

The TEACHER.in

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Equality, Accessibility & Equity In Education

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*Academic Advisor & Senior
Consultant to Schools, MP*



Your A – Z Guide of Emotional Intelligence

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04

Role Of Textbooks In Schools

G. Balasubramanian

06



Cover Story

Equality, Accessibility & Equity In Education

Kala Mohan

14

We Recommend MyFitnessPal

16

Education News

24

The School of the 'Pancha Mahabhootas' B-KANAE School, Modasa

10



Cover Story

18

The Man Behind 'Computers on Wheels' Fr. Maria Julian

21

The Need for Professional Qualified Counsellors in School

Vaishali J. Panicker

Your A – Z Guide of Emotional Intelligence for Children (and Adults)

Gavin McCormack



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A World Without Teachers!



RASHMI MARIAN FURTADO
Senior Editor, TheTeacher.in

Reena woke up early, got ready, boarded her school bus and reached her school. She joined the queue that was entering the school. Each student flashed their ID/access card at the scanner machine to enter the school. This access card maintained their attendance. The students murmured in a low volume as they entered the school. Each time a child spoke in a slightly high-pitched voice, a sensor would go on and an announcement which was a pre-recorded message in a monotone would be made. The announcement was, "All children are to maintain silence and speak in a volume not more than 40 decibels."

There were markings on the pathways to direct the students to their respective classes. LED screens with the class numbers and sections specified the entrance of every class. Automatic doors opened to individual desks with inbuilt lockers, controlled by fingerprints, seats adjustable according to their comfort.

A giant screen on the wall stood in place of a chalk board. A touchscreen computer connected to a main server, had all the information stored class wise. This was the main screen of a classroom. There was a robot stationed next to the screen, connected to a charger. There was no system of a bell. An orange light, similar to the ones outside operation theatres, above the main screen switched on to indicate the class was starting. A robot switched on, unplugged itself from the charger and moved to centre of the main screen. The desks of the children were also touchscreen devices that were connected to the main screen and the server. The moment the light on top of the main screen went green, the robot would reveal the password to that day's class to the children and would begin the class in a monotone.

Every single classroom across that school and the world was the same. Standardisation was the key. Education was delivered through a pre-programmed learning app. Children were not allowed to ask doubts in between. They could air their doubts at the end of the class through their respective screens and they would receive a response for the same from a chatbot. The entire control was at the hands of a few people who were the heads of that new world. Their instructions would reach the citizens through machines that ran the entire show, for them.

“
One book, one pen
and one teacher can
change the world!
”

No child played, no child laughed. No one to correct wrong behaviour, no one to laugh with the children and laugh at their jokes. There wasn't a hand that patted their back. No one who clapped for them. No one to teach them the lessons at schools with a human touch. No one with whom they could clear their doubts or have a productive discussion on. No child had dreams, they didn't have anyone to push them to dream and achieve their dreams. As a result, there were no leaders, no authors, no singers, no doctors, no engineers, no dancers, no journalists, no photographers. It was a WORLD WITHOUT TEACHERS!

Dear teachers, yes, this is plausible image of the future from my imagination. Believe me, a world without teacher could be way worse! Your students may not express appreciation for your worth except on Teachers' Day, once a year. It is human to realise the worth of someone or something after we have lost it. Let them be if they don't realise your value. The same children, when they grow up will remember you. Let that memory be a fond, positive and reinforcing one. Like a young girl once rightly said, "One book, one pen and one teacher can change the world!" BE THAT ONE TEACHER!

Yours Positively!



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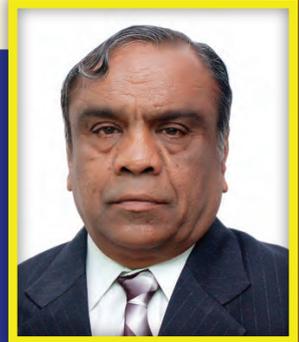
Rashmi

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

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

ROLE OF TEXTBOOKS IN SCHOOLS

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.

A few telephone calls from some professional friends on the context and the content of the textbooks in schools provoked me to pen a few of my thoughts. The context in which they asked this question appears irrelevant to me, but the real issues need to be addressed.

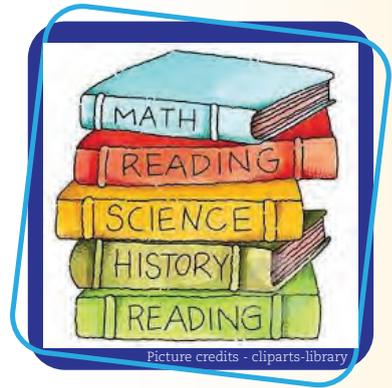
How does learning take place?

Learning is a unique individualistic experience. The engagement of different nodal centres of the brain in articulating the process of learning, the extent of learning, the styles of learning and the retention of learning makes it as complex and unique as possible, though all these could synergize in nanoseconds. Learning could be both formal and informal. The recent researches indicate that nearly ninety percent of all learning is informal and the rest is formal. Oftentimes, learning is emotional and hence the kind and types of emotions impact the process and extent of learning, leave alone the quantum of learning.

What is the relationship between teaching and learning?

Though we have lived with the idea of 'teaching' for centuries, Philosopher Aurobindo observed, "The first true principle of teaching is that nothing can be taught." This view has further been supported by recent researches in

cognitive sciences wherein the argument that 'there is nothing called teaching, it is all learning', appears to be the main stay of the advocacy. The idea of teaching supports the flow of knowledge and a top-down approach as against 'learning', a self-designed or self-directed process. The role of the teacher thus gets redefined as a facilitator.



What is the role of textbooks?

