

# The TEACHER.in

A Not-for-Profit initiative by Greycaps

## Revamping Education at the Grassroot Level

**Dinesh Bakshi**

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## PITCH Philosophy

**Mona Mehdi**

*Principal, JHCS  
Kondapur,  
Hyderabad*



*Creative and  
Critical  
Thinking  
Programme  
by CBSE*

*Make Schools  
Anger-Free  
Zones, says  
CBSE*

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

# Upgrading ourselves VS Upgrading our technology

We often believe that upgrading our environment with technology, is upgrading ourselves. I have visited several schools, where the latest technology has been procured, but there's no one who has the skill to use the technology. As educators, we have always understood the importance of updating ourselves. We tell our students to have good reading habits, attend guest lectures or talks, watch informative shows. All of this amounts to updating ourselves with information and knowledge. Is knowledge alone enough or should it go hand-in-hand with skills? How often do we educators, upgrade our skills?

Upgrading our skills to work with technology is one of the commonly known paths that most of us educators take. Yes, it is important, as technology helps us complete our tasks faster. But, what about other skills that are required to keep us relevant and help us speed up our professional growth and success? Don't we need to acquire such skills?

There are many reasons why we educators should upgrade ourselves. The first one is to **increase our self-confidence**. Learning a new skill will help us take up new tasks and challenges. Learning a new skill will help us be surer about ourselves. This surety will help us to deal with challenges, efficiently. The second reason is to **stay relevant**. Students today live in a fast paced world. It is very important for us educators to keep up. Remember, staying relevant to our students is very important, as it helps us stay connected with them. The third reason is **greater resourcefulness**. New skills will give us the ability to solve problems. As educators, if we get ourselves into a habit of problem solving, we will also be able to imbibe the same in our students. The fourth is to **stand out from the crowd** and create a unique identity of your own. The fifth is to **hasten your professional growth and success**. Upgrading ourselves with new skills will have a direct impact on our professional growth.



As educators, there are several skills like **pedagogy, cognition, assessments, communication skills and conflict resolution**, etc., that we need to be mindful of. We may believe we already know a lot on these topics, so why is it important to learn more. Irrespective of whether we are beginners or experienced, irrespective of the subject we teach, these skills will help any educator in his or her profession. We maybe the best when it comes to subject knowledge, but if we lack in any of the skills mentioned above, we will fall short of being an effective teacher.



**Learning gives creativity,  
creativity leads to  
thinking, thinking  
provides knowledge,  
and knowledge  
makes you great.**

**Dr. Kalam**






Upgrading ourselves is nothing but learning new skills. I am sure as an educator it can be difficult to find time to learn new skills. There are several online courses and certifications that are easy to include in our everyday or weekend schedule. We would probably need to allocate some time for courses of such nature, but when compared to the value it adds over the years, the time requirement is miniscule. Being a lifelong learner is a value we try imbibing in all our students. Is it not time we too become the learners we want our students to be?

As Dr. A. P. J. Kalam famously said, **“Learning gives creativity, creativity leads to thinking, thinking provides knowledge, and knowledge makes you great.”**

It is time all of us to aim at becoming great at our professions. Those willing to unlearn and relearn, transform from being good to being GREAT. Wishing you to become a GREAT TEACHER.

**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](mailto: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.*

# WHAT IS YOUR CONFIDENCE LEVEL?



**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)

**Please examine the following constructs:**

- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| <b>I think</b> | <b>I may</b>  |
| <b>I can</b>   | <b>I will</b> |

Do you find that each of the above constructs reflect different levels of confidence? Which of the above do you use frequently and why?

One of the essential qualities of a good leader is the level of confidence he or she has. The confidence level of a leader indicates the faith one has in one's visions and actions. If a leader is not confident of self, how can they expect their team-mates to repose confidence in their leadership?

Very often we give up a task half the way through - because we had not thought of its effects or consequences, or we get stuck somewhere without knowing where to go and what to do. We need to take up a task only when we are confident of doing it. Even if we meet a few failures, they shouldn't deter us from going ahead.

In many cases, we lose confidence in our actions as we don't take charge of the situations and we hold someone else responsible for our actions. It is important that we take responsibility for our actions. The more we are responsible; we gain more confidence in our work.

**“ True greatness lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall. ”**

Robert Bach, the well-known author says, “Sooner or later, those who win are those who think they can.”

When we start doing a work, let us ask ourselves,

- Do I have the motivation to do this piece of work?
- Am I confident of doing this?
- What will I do if I get some hurdles in the completion of the task?
- If I fail in achieving the desired outcome, what should I do?

Well, it is said “True greatness lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall.”

A.C Dumas states: “Drugs are always not necessary, but the belief in recovery is.”

