, knowledge, and instruction that is focused on learning and the learner. Any institution capable

of imparting the skill sets necessary for effective teaching should be eligible to participate in teacher preparation. If faculty members can demonstrate their ability to perform well in the classroom, the length and path of their preparation should be irrelevant.

There is recognition that faculty members are a critical link between reform ideas and improved student learning. As views of educational leadership encompass new understandings from the corporate world, the relationship between college administrators and faculty members is evolving. ■



# EDUCATION NEWS

## CBSE Releases Handbooks for Schools

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has come up with three handbooks for schools, especially keeping in mind the needs of the current situation in the nation. The handbooks are mainly addressed for the heads of schools, the school principals.

In continuation of CBSE's efforts to reach the global value-based standards of education, it has released the following handbooks-

i) Handbook for Principals- This handbook unravels the day-to-day areas of work and answers many queries related to the professional lives of CBSE school principals. It also focuses on providing a guiding hand to newly appointed principals, who might not be familiar with the full range of

their responsibilities yet.



ii) 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills: A Handbook- The handbook specifies the necessary 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that our nation's young minds need to succeed in the future.

It also seeks to inform all CBSE stakeholders on what these skills are and how to collectively collaborate towards attaining them in each learner.

iii) Handbook on Cyber Safety- This handbook aims to comprehensively cover all aspects of digital literacy and safety. It engages students in learning about responsible online behaviour, their rights, freedoms and responsibilities along with basic awareness about personal security and safety. The handbooks are formulated by CBSE to provide the school a guiding path towards collective growth for all the students.

## CBSE Releases Schedule for Remaining Board Exams in 2020 for Class 10 and 12

CBSE has released the schedule for the remaining

board examinations of class 10 and 12, which will be conducted between

1-15 July 2020. While the Class 10 board exams are pending only in North-East Delhi, class 12 exams are pending all over India. The halt in the examination process happened due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The CBSE has issued strict guidelines for candidates to be followed during the examinations such as carrying their own hand sanitizers and covering the mouth and nose with a

mask or cloth. Physical distancing norms are also to be followed by the candidates appearing for their exams. Parents will have to ensure that their wards are not sick to prevent any further spread of the virus. CBSE's official website has more information on the dates and subjects.

## Introduction of Online Teacher Training by CBSE

CBSE has initiated conducting online teacher training sessions throughout the nation. The initiative was first started on a trial basis since the third week of April, where more than 500 free online training sessions were conducted.

In response, over 35,000 teachers and principals from various parts of the nation and abroad participated in these programmes.



Considering the huge response, the board decided to launch structured online teacher training programmes to achieve the following objectives:

- i) Enabling teachers to teach better and lead improved learning outcomes.
- ii) Continuously instilling new knowledge and skills in teachers, as per the demand, to keep them at par with what is expected.
- iii) Helping teachers revise and refresh the knowledge that has already been

provided to them in their regular training and making it more practical.

Each online training session will be of one-hour duration.

There will be no participation fee and e-certificates will be issued to the participants. Attending five sessions will be equivalent to one day of training as

per CBSE Affiliation Byelaws.

The sessions include topics such as 'Managing Virtual Classes', 'Perspective Building on Life Skills', 'Mind Magic with Neuroscience and Neuroplasticity', etc. Participants would be able to register for the sessions from the CBSE's official website. ■

# EXPLORING NEW FRONTIERS

## TheTeacher.in Webinars

The world is witnessing an unprecedented disruption where every sector is affected. Education perhaps is among the more affected as the world is trying to embrace new methods. Recognising the need for all of us educators to be better prepared, informed and equipped, TheTeacher.in organised a series of webinars during the lockdown for educators.

The recognition that students and children are the most fragile audience affected by the pandemic, it is up to us educators and teachers to be the interface between them and the world outside. Season 1 of TheTeacher.in Webinar Series saw five speakers addressing five different topics which are of utmost importance to educators.