I have always felt that the role of textbooks is like 'the runway for an aircraft', to enable the flight to take off to scale greater heights. It is to empower discovery, exploration, research and understanding. Teachers need to use the content of the books to enable the students to learn, research and discover. Restricting learning to the textbooks is like killing the intellectual curiosity of the young learner and should be avoided. Systems and schools using the textbooks as an end product of a learning process do great harm to the learning generation. The concept of 'Minimum Levels of Learning' has no doubt a social objective but has a limiting value of producing a generation with mediocre knowledge, leave alone competencies. Any argument that the questions for examinations should be designed based on the textbook is regrettable, as it defeats the very value of learning and the brain competencies. As such, the concept of board examinations, be it any board, needs to be taken cognizance of, only at the secondary level, certainly not at the formative, primary or middle level. The focus here has to be assessing the diversity of knowledge and skills and the individual learning experiences of each learner.

What kind of textbooks need to be used?

It matters not from where a learner seeks knowledge. With global access to knowledge, where learning, unlearning and re-learning is the call of the day, the thrust has to be to encourage the learners to seek knowledge from different gateways so long the knowledge is valid, reliable and authentic. With technology in place, there is a decreasing emphasis on the print knowledge and the young learners tend to acquire and seek knowledge depending on their styles of learning. Such experiences should not be curbed if we need to look for a generation that is competent, confident and creative.

I am sure, I have been able to respond meaningfully to some of the questions raised by my professional friends. ■

EQUALITY, ACCESSIBILITY & EQUITY IN EDUCATION



KALA MOHAN | Academic Advisor & Senior Consultant to Schools, MP

Kala Mohan has had more than three decades of progressive and qualitative experience in the field of education and training. She has had an experience of heading three CBSE schools in Madhya Pradesh. She currently holds the position of an Academic Advisor and a Senior Consultant to a few schools in MP. She is also part of the Academic Audit, Curriculum Development and Planning, Training of all stake holders.

Kala Mohan is an International NLP certified Practitioner, RCI registered Special Educator and has conducted various workshops for school management, principals, educators, students, parents and corporates. She has formed NGOs Anahita and Nidaan Sewa Samiti (exclusively working in the field of Mental Health) with her team of volunteers.

She has been conferred with multiple awards and recognition, like Bharat Shiksha Ratna, Guru Dronacharya Samman, Best Principal Award, WEF award at Delhi, and many more.

Who inspired you to get into teaching?

I have entered into the joyful experience of teaching at a very early age of 10. I taught old women of my locality under the community programme of Adult Literacy Drive at Bhopal, MP. Then a passion built up for teaching, there started my journey as a teacher. As a teacher, I was always more focused on bringing the best out of children who needed extra attention. In early years of life, I got to work with children with special needs, where I realised these children too have potential which works like a miracle, which inspired me to start an inclusive school in later stage of life.

What is so far your most satisfying teaching experience?

Most satisfying is yet to come, but yes, few experiences are worth mentioning.

One is when I saw a child of 6 years at Nidaan, who spoke his first words at this age with the help of speech therapist, and many such incidents in my school that keeps alive my believe that everything is possible.

● **In today's education scenario, how important is teacher trainings and workshops?**

It's imperative for all to update and be abreast with the latest technology and changes. Teachers' skill enhancement, life skills, soft skills, technical skills, etc. are integral part of their professional development. To prepare children for 21st century, one needs to keep oneself updated regarding the new trends, their outcomes and how to deal with them. With the increasing cases of Learning Disabilities and other special needs of children, a teacher has to learn the skill set on how to bring the best out of these children.

● **What are some of the important skills that a 21st century teacher needs?**

Teachers themselves are forever evolving. In this century it is important that teachers are:

1. **Learner-centered classroom and personalised instruction:** As students have access to any information possible, there certainly is no need to spoon-feed them knowledge or teach one-size-fits-all content. Students have different personalities, goals, and needs, and offering personalised instruction is not just possible but desirable.
2. **Learn new technologies:** In order to be able to offer students choices, having one's own hands-on experience and expertise will be useful. Since technology keeps developing, learning a tool once and for all is not an option.
3. **Go digital:** Another important attribute is to go paperless. Organising teaching resources and activities on one's own website and integrating technology can bring students' learning experience to a different level.
4. **Collaborate:** Technology allows collaboration between teachers and students. Creating digital resources, presentations and projects together with other educators and students will make classroom activities resemble the real world. Collaboration should go beyond sharing documents via email or creating PowerPoint presentations.
5. **Project-based learning:** As today's students have access to authentic resources on the web, experts anywhere in the world, and peers learning the same subject somewhere else, teaching with textbooks is very 20th century. Today's students should develop their own driving questions, conduct their research, contact experts, and create final projects to share, all using devices already in their hands. All they need from their teacher is guidance.

What is the greatest misconception about teachers/principals?

Teachers work from 8 AM to 3 PM.

In my experience, this cannot be the truth. The teachers arrive around 7 AM and do not leave the building until after 5 PM.

A teacher's only job is to teach

No, not at all. In fact, it is just 40% of what we do in the classroom. Lesson planning and preparation, grading papers, school paperwork, student reports, parent phone calls and emails, extra help for students, and participating in community events are all things that teachers are required to and expected to do along with other co-curricular activities.

Everything they teach is prepared for them

I don't think people realise how much we have to do from scratch. There is often no existing curriculum full of lesson plans. Teachers have to design their own every single day. And each lesson plan involves hours of planning, as you dutifully explain how it connects to the Common Core, how you are differentiating for specific learners, how you are assessing students both informally and formally. And of course, ensuring this is all in the context of a well-thought-out unit that builds up certain skills and content knowledge.

A teacher's professional and also personal time is spent on things like:

- preparing lessons
- grading projects
- making schedules
- attending PD sessions
- talking to parents
- answering emails
- managing student conflicts
- conferring with colleagues and administrators
- learning about technology
- updation of skill sets
- networking with fellow educators



According to you, what is the best kind of teaching and learning method that schools should adopt?