In a book titled “How to be a leader of others?” the author says:

**“What is the gift that makes a person a successful leader of others? It is simply confidence. It means confidence in one's powers, and if that confidence is great enough and strong enough it will inspire others, and they will believe in the leader as firmly as he believes in himself, perhaps more so.” ■**



# Revamping Education at the Grassroot Level

**DINESH BAKSHI** | Principal,  
Ebenezer International School, Bengaluru

*Dinesh Bakshi has been in the education industry for two decades. He has worked in the best international schools across three countries, including Singapore, Indonesia and Maldives. His recent assignment was in the Maldives as the Director of Education for Islanders Education, the largest private education provider in the Maldives.*



*Apart from being an able administrator, he is also a passionate educator and has developed numerous resources for his subject (Business, Economics, Accounting and ICT). These resources are used by teachers and students across the globe. His website [www.dineshbakshi.com](http://www.dineshbakshi.com) is a reputed resource repository which is also listed as a recommended resource on Cambridge official website for IGCSE and A-Level courses.*

*Dinesh Bakshi is an IB examiner for Economics and is deeply involved in curriculum development. He is a Google Certified Educator and specialises in developing pedagogical strategies using technology and hands-on learning.*

*Currently, he is the Principal of Ebenezer International School, Bengaluru.*

## ● What or who motivated you to get into teaching?

My mother used to run a primary school. During my college days, I started teaching young children. At the same time, out of curiosity, I started to read about education and came across the philosophy of Kurt Hahn, a renowned educationist of our times.

Hahn's educational philosophy was based on respect for adolescents, whom he believed to possess innate decency and moral sense, but who were, he believed,

corrupted by society as they aged. He believed that education could prevent this corruption, if students were given opportunities for personal leadership and to see the results of their own actions.

● **What are some of the important skills that educators of the 21<sup>st</sup> century require?**

I strongly feel that the most important skills required in the 21<sup>st</sup> century are effective **communication, problem-solving and resource management**. In this age of communication, with so many avenues to communicate, it is pertinent for a person to be an effective communicator. It is crucial that a required message is sent and received in the way intended. With team working culture coming up in a big way, our communication skills can certainly help us to rise and shine. With societies and workplaces becoming more complex, problem-solving skills are the need of the day. Unlimited wants and limited resources are putting a lot of pressure on everybody. Whether it is personal life or workplace, we have to utilise the available resources in the most optimal manner.

Schools should carry out 'safety drills' on a regular basis and create a culture where everybody is concerned about safety.

● **How important are in-house counsellors in schools today?**

For me, in-house counsellors are the need of the hour. As I already mentioned, the world is growing complex. Problems and challenges facing us are getting complex each day. Children are being exposed to situations, challenges, dilemmas which never used to exist in the good old days. There are tons of distractions for an average child. In the chaos, a child needs somebody to fall back upon, the child needs somebody who can guide him/her through this complex maze of life and provide much-needed guidance. At this point, the inhouse counsellors come very handily.

● **What according to you is the greatest challenge that teachers face today?**

The greatest challenge for a teacher is to keep them 'relevant' in a child's life. With the advent of new educational technologies, the role of a teacher has changed from 'a transmitter of knowledge' to a 'facilitator'. Knowledge which was once an 'exclusive' thing is now available to everyone, at a click of a button. Unfortunately, teachers are still fixated with the same idea that they have to transmit the knowledge to a child. They need to understand that we don't need a teacher to transmit knowledge. That can easily be done by 'Google'. Today, a teacher needs to transform into a facilitator and a catalyst. A teacher needs to -

- Provide opportunities for a child to use the available knowledge effectively to solve complex problems.
- Prepare the child for the fast-changing world.
- Develop life skills.



This involves a lot of pre-lesson planning. This involves a totally different approach to teaching and learning. Unfortunately, this is where the teachers find the greatest challenge.

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

Agreed. Safety drills are required to train our brains to respond to emergencies. However, schools take it as a calendar event and try to ‘tick’ the box. However, they need to realise that if our brain is not trained adequately enough, we might forget how to respond during emergencies. I strongly feel that schools should carry out ‘safety drills’ on a regular basis and create a culture where everybody is concerned about safety.

Furthermore, I also feel that with changing times, schools should also think about carrying out ‘lockdown’ drills.

- **What can schools do to impart environmental education?**

As per my opinion, environmental education is one of the most important areas to look into. With the kind of devastation which our generation has done to the environment, it is high time we appraise our children about the grave environmental issues which we face today. Unfortunately, most of the schools teach it as a subject where there is more of theory rather than action. Our children read it and forget it! Schools need to have concrete plans on how to involve kids and involve them in taking environmental initiatives. Further, rather than having a one-off activity, a school should chalk out a sustainable programme through which they can show some real improvement or result for a specific cause over a period of time. For example, planting ‘Miyawaki forest’ in the school and nurturing it over a period of time will really result in students getting emotionally connected with the cause. Another example is to adopt a nearby park or even start an environmental awareness campaign but follow it over a period of time.

- **In this era where books, apart from textbooks, are hardly read, how do you think non-academic reading habits be inculcated in children?**

For me, the main objective of reading is to enhance knowledge and encourage imagination. Yes, it was very popular once upon a time because there were no other medium, except for books, to transfer knowledge. Today, reading habits are dying because children have alternatives to meet the same objectives. We have YouTube blogs, gigs, informative TV channels such as NGC, Discovery, etc. Further, there are multiple online tools available to enhance creativity. Through these mediums, children get the same knowledge in a much shorter span of time for which they had to spend much more time earlier.

