

Teachers' Day 2020

**‘EMBRACING
CHANGE’**





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Happy Teachers' Day!



*'The true teachers are those who help us
think for ourselves.'*

–Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan



केन्द्रीय माध्यमिक शिक्षा बोर्ड CENTRAL BOARD OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

डा. बिस्वजीत साहा
निदेशक (प्रशिक्षण एवं कौशल शिक्षा)

Dr. Biswajit Saha
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DIRECTOR/TRG&SE/CBSE/2020

August 25, 2020

FOREWORD

Dear Educators

Happy Teacher's Day!

It gives me great pleasure to share a message in this Teachers' Digest, being released on September 5, 2020.

The future of a country lies in the hands of its teachers, who mould students into productive citizens and future leaders. I earnestly appreciate the efforts put in by teachers and acknowledge the challenges they have overcome to continue teaching in the pandemic.

We recognize that capacity building of teachers is central to the success of our educational initiatives. Expert educators, who have contributed to this digest, are from all over India and other countries. They have delved into the changing dynamics of education and future needs of educators, to come up with relevant ideas for educators to build upon their learning.

The digest covers a host of themes ranging from '*School Leadership in the Pandemic*', '*Developing Emotional Resilience to Thrive*' to '*Practical Approach to Online Professional Development*' and '*Moving towards learner-friendly teaching*'.

I congratulate Macmillan Education India, for sharing these blogs to support educators in their professional and personal development.

Best wishes,

(Dr. Biswajit Saha)

शैक्षणिक, प्रशिक्षण एवं कौशल शिक्षा

शिक्षा सदन, 17 राउज एवेन्यू, इंस्टीट्यूशनल एरिया बाल भवन के पास, आईटीओ, नई दिल्ली – 110 002

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Dear Educators,

We wish you a Happy Teachers' Day and salute your efforts towards continuing education.

Congratulations to the entire education fraternity on the release of the momentous National Education Policy 2020, which envisions a learner centric, skill based education system to transform India, into an equitable and vibrant knowledge society.

The past few months have been transformational for the education landscape, as teaching-learning moved out of brick and mortar, to the virtual world. While institutions closed, learning did not. Courageous and enterprising teachers, picked up virtual classroom tools and apps to reach out to learners. Dissemination of knowledge leapfrogged, with kneejerk adoption of technology.

However, research shows that the efficacy of technology integration in teaching, is correlated to teacher knowledge, confidence and belief in this tool. Teachers are and will remain central to the entire process of learner motivation and actual learning. It is the pedagogy of technology application, rather than technology itself, that will improve learning outcomes and this can happen only, when teachers are empowered and equipped to teach in the blended mode.

Recently a survey was conducted by Macmillan Education, with K-8 teachers, to understand their experience of online teaching in lockdown. It showed that in terms of syllabus coverage, student engagement and continuity in teaching, only 60% of teachers were satisfied. Over 50% of them wanted to take up training in 'Blended Teaching Methodology' and 'Creativity in Subject Pedagogy.' Most expressed a desire to pick up new skills and tools.

Today, teachers are ready to embed technology in their pedagogy, assessments and classroom management. This awakened desire to unlearn and relearn, can bring the requisite changes in the teaching capabilities and subsequently in improvement of learning outcomes.

We hope that this compilation of articles and blogs from experts, will trigger a desire in teachers, to reinvent themselves.

With regards
Macmillan Education



Time to Reboot

A lot has been said and heard on the emerging pedagogic trends and evolutionary pathways that the pandemic has set forth. While all this goes on in the forefront, there are silent whispers as we witness the steep rise in Covid-19 cases. What was a concern and fear triggered by the incessant downpour of updates on the social media, is now a next door reality.

These are times when parables and analogies come as handy tools to help visualize the purpose of a state of helplessness. Reminds me of one such narrative heard several times but yet never fails to make that desired impact. As the narrative goes, this young man loved spending time at his terrace garden. Sprawled out with dense green, his little Zen garden with the green turf below, the leafy canopy for his mornings, the rhythm of water gurgling at the little Buddha fountain was nothing less than bliss.

One such morning, having done with his morning silence while softly tending to his plants, he sees a cocoon precariously hanging. A small hole in it and the butterfly within struggling to make an exit. Enamoured by the efforts of the little being, he sat down to watch the butterfly as it struggled to steer its body through that little hole. After what seemed to be an eternity it stopped making any progress. It seemed as if the little one had given up and there was nothing more to it. Unable to bear the stress of watching helpless, he stretched out and peeled the crusty shield bit by bit till the swollen body with its shrivelled wings fell out in a lump. He carefully placed it on a leaf in a corner hoping it to gain its glory.

A day later he saw it there it still lying and crawling on the leaf till it no more did. Little did he know that the magic in the flight of the butterfly lay in the struggle of emerging from the cocoon. The wrangle in getting itself out through the tiny hole was nature's mechanism to force the fluid back into the vein of the wings so that it would be ready for flight.

Perhaps we too are in the same struggle of emerging into a new world, with new dimensions to a better understanding and sensitivity. While all this happens it is of paramount importance that we update and upgrade to the tools needed. Never before has learning been laid out on a platter which may be accessed from the comfort of our homes and with so much ease. All that one needs today is the thirst and the desire to learn. The rest shall take care of itself.

Certainly it is a time to reboot with certain uninstallations and new add-ons.



Mr. Sharat Chandran

Director
Kerala Public Schools
Jamshedpur

Homage to Teachers

It is true that the unprecedented spread of Covid -19 has thrown most of us, out of gear in our lives. And, the school stakeholders are not spared too. Parents, teachers, students and the managements, are all affected by this pandemic. Of these, the saga of teachers needs special mention. They have to confront a hitherto inexperienced challenge of conducting virtual classes continuously for months together. The story goes on even today.

Initially, many of them were at sea! Very quickly they rose to the situation, and got equal to the task, thanks to appropriate and adequate training provided by the managements. Unlike classroom sessions, where they were in the physical presence of the students, and could freely interact with them, this was an altogether new experience. Online sessions have their limitations with each student sitting at his/her home, and dependant on erratic net connectivity. Holding the students' attention is a herculean task. Techniques and strategies are improvised and devised to make the classes as interesting as can be. But the most challenging task is the exposure to the parent community during class! Teachers lacking in skill and calibre, across the country, have a difficult time. Even high ability teachers, despite their best efforts, have to face uncharitable comments by some unsympathetic parents.

The fact of the matter is that the sincere and dedicated teaching fraternity has to put in almost double the normal efforts in preparing for an online class. To meet the high expectations of students and parents, many of who are hesitant to pay up the fees!

All told, the teachers are doing a great job, stretching themselves to cope with the trying situation.

On the occasion of Teachers' Day 2020, we pay our respectful homage to all the teachers because of whom the academics of the children are well attended to, in spite of this Covid calamity. Kudos to them all!

I thank the Macmillan Group for bringing out a special Teachers' Day Digest on the occasion carrying notes from eminent educationists across the country.



Swami Viviktananda Saraswati

Regional Head
Chinmaya Mission
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Focus on Holistic Education in NEP 2020

NEP 2020 has laid transformative ideas to reshape education. Teachers are central to the success of our education system. Four years Bachelors in Education has got the long-awaited recognition and so has the amount of teaching practice in class room (30-40%) thus endeavouring to bridge the gap between knowledge and practice (hands on).

Creating ecosystem for educators & learners to excel by – much has been drafted & envisioned.

Integration spirit of human values in our curriculum i.e. K.G. to P hd. needs to be strengthened. Gurukul model or system of education i.e. blend of modern scientific education with spiritual rejuvenation is the need of the times.

These are the two core areas around which the universities of Nalanda & Taxila were built - pioneer work of Indian Civilization dating back to 1100 BC. These Vedic models of excellence started as centers of theology, where the spirit of philanthropy and humanity was the nucleus. Their edifice was so strong that Ivy league universities of today/ Cambridge/ Oxford emulated these models of excellence of Vedic period to develop the coveted model of pedagogical excellence & trans-disciplinary research.

NEP envisions a move from inspectorial regime of input focus, qualification on paper, to more dynamic, vibrant system of learning outcomes and pedagogy which requires teachers to be facilitators in the classroom versus 'sage on stage'.

It emphasizes educational models which require us to re-invent ourselves and realign with rapid changes occurring in the world today. Be it climate change, machine learning, AI, Covid arises and more. Our learner has to be sensitized to the pain and suffering of millions around him. He has to develop the ability to ADAPT to these changes. This will be tested throughout his life and it is not buried in mere degrees and certificates stacked neatly in files. We have to teach our teachers to be pedagogically sharp and highly competent - who can create and innovate curriculum as per the need of changing times, geographic location and as per the individual need of the learner. Concept of differentiation in ability, process of teaching-learning and assessment has to be given due credit for inclusive education.

Early years education & Primary years Inclusion of Early childhood education in the formal school structure is incomplete by itself. Education in these years of rapid learning can be strengthened if the best trained minds teach these students. Aganwadi workers, even if trained for few weeks will not be able to lay foundation of sensitive, socially emotionally stable child with strong civic sense and who is spiritually kind of.

All teacher training institutes and schools have to embed spiritual values and emotional intelligence in their curriculum. Modern Education should not make us more materialistic

human beings, focused on me and mine. In order to make this world a beautiful place we need to shift our focus from MINE to THINE and for this sterling quality to develop, spiritual education based on moral and ethics has to be incorporated in our design of course work.

Education of mind cannot heal the world. Humane teachers will keep enriching the lives of lessons of their learners by integrating disciplinary subjects with humanistic spirit. I as a teacher have to internalize and take the call to change my DNA. No policy or reference alone can change anything, unless I decide to change. Change/survival does not mean elbowing others out. In reality more than survival of the fittest, it is survival of the kindest that has made our species survive over two millennia.

We have to empower our teachers to this awakening of GIVING & SHARING. Tall order indeed but worth trying.

Salute all of you.



Dr. Neelam Kaur

Advisor
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Decoding NEP 2020-The Road Ahead

The National Education Policy 2020 unveiled by the Ministry of Education has been the focus of much attention, discussion and debate, and not without reason. Coming, as it does, three decades after the last NEP in 1984 and the first one to be introduced in the 21st century, NEP 2020 is bold and ambitious both in scope and scale and envisions a complete over-hauling of the education sector. The proposed allocation of 6% of India's GDP to the sector is indicative of the government's commitment to making the vision a reality.

But, beyond the hype and hoopla, what does NEP 2020 mean in real, tangible terms to students, teachers and parents? How is it going to impact schools once the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) is redesigned by NCERT in line with the latest policy, and implemented by 2022-23 academic session?

To understand the new policy impact, it will help to break it down into four components broadly: School Structure, Curriculum, Pedagogy and Assessment or simply put, the Who, the What and the How of education followed by a report on all three.

In terms of Academic or School Structure, the new education policy seeks to replace the existing 10+2 format with a 5+3+3+4 format based on the cognitive developmental stages of the child. The five years of Foundation Stage (Pre-Nur. to II) will be followed by three years of Preparatory Stage (III to V), another three years of Middle Stage (VI-VIII) and four years of Secondary Stage (IX-XII). The transformational aspect of this structure is most evident in the Foundation Stage, or the first five years of the school for ages 3 to 8. For the first time, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), which includes 3 years of pre-primary school (age 3-6), preceding grade I-II, have been included in the ambit of Indian education system. This is based on the recognition that these early years are most significant for the cognitive growth of children and building strong foundations early in a child's life must be given the highest priority. To that end, the National Curricular and Pedagogical Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (NCPFECCE) will formulate a blueprint for expected learning outcomes, age appropriate curriculum, activities and methodology. However, it may be noted that there will be no addition to the actual number of school years, which will remain the same.