The school should adopt a blend of practical and theoretical teaching learning practice, where the strong trait of each student of school should be nurtured and encouraged. Teachers should understand that every child is different and efficient, and effective teachers can bring the best out of each child, with complete involvement in class, keeping intact the child's self esteem and without labelling them. Believe strongly in ENABLING THEM RATHER THAN LABELLING THEM.

● **Do you think it is important to have a counsellor in school?**

A child moves from one level to another like kindergarten to primary, secondary to senior secondary. There are many changes as per the developmental milestones to be achieved according to his chronological age – both internally and externally. A counsellor gives students proper guidance on how to deal with the changes. With this, the students also develop certain problem-solving skills which to an extent help them deal with particular issues surrounding their lives. The students are advised on how to cope with different situations they tend to face in their school life. For instance, how to talk politely or relate with their peers. This advice will give them perspective on how they should behave in certain scenarios. Students get comprehensive advice on career, courses and jobs that enable them to make a proper and informed choice and understand what they can do after they are done with school. Counsellors are the backbone of any educational institution. Their presence itself is a sigh of relief for all stake holders.

● **If given a chance to change one thing about the education system today, what would it be and why?**

Schools should give equal opportunity to children with special needs and every school should follow an inclusive setup. This helps for the development of social skills of all children. Schools should develop a curriculum which nurtures a nature of curiosity in each student's mind. School is the place where a child spends around 15 years of his formative years of multi-dimensional, holistic development. Schools must cater to the INDIVIDUAL's need effectively in INCLUSIVE setup. No child should feel that 'I have not been given what I really deserve'. EQUALITY, ACCESSIBILITY, EQUITY in reality and not on piece of paper for the purpose of filling the columns, boxes to show the statistics only, is important.

● **A few words for teachers...**

Dear Teachers,

OUR pride lies in our WORK and believe me WORK WORKS. Whether you are a teacher by choice or by chance, God has handed over these divine souls to you to be part of their life for another 15 years. How you play your DIVINE role matters some times more than theirs. Every action of yours is playing a role in how a human being will grow up as a mentally and physically healthy human beings. Always say proudly that I AM A TEACHER. Don't be judgemental in life. Acceptance matters (accept the way he or she is). Believe that GOD'S CREATION CAN NEVER BE A WASTE.

Unconditional Love, Selfless Approach for the Humanity. ■

Your A - Z Guide of Emotional Intelligence for Children (and Adults)



GAVIN MCCORMACK | Educator and Principal, Farmhouse Montessori School, Sydney

Gavin McCormack is the Principal of Farmhouse Montessori School, Sydney. He is a teacher with over 20 years experience across the globe. He is also a mountaineer, an advisor to numerous schools on pedagogy and teaching, a philanthropist and the co-founder of educationinfluence.com, an initiative to connect teachers and

educators across the world. He was the LinkedIn Global Goodwill Ambassador for Australia, 2017 and a nominee for Australian Author of the Year, 2017.

With emotional intelligence a hot topic in the worlds of parenting and education, I thought I would put together 26 of the best activities parents, caters and teachers can do to allow children to feel emotional grounded.

The idea is that we build skills within the children in our care to allow them to deal with the problems that the world has to offer without crumbling. We want our future leaders to have a good grasp on soft skills such as resilience, empathy,

research, understanding and cooperation before we even think about taking their education to astronomical heights.

Here's your A to Z of emotional well-being -

A APPRECIATE

Make sure that your child has perspective of the things that they have.

Their family, their health, food on the table. A global perspective is what we need to instil in our children. Travel, read, look. Show examples of how others live and build empathy. Be thankful for what you've got, and not angry about what you don't have.



B BUILD SOMETHING

Allowing your child to have a dream, a vision of something they'd like to create. A rocket, a go-kart or a wendy house. Allow them to make that dream become reality by set steps to success. Design, resources, tools, procedure, result. On the way there will be heartache, time constraints, failure. But a whole lot of learning will take place too.

C CONNECT

Understand that our children need real tangible connections. Take them to the part of town they never visit and make friends at the swings. Let them visit the old people's home to read to the people and get them to feel that they are part of the big wheel we call society. For the sooner they realise their place, they'll take on the responsibility that goes with that.

D DO THE DIFFICULT STUFF

The world isn't all roses and baby's faces. There are some difficult things we need to do. Having conversations with someone you've hurt to say sorry, cleaning the house before we go for a walk or dealing with death in the family. Talk through the reasons why these things happen, don't hide them away in a drawer to be revealed later because your children will learn them from somewhere, it might as well be you. Enable your children to take in these difficult moments and build that strength.

E EXPLORE

Take time to plane trips. Have a globe in the house and discuss the world. Where would you like to go? Why? Watch documentaries and dream of travel.

At every opportunity, get out of the city to where the green stuff is and I'm not talking about a park. I mean nature. Trees, rivers, mud, insects, animals and clear air. Allow your child to find out about the planet and understand it's importance in our & existence and survival. Let's cultivate children who save our environment, not destroy it.

FORGIVE

To hold a grudge or anger against another only causes you more stress and tension. We must allow our children to have an understanding of other people's intentions and perspectives. Once our children can put themselves in another's shoes they can start to forgive. Yes, maybe Tom kicked you at play time but do you know why? Let's find out and maybe we can forgive him. The feeling of forgiveness always makes us all feel better.

GATHER

Organise family get togethers, picnics and always have dinner around the table with no technology. Allow your child to organise these gatherings – setting the table, calling the uncle to ask him over for a picnic or planning the menu. To bring groups together allows you to observe your child in their natural free play state without the pressures of the unknown. Giving ownership over these events allows them to take some responsibility towards the success (and the cleanup) process.