- **In today’s world, what role do PR offices and communication cells play in school?**

In the good olden days, parents usually were confused as to whom to contact in



school for a particular issue. Today the PR office is more of a 'single window' solution for parents woes. When a parent has a problem, they just call the PR office. It can be related to academic concerns or maybe logistics concerns such as uniforms, books, transport, etc. The PR office analyses the issue and internally connects with the relevant department and provides the parents with an amicable solution to their concerns. We can say that schools have become more professional in handling parents relations.

Our curriculum is focusing more on transfer of knowledge. It should rather be focusing on 'skill-building'

● **What role do exchange programmes play, in the development of children?**

International mindedness is the need of the day. A child needs to be aware of what is happening in the world. 'Exchange programme' is an ideal solution to get our children acquainted with the world beyond. The programmes lead to -

- Effective Learning through Exchange of Ideas
- Personal Development through Enhanced Perspective
- Development of Global Perspective & Networking
- Better Academic Purpose and Performance
- Development of Confidence, Grit, Individuality, Independence & Growth.

Certainly, they add value!

● **If given a chance to change one thing in the Indian education system, what would you change and why?**

I strongly feel that the Indian education system needs to be revamped at the grass-root level. Inquiry element is missing in our curriculum. The content has to be updated as per the 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace requirements. Our curriculum is focusing more on transfer of knowledge. It should rather be focusing on 'skill-building'. Another issue is with the assessment model which is focusing more on testing knowledge. Rather it should focus on testing creativity and problem-solving skills!

● **Your message for teachers and educators...**

The world is transforming at a pace as never before. Teachers and educators need to keep them abreast of the changes. They need to be aware what are the skills their learners require in the future. They need to keep themselves relevant in the changing times. The approach should be more of a facilitator rather than being a teacher.

Educators should also focus on value education which should be intertwined in their subject rather than as a stand-alone subject. ■

# PITCH Philosophy

**MONA MEHDI** | Principal, JHCS  
Kondapur, Hyderabad



*Mona Mehdi is the Head of Institute, Jain Heritage a Cambridge School (JHCS), Kondapur. She has over 24 years of experience as a teacher and an administrator in reputed schools of Lucknow and Hyderabad.*

*Mona Mehdi is a national scholarship holder and is the recipient of many awards. Rajiv Gandhi Vidya Gold Award for her outstanding achievement in the field of education, Rex Karmaveer Global Education Champions Fellowship and the National Leadership Award by Scoolstars are some of them. Under her leadership, her school has been awarded the Fourth Best International School in Hyderabad three times and was declared amongst the Top 20 Schools in Hyderabad. Mona Mehdi is also a sought-after national level Resource Person of ELT, for leading publication houses and a leading pronouncer for Spell Bee Contests.*

In this age and era of technology where Artificial Intelligence is talked about and offered as a subject, where organisers and planners decide your day, when people have started living in a virtual world, we at Jain Heritage, a Cambridge School, feel proud to stick to our PITCH philosophy where 'P' stands for 'Personal touch' to each and every student; 'I' symbolises 'Involvement of the parents' in their wards' school activities; 'T' marks the basis of 'Tradition and values' being inculcated into the students' minds; 'C' refers to 'Child-centric curriculum' & finally, 'H' stands for 'Holistic development'. Our curriculum is a blend of personal touch and technology.

Appreciation for any good work done is the essence of living a wonderful life. What better would it be, if these values be ingrained into the young minds right during their school days. This is in congruence with our school's philosophy. Even after so many years of technological advancements, one thing that holds true in case of our kids is that they learn and emulate their elders, the teachers at school and the parents at home have a profound impact on the minds of their wards. In such a case, the elders themselves have to be imbued with good values too in order that the kids may inculcate the same as they grow into better human beings of this planet earth.

**Appreciation is a wonderful thing. It makes what is excellent in others belong to us as well.**

In JHCS-KP, it has become a daily habit for everyone to display the core essentials of human values viz: punctuality, honesty, discipline, regularity, respecting & obedience to elders, no wastage of food on plate, active participation in all school activities to name a few. At first instance, these qualities appear to be taken 'for granted'. However, when consciously sown

into human minds on a constant basis, they appear to be 'in practice'. We imbibed these qualities in all the stakeholders of the school through project KUDOS – All for one, one for All! A culture of appreciating appreciation is developed and demonstrated at every level and the basic human values become the integral part of our teaching and learning. ■



# The Kenyan Changemaker

**Peter Tabichi**

**PERSON OF THE MONTH**



Teaching is a calling and, it requires passion and dedication. One such teacher who has dedicated himself to change the lives of his students for the better, is Peter Tabichi.

Peter teaches science in a rural school in Kenya. To help educate the poor and to provide them with basic education, Peter donates close to 80% of his income every month. Due to his constant effort and commitment, his students have had the exposure to take part in various competitions and have also won many of them.