Some of the other significant changes announced by the NEP pertain to School Curriculum, the most prominent being a clear intent to reduce the curricular load to its core essentials. The logic is simple: reduce the burden of curriculum and increase the scope and depth of learning. The focus of the syllabus will be on key concepts and ideas which will not only reduce academic stress but also free the teachers to focus on conceptual understanding and higher order thinking skills, thus making the shift from content to competencies.

The main thrust of the curriculum in the early years will be to develop Foundational Literary and Numeracy skills (FLN) i.e., reading, writing and mathematics, besides promoting curiosity, ethics, etiquette, good behaviour and self-identity. In the following stages, multi-disciplinary and integrated learning will be the mantra, and the existing separations between different subjects will be eliminated and rigid silos of curricular-extracurricular, vocational-academic, science-humanities etc. will be dismantled. In addition, students at the senior secondary level will have the flexibility of choosing subjects across different streams as per their interest and inclination and traditional streams of Science, Humanities and Commerce will be a thing of the past.

Two areas that have received special attention from NEP 2020 are a) Vocational Studies and (b) Digital Learning and Computational Thinking. From the Middle stage, every child will be exposed to a variety of vocations and learn at least one vocation for which he/she will also have to undergo industry-based internship. The aim is to remove the stigma associated with taking up a vocation as a career and expose students to various career paths, including entrepreneurial enterprise. At the same time, AI, Coding and Design Thinking will also be introduced and taught grade VI upwards, thereby making students future-ready for the digital age.

However, even as we build citizens armed with skills and competencies required for global success in the 21st century, Indian culture, heritage, values and ethos will be given impetus in the curriculum and new textbooks prepared by NCERT will have local content and flavour. In the same spirit of nationalism, the medium of instruction up to class V will be the mother-tongue or a regional language, wherever possible. The policy also gives a nod to the current three-language formula to promote multi-lingualism but mandates that no language will be imposed.

It goes without saying that the entire educational edifice envisioned by the NEP will rest on the shoulders of the teachers. Its success will be dependent on the Pedagogy or the delivery mechanism that these teachers will employ to transact this new curriculum. The new policy takes pains to emphasize that for learning to be permanent and life-long, it should be joyful and student-driven and age appropriate. While Early Education will be play/activity based, in the Preparatory Stage (III-V) the NEP prescribes more formal, yet interactive, classroom teaching with a discovery and learning-by-doing approach. At the Middle stage and Secondary stage, where academic complexities and abstract concepts gain prominence, the chalk-talk, jug-mug approach to teaching will be replaced by innovative, experiential, enquiry-based pedagogies that integrate arts, sports and ICT, and encourage reflection, observation and evaluation. Rote-learning will be sought to be eliminated while learning outcomes and competencies will take

centre-stage.

No reform in education can be complete or effectual without a corresponding reform in the current Examination System. The reason being that most teaching by teachers and learning by learners is directed and driven by the nature of the examination. Students study what they will be tested for, and teachers will teach likewise.

In order to actualize its vision of a purposeful, competency-based education, the NEP seeks to de-emphasize exams and recommends ongoing formative assessments for measuring learning outcomes over one-time summative assessments.

Another recommendation is to conduct formal standardized school assessments at the end of grades III, V and VIII for tracking learning progress at key stages rather than just at the end, as well as for course-correction, if required.

All assessment, whether formative assessment, key stage assessment or Board assessment, will focus on testing not information and factual knowledge (the very cause of rote-learning) but core concepts, higher order thinking skills and application of knowledge. The new structure will thus promote not just assessment of learning but also assessment as learning and assessment for learning.

The shift in approach will also be reflected in the report card which will be a 3600, holistic, multi-dimensional report card that will cover a student's progress across all domains - cognitive, affective, socio-dimensional and psycho-motor domains, not unlike the now defunct CCE or Continuous, Comprehensive Evaluation system.

As for Board Exams, they will continue for both grades X and XII but the exams will be redesigned to focus on competencies and conceptual understanding, making them "easier." Also, students will have the choice of appearing for them twice a year, the second time for improvement of grades, if desired. There is also a tentative suggestion for an examination to be administered by the National Testing Agency (not unlike the SAT/ACT in America) that could also be used for admission into higher educational institutions, thus further reducing the enormous focus and concomitant stress around Board exams.

With all these sweeping changes announced, it is evident that the National Education Policy of 2020 is looking to bring a paradigm shift in how we, as a society, perceive education and how it is imparted in schools across the country. In fact, it makes us re-examine the very purpose of going to school – not to rote-learn our way through exams at the end of each year or to crack the Boards for that degree/diploma that will be the ticket to a good college and a well-paying job at the end of it. Rather, it is to learn about the world around us, to imbibe a life-long love of learning, to acquire 21st century skills and competencies and inculcate values and ethics, all

of which will not only prepare students for success in their life and career but also make them independent-minded, capable, compassionate, well-rounded and self-aware individuals.

While the aims of the policy are laudable, changing mind-sets will be the challenge – of teachers, parents and school administrators. Equally challenging will be the task of preparing and training teachers for implementing the new curriculum, the new pedagogies and assessment patterns. To its credit, the NEP has outlined a detailed plan for the professional development of teachers going forward.

It must also be said that much of the progressive change articulated by the document, and many of the ideas relating to the purpose of and approach to teaching-learning and assessments, have been around for a while and are already being practised by several private schools. However, the aim of the policy is to make comprehensive, systematic changes across all sections of the educational sector so as to make India a “knowledge hub” and build an equitable, inclusive and plural society.

Finally, NEP 2020 is a grandiose announcement of a grand vision. It is the need of the hour as India asserts to find its rightful place on the world stage. However, the success of the new education policy, as with any policy, will ultimately depend on how all its stakeholders will walk the talk.



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Technology Aided Online Teaching

Introduction

Man's adaptability to adversity is amazing. In fact, calamities have always triggered man's determination. It is no denying the fact that inopportune moments have more often than not led to innovation. The current unprecedented world scenario of COVID-19 is having a cascading effect on every single field including education. It calls for a revamp, especially in its mode of content delivery.

Adapting to the new change and gaining the latest technical know-how is incumbent upon everyone and is a new-found challenge for both teachers and the taught, though the latter being the quicker of the two in mastering online technology. However, not all are technically sound and willing to come out of the comfort zone, and the ones that are earnestly trying to get familiar with technology scarcely meet the standards thus exposing the vast digital divide.

Effective Use of Digital Tools

As online learning took off at a fast pace the number of e-learning technologies, sites and apps grew exponentially. It is ironic to note that the major issue for educationists is to determine the range of collaboration tools and engagement methods to suit their educational needs. Contrary to the traditional system of teaching where the teacher was delivering lessons with the help of slides and ppt, the modern-day classrooms supported by the internet have enabled teachers and students to enjoy interactive content delivery and enhanced classroom conditions in terms of knowledge transfer.

With high access to technology and internet connectivity the following range of activities such as pre-recorded lectures, notes, live discussions, live help or remedial sessions, online assignments and assessment can be suitably carried out. With medium access to technology, activities such as voice-over, slides, Email or phone-based help sessions like group chat and messaging can be arranged. The technologies such as Web 2.0: Wikis and social networks aid learning through collaboration.

The paradigm shift in the process of disseminating knowledge has paved the way for a plethora of digital tools coming into play a crucial role in the effectiveness of online classroom management. The effective use of digital tools facilitates students to apply their knowledge and demonstrate their learning through enriching classroom activities. So much so, in remote learning, there are a set of activities to meet learning objectives. While performing activities, a blended approach with both synchronous (one to one teaching) and asynchronous (sending the link for learning) activities can be chosen for the effectiveness of content delivery. While finding the appropriate tool one should give preference to the objective of learning. It is advisable to use tools that get learners talking, doing and making E.g. Google docs. Padlet, Flipboard etc., Above all the quintessential nature of teachers keeping temperament intact while experiencing technologies for digital natives. One has to resist those perfectionist tendencies to master all of

the things at one go. An inventive approach of technology integrated education is phenomenal from the perspective of those advocating technology as it brings about a desirable change in the way teaching can be prominently carried out.

Additionally, as an applied tool, technology intensifies the learning process and provides opportunities for enhanced delivery of educational contents. As the present world is striving to get over the COVID-19 pandemic, educators across the world with grit and determination devise online pedagogy, by harnessing skills and creativity of students and to support them in their educational needs.

The fact remains that online learning is here to stay during the pandemic and beyond, and the integration of technology in the field of education will help students to face the challenges of future with confidence.



Mrs. Hameeda Kadar

Principal

M. E. S. Indian School

Doha

Qatar

Building Adversity Quotient in Learners

The new normal has laid bare a confusing world, in which, a lot has changed, with social distancing norms and other restrictions in place. Learning is no longer constrained by physical barriers, it may be acquired anywhere, thanks to technology.

The adversity quotient: acceptance is recovery

With fear and uncertainty in the air, it is crucial for teachers to stay connected, generate awareness, and respond creatively while maintaining the essence of teaching.

Four easy steps for acceptance

- See it: acknowledge the need for change
- Own it: accept and take ownership of the situation
- Solve it: plan ahead
- Do it: execute the change with a Plan B as backup

We are at the cross roads of history, and our young learners need to be sensitized to the challenges and gifts of this new reality, as well as, supported to build skills and competencies and use technology as a tool to thrive.

It's a pressure cooker out there!

I would like to share a recent incident, analogous to our situation in the first few days of the lockdown. A few weeks ago, to save time spent in the kitchen, I decided to cook more meals in a pressure cooker, than in pots and pans. My old pressure cooker was too small for my plan, so a new one was ordered. The new version that confronted me, was a completely different design. Frantic efforts were made to get the two pieces to fit together. I struggled for a few minutes, sweating over it. Adding to the frustration was the fact that I had an audience. Thankfully, ten minutes into the ordeal, my intelligence kicked in and I asked for the instruction manual. Thirty seconds later the pressure cooker lid and the pot were joyfully united. That's all it took - a few seconds to read the instructions, line up the two arrows (which were there in plain sight, if only I had known where to look).

Such a simple lesson for us all from the humble pressure cooker: misdirected action does not result in much, other than a lot of sweat. Too many people trying to do a job with the best intent does not help either. What is needed sometimes, is a pause, some research and reflection. Seek to first understand what needs to be done. Take the time to apply your mind. Then swing into action...mindful action vs. mindless frenzy.

The pressure cooker created an environment of stress like the lockdown did. There was so much newness to navigate, with no time to pause and think. The turning point came in the form of some 'me time' and quiet reflection. Thankfully, we aligned quickly and marched

forward, now everything is slowly finding its place in this new jigsaw puzzle. We must remind ourselves to take some time to find the alignment and start connecting with the new Normal, to help our young learners learn to cope

with the uncertainty that surrounds them...and build Adversity Quotient. Remember to let off steam at times, to cope with stress. Do not allow uncertainty to get to you. Spend some time in solitude...it's ok to want to be alone at times to find solutions.