HONOUR

Children need to understand that these freedoms, liberties and rules have not come easy. From the wars that have been fought to the fact that grandad worked hard to help us buy our first house need to be told and celebrated. This allows children to develop a sense of respect but more importantly, allows them to feel that what they do now, will impact those who come afterwards. "What mark are you going to leave on this Earth?"

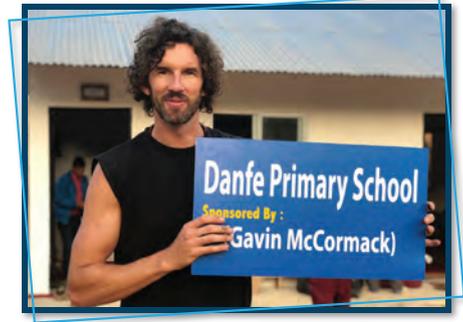
IGNORE THE NAYSAYERS

Children always dream big. Whether it's becoming an astronaut or saving the Amazon. They always dream big without limitations. We must keep fuelling those dreams by throwing wood on the fire but also explain to our children that there will be sceptics. People said that the internet wasn't possible, or walking on the moon was a fallacy but they all happened. Tell them to dream big and hold onto those dreams for one day they may be able to make them come true.



JUST BE

The world today is all about that drive for recognition. Likes, shares and comments. Instant gratification takes us away from the sense that to be creative or to restore our sense of well-being, we must have time to just be ourselves, in our own head with our own thoughts. Allow your children to be bored. No television, no tech, no stories, no nothing. Allow them to think, to create, to dream. “From great moments of boredom, come extraordinary moments of clarity and creativity.”



KNOW YOU ARE LOVED

There are people who love you, need you and rely on you. In the classroom children will save seats for each other, invite, discuss friends to join their club and hold their hands. Make sure that you encourage this. These friendships and circumstances allow for unique bonds to take hold allowing children to feel their place in the class and the school. Most of all, let the children know that you love them and you only want what is best for them.

LISTEN (ACTIVELY)

It is so important for children to have a chance to have a voice that is heard and more importantly responded to. Make a place in your daily routine where children can have a voice or opinion, such as group or circle time. Model active listening where a response is given based directly on the statement made. Modelling active listening allows for children to understand that there is a time to respond to another's voice and that is when they have finished talking. Adults can leave obvious gaps in their speech to allow children to understand the meaning of the word conversation.

MAKE SOMETHING

There is an old saying I'm sure you have heard before “What is work to an adult is play to a child.” Children love to mimic their parents and teachers. To us, sweeping the floor is a mindless, boring chore that we have to undertake, but to a child this is a fun game to pretend to be like you. With this in mind, whenever there are repairs to be done in the home - a shelf to build, a cupboard to assemble or a car to fix - allow children to lend a hand, even if it is just to pass you the tools or hammer in a nail. The sense of achievement and teamwork they will get from this small act will stay with them for many years... ■

...continue reading on TheTeacher.in website.

WE RECOMMEND

Apps

MyFitnessPal App

Teachers require a lot of energy, motivation, power and effort to be active every single day. No matter how passionate, driven or dedicated a teacher is, it is necessary to be mentally and physically fit.

Teachers often run around to fulfill the task and overlook their health to focus on getting through the day. Here is where the fitness app comes to use.

'My Fitness Pal' is designed to make calorie counting and tracking nutritional value easier.

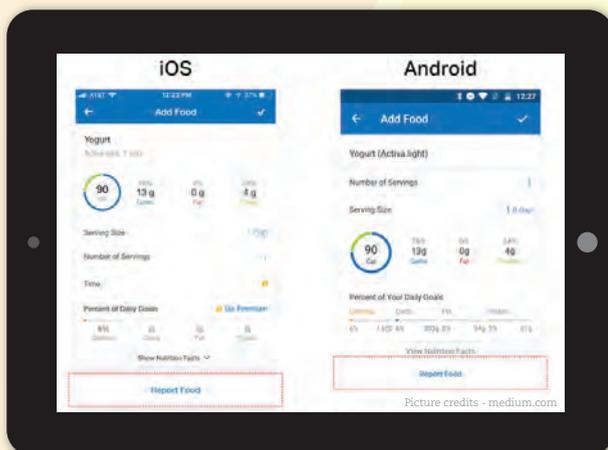


The App

My Fitness Pal is an application which is compatible with iOS, Android and Windows phones. This app helps control the user's goals, track calories, break down activities and log activities. It clearly states that 'fitness starts with what you eat'.

To begin with, the app requires the users to fill up basic details such as name, gender, birthday, height, weight, etc. and sign up. After creating an account, it asks the users to choose from options like 'to lose weight', 'maintain' or 'gain' weight, based on what the user wants to use the app for.

The app also allows the user to select weekly goals and from that, select the weight loss or gain as the aim on a weekly basis.



Picture credits - medium.com

'Start with what you eat'

MyFitnessPal requires all the information related to food, like, 'What was the last meal you ate?', 'What did you eat?', etc. which will help keep the record of food for a day in terms of overindulgence or under indulgence. It is very useful for the users to understand the intake of food per day.

Calculate calories

The app calculates the calories based on current height and weight, and depending on desired weight loss or gain, the number of calories to be consumed.

It also allows the users to upload personal food recipes or pick from the database of thousands of items.

Set nutrients goal

There is an option in the app to set 'nutrients goal'. Setting this helps track calories, carb, proteins, etc. which will help the user to reach the weekly goal. It makes the process easier to maintain a healthy life.

MyFitnessPal has the standard suggestions available according to one's requirement. Hence, on following those suggestions, it helps to meet the weekly target.