## Early beginnings

Peter Tabichi began his career by teaching at the Keriko Mixed Day Secondary School. This school is located in a remote area in Kenya and hosts students from diverse backgrounds. Peter noticed that the school and the classrooms were poorly equipped, and the students faced problems due to lack of good teachers, books and other facilities.

## Challenges

Some of the other major challenges that Peter noticed in the school were –

- Class strength – Peter found that the classes had over 80 students, but was equipped to accommodate only 40. This caused overcrowding of the classrooms.
- Family background – Most of the students who came to this school were from poor families, while some were orphaned or were brought up by a single parent. There were even children who couldn't have a single meal a day.
- Students were exposed to drugs, the suicide rate was high, there were teen pregnancies and child marriages. Some children even dropped out of school half-way.





- Some students walked 6-7 kilometres everyday to reach school, due to bad roads.

### Bringing about a change

Peter wanted to change the students' outlook towards education. He was determined to teach science to these children. In the beginning, he utilised the only computer available in the school to download teaching resources for his science classes.

With limited internet access and the one available computer, Peter used Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in majority of his lessons to keep the students engaged in class. He even downloaded resource materials from internet cafes to show offline content in class.

Peter began a club in school and called it the 'talent hunt club', and began expanding the school's science lab. His aim was to help students design projects to a standard that it would qualify at national level competitions.

### Engagement with the community

To go beyond school, Peter and few of his colleagues started giving tuitions to low-achiever in Math and Science on a one-on-one basis. He also began visiting homes of students to understand the challenges they faced.

Peter formed a 'peace club', uniting the people of the community to help teach them to grow crops to get through the famine.

### Positive results

Peter guided his students through multiple competitions to give them the exposure and confidence. In some of them, his students showcased their talent where they invented a device which allows deaf and blind people to measure objects.

The students have also proved their mettle by generating electricity by harnessing local plant life.

Due to Peter's effort and perseverance, enrolment of student in the school doubled, close to 25 students made it to college and the achievement of girls improved.



### Awards and recognition

For his contribution to the school and for his commitment towards making the education in his town better, Peter was awarded the 'Global Teacher Prize 2019' as the 'World's Best Teacher'. He emerged as the winner among thousands of contenders from close to 175 countries. ■

Source: [globalteacherprize.org](http://globalteacherprize.org)

# EDUCATION NEWS

## Make Schools Anger-Free Zones - CBSE

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has asked all the affiliated schools to be 'anger-free'. In other words, everyone, be it a teacher, student, or staff, will have to try to manage their anger.

According to the Board, fitness of body leads to fitness of mind. Anger is detrimental to fitness and uncontrolled anger can lead to increased anxiety, headache and high blood pressure in long term.

With initiatives like 'Fit India' movement, the board, as a part of 'Joyful Education and Holistic Fitness', has asked the school leaders to make all the affiliated schools an 'anger-free' zone.

In the 'anger-free' zone programme, people will have to try to manage their anger. This is inclusive of educators, students, parents and other stakeholders. Some of the simplest changes that could be undertaken are - smiling at students and teachers, talking to students and everyone

around in a calm manner, practising breathing exercises, practising mindfulness and giving 20 minutes to self.



According to the CBSE curricular, the aim is to develop the students in affective skills and in eradicating fear, disrespect, humiliation and hurt.

Steps to initiate the 'anger-free' zone programme –

- i. Place signage board – “This is an Anger-Free Zone” – at the reception area/strategic locations in school.
- ii. Take up teacher mentoring on this area.
- iii. Take up exercises with children in assembly, sport/art period, classrooms, labs, etc.
- iv. Record experiences.
- v. Announce on social media that you are endeavouring to become an 'anger-free' school by using hashtag #cbsenoanger.
- vi. Recognise and reward improvement in this area.

## Creative and Critical Thinking Programme by CBSE

CBSE has announced a Creative and Critical Thinking (CCT) weekly programme to generate interest

among students and, enhance the critical and creative thinking ability.



Through CCT practice, CBSE aims to empower teachers to:

- Ask questions in classrooms which are connected to real-life to build curiosity in students.
- Facilitate discussions amongst students to build the skills of collaboration and problem-solving.
- Engage parents and the community at large in student's learning process.

In this programme, the Board will provide 5 questions every week. The questions will not be related to the syllabus and will be attempted by students from Classes 7 to 10. New questions for the week will be made available every Monday and the solutions for those questions will be made available on the Thursday of the same week, via the same QR code.

According to the curriculum, this programme can be practised by teachers

in the class in the following ways:

1. The teacher can use these questions at the beginning of a class to make students curious about the topic that will be taught in class or has already been taught in class and to engage them in discussions.
2. Students can be asked to attempt these questions as homework in consultation with their friends and family. The solutions can be discussed the next day or at the end of the week as per the convenience of the teachers in a way that it promotes discussion.
3. These questions can be used in the form of activity on the No Bag Day or a special period, like the Activity Hour or Zero Period, where the teachers make the students collaborate with each other to solve the problems.