Design thinking for change: building bridges

- The online teaching model must be embedded with an emotional compass as mental health issues are on the rise and the dominos effect will be felt very soon
- Design thinking for change is the need of the hour, with creative freedom and opportunities for self-learning
- Building emotional resilience
- Using photographs of the city in lock down, silent, but beautiful will help us reflect and overcome this situation without fear and with hope
- Creating a virtual class constitution will help children apply their civics lessons to life
- Show them they are not alone
- If current times are tough, it is the same for all. Confinement need not be a condition of the spirit for we can be free if we wish ourselves to be
- Encourage students to learn through trial and error as we are doing.
- Plan lessons with less frills /fuss as what matters is not the quantity of what is taught but quality.

Try reverse mentoring

- Flip the class with students doing most of the talking
- Repackage content and assessments
- Let them show us the way

The gift of hope

Hard times such as these will teach children to appreciate their blessings and empathize with others. Remind them to go up to the terrace to watch the stars and clear blue skies. As teachers, we must add freshness to old tasks. Our familiar lives must now be reconstructed, with a new attitude in place. Yes, we miss our work, the comfort of routine, structure and friends. We are afraid. Let us turn FEAR into a motivator, it sometimes is. Life is scary but planning makes it comfortable, and we can be back in control.

The happiest of people don't necessarily have the best of everything—they just make the most of everything that comes along their way.

It is the same when we teach I write, erase, rewrite

Erase again and then a poppy blooms

As teachers, let us reinvent to be real, let us rewrite rule books, add kindness, offer choices and keep connecting till the poppies bloom in our class rooms. As Maya Angelou said 'As teachers let us try to be the rainbow in someone's cloud.'



Ms. Anjana Saha

Principal

Mahadevi Birla World Academy

Kolkata

Lockdown or Lockup?

The lockdown, has proved to be, more than anything else, a ‘lockup’ of the free spirit of young children and adolescents, who, till six months back, were oblivious of this term. Today the term lockdown has become an everyday word – the ‘new normal’. This unprecedented disruption has adversely affected the emotional well-being of all generations, more so of the very young, who are active by nature. For students in their teens, socialisation is an integral part of their daily life and friends their safety net. In the absence of face to face contact with their friends, they are facing emotional upheaval. As someone who interacts with students on a daily basis, I wonder how the lockdown is affecting their physical, mental and emotional health.

Educators are reaching out to all students possible, overcoming challenges of technology to extend academic support. Schools are doing their best to disseminate knowledge and skills so that this academic session is not declared as a ‘Null Year’. Are educators, as mentors and facilitators doing enough, by delivering content in the best possible manner? Is using technology to extend learning, the real role of a teacher? Ask any teacher and she will tell you that the best part of teaching is motivating and supporting students, to become confident and good human beings.

Teachers need to assume a larger role

Today, these young learners and adolescents, whose future has been entrusted to us by their parents, find themselves in a distressing situation. Probably for the first time, they find their parents discussing dire financial situation and uncertainty in low voices. The anxiety gets transferred to the children, who have no understanding or coping mechanism. When they find their parents not going to work, they fear as to how and from where the money would come. But, I am sure that these young ones do understand one thing clearly, that this is not the time to add to their parents’ worries, so they keep all these questions to themselves.

Educators, are already putting their heart and soul into making this period of lockdown an engaging one through online sessions. More important than any academics or activity at this point of time, is to talk to these young ones who, are isolated and have no friends or extended family to share these apprehensions with. We should talk to them, listen to their fears and make them understand that this too shall pass. Have a conversation with them about how they could extend support to their parents during such challenging times, answer their queries and stimulate them to speak about their fears. Talk to them about adjustment, empathy and caring. If we look at the positives of this situation, there could not be a better time to impart valuable life lessons to this young generation, to imbibe an empathetic and peaceful perspective on life.



Ms. Urvashi Kakkar
Principal
Amity International School
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Teaching Leapfrogs from 19th to 21st Century

COVID19 pandemic has demonstrated that all teachers possess skills of the fourth industrial revolution – digital literacy, adaptability, lifelong learning and effective communication. Traditional classrooms seat at least forty uniform-clad students in rows on facing a blackboard. Classes change every forty minutes, and each class is teacher led with the support of textbooks and notebooks. Schooling now, during the Corona virus pandemic looks nothing like this.

For schools in India, where students and teachers were lucky enough to have access to data and connectivity, schooling transformed in a matter of weeks.

It started with the creation of digital classrooms where teachers and their students came together to communicate with each other. Teachers first taught themselves how to navigate, set up and run such classrooms and then immediately set out to teach students and their parents too. In the first few weeks, this involved reaching out to individual parents and students to understand their unique situations and clear doubts, to ensure that all students could be online and access digital classrooms.

Next, a bigger challenge – how were teachers going to create rich learning experiences for their students while they remained at home? Teachers started by creating asynchronous lessons for their students. These lessons ensured that students could learn at any suitable time and on any available device.

To make learning meaningful and deliver the right content given where learners had left off, teachers searched for the best and most relevant videos on the internet. When those were not the most appropriate, they curated and simplified them, to meet their students' needs. Many went further and created their own, presentations to share information with students and embedded interactive elements like questions, worksheets and polls to ensure that learners stayed focused and engaged.

Interestingly and unlike before, online assessments and digital platforms are also helping teachers generate new data to understand student learning better. Their data is no longer limited to attendance records. Now, along with attendance, teachers can see what students have completed and what they have struggled with, often in real-time. By tracking such student data, teachers are able to identify student needs such as learning gaps, their interests and engagement and then tailor lessons to meet and resolve those needs and doubts.

Teachers' unique roles extend beyond teaching academics, to checking on the physical and mental well-being of their students. In the wake of COVID19 teachers have extended themselves to learn, innovate and completely change their approach to teaching. Their determination, ability to adapt and rise to this challenge makes them great examples of success for students who are growing up in a world that is increasingly disrupted and dominated by technology.



Mr Rohan Parikh

Managing Director
The Green Acres Academy
Mumbai

Preparing for School Leadership

Human being evolve, so must education, and educators. The pandemic has had an apocalyptic impact on education. As educators, we were quite literally thrown into the deep end without so much as a warning! Well, we not just learnt to swim, we helped students, parents and various other stakeholders in the system to come along with us. We learnt some graceful strokes techniques and attitudes for smooth sailing. While our students, the digital natives enthusiastically joined this learning experience, often providing support as MKOs (More Knowledgeable Others) of Social constructivism; their parents found it tougher. The more years you spend on this planet, the more difficult it is to accept change, but then change is inevitable and the gateway to a new beginning.

Our education system was designed to cater to the industrial revolution, and has been wrought with what John Taylor Gatto aptly calls, 'Weapons of mass instruction.' We should have got rid of those weapons long back, and turned 'mass' into 'personalized' and 'instruction' to evolve into real 'learning.'

The world today needs empathy, social-emotional intelligence, resilience, creativity and collaboration. Even the foundational literacies have evolved and so have key competencies for sheer survival of human beings on this planet.

In this VUCA world, educational leadership is not easy, as we struggle for resources on one hand and an ever-changing landscape on the other. More than ever before, a leader needs to take on all qualities of water - the flexibility to flow through narrow chinks, the transparency in our interactions with parents, colourless unbiased professionalism, the ability to quench thirst with sensitive solutions and when needed shower from the skies to make learning fresh and keep the school growing.

Professional development and quality assurance are at the center of empowerment and growth for the whole team. The only successful way to make this work in a school setting, is joint practice development. Teaching is very personal, ingrained in building relationships. Impersonal approaches to professional development / random workshops here and there do not have any impact or worse, these may even prove detrimental to growth. What's needed a seamless integration and impact analysis in a democratic setting. It works only when what's for the teachers is by the teachers and of the teachers.

This is indeed why Professor David Hargreaves model of 'Joint Practice Development' works. It is the only way in which teacher training does not become a vanity project. Each teacher becomes a rider of change, overpowering the elephant of resistance.

As an educator, aspiring to be an educational leader, it is imperative to unlearn and relearn pedagogy. Digital pedagogy is different from the traditional didactic pedagogy, and as we see, a hybrid model of teaching is here to stay. We need to embrace technology and own our learning first so that we can develop the skill of 'lifelong learning' in our students. Schools

of the future will have blended learning integrated into their operational model. Now is the opportunity, like never before, to break inhibitions, to learn all those futuristic skills and gain a certain edge. Endless free and paid courses, are available online by the best of universities from across the globe.

There is a difference between leadership and educational leadership. This must be clearly understood as an aspiring leader. Each teacher is a leader in her own right. An educational leader is an inspiration, a role-model and radiate an empowering energy. No genuine solutions are possible in a school environment without this. The educational leader is an active practitioner and key collaborator who empowers without making it evident.

An education leader is also a situational leader who stays out of the way and yet effectively ensures that all potential disruptions to the free space for learning are eliminated effectively. An educational leader is a reflective practitioner with a growth mindset. Thus, they continually reflect on data, gaps and further improvement. Above all else, the educational leader is an exceptional educator who lives with the 'Ethic of Care'...

Are you an exceptional educator? Evolve then into an educational leader.



Dr Amrita Vohra

Director Education, GEMS India
Executive Principal
GEMS International School
Gurugram

The Solitary Teacher

A thousand definitions, innumerable quotes, but what best describes leadership is a “situation and the response to it. “History is testimony to the fact that most trying times have seen leaders emerge out of them.”

The year 2020 is witness to this kind of a situation; schools closed, students but schooling did not. It evolved into a whole new idea of teaching and learning in virtual mode. It was not a smooth sail, but neither impossible. Technology invaded the lives of the Teacher and the Taught. The hands that held a textbook, chalk and duster were now holding the mouse and a digitalized book. A screen became a classroom and conversation flowed on a microphone.

Well, that was a short visual of how schools adapted to the online mode, but what was required here was the understanding of the depth and chartering a new course of action. It required unlearning and accepting the new.

The Challenges

- Teachers to understand technology, adapt, adopt and deliver the lessons
- Students to accept the new normal and learn in isolation, without friends or teachers
- Parents to actively participate in learning and support their children
- Society to know and respect the teaching community for rising to the occasion and not failing in execution of their duty.

The Unlearning

- From a physical environment of desk and bench to the cozy comfort of a home, of family becoming friends and the screen becoming their playground and classroom for the children
- From depending on a text book to diving into the vast expanse of the internet to explore and find new ways to engage the child for the teachers
- From knowing that the school was responsible for keeping the children for half a day, to coming to terms with having the kids around the entire day
- A complete revolution of Learning and Teaching from ‘face to face’ to ‘screen to screen’

The Good

- There seemed to be more time for the child to explore and learn
- There seemed to be a realization that skills essential for living (household chores, carpentry, fixing leaks and short circuits) were much needed and there was time
- Family time was regained and cherished
- Time for self was gained

The Bad

- Children could be affected by digital fatigue over a period of time
- Teachers may struggle to develop emotional connect with children

Over the entire course, School Leadership acquired a new mantle and the responsibility of getting together all the stake holders to give education a new meaning. The pandemic brought forth opportunities that were dormant and made children understand their own potential in a most reflective and introspective manner.