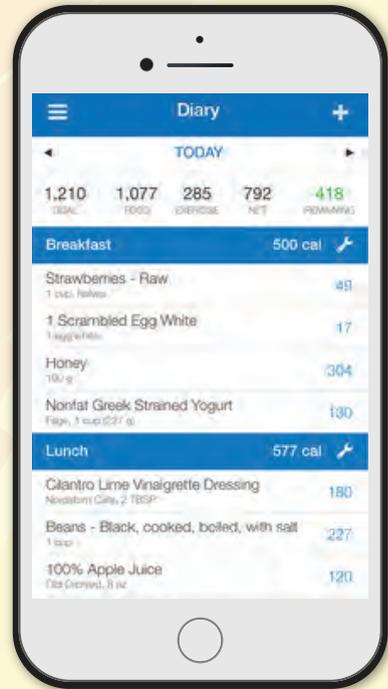
Community

MyFitnessPal also has a huge community in which users share their problems, tips, write in forums and discuss the problem. The community helps each other to share their fitness journey and recommend useful healthy facts.

Progress report

Watching the progress report can be a huge source of motivation. The application keeps all the track records related to weight since the time a person has signed up. With time, weight is plotted in the 'Progress tab' which helps to monitor health habits.

MyFitnessPal acts as the best pal for teachers by tracking record and giving one stop solution on fitness. ■



EDUCATION NEWS

'No School Bag Day' for Students in Manipur

The Manipur government has declared 'No School Bag Day' on all the working Saturdays. It is applicable for students from class I to VIII. On Saturdays, students will not carry school bags and, institutions will have to take up initiatives for co-curricular activities, games, sports, and recreational activities. The aim is to make schools a more joyful place of learning.

An office memorandum to this effect was issued by the education department enforcing 'No School Bag Day' in all categories of schools, including the government and private schools.

"It has come to the knowledge of the government that the students in these classes are found to be always engaged in routine work related to school curriculum, additional homework, assignments, etc. This makes it hard

to find any quality time for life skill activities including games and sports, extra co-curricular activities, etc. These activities can help in their holistic personality development and growth," the memorandum said.



The Education Department said it will review the practice having considered the long term physical and mental effects of carrying heavy school bags every day by young students causes inconveniences, health problems and discomfort to them.

The department notified that focus will be given more on the areas for providing a holistic development of the students by reducing excessive stress and by making school a more conducive and joyful place.

A local resident of Thangmeiband said, "It is a great relief not only for my child but for me too. It has become almost unbearable to watch my daughter carry that heavy school bag every day and the physical hardship she has to go through after carrying the bag."

New Policy in CBSE for Children with Special Needs

Children with special needs do not get required attention in schools across the country, which has now caught the attention of policy makers at the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

The Board has decided to draw a comprehensive policy to analyse teaching processes in its affiliated schools to the needs of children with special needs.

Students who have disabilities like dyslexia, dysgraphia or other physical or mental disabilities, sit in the classroom with others and try to cope up with the normal learning pace with little or no attention and recognition of the disability they carry with themselves.

While in several advanced countries there is awareness about the needs of such children, in India, knowledge of these issues is not widespread.

A CBSE official said “The need to design innovative strategies for the identification,



education and examination for children with special needs have been felt. It has been decided that a committee of experts headed by Sudha Acharya, Principal of Delhi's ITL school, will create a draft plan to make the classroom experience really inclusive for children with special needs.”

The official also added, “The Board has consulted leading experts to find ways to deal with the issue. Due to the scarcity of educators, it was felt that it is essential that school teachers be oriented towards the needs and management of such children”.

Dr. Nagpal of Moolchand Hospital said “Curriculum and teaching should be modified to meet the needs of this diversity which should include children with special needs. They can be as bright as anyone. It is said that even great people like Einstein or Thomas Alva Edison suffered from some such disorders. A policy intervention on addressing developmental disorder with associated behavioural problems by providing counselling and remedial teaching is much needed”.

The possibility of identification of neuro-based disabilities through the use of online tests are also being explored. ■



The Man Behind 'Computers on Wheels'

Fr. Maria Julian

PERSON OF
THE MONTH



The man behind converting a bus into a computer lab and implementing it to serve children from backward communities, Fr. Maria Julian, Director of Chitra Don Bosco School in Chitradurga, Karnataka, has been educating school children and empowering them to do better.

The Beginning

The idea came to Fr. Maria Julian's mind when he wanted to introduce computer education to children at a very young age. He realised that children living in backward communities and districts do not know what a computer is, and such kids would find it difficult to succeed in a world where computers are playing a very important role.

He felt the urge to educate these kids to overcome their fears of not knowing something such as operating a computer

and, give them a first-hand experiencing touching, seeing and probably creating something on it which gave rise to the project.

Taking the idea from Fr. Jose Churavelikudilil, Fr. Maria Julian decided to convert a bus into a computer lab and reach out to those backward communities and kids who had no access to technology.

The Mobile Computer Lab

To take his idea to schools across districts, Fr. Maria Julian decided to remodel a bus into a space similar to a computer lab. He hired a carpenter and a welder to remove the seats in



the bus, and replaced them with desks to place the computers. The initial idea was to fit desktops as they were durable and easy to maintain. But, he soon realised it was difficult to keep desktop computers stationary in a moving bus. It was then that Fr. Julian decided to use laptops instead, as they could be used for travelling purposes and had three-four hours of battery backup which suited the project better.

The next step was to decide on how to power the bus and the laptops while they were on the road. Fr. Julian's original idea was to install a battery that could hold power for 10-12 hours and could later be charged once it gets back to the school campus. However, the cost of the battery required an investment of close to 3 lakh rupees, and the cost of charging costed more than what they anticipated. Another alternative idea was proposed to equip the bus with generators. However, Fr. Julian

realised that the generators would consume more fuel and would contribute to air and noise pollution, so the plan was discarded.