### Prepare for a VUCA World

The first season began with noted quizmaster, Giri Pickbrain, on the topic 'Teachers, What Is Your Future?'. This webinar took the teachers on a journey into their future, their role, significance and how they would handle children when schools and classrooms reopen after the pandemic. Pickbrain introduced the concept of a VUCA World (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous World) and underlined how teachers are the 'bridge to the future'.



The recording of the whole webinar series is available FREE on TheTeacher.in YouTube channel. You can watch it here - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eeWo\\_KYIcU&t](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9eeWo_KYIcU&t)



### Strategies of Engaging Children Digitally

The second speaker was noted Counselling Psychologist, Educationist, Special Educator and an International NLP Practitioner, Ms. Kala Mohan. In conversation with Pickbrain, she spoke on an important issue that many teachers currently face – ‘Strategies of Engaging

Children Digitally’. Kala Mohan addressed a wide range of questions from interesting tactics to engage the primary children online, duration of an ideal class online, approaching slow learners and special kids.

You can watch it here -

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YO\\_1QMrxzY&t](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YO_1QMrxzY&t)

### Cyber Security for Educators

Recognising the need to understand security issues that teachers should be aware of during online classes, TheTeacher.in addressed ‘Cyber Security for Educators’ in its third webinar. The session was addressed by Cyber Law Expert and Techno Legal Consultant Adv. Sai Sushanth.

He touched upon the security threats that educators and children can face during online classes, and some important steps to prevent such risks.

A scary but pertinent session, as one Principal aptly put it, you can watch it here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYaf24SKdsI>

### Importance of Learning Environments for Students

As learning environment across the world are being disrupted and challenged, the penultimate webinar was on the ‘Importance of Learning Environments for Students’. It addressed the role the environment plays, in the learning output of a child. The webinar was delivered by Dr. Kamala Mukunda, a noted author, a teacher



and a speaker. This session focussed on keeping in mind multiple intelligences in online teaching, learning environments for pre-primary children, impact of online learning environments on children and lots more.

Dr. Mukunda gave the teachers extremely valuable and practical ideas to implement in their classrooms. You can watch it here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eCGYQRvICGQ>



### Power of Questioning

The final session of the webinar series had the ever so popular, G. Balasubramanian, Former Director Academics, CBSE, speaking about the 'Power of Questioning'. With his vast experience in the field of education, G. Balasubramanian spoke about the importance of asking questions in class, being inquisitive, the difference between examining, assessing and evaluating, and the concept of 'right and wrong' questions. You can watch it here -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VdseaVn2w-Q&t>



### Thousands watch and adapt to online sessions

TheTeacher.in Webinar Series saw an overwhelming response of more than 5000 educators from not just across India, but from cities and countries like Riyadh, Muscat, Dubai, Kuwait, Doha, Philippines, Indonesia, USA being part of this season of the webinar series. It also saw teachers learn how to get on to online sessions aided mostly by their children at home. It sure opened them up to a future where the student could be the teacher, atleast on the technology front. ■



# Multimodal Literacy



**NAGAMANI** | Educator, Bangalore

*Nagamani is a passionate educator with over two plus decades of experience. She has been contributing in the area of Industry-Academia relationship and interaction, training, internships and placements. She has, as a second in line, shouldered academic and administrative roles as well. She has edited and published seven books and few articles in the communication and media domain. She is also part of few social initiatives, education and leadership forums.*

*"It is no longer true that proficiency in language is the only measure of literacy. Multimodal literacy is the current paradigm of education."*

Currently education is in a transition stage. Literacy needs to be reevaluated within the existing curriculum contexts. Changes in the pedagogies are ensuing classrooms as a riposte to present-day communication and learning contexts. Teachers and educationists are making attempts across the world to respond to digital technologies within the existing curriculums and pedagogies. These digital technologies are impacting society at large and particularly the growing children, as these 'digital natives' are born into this digital era and are digital savvy. This swift changes in digital communication has enabled literacy to be combined with numerous multifaceted resources like colour, images, gestures, metaphors, music, graphic, sound, smells, pictures, photography and movies, etc. Multiliteracies have become indispensable skills for learning and interactional context in classrooms. With this construct today, literacy needs to redefine itself with 'new language and literacy criteria' within the context of multimodal literacy.