I wish to share a poem which sums the state we are in now, but there is much beyond it too. I am sure all my fellow English teachers will relate to this

This is the time of online classes. As I wrapped up my class today and sat alone in the classroom, I was struck by melancholy. ‘The Solitary Teacher’ I thought, and that brought to mind, the famous poem-” The Solitary Reaper” by William Wordsworth. I penned down my thoughts along the lines of my favourite poem by the nature poet.

The Solitary Teacher

Behold her, single in the class,

Yon solitary Manipal lass!

Speaking and explaining by herself;

On pressure, volume, energy and mass.

Alone she lectures and asks a question,

And derives a lengthy equation;

O listen! for the room around

Is overflowing with her sound.

Does anyone know what she says?

Perhaps theorems of some scientist bygone;

Boltzmann, Einstein or Planck’s essays

All masters from an era long gone.

Or is it some more wanted topic,

Pressing matters of the day?

Sharing concerns of this pandemic;

That has taken many a prey.

Whatever the topic, the teacher spoke
As if her discourse would have no ending;
You see her “online” at work,
And o’er the laptop, bending.
They listened faceless, far away;
As they logged off, she calls it a day.
Their faces in her heart she bore,
Long after their voices were heard no more.

We all are together in this battle that came upon us, to teach what we ignored.
To feel what we missed, to hear what fell on deaf ears, and to create a generation of more
Humane and Humble beings!



Ms. Bharathi Lakshmi
Principal
Hindustan International School
Chennai

Braving the Storm

The global pandemic, has altered our lives significantly. Never before have we seen a lockdown of this magnitude. While we wait for the vaccine to arrive, the show must go on. We must find ways to carry on with our work from the confines of our homes, with the support of technology.

As school leaders, we carry a responsibility to provide uninterrupted education to our students. Teachers have been at the frontline, adapting and adopting the change. The schools had to shut, yet schooling continued, uninterrupted on e-learning platforms. Many parents did not have extra devices for their kids. One device was being shared by many users at home. Teachers and parents had to grapple with poor connectivity. That meant, going with asynchronous mode of teaching where students could view their lessons at their convenience.

Aligning and Motivating Teachers

Teachers undoubtedly, are a valuable asset, despite being used to physical classrooms and face to face teaching, they suddenly developed into new avatars of *E-teachers*. It was not easy, without formal training on e – teaching. Seemed impossible initially, but these super heroes made online teaching happen with some support. Over time, they were able to make teaching interesting and effective through videos and other available resources. Preparing a video, managing content resources and then screenplay was not a cakewalk. Teachers put in fourteen to sixteen hours a day, to prepare and deliver an effective lesson.

They also demonstrated out- of- box creativity and extraordinary enthusiasm in making such videos. The result was fantastic: 500 plus videos uploaded on our channel for all classes. These videos with a real classroom feel appealed to students. Teachers used many innovative methods to reach out to the students, like video lectures, online classes, discussion, activities, tests and assignments. Our team did not shirk from their responsibilities despite hardships and resource crunch.

Managing Stakeholders

We are proud of our students for their energetic involvement. Online classes have ensured productive usage of phones and screen time, which otherwise would have gone towards gaming and social media activities. Students are enjoying their education, the new way.

Some parents were sceptical about online sessions; issues like cyber security were a major concern. Our team counselled them to allow their children to attend online classes. Many parents appreciated our efforts and even wanted us to arrange a virtual visit of their school as many students missed their classrooms, teachers and the school environs. We arranged the same after the unlock phase, leaving everyone delighted.

“To the world, you may be just a teacher, but to your students, you are a hero.”

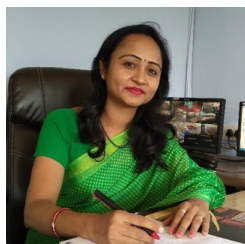
We educated our students about ways to prevent the spread of the virus and positively influence their family and community. We were in touch with them constantly, filtering out misinformation and fake news.

On one hand, our teachers did their best to teach students online, on the other, we were grappling with financial issues. Some parents were not paying fees, making it difficult to manage the salaries of teachers & non-teaching staff or meet school maintenance expenses. Our school management played a pivotal role to appreciate and motivate our team to continue with their teaching, with the same enthusiasm, in trying times. The school management did not allow anyone to suffer financially during this pandemic, standing by the staff, like a rock.

Ready to Tackle

It will be a great challenge for us to resume physical classroom teaching when schools get a green signal to reopen. We must create a healthy atmosphere, take all health precautions, safeguard essential services and encourage healthy behaviour. We must strictly follow the protocols of social distancing and adopt good hygiene practices.

As far as academics is concerned, we are going to emphasise on practices that would compensate for lost instructional time and revisit concepts that need attention. To conclude, education is a passion and we will not leave any stone unturned to ensure that our students receive best education always.



Dr. Hetal Parikh

Principal
Greenwood International School
Rajkot

The Mark of a True Leader

The unalloyed mark of a leader is the willingness and persistence to stick with a bold course of action. An unconventional panic mitigation strategy in an era of hyper-competition and nonstop disruption has been the need of the hour. Covid-19 pandemic has infiltrated lives and disrupted normalcy in our education system. Initially, we were not prepared, but the education system responded quickly and adapted to meet the demands of online schooling.

It was more than trial and error. Postponement of exams led emergency meetings, changes in the syllabus, the mode of teaching and established norms for connecting with pivotal stakeholders like management, teachers, non-teaching staff, parents and students.

Boosting confidence and empowering the unnerved teachers, parents and students was the need of time. Using a virtual platform, to its' fullest capacity was the main challenge. Thankfully a team of courageous teachers with positive attitude stood strong in facing this challenge.

Many virtual classroom applications were used, explaining the new teaching strategies to parents was difficult. Conducting online classes under parents' supervision was not easy for teachers. Putting together a proper online and offline timetable with ten minutes interval between two periods of academic subjects was followed, with consistent efforts we achieved stability. Co-scholastic activities like debate, and interviews with well-known personalities were also arranged.

The significant role of schooling in society enhances its' importance but if we fail to highlight the benefits of schooling, the existence of our system could be questioned, in this virtual world. It is our duty to retain the importance not only of academic subjects but others like art, physical education etc. by experimenting with different online applications. Teachers evaluated using online applications. Taking doubt solving classes with remediation, was welcomed by parents which was indeed surprising. Teachers are now true facilitators.

We started with panic but now, are sailing calmly, where everyone is enjoying unlimited resources. Publications like Macmillan supported us, with e-books which made teaching easy and helped us to gain confidence of parents.

This journey of online schooling sharpened leadership skills in Principals. Keeping a keen eye on news, changes in state education policies, results, online admission, constant communication with parents and teachers, strong follow-up made them more versatile, alert and strong. I certainly know that achieving this goal is only possible with a supportive management and strong teaching colleagues, I feel blessed experiencing this fulfilment.



Mrs. Smita D. Jathar
Sharda Mandir High School
Gamdevi
Mumbai

Teachers' Role is Key for Success of National Education Policy 2020

The recently released National Education Policy (NEP) is to be implemented in phases beginning 2021. In the past decades, we have seen similar policy recommendations such as the Kothari Commission, many that are yet to be implemented. A critical review of two earlier policies indicates there are gaps in implementation and limited training for educators. NEP 2020 should not suffer a similar fate, leading to delay in development of human potential, for progress of the nation.

NEP recommends restructuring of the entire education domain of India. It talks about foundational literacy and numeracy and skill education to transform India to face 21st century challenges. The success of any education policy rests upon the belief and efforts of its' fraternity.

Educators must be proactive in understanding in detail the ethos, the aims, objectives and the motto of the NEP and upskill themselves with rigorous Continuous Professional Development programs, trainings, participation in seminars, workshops and conferences at various levels.

Implementation of NEP will require discarding the age-old practices of memorization and rote learning and adopting Constructivist pedagogies to go beyond textbooks and the aim must be to change from syllabus completion to achieving learning outcomes.

Educators must understand and embrace the concepts of integrated and multidisciplinary approaches and the need for development of 21st century skills. While implementing the NEP at the ground level, it becomes imperative for the teaching fraternity to have strong coordination, cooperation and the motivation to transform students' life through skill and character building.

Apart from teachers, the onus for the successful implementation of NEP falls on those involved in drafting the National Curriculum framework - curriculum, syllabus and the assessment and evaluation strategies. If educators fall short in their task, the NEP policy will fall by the wayside and millions of young people will struggle for suitable employment upon graduation.

Hence the government/school heads must support teachers by mapping a teacher education program both in- service and pre-service which must be supported by policy makers of school education and the higher education.

The NEP emphasizes the teacher's contribution, their sacrifice and efforts to uphold the dignity, respect and honour of this profession. This can happen only if the policymakers consider creating an independent agency like Teacher Recruitment Board/ Indian Teaching Services on the lines of Indian Administrative Services or State Civil Services and speeding the recruitment of the teachers which is pending for about a decade. The policy makers should be light in their approach, while giving them all the perks and facilities so as to attract the young, intelligent

and creative minds in this profession but should be tight while monitoring them for getting the desired results, making them accountable and responsible.

If these are implemented, the best brains will come into this ecosystem as a preferred choice and lead India towards becoming a Vishwa Guru in the coming days.



Mr. Sunil Shrivastav
Principal
Kids' Kingdom Public School
Khurgaon
Nanded

Teachers – New Learning, New Challenges

Online education has never been so popular among working professionals and students as it is now. The credit for its popularity goes to its' flexibility of place and time. Successful institutions are those which adapt to changing times, as well as to the expectations of students, parents and the society. From all trends, online education is here to stay, what then are the implications for education? What will be the device and mode preferences of learners and educators? Will the process of teaching-learning be enjoyable and fruitful? Would educators be able to cater to emotional needs of students?

Virtual versus Face to Face Teaching

Online courses call for a greater motivation and self-discipline than a classroom-based course. A classroom has one or more instructors and peers, who can hold a student accountable for their course-work. In contrast, online courses involve setting own goals, tracking progress and meeting deadlines.

A school provides structure and support for teaching. Traditional classroom education has the benefit of face-to-face interactions with learners and a proven environment for social development, developing empathy, cooperation, caring and sharing especially during early developmental years. Unlike a virtual class, it gives lot of space for spontaneity. However, as students move to higher grades, they seek more autonomy and freedom in learning which is catered by virtual setup. It proves to be really beneficial when combined with hands-on activities, exercises, online assessments and practical exploration.

On this Teacher's Day, my heart goes out to the most important pillar of education: The Teacher. One cannot deny that teachers have enthusiastically adopted new teaching pedagogy. Their chalk and board lectures are now presentations, their class rooms are now online sessions, their 'Keep quiet' is now "Turn on mute mode", their 'Can you hear me?' is "Am I audible to you?" They deserve a standing ovation for bringing about these changes so rapidly and adjusting to the new normal.

Challenges of Online Teaching

With education being affected worldwide by Covid, teachers are forced to teach from home. A survey among more than 100 teachers teaching in secondary section reveals that, for conducting a single online lecture, two to three hours of preparation is required. Teachers conduct lectures along with household duties call up students and counsel them. While teaching, they are under scrutiny and pressure of performance. They are always worried about the attendance of their class. They try to engage and activate student learning during online classes. Not all the teachers possess facilities for conducting online sessions like a laptop, headphones, proper bandwidth etc., they have left no stone unturned for imparting joyful sessions to the learners.

