CIRDI – A friend for life is being launched on World Teachers' Day

Centre for Individual Resource Development International (CIRDI) is being launched on World Teachers' Day, 5th October, 2021. The main objectives of CIRDI are: To build individuals and community with sustainable skills, values, and initiatives through refined and extensive research and assessment and to become effective solution providers in the field of education and development sector with up-to-date mentoring, training and information, Partner with corporate sector to seamlessly and effectively drive social, cultural, and educational programmes and project and also to promote and work towards the UN SDGs.

Our vision would be to become the centre of possibilities for educational, corporate and social organisations in bringing sustainable development towards economic, literacy, inclusion and individual aspirations.

We would strive to fulfill our mission: to become an exemplary centre and partner effectively with the National and International Educational Institutions, teacher community, parents. To help in achieving the UN SDGs which aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all", in other words "a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity". And to aid in the preparation of students of all levels to be responsible citizens, good workers and faithful family members.

Centre for individual resources and development international, primarily focuses on exploring self, building upon innate and dormant talents thus resulting in capacity building of teachers as well as other stake holders through empowerment, encouraging research and innovation. An overview of the initiatives for the stake holders is: For the teachers, we plan Resource Building Team, Opportunity to offer valued-added support through community projects, International Exposure and Global Recognition, Placements Support and

Guidance for Research and Survey initiatives. For students, our endeavor would be Additional learning resources centre, Scope for school education funding, Higher education scholarship guidance, Earn and learn, Fellowship programme and Home schooling. Finally, for the organisations, Conduct Survey, Research, and Assessment towards identifying learning gaps, Partnership programme with Universities, Institutions abroad, Provide scope for global recognition, Provide placement services, Training and Counselling services and implementing partner for CSR projects

The promulgation of NEP 2020 has brought in new dimensions in the field of education, which most of us, as principals, teachers, students or the parents are equipped to adapt. However, a little support, a small push can do wonders. An experienced helping hand is what is needed to achieve the desirable goals. It is this thought that led to the inception of 'CIRDI', to help the teacher community to grow, explore their talents which in turn will be beneficial for the students thus raising the bar of education as well as educational institutions. CIRDI believes that teachers as facilitators are the most effective medium towards progress and development.

CIRDI AT A GLANCE:
CIRDI has an efficient Board of Trustees, Advisory Panel, Editorial Panel and Prime members across India and abroad.
The Team Advisory Panel has the following dignitaries: Dr. A.P. Jayaraman, Sr. Nuclear Scientist, BARC and Chairman, National Centre for Science

CiRDI NEWS

Communicators. Dr. Narayan AB Iyer, Chief Executive Officer, Indian Development Foundation, Mumbai. Dr. Tushar Guha, Founder-Chairman of Nrityanjali Group and also the Chairman of Open Forum for Principals. Prof. S. Sivadas, Chief Editor of Labour India Publications, Kerala. Prof. (Dr). Mark Nowacki, Professor at Singapore Management University and Founder LogicMills. Mrs. Vijayasheela Sardesai, Former Chairperson, Maharashtra State Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, Pune.

CIRDI has a bimonthly newsletter, called CIRDI NEWS. The editorial team has Mrs. Sheeja Menon as the Editor and Mr. Inderjit Rattan Singh as the Graphic Artist.

As a 'Gift' and 'Friends for life', Centre for Individual Resource and Development International Trust (CIRDI Trust) was formed on 5th of October, 2021.

CIRDI membership is open to school teachers, principals and independent educators, ultimately, beneficial to the students.

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CAO- Open Forum for Principals-INDIA

Smiling Personality.
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Sr. Director, ADAPT

Inderjit Singh Rattan
Graphic Designer.

CENTRE FOR INDIVIDUAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT INTERNATIONAL

Encouraging life-study balance (Teacher to Teacher)
(Dr Tushar Guha – Founder – Chairman Nrityanjali Group)

In India, the formal education system as it exists today, was established during British rule (1757-1947). Standardised school education — pre-primary, primary and secondary — structured by Lord Macaulay, came into existence during this period and over the past two centuries, formal, British-style school and higher education has become the norm, certainly in urban India. This system posits that every child should know the basics of the normative curriculum comprising the sciences, languages and social sciences, as also art and crafts.

Somewhere down the line after independence, the country's education system started becoming ineffective. Today the system has been reduced to dispensing degrees and certificates to students who follow the rote-learning method, with the syllabuses of most examination boards leaving no room for any inspired or enthusiastic study patterns to be followed by students. Qualified and dedicated teachers are hard to find. However elite private schools still manage to attract competent staff and therefore, we are back to the ancient times when only the elite could afford good quality education.

Nevertheless, even in the country's best schools, children are growing up to become academically learned, but ill-equipped to implement know-ledge. In the quest for academic brilliance, natural skills and abilities and holistic development of children have become casualties. Regrettably, today's children need to be taught to become imaginative, once the prerogative of every child!

Changing times, evolving technologies and jet travel which have shortened inter-national boundaries, have impacted society. Children in particular have taken to new digital and information communication technologies in a big way. Therefore, they deserve a much better environment to grow intellectually into balanced personalities, with sound value systems.

With multi-tasking becoming the key to workplace efficiency and effectiveness, children should be encouraged to perform a variety of tasks in stress-free environments. Learning by rote has to give way to learning for knowledge through research and supplementary reading. The primacy of examinations needs to be downgraded in favour of continuous testing and evaluation to assess the real learning and comprehension — rather than memorisation skills — of students. Moreover, with the guidance of parents and teachers, children should be given the choice to select subjects and study programmes which interest them.

Against this backdrop, the choice of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities in the formative years becomes very important. Schools should integrate as many activities as they can, aside from regular study subjects and programmes, into their time tables. Children's aptitudes can be ascertained fairly early, and accordingly their other intelligences like sports, dramatics, fine arts etc need to be institutionally and parentally encouraged.