The term 'multimodal literacy' is an offshoot of the concept called 'multimodality'. A 4<sup>th</sup> century phenomenon which saw a significant

upsurge in the 20<sup>th</sup> century due to exponential rise in digital technologies. In the 80s this term further developed and conceptualised learning through cognition. Consequently, Neil D Fleming's through his research on 'neuro-linguistic learning styles' propagated three styles of learning that is, visual, auditory and kinesthetics. Fleming explained that these styles essentially facilitated the learner to learn and to interpret meaning making and at the same time create texts using digital technologies. This phenomenon has evolved with technology. And today we see traditional forms of teaching and learning transforming to digital forms.



Gunther Kress and Carey Jewitt proposed the term 'Multimodal literacy'. Michael Halliday, a well-known linguist propagated this pedagogical approach. The term originates from social semiotics. It is an emergent research in learning multiple means of meaning making. It is the current paradigm of education as it is evident that educators should combine print-based learning with digital communication technology. Today there are numerous innovative and creative ways to engage students in effective learning by incorporating digital communication technology and notions of communication landscape brought about by new media technologies. In fact, this pedagogic approach focuses on explicit teaching strategies in a multimodal text to help students develop 'evidence-based interpretation of texts and critical thinking'.

This term has numerous definitions. Few significant ones are as below: Kress and Jewitt (2003) states that *"multimodal literacy refers to meaning-making that occurs at different levels through the reading, viewing, understanding, responding to, producing and interacting with multimodal texts and multimodal communication. It may include listening, talking and dramatizing as well as the writing, designing and producing of such texts. It also refers to comprehending the different ways knowledge is represented; the way discourse is designed to interact and integrate multimodal texts like advertisements, posters, reports, websites, films, etc. It is also interpreted as an extended form of social semiology dealing with how society interprets and manages signs and symbol. In this type of literacy, the text has to be interpreted separately in terms of sounds, writing, and visuals, and then has to be interpreted as a whole as a multimodal entity"*.

Hocks (2003) states that “this process includes reading, comprehending, and analysing the texts shared in electronic media and then producing new texts through writing (cited in Tüzel & Tok, 2013)

Cordes (2007) in his research papers states “multimodal literacy is the synthesis of multiple modes of communication. This communication can result in a transformation of the singular modes into a form that often contains new or multiple meanings. The multimodal object can require a range of tools, skills, and sensibilities and often reflects collaborative as well as individual effort”.

Walsh (2010) describes it as “...meaning-making that occurs through the reading, viewing, understanding, responding to, and producing and interacting with multimedia and digital texts” (p. 213).