Teachers constantly struggle to meet the expectations of the school administrators, parents and the learners. It is challenging to make their sessions interesting and interactive. For this, they have learnt necessary technical skills like using computer, mobile phone applications, Google documents, forms, word, PowerPoint, etc. Teachers have proved that learning is not limited to any age and with the right attitude and determination one can learn and implement any skill. If we start thinking differently and be open to innovation in this new world, no matter what shifts come up we will win the game.

Health workers may be warriors during this pandemic, but teachers who are keeping the learning going and nurturing our future generation are no less. I salute them on this auspicious day.



Dr Geeta Bhambhani
Academic Director
K G Dholakiya School
Rajkot

Restructuring Education

The current pandemic has affected all sectors including education. In India only 22 % of the children are able to log on to remote or virtual schooling, for the majority of students, learning is sporadic, depending on availability of devices and connectivity.

Restructuring our education system is the need of the hour. For a long time our education system, has resisted change, the pedagogy and content has been faithful to traditional didactic methods of teaching-learning. Rote learning has habituated parents and students to follow the same structure of education, and use this knowledge to get admission in higher education.

Parents' lack of awareness about remote learning is leading to frustration. Students in higher classes face uncertainty in terms of admissions. Against this background, it is important to hand hold parents with compassion, bring them on board with the new kind of education, that is the need of the hour.

When one gives serious consideration to the process for restructuring education based on the new paradigm of inclusiveness, the question that arises is, how? It is important that the process is consistent with the end goals of inclusivity and equity, to achieve. We are all acquainted by experience with processes that are dehumanizing in an endeavour to accomplish goals of humanisation.

To effect change, focus must not be on the individual alone, it should be a broader institutional change leading to success.

To address the current crisis, restructuring of the education system is imperative with the following features:

- Share planner with parents to give them a head start about the child's educational and behavioural growth, with a positive approach
- Involve parents in the school activities; get them to acknowledge, every week, tasks completed by their wards; online PTMs can be conducted
- Suggest project-based activities where the child can explore the topic with parents
- Initiate experiential learning in remote & virtual classrooms.
- Application oriented teaching approach
- Keep communication open so that the new project-based learning approach is understood and accepted by most parents
- Make moral values sessions and systems mandatory
- Assessment objective must be shared with parents and the children. It will give them a sense of importance and remove fear factor.
- Activities pertaining to building responsibilities in children are important.

- Building self-compassion and self-confidence are key aspects of every approach and initiative.
- Talent hunt activities to be included in the curriculum and weekly planner.
- Transact a differentiated lesson in the classroom
- Train students to think and ask questions.

Teachers are magic makers

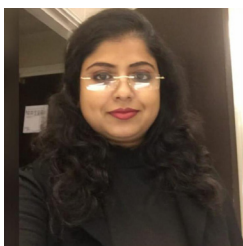
A child learns by observing, imitating, listening, understanding and by experiencing situations. A teacher is a role model for her students - he motivates, inspires and nourishes a child's thought process, making a skilled, abled and responsible citizen.

However there is a flip side to it, a teacher may have an adverse effect on the self-esteem of his/her students through discouraging words and actions which may lead to many students giving up in life. Training programmes help teachers understand their students better and incorporate effective teaching strategies to make the class a powerhouse of ideas, creativity, ambition and positivity.

Let's continue to inspire lives for a better tomorrow...

Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai said, "Books and our pens, they are the most powerful weapons. One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world. Education is the only solution. Education first."

Jai Hind!



Dr Sanghamitra Banerjee
Principal
Gateway International School
Neelankarai
Chennai

Resilience in Teaching-Learning

‘All progress happens in uncertain times.’

- Ozan Varol, Law Professor, Author, Rocket Scientist

March 2020 saw over a billion students across the world not in school. Teachers across the globe took up the mantle to ensure that their students coped up with the crisis. Shedding their inhibitions and anxiety, the teachers strived to reach out to the students and ensure that learning continued while in-school learning stayed suspended. Teachers’ personal relationships with the students and their families positioned them uniquely to guide them in these times of anxiety. The situation compelled teachers to unlearn and relearn the approaches they had mastered, down the years effectively.

The S H I F T seemed easy at first but then REALITY sprung up a few clear messages:

Basic Needs First:

Children’s basic needs like food, health, and emotional well-being are more important than trying to get them back to school.

George Werner, Liberia’s Minister of Education during the 2014-15 Ebola crisis, said,

“You have to think as a leader, what happens when the shadow of COVID-19 begins to fade. We need to take school health more seriously than ever before, and it needs to be part of our strategic planning.”

The Teachers got to the drawing boards to re-organize strategies. It was observed that the teachers had to prepare to meet the psychosocial needs of the children in these difficult circumstances. Rather than rushing to focus on academics (syllabus completion) on the various online platforms, the teachers had to introduce online interactive options to address the educational, psychological and the social needs of the children and their families too. The sessions blended with some learning, fun, art, music & interactive games were found positively affecting student well-being. Students adapted differently to learn in different environment resulting in differential learning outcomes.

Value Based Education:

Teachers played a critical role in building confidence and ensuring support to students’ learning. As Dr. Sara Ruto, the Chairperson of the Kenyan Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) and Chairperson of the Kenyan Ministry of Education’s COVID Response, “[The crisis] is giving energy to some of the pillars of the curriculum that had not found voice before; parental engagement, empowerment, and values-based education. Children need to see, touch, and grow with values-based education. No better place than a home where this happens. Teachers use this opportunity to engage parents to ensure such learning takes place.” Teachers have helped reducing anxiety and building confidence to return to school and support children’s learning.

Technology Enabled Learning:

Teachers in many countries serve in uncomfortable situations with little or no prior experience. Many teachers have been innovative in their approach to students' needs, especially where devices or connectivity is not available.

Dr. Iwan Syahril, the recently appointed Director General for Teachers and Education Personnel in the Ministry of Education and Culture in Indonesia, said, "We are becoming comfortable with the uncomfortable. We've been talking about student-centered learning for ages. [COVID] is giving us the trust that this is okay. You don't just teach your curriculum, but you look at your students and start there. This is an opportunity to reimagine the curriculum and ensure that each student is learning"

Orienting schools and teachers to improve students' outcomes at their level is imperative. The COVID crisis realigned the roles of teachers to focus on doing what is best for their students.

Conclusion:

Teachers across the world have risen up to the situation and adapted very well to online teaching ensuring students' accessibility to learning. Parental and societal support will take learning to a different and a more desirable level.

LET LEARNING CONTINUE.



Mr. Joy Pullambra
Principal
St. Joseph's School
Ahmedabad

Ref. :<https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/school-leadership-uncertain-times>

(www.sjskhanusa.org) and has been facilitating digital teaching & learning since 2010

Staying Connected

Growing up, we remember playing a ‘Telephone’ game with discarded match boxes. You took one box and your friend the other, and we pretended to have great conversations – one speaking and the other listening intently. Little did we realise then that these very ‘listening and speaking’ lessons would stand us in good stead, to reach out to thousands of students in virtual teaching.

While we leverage technology as a key component for effective teaching, we cannot neglect the teacher-student connect. Teachers play a key role in motivating students to learn and perform. As adults, all of us remember our favourite teachers and their role in shaping our professional lives.

It seems easy to impart lessons virtually in language and social studies but to teach science it is important to physically conduct experiments. Bringing students into a virtual science lab is not the same experience - we must make learning real through practical demonstrations on screen and simulators.

Teachers toiled using innovative strategies to make learning possible and accessible to our students. Learning kits were provided to the children to perform experiments and activities at home while connecting online to their science teachers. Since the beginning of the lockdown, the learning ecosystem has changed; parents become teachers and teachers have become facilitators. Parents are partners in making this new teaching-learning process a win-win for all the stakeholders.

We should be empathetic towards our teachers and all staff members. Staff meetings should be more stress free, with empathy as an important element to connect with each other. What has the pandemic taught us? It has taught us to give the best in a shorter duration, like a Twenty20 or T20, a shorter version of the cricket match. Teachers and the parents must cement their interpersonal bonds and practice resilience in a new way.

After the lockdown is lifted, we may go back to our chalkboards, but our vision has to be to make education inclusive and purposeful. This phase of reflection and isolation has made our young learners self-reliant and independent! Sweet are the uses of adversity!



Mr. Ganesh Kumar Pandidhar
Vice-Principal
Wisdom High International School
Nashik

Continuous Professional Development

Educators play a role in accelerating learning, spreading the knowledge and stimulating the curiosity of learners around the world.



Teachers: At the Heart of Education

At the British Council, in an air-conditioned, quiet and orderly meeting room when we gather to discuss different aspects of the school programmes, the sound of the school bell, the chaos of the corridors, the lively smiling faces of students and the energy of a busy staffroom may seem very distant. However, that is far from the truth.

Teachers are not just at the centre of our thinking they have always walked with us in our journey as an equal partner. Much of the success of many of our programmes comes from the inputs provided by teachers, and, some of those outstanding teachers have now moved on to become principals and leaders of education in various capacities.

If I had to pick top three personal favourite projects or resources of the British Council that I worked on, I would begin with the Curriculum Mapping that we did to create the “Handbook for Embedding International Dimension and Core skills in the Curriculum”, the “Teaching for Success framework” for Continuing Professional Development of teachers and the “Delhi English Project”. The reason they are my favourite is because all of them have teachers’ contribution at their heart. Let me share them with you.

Embracing Innovation

The British Council prides itself on its responsiveness to feedback. Teachers associated with our International School Award and Core Skills Programme were telling us that they could not find the time and space during the daily school hours to fit in content-focussed lessons, alongside nurturing core skills as well as adding an international dimension to their regular curriculum. It was a big ask and we felt that the solution lay in developing a set of integrated lesson plans to demonstrate how this could be achieved.

We put our faith in teachers to find the solution. In two separate workshops, we got into a room with teachers from all over the country and asked them to do one thing: review the curriculum and come up with lesson plans that met the goal of nurturing core skills, in an international dimension and covering the topic they needed to go through. Over the three days shut in a stuffy hotel conference room, sometimes without any tea breaks, around 60 enthusiastic teachers got down to the task.

Some of the most amazing, innovative lesson plans were generated through this exercise. There was much debate and discussion, very passionate presentations and some really, really, out of the box ideas shared each evening as we marked the progress of the day with a debriefing session. In those moments, I felt privileged to be facilitating such a talented group of professionals. We spent many long hours afterwards sifting through the large amount of material to find the ones that were most suited to be included in our publications.

The purpose of the exercise was to create a handbook that would allow teachers to embed core-skills practice in their classroom and not to sacrifice the core content of the lesson in order to ‘teach’ core skills by doing an extra lesson or activity. It was a new concept at the time and if those teachers in the room, on that day, were initially sceptical about this new approach,

they had the typical teachers' goodness of heart, to humour me. They were quick to accept the challenge before them and dived into it with an inspiring positivity and energy.

