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QUARTERLY SCHOOL MAGAZINE

AI IN SCHOOL EDUCATION

TRANSFORMING INDIAN CLASSROOMS

BUILDING INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

IMPROVING LEARNING OUTCOMES VIA TEACHER GROWTH

HOW TO MAKE YOUR SCHOOL GREEN

FROM THE FOUNDERS' DESK

Dear Reader.
Welcome to the second edition of The School Times, India's leading magazine for school leaders and teachers. The School Times' mission remains steadfast: to serve as your trusted guide in your journey towards school excellence and growth.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is everywhere. And people are speculating on its impact on school education. Our cover story traces the origins and history of AI in education. And lays out the possibilities for school education in the coming future. Ajay Kashyap is a technology and data expert and you will love reading his take on the matter.

Inclusion is important for schools and education so that every child can learn to their best potential. In this issue, we invited Maya Menon of The Teacher Foundation to share her insights on the subject.

Teachers are the bedrock of good schools. Our next feature has Ramya Venkatraman of CENTA sharing a 5 point action plan on motivating teachers to invest in their growth!

As per NEP 2020, sustainability is an important goal of school education. Loluck Baby, an Academic Expert, shares a simple framework for a school to become a Green School, thereby instilling a culture of environmental consciousness in students from a young age.

In addition, we have our regular features: School of the Future, Student Spotlight, Educator and Teacher Spotlight and we celebrate the winners of Shiksha Awards and LEAD Championships. Plus, we have Ishan Jain sharing his journey of cracking the IIT-JEE for the benefit of our middle and high school students!

We have personally curated each article in this edition along with our editorial team to benefit our readers. Through The School Times, we aim to foster a community that learns, grows, and innovates together.

Thank you for your continued support and belief in our mission. Here's to a year of growth, learning and success.

Happy Learning,
Sumeet Mehta & Smita Deorah
Co-Founders, LEAD Group

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AI in School Education
Transforming Indian Classrooms

By **Ajay Kashyap**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has made it possible to meet diverse student learning needs; and is helping schools across the world operate more efficiently.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for School Education both emphasise the importance of integrating technology and innovation in schools - to improve learning outcomes and prepare students for the future. Both highlight the importance of 21st-century skills such as Critical Thinking, Problem-solving, Creativity and Collaboration. **AI can play a significant role in fostering these skills through project-based learning, interactive simulation and adaptive learning.**

A Brief History of AI in School Classrooms

Early Experimentation (1960s-1980s)

The earliest experiments with AI in education date back to the 1960s, focusing on computer-assisted instruction (CAI) programs. Examples include PLATO (Programmed Logic for Automatic Teaching Operations), which provided interactive educational experiences and LOGO, a programming language designed for educational purposes. In South-East Asia, countries like Singapore and Japan began exploring computer-assisted learning systems during this time.

Advent of Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS) (1980s-1990s)

Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS) emerged in the 1980s. These systems utilised AI techniques to provide personalised instruction to students. Systems like AutoTutor, a computer-based ITS, were designed to help students learn a variety of subjects, including Newtonian physics, computer literacy and critical thinking. Students could interact with these systems the way they would with a human tutor. Countries like South Korea started using Intelligent Tutoring Systems to enhance learning outcomes.

Mainstream Adoption (2000s-2010s)

The 2000s saw a wider adoption of AI-driven educational technologies, including adaptive learning platforms and virtual learning environments. Companies started leveraging AI algorithms to personalise learning experiences for students globally. In China, students had access to online tutoring services powered by AI.

Integration of AI in Education Systems (2010s-present)

Recent years have witnessed increased integration of AI into education systems, with applications ranging from automated grading systems to virtual classroom assistants. AI-powered tools have become commonplace, streamlining administrative tasks and providing data-driven insights to educators. South-East Asian countries like Singapore have implemented AI-driven Learning Management Systems (LMS) in schools to enhance teaching efficiency and student engagement.

Courtesy: The Grainger College of Engineering

> "The 1980s witnessed the emergence of Intelligent Tutoring Systems (ITS), which utilized AI techniques to provide personalized instruction to students."