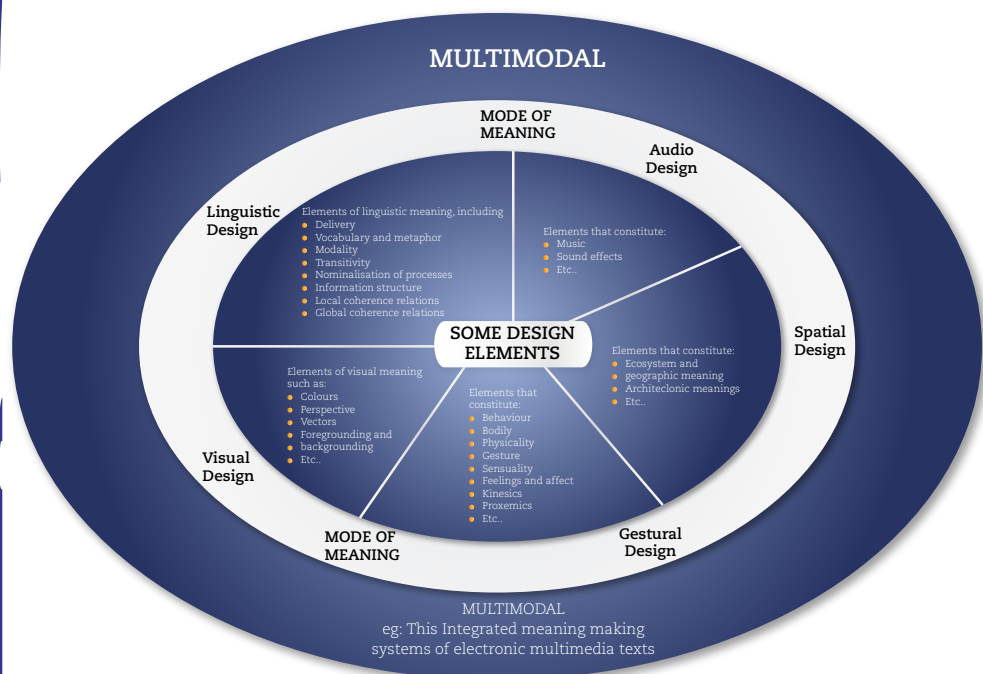
Mills and Unsworth (2017) states that “multimodal literacy refers to the study of language that combines two or more modes of meaning”.

Theo Van Leeuwen (2017) states “Multimodal literacy is therefore the ability to use and combine different semiotic modes in ways that are appropriate to the given context, both in the sense of the context-bound rules and conventions that may apply, and in the sense of the unique demands made by each specific situation”.

In the most basic sense multimodal literacy is

- It is a meaning making tool which uses multimodal texts
- It's a union of multiples resources (modes) to create and infer meaning
- It can make/produce/examine/construe meaning using any combination of modes of communication: linguistics, digital, aural, visual, gestural and spatial resources
- It brings meaning through different objects of expression
- It studies language using different modes of meaning
- It uses digital media tools to enhance analysis and interpretation
- It is an ability to combine semiotic resources to give appropriate meaning to a particular context
- Last but not the least it's a skill to critically look at multiple texts and make sense of it

The multiple tools used under linguistics, digital, aural, visual, gestural, and spatial design through which meanings are constructed and shaped in the process of learning are as follows:



**Multimodal Literacy Framework Source: adopted from Rush, 2003**

This pedagogic approach can be applied to all the subjects and fields of discourse, as it aims to develop students to be discerning readers and savvy producers of multimodal texts. Today there is a mounting attention given to multimodal literacy even in informal social contexts like communities, recreational sites, homes, workplaces and others.

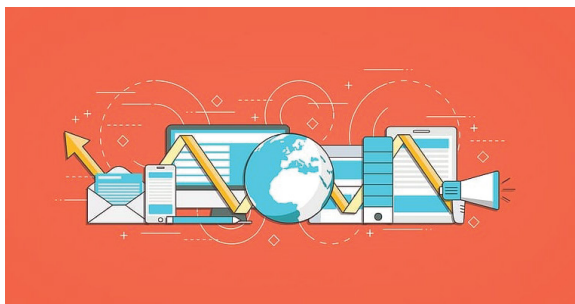
The future of education is interwoven with digital technologies, multimodal conventions and practices. Today's digital natives know more about multimodal texts, because of early exposure to digital technologies. As educators we need to understand this impact and develop different modes to enhance literacy skills in today's children. In fact, multimodal pedagogies can transform classroom learning to newer heights.

Educators, linguists, researchers and curriculum makers are looking at this fast-growing field to bring transformation in learning to meet the needs of diverse cultural, social and digital contexts of students. This need has led the way to classroom pedagogies to examine the application of multimodal literacy for better learning. In fact, today's students cannot escape from globalised communication environments. Consequently, they need advanced critical and digital skills to comprehend the array of knowledge they are constantly exposed too.