Detailed information has been provided on the official website of CBSE. Students, teachers or parents can also mail their queries at [cctpractice.cbse@gmail.com](mailto:cctpractice.cbse@gmail.com). ■



Our team at TheTeacher.in is proud to share that our Senior Editor, Rashmi Furtado, has been recognised with the '**Exemplary Leader in Education**' Award at the International Inspirational Women's Award 2020, an initiative by the GISR Foundation. We thank all you educators for your patronage of TheTeacher.in, which has certainly helped in this recognition.

-Team TheTeacher.in

# Leadership and Mahatma Gandhi

## SATISH M. GANDHI

Teacher, Sanjay Ghodawat International School, Kolhapur.

*Satish is an IB faculty at the Sanjay Ghodawat International School Atigre, Kolhapur.*



Education is a doubly edged sword. Master minds can utilize it to make or mar the world. It's the trait of life that confronts you with values and varied ways of knowing the surrounding. It fortifies the mind and soul and allows one to think in the right direction honing the talent and sharpening the skills. **LEADER IS THE CHILD OF EDUCATION.** It was M. K. Gandhi who voluntarily decided to get justice for his heinous insult by the train authorities. Education made him think well and to be a good decision maker, in a real sense the risk taker.

A leader is always with the novel ideas in his mind and is on the verge to get the same materialised. To bring the ideas to life, a person has to pass through the easy and cryptic levels retaining the boost. The lawyer Gandhi spent every moment, putting it to use in a fruitful manner. It may be introspection, group communication or observation of the happenings in the surrounding. According to great leaders, every human has a set of fixed hours. What matters is its quality utilisation, and the output is experienced. A leader sets an example by not wasting time. **TIME WELL INVESTED GIVES RICH DIVIDENDS!**

Approach lifts the leader to the next level. Think of a problem as a problem, and it is never solved. Look at it as a challenge that has a solution and it is cracked. The greatness of a leader reflects the former statement. A leader leads the people

with sheer confidence and courage. Based on the personal and the shared knowledge, the leader can make claims and take the responsibility to justify the same. Any revolution begins with a keen interest in the matter. **A LEADER HAS THE QUALITY TO BE A PATIENT LISTENER AND AN EFFECTIVE ORATOR.**

A common peasant Raj Kumar Shukla from Champaran – Bihar, poured out the pathetic condition of the cultivators in front of Mr. Gandhi. He was listened at with keenness. The listening skills actually strengthen the vocabulary of the leader and thus any issue could be handled with efficiency and effect. The Satyagraha was his laboratory – where he explored the tyrannical behaviour of the Britishers and made up his mind to free India from their clutches.

A leader could be active or passive. The passive leader has a burning desire to solve the problems faced by the society but lacks power – as **KNOWLEDGE IS POWER**. The passive leader, for the want of literacy and its incompleteness, fails to lead. However, such leaders can march ahead to seek the aid of the one who are active. On the contrary, the active leader needs fuel to act upon the problem. Once sought,

the keen interest, devotion, dedication and determination helps him to reach to the roots of the problem. In this transit, such leaders have to face challenges, pitfalls and non-alliance, yet remain brave. M. K. Gandhi had to face many other revolutionaries, leaders and politicians who seemed to have a different bias. He was the man to convince them satisfactorily.



#### **SELF – BELIEF IS THE BEST BELIEF.**

Let the world say anything about you. Leaders believe in their words and deeds and set an example for many to do the same. If you strongly believe in your verbatim there's no one to catch hold of life. Education empowers your vocabulary. The Mahatma was confident enough, to answer boldly any question that was posed on him – he was well armed with the LLB and above all a true patriot. He never cared for the rich societies' comments on his living.

**TRUTH TRIUMPHS.** A leader believes in self and is outspoken, though less spoken at times. He is ever ready to face new challenges and spend quality time to ruminate over its outcomes. This quality of a leader inspires not one, but many souls. People trust such leaders who assure success. Leaders gain maturity as they form a crucial part of the society. In every thick and thin, the leader has to keep moving forward. The weak give up and run away from the field without knowing or trying to know the solution to a problem, if they sense some danger or feel they are into crisis.

At times, the leader teaches you that the SHOW MUST GO ON, whatever may be the consequences. The quality of a person is put to test in the hard times.

M. K. Gandhi kept attending various conferences and knowing the reflections of the delegates about the despotic foreign rulers. A man is with strengths – weaknesses – opportunities and threats. Leaders analyse it scrupulously and remain focused on the strengths. They convert their weakness into their strength by facing

them with courage and confidence. Non-violence is a perfect example that fits in here. They are committed to make themselves the winners and become the **ROLE MODEL TO THE GENERATION THAT FOLLOWS THEM.**

A leader always maintains his Emotional Quotient to the highest level.