The 'solar' way

When other ideas and alternatives to power the laptops did not work, Fr. Julian then came up with the idea of making the bus solar-powered. He spoke to the representatives of a company named SELCO, who deal with solar panels and presented his idea to them. He had the company fit solar panels on top of the bus that was connected to batteries which would store energy for its use.

Certificate of fitness

After the bus was completely equipped, Fr. Julian had to approach



the RTO (Regional Transport Office) to get his 'project on wheels' approved. Luckily for him, the transport authority stated that the school bus is a part of the schooling

system and could be used for any educational purpose. Thus, he received the all green signal to flag his project.

The Progression

Focusing on children between the age groups of 6 up to high-school, the school bus approaches government schools which do not have access to computers, during school hours, on a rotational basis. Here the kids are taught lessons starting from how to operate a computer to various other computer programmes that equip them to be tech-savvy.

The project also received permission from the Department of Education enabling them to conduct classes during free hours between classes so that the students are not disturbed from their main subjects or classes.

Due to its unique and tech-friendly idea, students and teachers are extremely interested in the project. Students love learning something new in a completely different environment and look forward to learning computer lessons on a school bus. Moreover, teachers and schools have also shown support to the project as it requires very little or minimal effort from their ends.

Milestones

Started in the year 2012, the project has received tremendous response from students and teachers alike from government schools and other



backward communities. Currently, it is also running a similar project in Ramnagara district, Karnataka.

The project is funded by Kinder Mission Works which is located in Germany. During Christmas, kids in Germany go around visiting houses and singing carols to raise money for the cause. The money and chocolate raised through this effort is later donated to keep the project running on wheels. ■

Source: [Scoo News](#)

Answers for Quiz of the Month - September 2019

1. Shehnai
2. Dr. Vikram Sarabhai
3. Assam
4. Atharvaveda
5. Jammu & Kashmir
6. Tiger
7. Mumbai
8. NTPC
9. Raghuram Rajan
10. Vaishno Devi

The Need for Professional Qualified Counsellors in School

VAISHALI J. PANICKER | Teacher, Navi Mumbai

Vaishali J. Panicker is a passionate teacher who believes in making learning an enjoyable experience. With a Montessori Teachers' Certificate and a Diploma in Teacher's Education, she has 14 years of experience in teaching pre-primary and primary students. She is also a co-author with Soulaitaire @ Quoting Scribblers Anthology.

Vaishali is currently mentoring and tutoring students, and also pursuing creative content writing.



I was inspired to write on counselling after reading Josh Neuer's articles. A licensed professional counsellor, he is the founder of Josh Neuer Counselling & Consulting.

According to experts, adolescent behavioural problems are increasing in numbers. Increasing family pressures, difficulties in concentration, no personal space, adjusting with peers, increasing academic, career and financial pressures, lack of quality time with family members, classes, pressure to perform in the exam, opinions and sarcasm over bad grades and so on. All these are piling up on the young minds and no one to share it with, without being snubbed with predetermined opinions is causing undue stress. Suicide incidents are frequenting the newspapers especially when examinations or results are around the corner, along with issues like child abuse.

Schools do have counsellors, but either on part time or they do more of academic counselling. Some counsellors are young and inexperienced to handle the gravity of the situation. Experienced counsellors should be recruited and a group of one to one session should be organised with the

teenage students. If the teacher identifies a student with similar symptoms, care should be taken by allotting a peer partner.

It is the teacher or an alert classmate, who will notice the behavioural changes. Special enriching workshops for teenagers addressing general topics in relation to mental health should often be conducted for the betterment of the students.

Initiate conversations with the isolated ones. Pull them into conversations. Ask their suggestions and opinions. Make them aware that you enjoy conversations with them. Don't snub or nip their conversations. Make them feel important. Slowly, they will come out of their shell and share what they think with you. Try this with your family at home too. You will notice a big difference.

When parents are asked to set a meeting with the school counsellor regarding their ward's behavioural issues, they are often thwarted with denial about existence of a problem due to social stigma. A problem can only be tackled quickly and appropriately when one agrees there is a problem.

School counsellors should often interact with parents, as and when possible by enlightening them with their knowledge about how certain behavioural issues can be tackled positively and not through the usual blame game.

These can compulsorily take place on Open House Days. A PowerPoint Presentation and few printed pamphlets should be circulated, while parents are waiting their turns or similar can be shared via emails. Feedback forms should be given to be filled, to get a fair idea about the teen. Similar MCQs or subjective tests should be conducted for students.



**A problem can only
be tackled quickly
and appropriately
when one agrees
there is a problem.**



This will help identify and correct any underlying mental health related issues and corrective measures can help the student perform better in the examinations or other areas of life, hence overcoming low self-esteem, low confidence or academic related issues if any. Considering every child is unique and has different emotional needs, the approach should be variant and not same for all. This can be thoughtfully handled by a mature and experienced counsellor only.

However, low academic performance cannot be blamed entirely on the student. The fault could be in the teacher, teaching technique or lack of knowledge on how to further simplify it for better understanding. In some cases, the rattling rote does not give the desired outcome. All facets have to be looked into prior to action on the account. Remedial guidance can work wonders in increasing the confidence of student.

Incentive should be given to teachers, who upgrade their skill by taking up counselling and guidance course for the betterment of the students. They can work alongside the counsellor to improve the student's performance. Every year, there are one or two specially-abled children and/or students with behaviour problem in the class. Providing regular study material may prove to be burdening them. Study material based on the given curriculum, according to concepts to be taught should be made by the school for such children in consultation with the counsellor. This will improve their outcome and definitely enhance the student's self-confidence as some children have shorter attention span.



It is difficult for a class teacher to continue with teaching and giving new learning experiences and also look into such children's need. A compassionate helping hand to take care should be appointed so the teacher's attention can be evenly distributed to all.