So, when regular schools had to shut down amidst the COVID-19 outbreak earlier this year, I was not surprised that the teaching community displayed such incredible adaptability, resilience and innovation to keep the show going. It is indeed a great tribute to their commitment to making sure that students in their classrooms don't fall behind. If you would like to take a look at what we created together look at the link given footer.¹

Nothing is too much Trouble

Another one of my favourite projects where teachers were on the frontline was the Delhi English Project. In a phased manner over two years, we worked in partnership with Macmillan Education India to deliver spoken English courses to Delhi government school learners. Over 1,500 teachers and 100 senior teachers worked ceaselessly to deliver high quality lessons to more than 50,000 learners.

Working in familiar environment, with students you know is easy, but teachers on this project went to centres assigned to them in whichever part of the city and taught any batch of students they were allotted without complaint or resentment. They prepared rigorously and delivered lesson with empathy and compassion for the young people they were interacting with. They spent hours on lesson plans and training to ensure, that the lessons they delivered were impactful and engaging.

The success of the project is a testimony to their resilience and determination to get the job done under any circumstances. Nothing was too much of a problem and every effort was made to give young people the best learning experience they could imagine. The impact of their work on the lives of the students in these classrooms will never truly be measurable but we do know from the many surveys and evaluations conducted that it was an unprecedented success and the students had only deep praise for their wonderful teachers.

Committed to Lifelong Learning

The British Council has long track record of delivering teacher training programmes in partnership with state governments here in India, and across the world. In the private schools' sector in India, over last two years, we have worked with 1300 principals and nearly 7800 teachers. We are constantly inspired by the teaching community's thirst for knowledge. The British Council's 'Teaching for Success'² is a tribute to their impressive commitment to lifelong learning and continuing professional development. This approach to teacher capacity building allows teachers and teacher mentors and educators to reflect on their strengths and skills systematically and create their own personalised pathway of professional development.

1 https://www.britishcouncil.in/sites/default/files/secondary_curriculum_mapping-web_version.pdf
https://www.britishcouncil.in/sites/default/files/primary_curriculum_mapping-web_version.pdf

2 https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/teaching_for_success_brochure.pdf

Resources available support teachers at every stage in their career to map and tailor their learning journey. Not only does it look at what needs to be learnt but also allows many possible options of how the learning experience might be customised from online courses available on the future learn platform, to action research or conference and seminars. Do take a look at it when you can and, as always, we would love to hear what you found most interesting and useful in it.

On Teachers' Day, I would like to thank you all for your hard work and dedication. You put yourself in the line of fire every day. So much is demanded from you by the education system, leaders, society, students and parents and you unfailingly rise to the occasion every time. I wish you superhuman powers to carry on this great work that you do.



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A Practical Guide To Online Professional Development

Introduction

Online CPD (Continual Professional Development) comes in many shapes and sizes, and with budgets to fit all. But do all the options have the same features and impact, and how do you go about choosing the right one for you? In this post, we examine some of the options and consider what to look for in an online course.

Informal CPD – the ‘Personal Learning Network’

Informal CPD may involve a number of platforms and web services such as Whatsapp Facebook, blogs and live chat. These are often combined by teachers into what is commonly known as a PLN, or Personal Learning Network. A PLN is based on your online connections: the people you know and are connected to, the knowledge they share online, and the places they share it. These experts may share links and other resources, and your reading of those may contribute to your understanding of a particular issue or challenge, research interest or topic. You may take part in regular online chats or attend online webinars and live events. All of these can combine into a powerful free form of CPD.

An approach like this is not, however, without issues. This kind of CPD is not a planned, systematic route to better practice. Another of the major issues is the ‘short form’ communication which most online communities employ: conversations often occur in bite-sized chunks and it is difficult to have a serious conversation around any given topic. Additionally, there are some common problems with online chat. Conversations can quickly get distracted from the main topic. Sometimes, especially when lots of people are contributing, comments can overlap and the conversation can become difficult to follow. CPD of this nature is a good daily boost for the working professional, but is both difficult to work into a plan and almost impossible to sell to a potential employer.

Formal CPD – MOOCs, Self-Study, Tutored Full Courses

More formal online CPD implies a deeper form of commitment, and often a larger investment, at least in time and, sometimes, financial terms.

MOOCs

MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) provide an easy – and often free – route into more formal ways of developing online. Primarily self-study, these courses are often video and quiz driven, and involve relatively little tutoring. Although usually free, you nearly always need to pay a fee to get a certificate, and it remains to be seen if the majority of these types of courses will gain any reasonable recognition worldwide. MOOCs are very good at teaching ‘skills’ such as photography or mathematics – where processes can be clearly described – but perhaps less so at less measurable processes such as language learning and teaching, where much of what we learn comes from conversations with others and with observed practice, feedback and

reflection. In such massive groups, these elements are harder to build in and harder to activate. Much is made of the ‘wisdom of crowds’, but in an over-crowded MOOC of 70k+ learners, it is often difficult to get to that particular wisdom. Combining a MOOC with members of your PLN might well improve this outlook, but again, the unorganised nature of this kind of development is one of its major weaknesses.

Self-study courses

Self-study courses form a natural bridge between shorter elements of professional development and the longer, often certified route of full, formal online courses. These courses are primarily individual in nature and allow participants to work through a set of materials in their own time and in a place of their choosing: for example in their lunch breaks, or in the evening at home. This flexibility is a big positive for many busy professionals.

The trend for most courses of this nature is for them to be ‘video driven’ in keeping with the ‘flipped’ model. Video input provided by an expert is watched and reflected upon and, this is often followed by an opportunity to try out the ideas and concepts in the video and reflect on that experience. Many self-study courses also build in an element of community in the form of discussion forums or an accompanying Facebook group, as well as opportunities for further exploration in the form of supplementary resources, links and further online materials.

Modules offered by larger institutions can sometimes be combined into a larger body of work, which may be used as recognition of prior learning for entry to a longer, higher programme such as MA. Their major advantage is perhaps that they allow teachers to explore smaller chunks of interest in a given field, without having to work through topics which are already familiar to them: there is a common theme, but choice and personalization, and – most importantly – flexibility. Some of these differences set them apart from the MOOC format.

Criteria for good online courses

The answer to the question of how to choose a good quality course and get value for your money, perhaps unsurprisingly, is more complex than you might think at first glance. A good online course is not simply the sum of its content and the person leading it: there are a number of other criteria which you may need to consider before making your final choice. Here are a few of the questions you might want to ask before choosing and signing up for one of these courses.

The institution

The first thing you might want to look at is the history and the reputation of the institution offering the course. Is the institution a recognised name in the field – do they have a track record in running teacher training course, either face-to-face or online? Do they provide administrative and technical support in a timely fashion, and are their online courses supported by a rich history of teacher training and development, as well as of technology-mediated learning?

The pedagogy

What kind of approach is used? Most good courses will adhere to an approach whereby good quality content is mediated through excellent moderation and conversation. Look for sample materials and evaluate the task design: how much collaboration is built in; how good are the opportunities for discussion, sharing contexts, experiences and co-constructing learning through the course? How much is synchronous (real time) and how much asynchronous? Who wrote the courses – were they experts in the field? Who tutors the courses – are they experienced tutors, and have they had training in online teaching and course moderation?

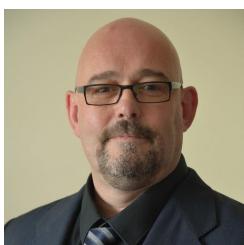
The technology

What platform is used? Is it available on all operating systems and hardware configurations? Will you be able to study on your mobile device, or will you be tied to a laptop or desktop computer? Will you need to buy any extra equipment such as videoconferencing hardware? Will you need to install any specific or expensive software? Will the materials be readily available if you live in a country with restricted Internet access? If needed, is the technology accessible to those with visual or auditory impairments? Will you get technical support, if necessary?

In conclusion ...

Done well, an online course can be amazingly collaborative, stimulating and just as rewarding – and sometimes more so – than a face-to-face one. If you haven't given one a try yet, maybe this year is the time to do it.

About the author



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The Bigger Picture When You Teach Online

Teachers have done an amazing job quickly working out how to use new videoconference systems for their live sessions. I have been working with several schools and universities, helping to train teachers and get everyone set up with delivering ‘live’ sessions. When we organise online learning, there are essentially two parts. The first is the ‘live’ session is only half the story. Yes, we need to do live teaching but what do the students do after our lesson? How are we organising our students, communicating with them, giving them homework and tracking what they are doing? That is where the other half of the story comes in.

Many teachers are overwhelmed with dealing with all the other parts after the live lesson. They are inundated with emails from students. They don’t know how to organise setting and marking their student’s homework and where to get the students to share it. The key is to have a **platform** where students can find the homework you have set, access the audio and video from the book and revise the lesson. Luckily, most publishers have platforms that offer interactive versions of their books, often with extra activities, tests, audio and video all thrown in. They often include the ability to communicate with the students and even the ability to track what homework they have done. This is the ideal complement to a live lesson since the platform provides a way to organise the students, provide activities and track their activity.

If you are lucky enough to work with a publisher that has a good platform to offer, then my advice would be to learn more about it. Some schools will already have access to a platform like MS Teams, Moodle and Google Classrooms, they are easy to use but will not have all the pre-made content that a publisher’s platform can provide.

Start combining

Using these two components - the live sessions through a videoconferencing tool and access to a platform - to organise students is the bedrock of online courses. For example why not get the students to watch a video on the platform or read an article in preparation for the lesson? This way when you get your students into the live videoconference setting, you can get them immediately discussing, sharing and building on what they studied at home. Let’s say, for example, you have asked them to watch a video at home and take notes on it. In the live lesson you can put them into breakout rooms and provide them with some questions to discuss related to the video. Immediately this makes the lesson more student-centered. So the platform is not just about what the students do after the live session, it can be combined with the ‘live’ session. The platform can be brought in both before, during and after the lesson. Remember, many of the platforms track what the students do. For example in the live lesson, you might get the students to listen to some audio content from the platform, you might then put the students into breakout rooms to discuss what they have understood.

Finally you might ask them to go onto the platform and complete a specific activity. Remember their work can be tracked by you, so it is possible after five minutes to bring the students back into the 'live' lesson and then open up the platform in the screen share to see how the students have done. The platform will provide an overall performance of the whole class, so you can quickly see what questions they found hard and what areas you might need to cover again. In some ways, this is even better than in the class, because you have immediate feedback on the performance of individual students as well as the whole group.

You need to look at ways to make the lessons more student-centered and to take pressure off you as a teacher. The platform can provide this in the way it helps you with the administration and organisation of your students but also in the way you can use the content to help with your lessons. So, the platform has a role to play both during the live lesson as well as beyond.

Be creative

It is never easy to 'think outside the box' when you first work online. We need to get our heads around the technology before we can start to see different ways that we can work with it. However in my time, I have seen incredibly creative lessons that often mean the focus of the lesson is placed on the students and the teacher can move away from 'teaching' and concentrate more on their role as a facilitator.

Conclusion

This is not an easy journey for teachers. The videoconferencing systems are not that easy to use and on top of that we have to deal with all the students beyond the live lesson. My feeling is that the platforms that the publishers provide may provide the answer. They can help you to organise your students, provide them with homework and activities to do but also allow you to track and monitor their progress.

Making Blended Learning Useful And Effective

When we think of blended learning today, we are really thinking of the mix between two distinct ways of delivering learning – one in the classroom (face-to-face) and one online. Although, this is complicated by the fact that we can use the online delivery part in the classroom too. The challenge is to think of the optimal way of combining these two parts to make the learning as useful and effective as possible for the students.