In this day and age, it's also vitally important to teach life skills to children. With both parents usually working full-time and joint families phasing out, today's children and youth are deprived of the traditional knowledge and invaluable wisdom of family elders whose life experiences were treasure chests of cultural education. This makes it incumbent upon schools and teachers to inculcate ethics and value systems — rather than mere academic knowledge in their students. Teachers need to upgrade and update their knowledge from time to time to meet the demands of learners. It is also imperative that life skills are imparted with enthusiasm, shunning monotonous routine teaching.

Non-formal or informal pedagogies which are the current flavour, are related to enjoyable teaching-learning. It is essentially about understanding the receptive capability and potential of each student, and as such, it requires initiative, innovation and interactivity — the three I's.

Implementing the three I's in the classroom can deeply impact students. It enables them to be appreciated and respected with each student's logic and intelligence allowed to bloom. This in turn leads to improved self-confidence, the ability to question, and independent thinking.

For instance, all teachers need to appreciate that

➢ Drama develops both verbal and non-verbal communication
➢ Dance teaches rhythm, physical agility, and develops aesthetics
➢ Singing teaches voice culture and the art of listening
➢ Athletics and sports encourage fitness, competitive spirit and physical development.
➢ Art and crafts education teaches aesthetics and patience

Commonly, all of the above extra or co-curricular activities infuse discipline, imagination and even develop spirituality in children.

Non-formal teaching skills — the ability to integrate and stimulate the multiple intelligences latent within all students to enable them to acquire a life-study balance — is the duty of all 21st century teachers. We need to grow commensurately with our students.

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Cooperative Learning

(Dr. Suresh Nair, Principal ~ Vivek Vidyalaya & Jr. College, Mumbai)

Cooperative learning is an instructional strategy that enables small groups of students to work together on a common assignment. It promotes positive interaction, interpersonal skills, both group and individual accountability, trust, leadership, decision making, conflict resolution, teamwork, and achievement. The parameters often vary, as students can work collaboratively on a variety of problems, ranging from simple math problems to large assignments such as proposing environmental solutions on a national level. Students are sometimes individually responsible for their part or role in the assignment, and sometimes they are held accountable as an entire group. Learning to work together should be instructed with guidelines just as skills and behavior management are instructed.

Divide the class into small heterogeneous groups and allow them to have fifteen or twenty minutes of study time together for a spelling or vocabulary test. At this point the students may choose a team captain to help coordinate any activities they may execute together. The teacher oversees the groups but does not interfere with them unless a specific behavioral classroom rule is being broken. At the end of the week the class is given a test and the students are scored individually. A group grade may be given as well as a small prize to the group whose average grade was the highest.

Cooperative learning has received a lot of attention and praise, especially since the 1990s when Johnson and Johnson outlined the five basic elements that allowed successful small-group learning:

• **Positive interdependence**: Students feel responsible for their own and the group's effort.

• **Face-to-face interaction**: Students encourage and support one another; the environment encourages discussion and eye contact.

• **Individual and group accountability**: Each student is responsible for doing their part; the group is accountable for meeting its goal.

• **Social Skills**: Group members gain direct instruction in the interpersonal, social, and collaborative skills needed to work with others.

• **Group processing**: Group members analyze their own and the group's ability to work together.

At the same time, the following characteristics need to be present:

• When designing cooperative learning activities, teachers need to clearly identify to students their individual responsibility and accountability to the group.

• Each member must have a task they are responsible for and that cannot be completed by other members.

Benefits of cooperative learning:

Teachers make use of group work frequently, and thus cooperative learning, for a number of reasons:

1. Change Things Up. It is beneficial to have a variety in your instruction; it keeps students engaged and enables you to reach a larger number of learners. Cooperative learning also changes students' and teachers' roles as teachers become facilitators of learning, guides on the side if you will, and students take on more responsibility for their own learning.

2. Life Skills. Cooperation and collaboration are crucial skills that students will continue using far beyond their schooling years. One of the key elements in a workplace is collaboration, and we need to get our students ready to cooperate, to be responsible and accountable, and to possess other interpersonal skills for effective professional lives. Cooperative learning is also proven to foster students' self-esteem, motivation, and empathy.

3. Deeper Learning. Collaborating with others has a potent and positive effect on students' thinking and learning—through well-executed cooperative learning tasks, students often deepen their understanding of the assigned content. Students engage in thoughtful discourse, examine different perspectives, and learn how to disagree productively.

In order to make all the students participate positively in cooperative learning, here are some specific recommendations that teachers should focus on:

1. Defining specific collaborative goals (in addition to the academic content Goals)
2. Training students in social interactions for productive collaboration.
3. Monitoring and supporting student interactions.
4. Assessing the collaborative process—productivity and the learning process of individuals and the whole group.
5. Applying the findings into future cooperative learning tasks.

Steps for a cooperative learning lesson:

1) Choose a lesson and teach what needs to be learned along with any background information that is necessary.

2) Assign students to small heterogeneous groups. A heterogeneous group enhances learning; high-achieving students increase their understanding of ideas by explaining them to others; and middle and low achieving students will contribute and experience success with lower frustration levels.

3) Brainstorm for ideas. What would be the best cooperative learning techniques to use? These would, of course, depend on the lesson used.

4) Arrange the classroom to fit the needs of the groups.

5) Provide appropriate materials. These may include books, computers, use of the library, rulers, scissors, etc.

6) Explain the goals and expectations and give each group or student a Rubric to follow. The groups discuss what is expected of each member and each group.

7) Give a detailed timeline. Provide both group and individual due dates for assignments.

8) Monitor the groups. If a particular group needs more instruction, spend time assisting them.