It should be made mandatory to appoint professionally experienced counsellors (not just one), to cater to the needs of teenagers and children. The fresher can take care of academic counselling and gain first-hand experience. ■

GREEN SCHOOL

The School of the 'Pancha Mahabhootas'

B-KANAE School, Modasa



India is a country rich in traditions and cultures. It is also home to many forests, mountains and hills. The Aravali Hills is one of them, which houses 'India's first green school'.

The Smt. Bhadraben Butala Kalrav Academy for National Education of the B-KANAE School is a green school located in Modasa, which is known as a heritage town of Gujarat. The school has dedicated itself to empower the future citizens and the green innovators of the country to take responsibility for the sustainability of the earth.

The beginning

The B-KANAE school was established in the year 2005 to provide central board education to Modasa. This is the first greens school in India and first in Gujarat and has won multiple awards and recognition.

The architect of this green campus is Virendra Rawat, the Director of B-KANAE

school. He has been associated with the school which is run by an almost 100-year-old trust named Bhadraben Butala Kalrav Academy for National Education.

Approach Towards Biodiversity

B-KANAE school saves money by reducing the consumption of resources, by educating the next generation on the values and the importance of caring for the environment.





The school works on the 'Pancha Mahabhoota' ideology that addresses all the five basic elements of nature- Prithvi (earth), Jal (water), Agni (sun), Vayu (air) and Akash (sky).

The main aim of the school is to connect students with nature while inculcating knowledge, values and skills.

The 'Pancha Mahabhootas'

Prithvi: The school has kept 60% of the area as 'green area'. With close to 1000 trees, herbal garden and different kinds of flowers, the management of the school has made the environment a conducive one for learning. The school has also taken the help of the social forestry department for plantation of trees and landscaping.

Jal: A sand filtering system is introduced in the school to reuse and recycle water. This process has helped to segment water into three categories - white water for drinking, grey for cleaning and black for watering.

- The school also harvests rainwater in tanks.
- Apart from this, they also use mulch, a layer that is applied on the top layer for the soil to conserve moisture and improve the health of the soil, and water plants once in a week. This method has helped the school save up to 80% of water.

Agni: Agni in this context is energy and electricity. The electricity connection in the school has been replaced with a 10-kiloWatt, zero-carbon emission solar panel.

- They use compact florescent bulbs instead of incandescent bulbs.
- The school takes advantage of the natural lighting and day lighting.
- The school also has a 5 KW solar plants to provide energy.

Vayu: The school has planted close to 25 trees per student, to effectively manage the ratio between students and trees.

- Air quality audits are conducted frequently, keeping basic parameters like temperature, humidity and carbon dioxide in mind.
- The school uses eco-friendly paint and adhesives to reduce indoor air contaminants.

- The school also frequently check the ventilation system to ensure clean and ample amount of fresh air is supplied to the classrooms.
- The school also has a water and air testing machine, which is used by the students to check the water and air quality in the school on a weekly basis.

Akash: To reduce the use of paper, the school has introduced tablets for students above class 5.

Other Initiatives

Waste Management: In addition to the reduction in the waste going to landfill, the school has introduced compost-pit and vermi-composting method. The school has also developed 'green curriculum' which makes students aware of the need to care for the environment.

Green Stationery: The school offers stationary like notebooks, pen, pencil, etc., made from recycled and or eco-friendly products.



Green Transport: Vehicles are the biggest source of carbon dioxide gas emission. To reduce the emission in the atmosphere, the school provides customised green transport driven by female drivers.

Innovative methods of teaching: The school has introduced a unique 'challenge the teacher' programme. Here, if a student scores 5 marks instead of 35 marks (the passing marks), the school asks that student to come up with difficult question giving the student 10-15 marks to find the question. If the teacher cannot give the answer, the student gets 10 marks. In this way, searching for a difficult question, the students end up learning more difficult concept.

Awards

B-KANAE is considered as the most respected school in India. The school has won many awards and recognition at both National and International levels. National School Sanitation Award 2012, Green School Mentor Award 2014, Green Difference of India Award 2015 by Boston, USA, are some of the many awards won by the school. The school was also nominated for UNESCO – Japan Prize 2015. ■

Source – <http://b-kanae.edu.in>
<http://www.theweekendleader.com>

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.

She has been appointed by CBSE as a member of the Inspection Committee for Affiliation of new schools. She has been a mentor to schools across Bangalore for implementation of the CBSE Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation system. She has also held appointments as the Centre Superintendent for the conduct of the CBSE All India Secondary School Examinations and Head examiner for evaluation.



As an effective counselor 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!

“

How can a school ensure that the writing habit remains a part of the learning culture in schools?

Reading and writing are acquired skills and must be made an integral part of the school curriculum. The curriculum should in itself reflect reading and writing as essential highlights of the school's learning culture, such that every student develops the writing habit adequately, through his scholastic years, from pre- school to high school, to meet immediate and long term learning objectives and outcomes. It should also be an integral part of the whole school policy.

At the pre- school stage students must be initiated into pre-reading and pre-writing skills. Book browsing at this level elicits excellent pre-reading skills. The freedom to feel a book and flip through its well illustrated pages will kindle curiosity and the invite little readers into a realm of good

reading that urges them to express in writing. Picture talk, story and rhyme, drawing and art will all help in developing good pre-reading and pre-writing skills.

The reading habit must be encouraged at all levels as it develops vocabulary, imagination and communication with vivid expression, descriptive and narrative, and fluency and enables better writing skills, which is of great help for students in their higher education and career.

A graded plan to develop the creative writing skill must be woven into the school curriculum through the primary, middle and high schools levels - from picture composition to story and poetry writing, listening and reading comprehension to script and dialogue writing, simple process, journal and letter writing to précis and report writing, thus nurturing the flair for writing.