Going forward,

advanced analytics and AI-driven tutoring systems will likely enable further personalization of learning experiences in the classroom. As AI continues to evolve, there will be increased focus on addressing educational inequality and access to quality education for all students, regardless of geographical location or socioeconomic status.

> "AI can be used to identify each student's current language proficiency levels and allocate the right learning program to bring the student to grade-level proficiency quickly."

Future of AI in Classrooms

Personalized Classrooms

Leveraging vast data resources, AI can help teachers identify individual student learning gaps within classrooms. Additionally, by tailoring personalised remedial content based on the diverse learning styles in a classroom, AI can empower educators to bring every student up to speed.

Tailored Learning Paths

By analysing data related to student learning outcomes and interests, AI can craft curriculum-aligned content personalised for each learner's needs. This can help build a learning path that is unique to each child, based on her strengths, learning style and remedial needs. This adaptive content approach will help ensure that students stay motivated and connected with their studies, fostering a life-long love for learning.

AI-Powered Assessment Building

Each classroom is different, with unique learning and assessment needs. AI can generate tailored assessments for specific classroom needs, considering factors like difficulty levels, question types and topic coverage. These assessments, initially created by bots, can be further refined by teachers as necessary

AI for English Instruction

Non-native English-speaking students struggle to understand subjects at school. This can be addressed by teaching English as a skill, together with other children at similar skill levels. AI can be used to identify each student's current language proficiency levels and allocate the right learning program to bring the student to grade-level proficiency quickly.

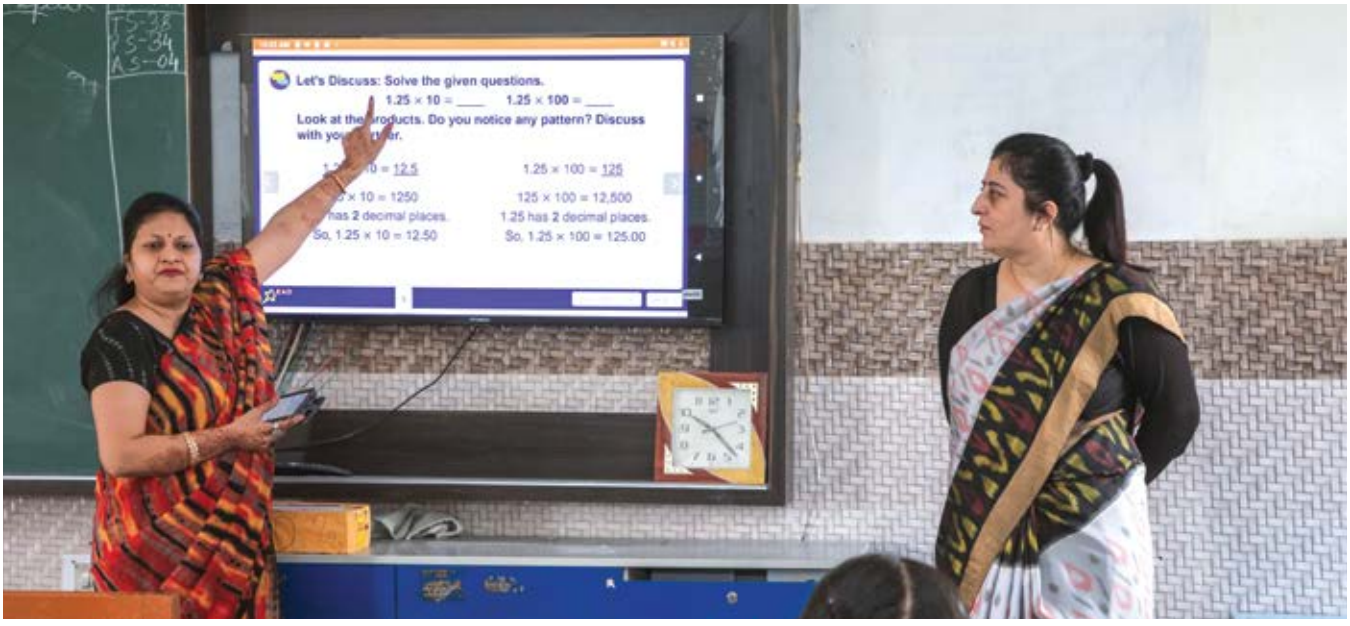
AI-Generated Content

The learning needs and styles of each child is different. This creates a massive ask for educators to develop more and more content to enable each child to progress. This is a time-consuming and expensive process. AI can assist educators in efficiently and swiftly creating customised content. This streamlines the process, ensuring that every student receives tailored educational materials.