9) Evaluate each group by reviewing and grading the Rubric.

If any children are having difficulty working in the group, the teacher should spend time with them to find out why. The tasks given may be beyond the students' academic reach. If this is the case they should be given something more suitable to their academic ability or learning style.

Cooperative learning does not take the place of instruction; it reinforces learning and makes it applicable. Try it in your classroom and let me know the results.

Resources:

• Rudnitsky, Al, et al. "What Students Need to Know about Good Talk: Be BRAVE." Middle School Journal, vol. 48, no. 3, Oct. 2017, pp. 3–14.
• Le, Ha, et al. "Collaborative Learning Practices: Teacher and Student Perceived Obstacles to Effective Student Collaboration." Cambridge Journal of Education, vol. 48, no. 1, 2017, pp. 103–122.
• Cooperative Learning www.context.org/ICLIB/IC18/Johnson.htm

Online Teaching ~ The New Path?

(Mrs. Deepa Desai, Former Principal – Mahapragya Public School, Kalbadevi)

The digital world has brought a lot of innovations to all businesses across the globe. Education is one of these areas. We are aware of e-learning and use of other forms of computer-based learning and teaching. Almost a decade ago came the approach of Flipped classrooms. But with the present scenario the digital world has dramatically affected Education and continues its impact positively daily. Online classes are becoming a more and more popular choice. Practically everyone wants to make up for the lost time in teaching. Hence it is very important to understand what issues ensue with taking online classes.

How effective can this approach be?

Online education which is a result of the digital world has brought a lot to the learning table for all the levels of learning, right from Primary up to senior level. But when it comes to the age group suited for online teaching, the most suitable is 11years upwards, younger children may not benefit as effectively by this form of learning.

It is rightly said that today's learners are native to technology. They are a new generation of learners and hence learn differently. They connect with technology effortlessly and hence online teaching for the senior classes can be very effective. They learn more than they do in traditional courses using multimedia content, thus leading to better retention. Students have a full control over their own learning and are able to work at their own speed. Online teaching can also allow for frequent assessments, without burdening the teacher. Interspersing multimedia content and learning materials with regular short tests can improve student engagement. The more often students are assessed, the better their teachers are able to keep track of their progress. Both the teacher and student can operate from any location of the world that has good internet connection. The teacher is also able to provide lessons to students who are located all over the globe without requiring a visa and other travel arrangements to do so. Unlimited number of students can be in a class thus saving the cost of appointing more teachers.

Thus, in short, we can say online teaching is effective as-

- It makes Education accessible
- Enhances technical skills,
- Is cost effective.
- Gives liberty of time and space, thus making it flexible.

What are the challenges to online teaching?

However effective online teaching may be, there are many cons to consider as well.

Students don't always complete assignments at the same time. This means that the teacher has to be in constant communication with the students, thus becoming time-consuming for her.

Some students may not understand the assignments, hence leading to the teacher having to keep up with constant help required by the student.

Some students may not have access to individual pieces of technology or an access to the latest technology.

Assignments can take longer to complete. Most tasks that take a simple classroom period to complete take much longer to complete virtually.

At times internet could pose a problem. Also, not all locations have good internet connection. An online session may need 700-800 MB.

Practical classes may not always be possible neither are physical activities.

Online teaching can make the teacher feel isolated. While teaching online, one usually does not meet with their colleagues and students like in a classroom setting. This can cause difficulty in discussing what works best and doesn't work at all with your fellow teachers.

In addition to this, the major challenge is the preparedness of the teacher. She needs to be mentally prepared for online teaching. That means she needs to overcome her reluctance, build upon her digital skills, prepare her lessons suitably for online teaching and understand that it is not the same as classroom teaching. Teaching online means a lot of hard work.

Many believe that teaching online is not nearly as time-consuming as teaching in the classroom. But it is not so. Taking the time to develop an online course takes a lot more time because the lesson may not translate well from a lecture to a more virtual standpoint.

The teacher has to equip herself with the right kind of tools, like templates to be uploaded, platform to be chosen, learn the features of the platform, tools for engagement, etc.

To summarise, the challenges to be overcome are:

- Lack of control,
- Isolation,
- Lack of activity,
- Lack of communication, and Technical issues

There are several challenges to online teaching, however they can be overcome. With a little thought, things can be made better.

- Schools will have to invest in proper learning management systems.
- A dedicated technical team has to be in place to provide the necessary support when need arises.
- As far as the teachers are concerned, with the right training and basic digital skills, one can tackle the problems faced by them.
- Assessments will have to be different. Year- end written examinations or annual examinations will have to be designed to computer-based testing (CBT).
- For languages a combination of CBT, written and oral could be designed.
- A designated space will have to be kept when live sessions are to be conducted.
- Better monitoring of the students will be needed to keep a check on absenteeism.
- In order to overcome isolation, lack of practical knowledge and physical activity, some classroom sessions could also be incorporated. This is a must because a class room environment teaches you friendship, working in a team, tolerance etc.

Though the plunge into online teaching in India is a result of Global Pandemic of Covid-19, online teaching is here to stay. So, the future of education lies in embracing online learning. Times are changing and changing rapidly and hence we too must change accordingly. The older generation who are technology immigrants will have to change and learn. And for survival, traditional educational institutions will need to ADAPT!

If we are here to educate every child, why are we failing so many?
(Mr. Girish Dalvi, C.A.O – Open Forum for Principals - India)

Yes, there are many joys and challenges experienced in the classroom both by teachers and students. However, the void between the teachers and students is increasing due to the changing trends and technology. The younger generation is native to technology and adults are still accelerating to upgrade technology every day. According to Prensky, teachers are Digital Immigrants (Prensky, 2005-06; cited from Lisenbee, 2016), while students are more tech-savvy. The information and skills that teachers are teaching need technological up-gradation as a tool to help students inculcate the knowledge and imbibe the skills relevant to the workspace and the society they belong to (Lisenbee, 2016).