Contextually, different curriculum and teaching strategies can be adopted through multimodal approach that can go beyond language to embrace audio, visual, spatial, haptic, spoken and other modes of meaning making to equip students to learn across all levels of education. The pedagogy should include different paper based, live and digital multimodal texts like picture books, illustrations, text books, graphic novels, comics and posters; texts like dance, drama, live performance, role play and oral storytelling; and texts like soap operas, film, animation, slide shows, documentaries, e-posters, digital stories, podcasts, and creative web pages.

Educators should proactively use:

- 1) Multimodal texts like Infographics, Videos, Slides. Visual worksheets, Interactive learning, Online and blended learning;
- 2) Properly organise the output to reduce overload;
- 3) Use digital learning opportunities to keep up with the everchanging landscape of digital communication;
- 4) Give multimodal assignments and assessments;
- 5) the feedback should also be multimodal in nature.



To conclude, the educational needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners are constantly evolving, traditional practices needs to redefine to include new multimodal literacies. Today there is a great emphasis on creation and innovation. Pedagogical practices should be reinvented and re-imagined to support students' rapid changing needs. Teachers and educators programmes should create context and learning spaces with regards to learning technologies. In short, teachers have to explore and discover ways to weave Multimodal literacies into classrooms to enhance students learning. ■



# Has COVID-19 changed the education paradigm forever?



**VARSHA PRASAD**  
Editor, TheTeacher.in

*“There is nothing permanent except change.”*

With the sudden onset of the pandemic COVID-19 in December 2019 and the extreme spread of the same across the globe in 2020, everything around us changed.

Among the many affected sectors was education. Also affected by this were the teachers who had to completely revamp their teaching styles and methods, to address children locked down at home, through online teaching.

It was fun for children initially – staying at home, missing examinations and getting early summer vacation feels. But did the online learning and online classes help?

## Then and Now

In history, there have been many instances and conditions that majorly affected education, teachers and students. The World Wars are a great example. In that situation, there was great destruction to infrastructure and, schools and universities were damaged. Children were at home, not knowing what to do next.

In other cases, such as diseases and pandemics like plague and cholera, though there was no damage to property, but interaction with people was on hold. Schools and educational institutions again suffered. Though the COVID-19 situation is no where close to the world wars, aren't we facing similar issues where schools and education has suffered? But the silver lining today, is that we have technology to our rescue. With video chats and calls, and multiple online tools, we are not disconnected from the outside world.

## The paradigm shift

Activities online and smart classes are very common in schools today. Children are used to this and are experts when it comes to handling

technology. This helped them adjust quickly to online classes. But, it was us, the teachers, who had to completely take a new route and to ensure our students were benefitted. The classroom teaching completely shifted to the online mode. There were many problems that the teachers faced – capturing students’ attention, catering to different kinds of learners through the screen, connectivity issues, time management, attendance of students and lots more.

This phase was definitely a learning period for us. Despite these multiple roadblocks, we still had our classes and continue to have them online, we kept our students engaged and managed everything at once! We did find solutions to be in touch with the students during these difficult times. But the question is, with this newfound trend of online learning, have we unknowingly moved towards a new ‘learning culture’?

Are we moving  
towards more  
evolved  
classrooms? ”

In a recent webinar organised by TheTeacher.in which focussed on strategies of engaging students online, an interesting question was raised. In the current situation, where classes are conducted online, will it lead to a situation where a student chooses to attend different schools for different subjects? Can the student pick subjects and classes from another school, as long as the concept is learnt? But, the point to be focussed on is - are we moving towards more evolved classrooms? Will our outlook towards ‘teaching’ and ‘learning’ change during this pandemic? Is the ‘online classroom’ trend here to stay? Are we heading towards a situation where students get to choose which subject to take and which class to attend, like they get to choose their favourite movies on the OTT platforms? Does this indicate a new trend? And finally, do we require to go to schools at all, when we are managing the same online?

I definitely feel that a great ‘educational metamorphosis’ is underway.

Share your thoughts on this with me at [varsha@greycaps.com](mailto:varsha@greycaps.com)

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Varsha Prasad is leading THE TEACHER.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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