Thus, **the role of the language teacher** is paramount in this direction. Language teachers at each level must spend dedicated time with each student to develop the writing habit. While inculcating the writing habit teachers must encourage students to write as they would like to be understood. It is important to have a structure that provides the template and then allows a student to develop his/her own writing style.

Writing is an art! Like any other art, for the creative element to emerge naturally, students must find joy in writing! Hence, teachers must create a stress free, open and transparent environment that gives students the freedom to express, though stories and poetry, their opinion about people, events, and social concerns. Channelizing their mindset and expression objectively, **will create responsible writers**. Motivation and periodic guidance play a pivotal role in encouraging the writing habit.

A good writing habit inculcated through school years will pay dividends later when expression with precision and clarity of thought will come naturally to the student, whichever professional course or career he/she pursues. Creativity and humour when blended into ones writing habit will lend a special flavour!

Writing workshops may be organised to nurture creative writing talent.

Group projects, engaging students in writing a story for the class library, will promote imagination, collaborative thinking and purposeful conversation, while creatively utilizing their individual skills as scribes

and illustrators. Having the stories bound well, with their names printed will motivate them to write more. The class will read each other's story with interest. Many skills and styles will emerge from this activity.

A well stocked school library, which serves as an activity centre, will provide students adequate opportunity for exposure to different writing styles through a wide genre of literature and poetry. In today's context, a SMART library can facilitate such an environment.

Students are easily influenced by success stories. The school can organise **meetings with authors and playwrights**. Students must have access to **age appropriate material about authors and philosophers**, whose writings have given us the joy of reading bed time stories and books filled with fantasy and mystery, historical literature, narratives of adventure, exploration and discovery, biographies, travelogues and books about the lives of great men. **Talks** may be arranged. Students must be inspired to practice to improve the quality of their writing.

A class-wise writers' club and a poets' guild will offer students a platform to exhibit their writing skills and also learn from others. Learning the art of appreciating different writing styles will be a valuable outcome.

Having a monthly **class newsletter** managed by the students in which their articles, stories and poetry are published periodically will motivate the students to write often.

Good writing must be awarded to encourage a student to practice and put in greater efforts, without compulsion, to improve his own skill. Every writing effort appreciated and guidance offered will encourage students to continue writing. Appointing students on the committee for selection of good articles, stories and poetry will empower them. Display of their writings on the school bulletin boards, publishing them in the school magazine, uploading them on to the school website and nominating them for writing competitions and awards will give the students recognition and encourage larger participation.

Teachers must lead by example. Teachers must contribute to student edition of newspapers and periodicals read by students. Participating actively in writing workshops, organised to enable better writing skills among teachers, will go a long way in bringing out their creative writing talent, and in **perpetuating the good writing habit as part of the learning culture in a school**. ■

Is nature our first teacher?



VARSHA PRASAD
Editor, TheTeacher.in

In a recent conversation with a friend, who takes a lot of inspiration from nature, he told me how nature and his surroundings are his greatest teachers. This got me intrigued and when I asked him to elaborate, his explanation inspired me and got me thinking at the same time. His explanation was simple, and his examples were interesting – nature is the best classroom, leading to discoveries and reflections.

One day, a man was walking when he saw a bird easily glide and fly in the sky. He wished to fly too. This led him to think and helped him invent the aeroplane.

A man was sitting by the pond and saw a duck easily paddle its way through in the water. This gave him an idea to create something on the lines of the duck's webbed feet, to help him in the sea during his diving trips. Thus, the flippers were invented.

A man was walking on the road at night when he saw something glowing in the dark. He later realised that it was a cat. This inspired him to device lights called 'cat eyes' on the roads, to help him drive safely.

Today, in schools, there is a lot of emphasis given to outdoor learning, especially for early years. **The aim of this is to allow children to interact with the surroundings and experience things on their own.** Hence, children are allowed to play in mud, sand and clay to allow them to touch, feel and have hands-on experience. This also allows them to improve their senses, further aiding their development.

I was able to relate to what my friend was saying, as what we do in schools today is nothing but allow the children to learn from the environment around them, and let mother nature do her job as one of the most important teachers.

Do you agree with me that nature can be one of the best teachers? Do you or your school do something similar to help children learn from their surroundings? Share your thoughts with me at varsha@greycaps.com

 Varsha Prasad

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.



Quiz of the Month

- 'Leander Adrian Paes', an Indian athlete, is famous for playing which sport?
 - Badminton
 - Tennis
- What is the capital city of Jharkhand?
 - Gurugram
 - Ranchi
- Which Indian city is nicknamed as the 'Pink City'?
 - Jaipur
 - Udaipur
- Who was the eldest son of Hyder Ali, the ruler of Mysuru kingdom?
 - Sher Shah Suri
 - Tipu Sultan
- Vikramaditya was an emperor belonging to which dynasty?
 - Gupta
 - Chola
- Bolivar is the currency of which South American country?
 - Argentina
 - Venezuela
- 'Alhambra', one of the most visited monuments in the world, is located in which European country?
 - Saudi Arabia
 - Spain
- Theodore Roosevelt Jr. was the President of which country?
 - UK
 - U.S.A
- Bogota is the capital city of which South American country?
 - Spain
 - Colombia
- Panama Canal connects the Atlantic Ocean and the _____ Ocean.
 - Indian
 - Pacific



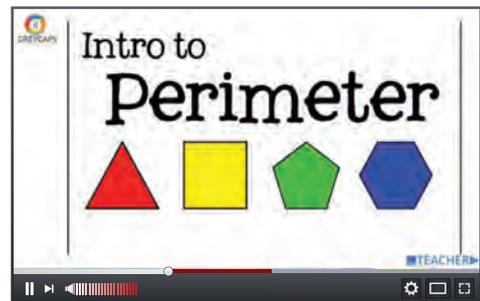
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