The approach of education is towards introducing and inculcating linear and uniform behaviour among students viz-a-viz the society they belong to and social expectations, and standardization tests to evaluate every student on the same scale (Robinson, 2010). While some students are identified as performers the majority are bracketed under being poor performers or are failures. The word 'fail' according to me is a technical term used in education to denote no learning by the student. It is a term that is synonymous with the failure of the teacher and the environment in which the student learns. According to Sir Ken Robinson (2010), the main factor is the standardised test that kills the interest of the students to learn by being more competitive than being collaborative, communicating, and the sense of individuality, the dreams, the creativity, and the sense of self-pride. Fail is that word that affirms Sir Robinson's statement (Madda, 2017).

Every adult or child experiences emotions, has aspirations, fantasises, and observes regularly. These elements shape up their understanding and the choices they make in life. What is necessary is the ability and realisation of every individual's potential, capability, and sense of existence to build the potential and capability to fulfill their dreams, make a suitable contribution to the surrounding, including the community one belongs to, and be proud of themselves. Thus, education needs to provide a suitable environment nurturing talent and individual potential in terms of knowledge, skills, acumen, and purpose of living. According to Sir Robinson, education should focus on the three aspects which are a good start towards providing joy and encouraging them towards successful learning.

1.   Realise the changing trends and the fast-growing technology, and accordingly switch the teaching and learning approach.

2.   Reframe the required skillsets and help students realise and bloom to their full potential viz-a-viz the revolution.

3.   Rework and reframe the approach to education by being more personalised than being generic. Encouraging teamwork while retaining and appreciating their individuality (Madda, 2017).

Teachers are an integral part of the education community and should be allowed to have more freedom towards reaching out and sharing the knowledge and skillsets customised for individual students. Individual potential needs to be assessed based on their past and present performance to help them shape their future. Also, as teachers, we need to be open enough to integrate new teaching approaches and using technology to the optimum possibility. Computer-integrated education is effective when the integration is well-planned and is regularly monitored.

Research proves that the academic performance of students concerning cognitive development depends on age and intellectual maturity.

The development reflects from the way they represent their experience influenced by the construct of their understanding (Poole, 2009). Adolescence is the age when emotions are misinterpreted by students due to the physical developments that take place. Similarly, early childhood is limited by exposure and is about excitement and newness. Middle childhood is when we begin to make choices and explore beyond the secured zone through applications learned from experiences. Hence, nurturing, teaching, and learning are different at all these stages. According to Piaget, progressive intellectual maturity reflects at every stage described as early childhood before schooling is the initial sensori-motor stage, at the early stage of schooling is a pre-concrete or symbolic operational stage, and middle childhood is a concrete operational stage, and the adolescent stage is about formal operations (Poole, 2009). Building on curiosity is important for any teacher to excel. One needs to allow students to bloom as per their intellect, understanding, and interest. Teachers have to help students be constructive through engagement exercises, sustaining their interest, and being approachable.

CIRDI NEWS

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articles related to education
to be published in Cirdi News Letter.
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To conclude, "While it is true that children will apply themselves diligently when their mind is engaged, it is not true that, unassisted, they will always select activities that will further their education. So, they need the teacher's help (Poole, 2009, pg.335)." The objective of education is to help and not fail students in acquiring information, seeking guidance, inculcating values, and freedom. The possibility is if the learning environment encourages acquisition and development of memories and behaviours (Orey, 2010) later forming as experiences honing existing and developing new skills, understanding, and resources for life.

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Education and its Benefits
Parimala Kulkarni - Educationist- Bengaluru.

The other day my son was on the YouTube watching a lesson on Pythagoras theorem. He was revisiting school curriculum! He was of the opinion that today we can learn about anything by the click of a button and formal schooling was not essential for learning new things. What he said was very true. But this set me thinking. Is education all about only learning?

We hear about many unpleasant stories like bank scams, money kickbacks, deals involving corruption, etc. Often many highly qualified people are involved in these cases. Is education only about gaining qualifications? Or is it about earning money?

Then what is education?

"By education, I mean an all-round drawing of the best in child and man in body, mind and spirit"---Mahatma Gandhi

Education comes from the Latin word for 'to lead'. So when you give education you lead a person from one place, like spiritual, moral or academic, to another. Thus education is not only the process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge but also developing skills, values, morals, beliefs and habits. Effective education brings about an inherent and permanent change in a person's thinking and capacity to do things. Imparting Education does not limit to only transfer of knowledge or giving access to or exposing one to information about something. True education is beyond earning degrees or qualifications. It is more than bookish knowledge. Valuable education prepares people for life. It should enable them to develop decision-making and problem-solving skills with a positive attitude. It should aim at inculcating moral and ethical values, the attitude to help and to bring positive changes in the society and to contribute to nation building.

Benefits of Education

In the process of human evolution education has played a very important role. It has helped to create better societies, develop virtues and attain a sense of freedom. Education makes us better citizens by giving us a sense of conscience. It not only teaches us the three R's but helps spread awareness; it gives us an analytical mind to stand up against wrong and for the right. An educated mind seeks a logic and scientific reasoning behind all actions. A well educated person is successful in life as he can achieve a progressive career in the profession that he has chosen and carve a bright future for himself.

Better educated people live a healthier lifestyle and they are more productive. Nowadays there is competition at every run and education enables us to attain progress in all spheres of life and subsequently helps a nation to flourish. Education helps to turn weakness into strength. It gives empowerment, especially to women, as it helps them to stand up against injustice, social stigma and take charge of their own lives. Education helps us to connect across borders. It has given peoples across the globe opportunities to connect and communicate and work towards building a better future and a better world.