A leader always remains with his crew to keep the flame of guidance ever burning. The crew is motivated more by the actions of a leader and less by the sermons. He is under surveillance for his walks – talks and mannerisms. The slightest error in the demeanor of a leader is criticised. The active leader takes the error as a lesson well learnt, rather than counter view the criticism. A leader's attitude towards any task; small or big, towards a person poor or rich and towards the place filthy or clean, counts for not only the improvement of the society but also for the strengthening of the nation and its economy. An **OPTIMISTIC** leader will see a half-filled glass as FULL. It is full with half water and half air. He will consider both the components important and use it in accordance. A right attitude towards anything and everything will always assist in amicable settlement of a problem or otherwise it will be a sheer pandemonium.

A person reaches to the high post by subjecting himself to **NEW VENTURES BY INHALING RISK.** Failures teach him to know the errors that are committed and thus accept the process of unlearn and relearn.

Do you remember your KG teacher made you trace and write pages of A to Z? Now, if you are woken up from the half sleep to identify any alphabet, you are damn sure it's perfect. So, what's the magic? It is practice that has helped to gain perfection. **LEADERS CONTINUE TO PRACTICE** what they want to preach for, it is the matter of fact that people will follow you on what you DO and not on what you SAY.

Time and tide waits for none. A leader always maintains his **EMOTIONAL QUOTIENT TO THE HIGHEST LEVEL.** He converts the mourning situation into the acceptable fact and then takes the people along to see the bright side of the world. A cheerful person is always admired. It is truly believed that one must not be overjoyed by the happiness and over dejected by the sorrow for; happy and sad times are part and parcel of life. The leader finds a ray of hope in the hard time and which creates a positive aura for the people with him. ■

# GREEN SCHOOL

# In Harmony with Nature

## Prakriya Green Wisdom School



Apart from just focussing on academics and examinations, equal importance needs to be given to a holistic development of the child in schools. In the recent times, there has been a change, where green schools like Prakriya Green Wisdom School, have been working towards making education more holistic and in tune with the lessons from Mother Nature.

### Early beginnings

Started in the year 1999, Prakriya Green Wisdom School, in Bengaluru, is an

educational institution which focuses on the humanistic and ecological side of education. The school's name is derived from the Sanskrit word 'Prakriti' which means 'nature'. Prakriya also means 'a process'. Here, education is based around the philosophy that involves experimental and activity-based learning.

The school was started on a ground where a eucalyptus plantation existed before. After clearing out the trees from the plantation, the members of the school planted 108 different species of rare trees and plants.

### Campus

The institution works on the basic design principle, where no building is taller than the trees around. The construction is very simple, which consists of interesting lobbies and corners. The buildings are shaped in the form of small houses and have classes named after the trees planted in the grounds such as Ashoka, Champa, Chameli, Arjuna and Krishna.







The school works on an ecological building principal, where all the building material that went into the construction of the school was sourced within a 500-kilometre radius. The stones and other building materials were bought from around Bengaluru, while the clay tiles and blocks were transported all the way from Mangalore. The reason behind this principle was to harmonise with nature by using locally available construction material which would help initiate soil nourishment and plant growth.

**The Ecosystem**

The school also has a mini forest in the campus which was created using several wild species of plants such as wild jamun, amla, bauhinias, kadu badam and several others. This place is called ‘Devar Kadu’ and was created to honour the sacred groves of India and the wise traditions that fostered them. The school also has a small orchard and an organic garden, which provides the necessary vegetables and fruits to the school kitchen and is managed by the school’s research team called Bhoomi Network.

The nursery area of the school is surrounded with lush greenery and other natural relics that was created by some of the youngest students studying at Prakriya. The nursery is also said to be the most beautiful part of the school.

The school, due to its large green expanses, is now home to several species of butterflies, thirty species of birds in addition to several snakes, frogs, bats, squirrels, and insects. Fireflies that add to pristineness of the ecosystem and earthworms that are essential for plant growth can also be found in the school’s organic garden.



**Water Usage & Recycling**

Prakriya harvests rainwater from all the school buildings. The dirty water from the kitchen is recycled and sent to the organic garden. Most toilets at Prakriya are not equipped with flush tanks as they believe there is a tremendous wastage of water. Instead, the school encourages its students to pour small buckets of water to reduce water consumption.



## Philosophies

The school gives much importance to greenery because it believes that associating with nature will help students to live and connect with the natural world surrounding them. Prakriya therefore, also believes that 'what is learnt unconsciously is more important than what is learnt consciously'. The core philosophy of Prakriya is to build a culture in the school that supports people valuing and learning from nature.

## Recognition

The students of this school have participated in the 'Earthian Award' organized by the Azim Premji Foundation and have won awards in the same. Today, Prakriya Green



Wipro Earthian Awards

Wisdom School is one such school which conducts several social activities to improve the flora and fauna of Bengaluru. The institution has conducted initiatives such as cleaning the Haddu Siddapura Lake, fighting for afforestation with their Pot-a-Plant project and raising funds for educating underprivileged children. They have also partnered with several international NGOs and is focusing on not only improving the quality of nature, but also giving a chance to those who are otherwise not able to access education. ■



Source: [prakriyaschool.edu.in](http://prakriyaschool.edu.in)

### Answers for Quiz of the Month - January 2020

- |                 |                     |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Argentina    | 6. Lord Mountbatten |
| 2. Sri Lanka    | 7. Nokia            |
| 3. FC Barcelona | 8. Swatch           |
| 4. Africa       | 9. Germany          |
| 5. Japan        | 10. Austria         |



# we RECOMMEND

## Folk Games



### Seven Stones

Seven Stones is a team sport originated in the southern part of India. The game is also known by various other names such as Lagori in Kannada, Pitto in Rajasthan, Satoliya in Madhya Pradesh and also as 'Pittu' or 'Pittu Garam'. The game is believed to have been mentioned in the ancient scriptures. The game is believed to have been played by Lord Krishna and his friends.