This challenge of getting the mix or blend right is made complicated by a number of factors.

1. Teachers may not know all the online content or endless number of tools available to them.
2. Many teachers (like myself) were trained before digital technologies impacted. We were familiar with the use of video, audio, etc, but the number of options was restricted and it was a lot easier to integrate them into a lesson.
3. Blended courses often grow out of courses that were originally face-to-face, and so getting the blend right can be difficult.
4. There might be institutional requirements to use a certain amount of technology or to limit its use.
5. The students themselves may have certain expectations. Students paying for face-to-face learning may be unhappy if too much of the learning takes place online and outside the classroom.
6. Parents can also be a factor.
7. You may feel under pressure to introduce technology and make your classes ‘up to date’.

Point seven can be the reason why blended learning is sometimes poorly conceived. Let me explain.

Our business is learning

Our goal is to help our students learn as fast and as effectively as possible. The pressure to introduce the latest gadget or technology, however, often takes our attention away from the original learning objective. As a result, teachers may introduce a certain technology into their lesson but lose focus of whether it is really having a positive impact on learning.

I recently watched a lesson where students had to find QR codes the teacher had displayed around the school. Each QR code triggered a video to watch. After viewing three videos, they returned to class and discussed in groups. On the surface this looked like a good lesson, but by introducing the QR codes certain things were also lost. Firstly, since the students were moving around, they found it hard to take notes as they watched the videos standing up. Secondly, the background noise in the corridor meant it was difficult to hear the videos and discuss them.

Another issue was that quite a few students had trouble triggering the QR codes.

We always have to weigh up the benefits of a certain technology against the things we lose by not doing it the 'old way'. So, in this case, if the students had worked in groups and watched the videos on a computer while sitting around a table, they could have easily taken notes, and easily played and replayed the video and discussed what they had watched. The use of QR actually hindered the objective of the lesson, which was to expose the students to as much language as possible and encourage good note-taking and discussion. So it is vital that we always think about what we are trying to achieve and think carefully about the optimum way of achieving it.

A slightly different approach

One way to think about how to blend your learning in a language classroom is to first think about all the things that a student needs to do to learn a language, and then think about which things technology can do well and what things a face-to-face context can do well. For example, I tend to use the face-to-face component of the class for developing students' speaking skills, doing group work, planning writing and discussing study skills. I use the online component (usually done at home) to allow students to complete listening activities, grammar activities with feedback and writing activities they have prepared in class, as well as to study vocabulary.

One very important thing, though, is that the face-to-face and the online part done at home must link together tightly. So, for example, we might read an article in class and discuss it, and then for homework the students have to study the vocabulary from the article using Quizlet. Back in the class, a week later, I might set up an activity to see how much of the vocabulary they can recall. In this way I am tightly linking the homework and the class time. I must admit that when I first started teaching in 1987, the homework was often an afterthought. These days I see the class time and homework as part of the same whole.

The flipped classroom is a form of blended learning that separates the class time and the homework in a slightly different way, but again it highlights how important the link is between these two components. In the flipped classroom, we tend to focus on the lower-order thinking skills at home. So students might watch a video on how to give a good presentation and choose their favourite five tips. In class we focus on the higher-order thinking skills, so perhaps the students get into groups and share their tips and see if they agree with each other. Again you can see this tight link between what students do at home and what they do in class.

I am a big fan of books, and whether I am teaching a language or learning a language, I like working with books. I like the way all the language is integrated and connected. So the contents of a chapter will introduce new vocabulary but also rework vocabulary from previous chapters. The workbook compliments the coursebook, and it is that continual revising and reworking of language that is vital, especially at low levels. So teachers can map the use of technology onto the syllabus and identify where they might introduce technology to support, expand and foster learning. It means that the students still have a clear pathway through their learning and can

clearly see how and why the teacher introduced the use of certain technologies. Mapping can be a good way of blending your learning, but we must be careful.

Overwhelming

One massive danger with blended learning is that you can often end up overwhelming students. In 2001, when I first began to use a virtual learning environment I added loads of links to additional material, slides, PDF files, extra listening, etc. The amount of content on the course grew massively. The students were confused and often discouraged by the enormous amount of material. In fact, in the end I realised most of the students were not really using any of the material. So whatever way we blend, we need to think carefully about the overall size of our course. These days, when I set up a blended course (or an online course), I emphasize that I have carefully selected the material and that it is all relevant to the class. I clearly indicate what they have to study and what is additional. I never share anything that I haven't carefully looked at before, and I will spend time in class making students aware of the online content I have shared.

Digital outputs

These days students are often producing a lot of digital outputs – blogs, podcasts, discussions online, videos, Word documents, PowerPoint slides, etc. One thing we can do is encourage our students to keep an E-Portfolio. An E-Portfolio is basically a digital repository which stores all their digital outputs. The great thing about E-Portfolios is that students can embed things they do in class and at home. It is literally a record of their learning over a period of time. It should also include a 'reflective' diary where students write about the things they have added into their E-Portfolio. I have been using them for many years, and now as a teacher trainer I continue to use them.

The digital assets students produce pose another problem. Students need feedback on what they have done. Students will lose interest in keeping their E-Portfolios if they don't receive any feedback or think that no one is reading them. It is vital that, every so often, we leave comments on students' E-Portfolios. We might also, for example, highlight some of the best examples in the lesson or set up activities in the class where students show each other their E-Portfolios.

Conclusions

Blended learning is here to stay. We have to accept that. However, we are the teachers in the classroom and we must remember that our 'currency' is language learning. That is our primary objective. I have highlighted a few golden rules about blending your lessons effectively:

1. Think carefully about the mix. Make sure there is always a strong link between what you do in class and what you do online at home.
2. Don't overwhelm your students. If you use a VLE, don't add overwhelming masses of links to extra material. Keep it lean and relevant and make sure you highlight and introduce the material in the class.

3. Think about the way you introduce technology into your lessons. Are you going to map it to a syllabus? Are you going to take a flipped learning approach or look at what can be done best online and best in class?
4. Think about using E-Portfolios. Students tend to produce a lot of digital outputs these days, and E-Portfolios can be a great way of collecting together evidence of their learning. Remember, though, that what is also really important is that students also reflect on the different digital assets they produce and reflect on what they learnt from creating them.
5. Finally, think carefully about feedback. Some teachers worry that technology is going to mean there's less need for teachers. I am not sure about that. The job of teacher is a changing one, and your role in giving feedback might be more important than ever. Look at ways to introduce peer reviews and self evaluation, and make sure you as the teacher play an active role too.

About the author



Russell Stannard is a multi-award-winning Educational Technologist and founder of www.teachertrainingvideos.com. He received awards from the British Council, the Times Higher and the University of Westminster for his work in the use of ICT in education.

He currently works as an Educational Consultant helping organisations to build online learning/blended learning courses as well as training staff in the use of technology all over the world. He specialises in the use of Camtasia, SnagIT, Google products and virtual learning environments like Moodle and Edmodo.

Further reading

- First Steps into Blended Learning – www.onestopenglish.com/methodology/first-steps-into-emerging-pedagogies-for-elt/blended-learning/first-steps-into-blended-learning/555095.article
- The one minute guide to integrating technology into teaching – www.emoderationskills.com/the-1-minute-guide-to-integrating-technology-into-teaching/
- Blended Language Learning: An Effective Solution but not Without its Challenges – <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1133256.pdf>

Economics of Teaching

I believe that a teacher is a resource-a renewable, collaborative, growth-oriented skilled resource. Hence my header Economics of Teaching.

To this I want to add capacity building? What does that mean? I think for an educator there are various capacities that have to be thought of;

An educator has the capacity to Love, to be empathetic, to be that bridge between the curriculum and the student. Like Rita Pierson in her ted talk says 'Every child needs a champion'.

A lot of these capacity builders are non tangibles. I would like to focus on the tangible one-how to increase productivity of the teacher so that the best outcome may be possible for both the teacher and the learner. And you hence Economise the resource. I definitely do not mean economising in terms of cost but rather in terms of efficiency.

As an educator, there is never a dearth to better your best. You compete with yourself and, with each step, improve your learning curve. This is because your objective is the child who is bound to grow, evolve, adapt, and succeed, so as an educator, a teacher's motto also becomes one of self-learning, evaluating, adapting, and developing. For the educator, it is a journey that involves a growth mindset, exploring options, and engaging in the learning process to reach out to students.

A basic fundamental equation we are all aware of is that of input and output. The more well-defined learning outcome or output, the better is the skill development of the input- in other words, capacity building. Capacity building in simple terms implies identifying focus areas to pull in resources to sharpen that area and finally train the individual (here teacher) resource to build that capacity. In a teacher's profile, capacity building is a lifelong skill, and hence I say this resource will never deplete.

Coming back to my topic Economics of teaching, I want to urge that there is a need to in-depth training for this resource – the teacher. This will help increase the productive capacity of the individual and that in turn will lead to overall development. I call it the HEART capacity- train the educator on:

Humane delivery of curriculum, Emotional understanding of students, Adaptive learning modules, Research oriented delivery of curriculum and Technology enabled and embedded delivery. This is bound to give us happy, involved and enriched educators. As they say do not deliver the product, deliver the experience- an experience that will help improve human life!



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Teaching ‘Life Economics’

Over the years, I have realised, that as a society, we focus on a single point agenda for our children: score high marks, get top grades. There is hardly a healthy dialogue with them which does not revolve around mark sheets. Our agenda is based on the premise that the highest scorer will be the most successful person in life. The irony is that most parents know the futility of that premise. Our current education system has remained unchanged for decades hence becoming ineffective and redundant, it has left most students with the skill of rote learning but not application. Although, there are some children who are blessed enough to know what is right and engage on that path with good guidance.

Academicians can play a bigger role in the overall construct. How do we give learners a real foundation for life, help them build self-confidence so that they are not limited in knowledge acquisition and understanding? Once we take the right approach, once we accept them as they are, we will be able to work as silent catalysts, in helping them to become responsible adults in the society. It is about future-proofing them, against an uncertain world.

We must train our children to stand strong and stand out in the crowd. Explore options. Accept their failures. Speaking for myself, there were times when I used to get dejected, disheartened and disinterested in my job. After reflecting and reading extensively, I figured the key to success lay in working to making a change in the system and making a difference to young lives.

New Form of Teaching for Life

The role of academics in real life, after we get into the workforce, is limited. All students are not the same although they go through the same education and evaluation systems. That is why we took an experimental, inclusive, and yet very effective educational approach in my school. To evoke 21st century awareness and readiness, we offer some innovative programmes: Neuro Linguistic Programming, Double Doodle Brain Gym, Graphology, Colour Therapy, Body Language, Psychology, Fashion Hair Styling, Personal grooming, Gender Equality, Home Science, etc. We teach the children essentials of life at a tender age, between Std. 4 to 10.

This 21st century concept has led to many positive changes in my students. They have turned out to be confident students. They ask the right questions and create a space of their own in these sessions. And, something important for our ever-demanding parents: the students are showing improved academic performance, as well. We want to make them future ready with our bouquet of knowledge and soft skills to lead confident happy and successful lives.