Thus education helps a person in not just being literate but develops his overall personality. Educated people enable to establish a better society and a progressive nation.

Types of Education

Education requires instruction of some sort from an individual or one can obtain it from published material. Education is imparted under the guidance of educators. The most common form of education results from years of schooling where the all the aims of education are met with. However people can educate themselves (self education) by choosing their own subject, study material, time or studying rhythm. This happens when an individual has attained a certain maturity level.

Formal Education

The basic foundation to education is laid in Formal education in which there is a structured education system that runs from kindergarten and primary school to university, and includes specialized programmes for vocational, technical and professional training. This is the education of a certain standard delivered to students by trained teachers. To make sure formal learning is standardized and all learning institutions like schools, colleges, universities, etc., comply with these standards. Formal education in a country is governed by organizations which set certain choices that include curriculum, organizational models, design of the physical learning spaces like classrooms, laboratories, library, playgrounds, etc. and also student-teacher interactions, methods of teaching and evaluation, class size and educational activities.

 Formal education may be a popular educational method, but it's not the only one. People who are no longer taking formal education can still continue to learn through informal and non-formal types of education.

Informal Education

Informal education lacks the structure and standards of formal education. However learning happens outside the classroom, in educational locations like museums and libraries or in non-educational locations like home or in non-educational organizations.   Unlike formal education settings, informal education is completely optional.

Non-formal Education

Non-formal learning is a mix of formal and informal education. While it doesn't have a syllabus or curriculum and isn't necessarily taught by people who are licensed to teach, it's more structured than informal learning. Examples of non-formal learning are organizations like the Boy or Girl Scouts, non-credit adult education courses, seminars, and conferences.

Quality in Education

Access to education is important and learning in classroom helps in gaining better knowledge and skills. Every child has a right to education. In addition to ensuring that all children are guaranteed schooling, it is vital that schools offer high-quality education so that each individual child can be given the opportunity to learn and develop. Ensuring high quality education is one of the most effective instruments for establishing democracy and good governance in a country.

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Some of the elements that influence the quality of education are:

- Educational methods that include teaching, training, storytelling, discussions, practical demonstrations, project and research based activities and use of effective teaching resources.
- Need for more proficient and well trained teachers who have a good academic knowledge and access to the teaching materials needed to satisfy the requirement. Moreover, they should have the ability to communicate and co-operate as well as to follow up pupils individually.
- Relevant educational content which includes curriculum, teaching material and emphasizes on literacy and numeracy skills and other basic understanding such as hygiene, nutrition, gender equality, major national and international issues.
- A healthy, secure, protective, inspiring learning environment adapted for both boys and girls and an inclusive environment for pupils with disabilities.
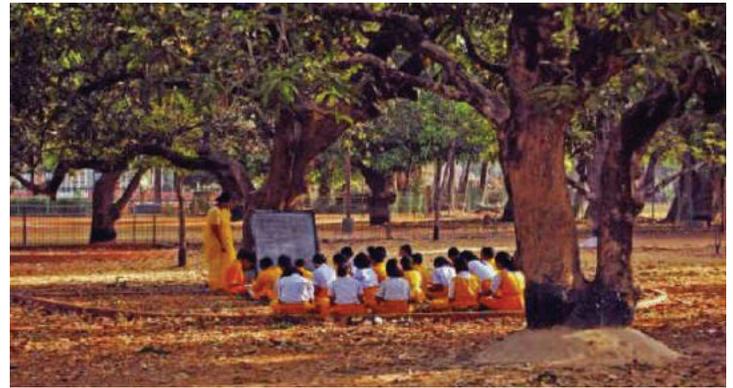
- A well organized school management with transparent administration, adherence to national guidelines and having set parameters for teaching and treating pupils and members of the staff.
- Sensitivity to the preconditions for pupils, their family background, their health conditions, exposure to special challenges
- Adequate funding and organization with clear guidelines.

Adaptations in Education due to unforeseen circumstances

Since the beginning of 2020, we have been facing a crisis of enormous proportions. The COVID-19 pandemic has created a havoc upsetting our lives and livelihoods. All students across the globe including India have been unable to go to their educational institutions for more than a year due to the pandemic. Though face-to-face interactions between teachers and students along with vibrant and healthy debate among peers within the classroom and outside are an integral to quality teaching, with the educational institutions closed, online education appears to be the only alternative to ensure the continuity of education. But this means of providing education has diluted the quality of teaching.   During the period of school closure, efforts have been made by governments to ensure continuity of learning for children while they have been home. Digital tools including internet based high tech tools like apps and online learning classes, social media platforms, television and radio are used extensively. The situation demands urgency as well as an incredible opportunity to act and transform the education system through technology using it as an important tool of capacity building, inclusiveness and quality learning, without replacing the essential role of teachers/facilitators. While technology is not a silver bullet to solve the problem of inequities in access and learning, it has huge potential for changing how teaching and learning is delivered in India, if employed in a systemic and inclusive way, empowering teachers, frontline workers, children and adolescents and increasing access to and quality of learning.

In conclusion, education is a continuous process which enables everyone to play the role of an enlightened member of the society, acquire greater control over his destiny and provides a strong foundation for a bright future. As Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

ENGLISH EDUCATION AND ROLE OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

(Dr. Sangeeta Srivastava, Principal - T.P. Bhatia Junior College, Mumbai)

In 2012, The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) unanimously adopted the National Policy on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in School Education (NPISE) and ICT literacy programme in all primary and secondary schools country-wide was introduced. The government took proactive role by making a policy to include ICT in school curriculum. The challenge was to reach out to large number of students.