The game requires a tennis ball and set of seven flat stones which can be stacked up, to form a small tower. The aim of the game is to be able to break the tower and then rebuild it before getting hit by one of the opponents.



#### How is it played?

Seven Stones is played between two teams with a minimum of three players and a maximum of nine in each team using seven flat stones and a rubber ball. The players form two teams- 'seekers' and 'hitters.' The flat stones are piled up at the centre of the ground and a player from the 'hitters' team hits the pile with the soft ball.



Now, the seekers try to collect the scattered stones and pile them up again while the hitters use the soft ball to hit the seekers. If a seeker gets hit by the soft ball, he is out of the game. The hitters try to get as many seekers out before the stones are piled up. If the stones are restored or piled up by the seekers, then the team should say 'Pittu' or 'Lagori' three times.



### Additional rules and regulations

- The hitters get 3 turns to break the tower
- The hitters cannot run around in the field with the ball to hit the seekers.
- But, after catching the ball, they can pass it on to the other hitters.
- The mission of the seekers is to pile up the seven stones before getting hit by the hitters.



### Benefits of playing Seven Stones

Seven Stones is an engaging game with multiple benefits. It not only engages the players but also develops their concentration power. It also -

- Is a good form of exercise.
- Makes the child a quick runner
- Improves precision ability
- Promotes outdoor games
- Develops team spirit
- Helps in coordination of the mind and body &
- Helps in strategising ■

### Answers for Quiz of the Month - February 2020

- |              |                    |
|--------------|--------------------|
| 1. Peru      | 6. Volga           |
| 2. Italy     | 7. Egypt           |
| 3. Istanbul  | 8. Belinda Clark   |
| 4. Peter Pan | 9. Detective       |
| 5. Jordan    | 10. Saurav Ganguly |

# 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.

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 middle school level** study takes a big leap, with higher and complex concepts being introduced and the need for deeper study of subjects through independent research and inquiry, while physical and biological changes demand a higher emotional quotient. Hence, certain advanced academic and social skills must be developed at this level.

The most important goal during the middle school years is for students to develop strong study habits, to continue to embrace learning, and to value education in general. But the student's attitude about school and learning is as important.

**Study skills and habits built in the Middle School lay the foundation for success in all further educational and other endeavors in life.** Students need to develop their own study skills and practice them for becoming more aware of how to they need to study. Once mastered, these study skills will be beneficial throughout their lives.

- 1. Monotasking- Focussing on one task at a time:** Sustained concentration is a gift, and it is generally lacking in most students, given the attention seeking gadgets that surround them. This skill can be best built in the classroom because, for most of them, it is perhaps the only time they work interruption-free, which is essential for developing their creativity.
- 2. Metacognition:** Retention and recall is different for each student. When students need to study, we need to talk about ways to retain information, and they can come up with a plan for how they will spend their study time. After they take an assessment, they must reflect on the

effectiveness of their study strategies. Metacognitive strategies can be developed in three stages asking a few simple questions:

- **Before a Task** - Is this similar to a previous task? What do I want to achieve? What should I do first?
- **During The Task** - Am I on the right track? What can I do differently? Who can I ask for help?
- **After a Task** - What worked well? What could I have done better? Can I apply this to other situations?

**3. Prioritisation:** This study skill is the first step towards organised planning preparation and effective execution of study strategies. The project way helps students to learn how to prioritise. Assign a project. Give the students a list of steps that have to be completed in a desired order, for projects. Ask them to prioritise what needs to be done first and how they are going to accomplish it. They learn to focus on the difficult parts of a project first, then move on to the fun stuff and would have spent their time productively, working on the same. In this way students would have learnt to apply such prioritisation in all activities, thereafter. **‘Once the ‘MUST Dos’ are done, there’s plenty of time for fun!’**

**4. Goal setting:** It is important to set goals, as long as they're attainable.

**5. Time Management and Regularity: Preparing personal study schedules** for regular study of concepts and their application helps retention and recall and consistent performance.

**6. Organisational skills:** "A place for everything and everything in its place" saves valuable time. Where and when to study and who to reach out to for help. Logical sequencing of concepts and facts/contents while answering questions or presenting assignments.

**7. Critical thinking - Analytical reasoning and problem-solving:** Asking questions is an essential skill in developing critical thinking ability, but asking **appropriate questions** is a greater skill, as also accessing and analysing information logically with reason, in problem solving.

**8. Research and inquiry:** Sourcing information and understanding, primary secondary and tertiary material for extended learning.