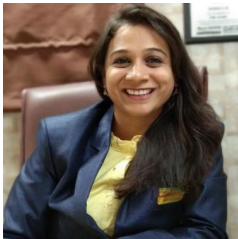
As school leaders, we need to think about what is important in life - beyond getting scores in academics. Let's be creative and get learners out of their comfort zones and help them understand the real meaning of life while they are in school.

Conclusion

What's in a name? Science is a systematic enterprise that builds and organises knowledge in the form of empirical explanations and predictions about the universe. Economics is all about money and weighing different choices or alternatives which may or may not involve money.

The above initiative of giving innovative choices to students – all linked to real life is called 'Life Economics' and if adopted by school leaders it can change the outcomes of learning to learning for life.

Let us unfurl life from school itself.



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Teaching Character Education

“The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and to think critically. Intelligence plus character - that is the goal of true education.”

- Martin Luther King, Jr.

Never has character education been so relevant as it is now. Emotional Resilience can provide children with the strength to navigate through the adversity caused by Covid-19, compassion can create a culture of understanding and empathy for how others have been affected. Now is a good time to discover the benchmarks of the Character Education.

School is an important social structure for a child to develop a strong moral character. A school should set a tone of respect, honesty and genuine kindness for all students. Teachers are role models for students, who notice what teachers, do, say, and how they handle challenges.

What is Character Education and its importance in student's life?

The most basic definition of character education is an approach to education that incorporates values, ethics, emotional maturity and a sense of civics. Character is the sum of the mental and moral qualities distinctive to an individual. However, when we talk about character, we refer to certain desirable moral qualities and virtues such as truthfulness, honesty, responsibility, compassion etc.

In fact, character building has been deeply rooted in Indian education since the time of Gurukul education. It is the foundation of Indian philosophy and culture to spend the first quarter of one's life as a student yearning for education and knowledge. The Gurukuls were meant as a place where one not only learnt academics but also important aspects of life such as community living and caring for others.

Positive behaviours for Character Building

Caring – kind, compassionate behaviour, expressing gratitude, forgiving others, and helping people in need.

Citizenship -- helping the school and community, staying informed, obeying rules and laws, respecting authority, and protecting the environment.

Fairness – playing by the rules, being open-minded, not taking advantage of others.

Respect - being tolerant of differences, using good manners and appropriate language and dealing peacefully with anger, insults, and disagreements.

Responsibility - doing what one is supposed to do, persevering, and being accountable for one's choices.

Trustworthiness – being honest especially when entrusted with a task or a responsibility. It is the quality on which all relationships are built.

Components of Character Education

There's no precise formula for a curriculum that incorporates character education. There are different theories on how to instil positive values and character traits. This also differs according to culture and the age of the students. Educators can adopt a conscious proactive and comprehensive approach to character development. To support this process, schools can create caring and supportive communities. Educators and all school staff are part of an ethical learning community and adhere to the same values that they teach.

Online Character-Building Activities for Students

Character building is not restricted to physical classrooms and can be done on line through a series of interactive activities. These classroom activities will encourage students to develop and adopt quality ethical principles and behaviours that can last far beyond the classroom.

Bucket-filler [showing kindness] Friday - Take time once a week to have students encourage each other. This could be via written notes or circle time to give each other compliments.

Recipe for Success - Students post “ingredients” for the recipe of what good character looks like. You could do a group brainstorming session or have children write and draw their recipes. If space allows, make a bulletin board with the ideas.

Make It Mine - Let kids define character traits in their own words and share an example of someone they know who displays that positive characteristic.

Puppet Role Play - Use puppets to have students act out a conflict and resolution. This can also give insight into the interpersonal issues your students are facing.

Don't Be Salty - Give students a little bit of salt and have them put it on a napkin. Tell them to put the crystals back into the pack. This is the same as our words — they are difficult to take back.

Helpful vs. Hurtful - Have students look at magazines or at social media posts and talk about which words can inspire and which words can be hurtful.

Big Kid Show and Tell - Have students bring in items that convey their individuality or unique experiences and talk about empathy and diversity.

Text to Talk – It's a reality that teenagers spend a lot of time on their phones, challenge students to turn short texts into longer real-world conversations to explain their opinions about different character issues.

Character building is the essence of education. It involves a comprehensive approach that includes a robust curriculum, dedicated staff, and partnership with parents. It's an approach to education, with the potential to yield outstanding results develop students into ethical, responsible citizens.



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Developing Emotional Resilience to Thrive

To be emotionally resilient means to be able to ‘spring back’ into shape after going through difficult and stressful times in one’s life. Stressed people experience a flood of powerful negative emotions which may include anger, anxiety, and depression and remain trapped in these, long after the stressful events that caused them have passed. Emotionally resilient people, on the other hand, are quickly able to bounce back to their normal emotional state.

People who are emotionally resilient possess a specific set of attitudes about their role in the world, that motivates them and enables them to cope more efficiently and effectively when compared with their non-resilient peers.

Specifically, emotionally resilient people tend to:

- Have realistic and attainable expectations and goals.
- Show good judgment and problem-solving skills.
- Be persistent and determined.
- Be responsible and thoughtful rather than impulsive.
- Be effective communicators with good people skills.
- Learn from past experience so as to not repeat mistakes.
- Be empathetic toward other people (caring how others around them are feeling).
- Have a social conscience (caring about the welfare of others).
- Feel good about themselves as a person.
- Feel like they are in control of their lives.
- Be optimistic rather than pessimistic.

Building Emotional Resilience during Pandemic

People with emotional awareness understand what they’re feeling and why. They also understand the feelings of others better because they are more in touch with their own inner life. This type of emotional understanding allows people to respond appropriately to others and to better regulate and cope with difficult emotions such as anger or fear. There are steps you can take to improve your resilience. These include:

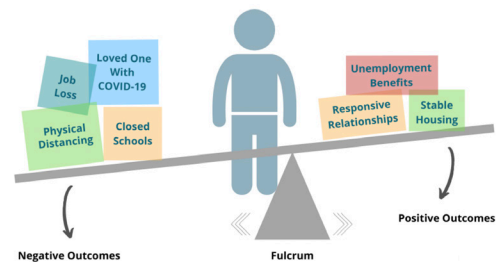
- **Build connections with other people** - Prioritize your relationships and reach out to others by joining community-based groups in your area.
- **Manage your thoughts** - Work on maintaining a hopeful outlook and accept that change and setbacks are part of life. The important thing is to keep working toward your goals.
- **Take care of yourself** - Foster wellness by taking care of your mind and body. Eat well, stay physically active, and avoid unhealthy coping mechanisms.

- **Sense of Humour** - Laugh at life's difficulties. This can shift one's perspective from seeing things as a threat to seeing them as a challenge, and this alters how the body reacts to stress.

How resilience can help us come out of COVID -19 Pandemic???

Resilience can help us get through and overcome hardship. Think of resilience as a seesaw or balance scale, where negative experiences tip the scale toward bad outcomes, and positive experiences tip it toward good outcomes. For some people during the COVID-19 outbreak, the resilience scale may look like this:

The point where the scale balances is called the “fulcrum,” and if it is more to one side or the other, it can make it harder or easier to tip the resilience scale to the positive. Everyone's fulcrum is in a different spot—which explains why each person is different in how easily we can counterbalance hardships in life. The good news is that the fulcrum can be moved by developing a toolkit of skills you can use to adapt and find solutions.



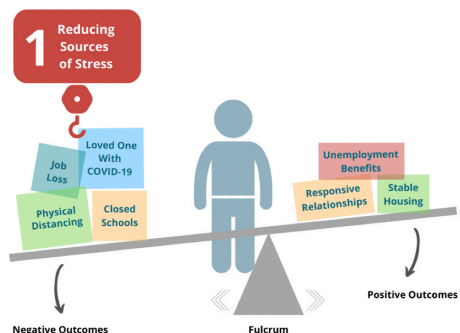
So, what can we do to build up and strengthen resilience right now during the COVID-19 outbreak? And how can we build resilience to plan ahead for future times of crisis?

The science of child development points to **three ways** we can affect experiences and the balance of the resilience scale:

1. Unload the Negative Side

We can lighten the load on the negative side of the resilience scale by **reducing sources of stress** for families and program staff. Reducing sources of stress may include:

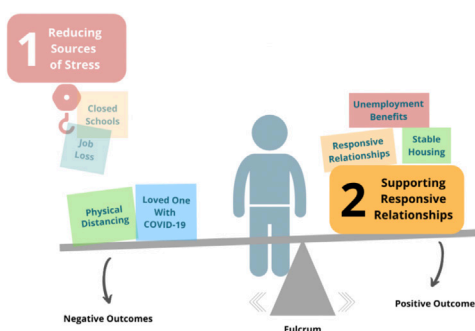
- Helping families **meet basic needs like food, shelter, health care, child care, and internet access** or connecting them with programs that can help
- Creating and providing children's activity kits that include things like colouring books, crayons and markers, word searches, puzzles, books, craft supplies, etc. to **give parents and caregivers a break**, even for a few minutes at a time
- **Encouraging parents, program staff, and co-workers to practice self-care.**



2. Load Up the Positive Side

We can add to the positive side of the resilience scale by piling on positive experiences—especially through **responsive relationships**. The one thing that most children who develop resilience have in common is a stable, committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult. Adults need those supportive relationships, too!

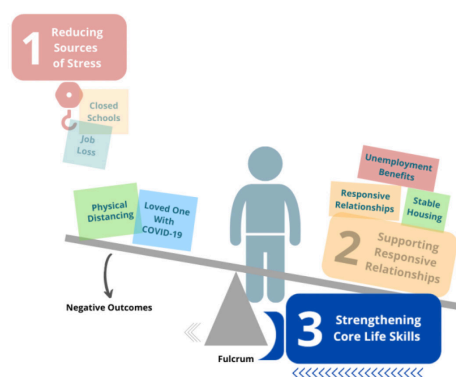
- If you work with families, you’ve likely already found new ways to check in with them while in-person visits aren’t possible—via phone calls or video chats, for example. The limitations of these alternatives may be a little frustrating, but **remember that you’re not just checking in; you’re also providing parents with time to engage in a responsive relationship** with a trusted adult during a time of physical isolation.
- **Maintain and encourage connections with family and friends.** Even though we’re all required to maintain physical distance, it’s important to call, video chat, email, or write letters to the people we care about to engage in responsive interactions, protect our emotional well-being, and manage the stress of living through this challenging time.
- Children’s development doesn’t pause during a crisis—and supporting that development and building resilience doesn’t have to take a lot of extra time or effort. **Back-and-forth “serve and return” interactions are simple and free, and you can do them during ordinary moments throughout the day.** Playing with a child is a great way to engage in serve and return—and relieve some stress for all! (See this [how-to video](#) and [step-by-step guide](#) for more examples of serve and return.)



3. Move the Fulcrum

We can make it easier for a scale to tip toward positive outcomes by **strengthening core life skills**. Adults can strengthen these skills with small but helpful supports, like:

- Sending or signing up for text reminders of important appointments
- Using tools such as grocery list apps, menu planners, and daily schedules (and posting them for the whole family to see)
- Creating step-by-step checklists for accessing relief funds and filling out important applications



During a crisis like the COVID-19 outbreak, families need their immediate, basic needs met before they can focus on anything else. But, when the crisis is over, longer-term programs that support adults and children in building and practicing their core life skills will again be necessary and effective.



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Macmillan Education would like to express its
heartfelt gratitude to all educationists who
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