Information and communication technology (ICT) can enhance the teaching learning process. It can be a game changer if its capabilities are incorporated in the teaching of English. Grammatical and communicative competence can be achieved through learner involvement in classrooms where teachers and learners have confidence in their knowledge of the language. However, for the majority of our learners, the issue is not so much of communicative competence as the acquisition of a basic or fundamental competence in the language (Prabhu 1987: 10). The main language of computers is English. Different ICT tools use English too. Although there are successful attempts at making computers offer available information in the various national and regional languages English remains the main language. It therefore, becomes imperative to use ICT to teach English and know English to use ICT.

The question arises that whether use of ICT to teach, help in achieving competence in English? It is strongly felt that if demands of the society are to be met then ICT has to be actively used by teachers to teach English in secondary schools especially in classrooms with large number of students. Competence in both English as well as computers would go a long way in improving their academic achievement. There's unanimity among the educationists that technology-based solutions are the key to revitalising India's education system in general and learning of English in particular thereby making its future generations globally competitive. The challenge is, how effectively and quickly digital technologies can be integrated into the education system. Use of technology to teach and give opportunity for practical application in the learning of English would enhance attainment in the language.

The schools today do provide computer technology and teachers are using the same to teach, but there is a need to have a specifically designed framework to teach English in a planned and consistent manner. Use of ICT tools will ensure that the interactive methods of teaching would help each and every student to participate actively. The teachers shall use technology in order to cope with the rapid changes taking place. This will lead to students' achievement in English in terms of competence in grammar, written and oral communication, literary appreciation and comprehension.

Role of government agencies

The government agencies can ensure training programmes for teachers to enhance their knowledge of English and use and prepare ICT tools for teaching English. Public policies, supportive legislation and budgetary allocations should be made to facilitate the availability of infrastructure and equipment. Research in teaching and learning processes related to use of ICT tools for teaching of English language and communication skills should be encouraged and be made an ongoing activity.

Role of school managements

The school managements must provide for the participation and consultation of all stakeholders, the government, the parents, and the students in decision-making processes for instilling importance of English and fostering the use of ICT tools to learn it. Infrastructural facilities, curriculum modification and educational materials should be addressed. Regular monitoring and evaluation of students should be based on performance indicators specified for the students' achievement in the language. Suitable and qualified teachers should be recruited and retained especially those who are willing to be involved in new and innovative learning processes. Training to teachers equipping them with the appropriate skills and materials to teach diverse student populations and meet the diverse learning needs of different categories of learners should be provided from time to time.

Role of Teachers

Teachers must connect the background knowledge of the students to the content. This makes it easier for students to comprehend. Students should be allowed to express themselves verbally and also by writing. Small groups of 5-6 students can be formed where students can interact freely. On their part the teachers must acknowledge that knowledge and competence in English and in use of ICT tools is the need of the hour. For this they must constantly update their knowledge and understanding of ICT tools based teaching of English. They should participate in various national and international seminars, conferences, workshops on ICT tools in teaching and current trends in language learning.

Parental involvement

Parental involvement is a must for academic success of children. Teachers must keep in mind that the language spoken at home may be different. They must constantly share information with parents and make them feel at ease whenever communicating with them. This will ensure parental support to the child. Ensure students practice reading, writing and speaking. Opportunities in the school for interacting with teachers and peers should be provided. Communication skills and use of ICT tools should be integrated. Then only technology can help.

The students should understand that developing competence in English language alongside using ICT will open immense opportunities for them for higher education or for joining the work force. They can improve their learning by using different modern ICTs in the form of wireless networks, internet, search engines, databases and websites. Communication skills and use of technology will allow students to collaborate and exchange information in a better manner and will help them to enhance their achievement.

CONCLUSION

Leaning English and Using ICT to be competitive in today's world is not an alternative but inevitability. If quality education has to be provided to all students then a positive attitude needs to be cultivated among all concerned agencies, government officials, policy makers, teachers and school managements.

From author's Experimental Research' based book,
'Teachers Create Magic...through ICT'

Expanding Horizons of Education: Beyond Examinations
(Dr. A.P. Jayaraman, Former Sr. Nuclear Scientist BARC)

To a learner, student life is a string of examinations, full of sound and fury signifying passing. Every test stares her squarely in the face and not to pass is not an option. She is being evaluated in two pi geometry and is a poignant process. We live in a world of horrifying tests. Examinations is the measure of all. We are valued for our scores and are evaluated in grudging scales of test platforms. We are awarded honour for hovering near the magic number 100 percent. Greatness is thrust upon us as we scale heights of calibrated performance. Media flashes our images and makes us instant celebrity with lightning speed. Coaching centres and shadow schools vie with one another claiming credit for grooming us and our loyalty to them. We are the cynosure of the literate world in dazzling magnesium light. We are in the postmodernist test culture. When we secure dizzying numbers we bring glory to our parents, siblings and extended family, our teachers, our school, our community and to all those separated from us by simple six degrees. All by the grace and charm of tests. Our school education is sorely one dimensional, with an obsessive compulsive neurotic focus on marks. The mark and seal of school matter.

Poignant

Continuing this implacable testing tradition, schools are segregated and graded and national education systems are marked. A seemingly sterile list of Good, Non-Good, Great, Non-Great and Good-Great schools quietly flows through parental pathways. Brand names the best performing schools tantalizingly dangle before us. An elaborate ritual of selection exists for admission to these coveted Ivy League of schools. Principals and school lordships run helter-skelter after rating agencies and not infrequently engineer grade discriminatory determiners. Recall the fact that engineering is design under constraints. Geographical contours are painstakingly drawn up to remain on top elevations in a prefabricated locale. National regional and local rankings appear and disappear transiently but they persist in the vision of parents.

Testful World.