**9. Developing advanced writing styles:** descriptive, narrative, collaborative, journal and précis.

**10. Self- motivation:** Collaborative and Cooperative learning and delegation.

**11. Responsibility and Citizenship**

**12. Decision making and managing peer pressure.** Developing the art of saying ‘NO’!

### Apply the Metacognition skill

Metacognition → assess performance/learning level → set new goals → prioritise → focus on one goal at a time (monotasking) → to list out strategies → apply new strategy → assess performance/learning level → metacognition...

- Effective strategy = Improvement in performance



**At the secondary school level**, the focus is on students' preparedness for the major examinations. By the time students reach the secondary school level,

- **They would have developed their own personal approach to study and learning**, to meet individual needs. They would have learnt how to discover what works and what doesn't.
- **They would have a good understanding of concepts, theories and ideas** surrounding the subject area, to apply their study skills. Students know that study skills are not subject specific. They understand that study skills are generic and can be applied to any area of study.
- **They understand the consequences** of the lack of appropriate study habits and study skills.

While all the study skills and study habits developed at the middle school level hold good at the secondary school level, there are some key areas that would require reinforcement and a few new skills developed.

- 1. Time Management and regularity:** Preparing and following regular study schedules
- 2. Organisational skills:** Presentation of assignments and answers in examinations with the desired logical sequence with analysis and reason.
- 3. Prioritisation** for effective execution of study strategies.
- 4. Note making & self- validation:** Easy retention and recall of value points for application with precision.
- 5. Reflection on evaluated and marked assignments:** to understand comments and feedback and learn from mistakes, if any.
- 6. Practising skills:** For effective retention, recall, review and verification of contents and concepts. Answering sample question papers as expected within specified time.
- 7. Revision and Recapitulating Skills:** Revising for examinations can be a real challenge. Learning to make revision time productive is essential for better preparedness for examinations, as also using effective recapitulating techniques.
- 8. Cooperation and collaboration, and leading by influence:** By being part of multidisciplinary, multi-skilled teams students learn to be good team players, recognise their own strengths apply them to compliment others' strengths. Develop healthy competitive skills. Preparation through study circles helps in this regard.
- 9. Metacognition skill for better academic preparedness and to manage 'Study and Preparation' pressure created by peers.**
- 10. Decision making**
- 11. Life skills developed over the years need to be strengthened** to help students to balance academic demands and social expectations with emotional stability and confidence. ■



# Quiz of the Month

1. Where is 'Machu Picchu' located?

a. Peru

b. Brazil

2. 'Risotto', a rice dish, originates from \_\_\_\_.

a. Portugal

b. Italy

3. What is the modern name of the city of Constantinople?

a. Istanbul

b. Baghdad

4. In which Disney movie does the character Captain Hook appear?

a. Peter Pan

b. Cinderella

5. Amman is the capital of which country?

a. Jordan

b. Vietnam

6. Which is the longest river in Europe?

a. Tigris

b. Volga

7. Where would you find the famous Pyramid of Khufu?

a. USA

b. Egypt

8. Who was the first person to hit a double-hundred in a One Day International?

a. Ricky Ponting

b. Belinda Clark

9. In Calvin and Hobbes, what is the occupation of Calvin when he becomes Tracer Bullet?

a. Detective

b. Teacher

10. 'A Century Is Not Enough' is a book about which Indian cricket captain?

a. Sachin Tendulkar

b. Saurav Ganguly

# BLENDING IN WITH BLENDED LEARNING



**VARSHA PRASAD**  
Editor, TheTeacher.in

There is an ongoing debate in the education space today, if technology is taking over a teacher's role in the classroom. With technology enhancing the classroom experience and being students' preferred medium of learning, teachers' role has shifted to being facilitators from instructors.

The notion that teachers are losing their importance in classrooms is untrue. With so many varied pieces of information available online, a teacher becomes one of the mentors to help steer the child in the right direction. This makes the teachers' role more important and relevant. While one cannot forgo technology in class and utilising it to the fullest, the presence of a trained educator makes the process simpler and more effective. This is where the concept of 'blended learning' fits in perfectly.

Blended Learning is something that has gained popularity recently, where learning is a mix of both classroom teaching and online learning. The classroom teaching part of blended learning majorly involves a teacher acting as a catalyst to help students understand or comprehend the online learning part.

But how does this help a teacher in a classroom? Through blended learning, a teacher can address children with diverse learning patterns. He/she can also cater to the needs of visual and auditory learners where colourful pictures and captivating audio is used as tools. With blended learning, the child in class also gets the freedom to learn, think and explore at his/her own pace.

For example, a modern, blended classroom in biology can involve students learning the working of the circulatory system through VR headsets, followed by which a teacher can take things forward and have a session on what the students have understood. It can also be as simple as showing a video on an interesting topic in class, followed by a discussion.

I believe blended learning is the perfect 'blend' of teaching methodology for students to learn and for teachers to teach, thus resulting in a better output.

Varsha Prasad  
#ProudToBeATeacher

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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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