We have a baffling variety of tests and amazing conglomerate of test taking skill developers. CAT, NET, NEET, CMAT, JEE and so on are on a long convoluted series. As global windows we have SAT, ACT and GRE. These are fairly good barometers of academic performance and general intelligence and also IQ. They are also predictors of some good things in life and job market. Academic accomplishments, size of our pay package and rung in the job ladder can be perceived from this. Where we sit or which C-suite we occupy depends on where we stood in tests. There is an over-indulgence on test taking skills leaving out other vital attributes. The prospects of living in a better world are prominent by absence. We create a generation of students adept in the art of taking tests. With a neuroplastic brain having over 100 billion neurons and each neuron with over 10,000 connections with other neurons and a hypertext mind, digizens of the second decade of the twenty first century are innately test-savvy.

PISA

Globality is an irresistible temptation and arguably a historical necessity too. We have best performing countries and best performing school systems based on calibrated and orchestrated tests. Taking system. Luminous among them is the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) masterminded by Professor Andreas for The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). His gripping and towering Ted talks will instantly proselytize you to the wonderland of PISA tests. PISA is an international assessment that measures 15-year-old learner's reading, mathematics, and science literacy every three years. The major domain of study rotates between reading, mathematics, and science in each cycle. It also includes measures of general or cross-curricular competencies, such as collaborative problem solving. By design, PISA emphasizes functional skills that students have acquired as they near the end of compulsory schooling. It reveals a lot as also it conceals in equal measure.

2018 Images

The most recent results of PISA are of those 2018. Fancy for a moment the frenzy in which the media and the world waited for the declaration of results of that test in which 600,000 students from 79 countries took the test. Asian flags were fluttering high on top. The big China and the small Singapore ranked first and second, respectively, in math, science, and reading. The Chinese dragon and the Singaporean lion have been putting up spectacular PISA shows. One striking feature that emerged is the children's preference for occupations and professions. Here again boys are boys and girls are girls.

Picking up from a list of top ten career expectations, boys' first preference gravitated to police officers and the tenth one was teaching. Girls opted first for medicine, fifth for teaching and eighth for police officers.

PISA-INDIA

India has participated in the PISA test only once before, in 2009. Students from two front runner states, Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu sat for the test. India ranked 72nd out of 73 countries, outranking only Kirgizstan. A shocked nation as a kneejerk reaction opted out in wounded innocence and rationalized that decision the test taking skills are not our cup of tea.

After twelve years of cooling time, India will return to the pavilion for PISA 2021. After intensive governmental deliberations at strategic, tactical and operations it was decided to have the union territory od Chandigarh as our testing space. Approximately 1.75 lakh students from government schools in Chandigarh, along with 600 Navodaya Vidyalayas and 3,000 Kendra Vidyalayas will take the test in 2021. Sensing some insufficiency or deficiency in mathematics, special enrichment and remedial classes are in position to gear up.

Contrarian view

The anatomy and physiology of PISA have been under critical scrutiny. A contrarian school of thought with no fewer than 100 school education scholars believes that PISA tries to do too much, that it distorts what is important, and

creates a dirty rat race in education. They argued for a moratorium on PISA testing, citing the problem Schleicher claims he wants to fix: An over-reliance on testing and a tendency to recommend simple solutions for complex problems. They wrote: "The new PISA regime, with its continuous cycle of global testing, harms our children and impoverishes our classrooms, as it inevitably involves more and longer batteries of multiple-choice testing, more scripted 'vendor'-made lessons, and less autonomy for teachers."

Wisdom Tooth

"Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"

These two seminal questions raised by T.S. Eliot still wander through the world of 21st century thought. Intelligence unless moderated and modulated by wisdom is sterile and barren. Post-test we find wrong people in right places. We did not select wrong people per se but we selected people with an imperfect and incomplete skillset. They were good at advancing their careers. Beyond poetic narrative, wisdom today is under study. Robert Sternberg is a leading light. Wisdom is about using your abilities and knowledge not just for your own selfish ends. It's about using them to help achieve a common good by balancing your own interests with other people's and with high-order interests through the infusion of positive ethical values. Schools and teachers do not teach or test wisdom in a crowded curriculum complaint class room today.

STEAM Approach

A simple reduction of learning load by mechanically pruning the content will certainly yield more leisure time. What is rejected and what is selected merit most critical attention. Diluting the science content assuming perceived hardness will be counterproductive. Decreasing the depth of the content or removing certain topics from the syllabus are two simple ways of addressing the problem of overload. This has to be achieved without affecting the supply chain of science pursuing students at the end of the school and preserving a critical threshold of science literacy for pursuing vocational career and also for an intelligent social life. The model of Next Generation Science Standards and the content of some of the best performing school systems as evidenced by PISA. Science storytelling may be developed as a powerful medium of generating and sustaining student interest in Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths and Medicine. This can be reinforced with science skits, science games and science, health and engineering fairs. An inventory of science stories for all basic science concepts and laws of science laced with short biographies of scientists and engineers may be created. It should be fully aligned to the content of the syllabus. Workshops to empower teachers to use this scistory inventory in class rooms as novel didactic narratives have to be organized. Transgessing the traditional silos and barriers of Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Maths, interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary stories have to be designed and developed perspectives to cover physical sciences, biological sciences, geo-space sciences in a graded style. Practical aspects with focus on engineering stories for design ideas and making things of utility and value with familiar

examples. Treating economics and psychology as sciences develop good stories to elucidate the concepts of limits to growth, sustainable development, resource nationalism etc.

Story mode narratives of Hardin's Theory of Tragedy of the Commons can be made from standard1. Appropriate games can also be played by students making science lively, vibrant and great fun to learn and assimilate.

THE LEGACY OF LEARNING

(Ms. Avril Sule, Hospitality Educator and Consultant)

The teaching profession is intended to impart knowledge, develop skills and imbibe attitudes in children, youth and adults and enable them to apply thesein the 'real world'. The ultimate goal is to create human beings who will contribute to society.

The good teacher knows that he or she must teach the learner to learn. Take heed of the old adage "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day…
Teach him to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." In the current scenario, educationists and educators endorse student-centric learning and joyful learning with an emphasis on learning through comprehension. This calls forfar more creativity and planning than the outdated chalk and talk method. With this new impetus, the profile of the teacher has changed to what one might refer to as a 'classroom manager'.

People who scorn the teaching profession need to realize its importance and give due respect to those who spend their entire lives nurturing students witha great deal of patience and very little remuneration.

Here is a thought-provoking article that has had a profound effect on me…

WHAT TEACHERS MAKE

The dinner guests were sitting around the table discussing life. One man, a CEO, decided to explain the problem with education.
He argued, "What's a kid going to learn from someone who decided his best option in life was to become a teacher?"
He reminded the other dinner guests what they say about teachers: "Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach."
To stress his point, he said to another guest; "You're a teacher, Bonnie. Be honest. What do you make?"
Bonnie, who had a reputation for honesty and frankness replied, "You want to know what I make? (She paused for a second, then began…)
"Well, I make kids work harder than they ever thought they could.
I make a C+ feel like the Congressional Medal of Honor.
I make kids sit through 40 minutes of class time when their parentscan't make them sit for 5 without an I Pod, Game Cube or Movie Rental…
You want to know what I make?"
(She paused again and looked at eachand every person at the table.)
I make kids wonder.
I make them question.
I make them criticize.
I make them apologize and mean it.
I make them have respect and take responsibility for their actions.
I teach them to write and then I make them write.

I make them read, read, read.
I make them work and practise math.
I make my students learn everything they need to know in English while preserving their unique cultural identity.
I make my classroom a place where all my students feel safe.
Finally, I make them understand that if they use the gifts they weregiven, work hard, and follow their hearts, they can succeed in life.
Bonnie paused one last time and then continued…
"Then, when people try to judge me by what I make, I can hold myhead up high and pay no attention because they are ignorant…
You want to know what I make?
I MAKE A DIFFERENCE. What do you make?"
THERE IS MUCH TRUTH IN THIS STATEMENT:
"Teachers make every other profession"

I believe that the key to this profession is to make education a joyful experience for both teachers and students. The appreciation from students and the joy and pride that teachers derive from the success of their studentssurpasses any shortcomings in professional recognition and monetary benefit. For those seeking to make a career in this field one must be a versatile communicator, focusing on speaking as well as listening skills and an understanding of the teaching-learning process. Good planning, time management and the creative use of various resources are an intrinsic part of a teacher's profile. Needless to say, a sense of humour enhances anyclassroom presentation. Here is my Recipe for a Teacher …

A RECIPE FOR A TEACHER

A Recipe for a Teacher??
Here's the best one that I know.
I guarantee the end result
–'Twas taught me long ago.
Take an average person,
First core the ego out,
Stir in fresh knowledge and fine skills,Then sieve to remove doubt.
Toss in a dash of effort
And a lot of nerve and grit.

Add humour for a difference -Anything improves with it.
Stir in a bit of empathy,

Impartiality too,
And flavour it with discipline
In whatever you may do.
And when retirement approaches You'll

look back in joy to see
A worthwhile product of your toil
Within my recipe.

A Smiling Personality!
(Mrs. Rekha Vijayakar, Senior Director ADAPT)

Teaching profession has always been considered as a 'Noble Profession'. The age old concept of Guru-Shishya may have undergone metamorphosis, but the sacred bonding will always exist.

If the society is concerned about the new generation of student population, it becomes mandatory to study the teacher population of the new generation.

This noble profession demands a certain code of conduct. The manuals, Secondary/Primary Teachers' Code of Conduct, provide guide lines to the work in-put, qualifications, salary scale, leave-facilities and even dress code. The text books and the syllabi give instructions regarding the content matter. Seminars and workshops are held regularly as in-service training programme for teachers.

*But a teacher needs something more to be '**The Teacher'**. She needs to understand that teaching is not a job or a career. Unlike other corporate jobs, she deals with live stock (children) not inanimate stock of files and documents.*

She is responsible for all the children without discrimination, under her care. The teacher needs to learn from her children before she begins to teach them. Children adore their teacher from day one. A teacher that reciprocates this adoration is a sensitive teacher. A teacher that counts the hours of working or keeps an account of leave or strikes work for personal demands, is a teacher by mistake.

A sensitive teacher creates a mother-child relationship through the process of teaching –learning. It makes a beautiful symbiosis of school-teacher –child – home. Children look up to their teacher as their mentor, a hero and of course a 'know-all' figure.

This God-Figure relationship begins from the pre-primary stage and runs through, till Secondary stage and perhaps beyond...

A Teacher may have mastery over the content matter of his or her subject but if the teacher lacks in basic life skills, she becomes just a narrator. The Teacher Training Course includes Educational Psychology and Philosophy but that does not suffice the complete grooming of a teacher. Understanding human relations, being sensitive, good communication skills, understanding emotions are some of the essential frills that are required to adorn the Teacher Figure.

This profession requires a crystal clear character of an individual. A teacher must accept the profession without any compromise. In the class room a Teacher is a friend, guide and a care taker. A teacher needs to have a perfect personality. She needs to watch her every move, every gesture and every word that she utters. She must remember that she is being constantly observed by her little children and is confidently imitated by them.

Teacher must be poised, thoughtful and cautious. Children walk like their teacher smile like the Teacher and talk like the Teacher. Therefore Teacher must be polite, humble and modest.

Finishing School is the concept of the west. It needs to be adopted by us. This is a school where you will learn the basics qualities of a good human being. This school sharpens the raw edges of your personality and delivers a smart, polite, modest and a smiling individual