AI in Special Education

AI is a revolutionary opportunity for students with learning disabilities. AI-powered tools identify specific challenges and adapt learning strategies such as speech recognition technology or AI-driven visual aids to help students with visual impairments.

AI tools are also streamlining administrative tasks, from grading assignments to managing admissions and scheduling. This automation allows educators and administrators to focus more on teaching and less on time-consuming paperwork.



Can AI Replace Teachers?

If you prompt '**Will generative AI replace teachers in India's classrooms?**' in ChatGPT, the response indicates how Generative AI has the potential to enhance educational experiences in many ways, including personalised learning, content creation and administrative tasks.

However, it's unlikely that it will completely replace teachers in India's classrooms in the foreseeable future. Here's why.

Human Connection: Teaching involves more than just conveying information. It requires empathy, understanding, and the ability to connect with students on a personal level. While AI can assist with certain tasks, it lacks the emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills that human teachers possess.

Complexity of Learning: Education is much more than just delivering information. Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating discussions and fostering critical thinking. They are also able to adapt instruction based on students' needs and feedback. Generative AI may struggle to replicate the nuanced understanding and adaptability that human teachers provide.

Cutural and Linguistic Diversity: India is a diverse country with multiple languages, cultures and educational backgrounds. Teaching often requires an understanding of these cultural nuances and the ability to communicate in various languages. While AI can assist with language translation and content creation, it may not fully understand the cultural context or nuances required for effective teaching.

Ethical and Social Considerations: There are ethical concerns regarding the use of AI in education, particularly around data privacy, algorithmic bias and the potential for making existing educational inequalities worse. Deploying AI as a replacement for teachers raises questions about access to quality education and the role of human educators in society, which is irreplaceable..

Supporting, Not Replacing: Rather than replacing teachers, AI is more likely to serve as a tool to support educators in their roles. For example, AI can help automate administrative tasks, provide personalised learning experiences, and offer additional resources for students and teachers.

By augmenting rather than replacing human teachers, AI can enhance the quality and accessibility of education in India and beyond.

AI has significant potential to revolutionise education in India. However, challenges such as infrastructure limitations, concerns about data privacy and security, and the need for teacher training and capacity building will need to be first addressed. This will help harness the true potential of AI in Indian school classrooms. Additionally, ensuring equitable access to AI-powered educational technologies across socio-economic backgrounds will be crucial for achieving inclusive and equitable education in India.

How Nations Worldwide Are Driving AI In Education

Singapore's '**Smart Nation**' strategy is geared towards positioning the country as a world leader in AI by 2030 by bringing together researchers, government and industry. One objective is to help teachers better customise and improve education for every student, particularly those with special needs.

South Korea has implemented AI-based systems to adapt homework and assignments based on students' educational levels and tendencies and learning behaviours. Each child will have a personalised AI tutor and access to an online learning platform, allowing teachers to focus on social-emotional and hands-on lessons.

Finland, known for its high-quality education system and teacher-centric system, has embraced AI with a commitment to educate its citizens with free online coursework.

China has heavily invested in tools such as adaptive tutoring platforms which rely on large-scale data sets and camera surveillance. Many of these systems focus heavily on improving performance on standardised tests.

The Use of AI in School Classrooms in India

In August 2023, India's first 'AI school' was launched in Kerala. The Santhigiri Vidyabhavan was launched in Kerala's capital city, Thiruvananthapuram and inaugurated by former President Ram Nath Kovind. The school uses AI technologies such as Machine Learning, Natural Language Processing and Data Analysis, in various aspects of education, including curriculum design, personalized learning, assessment and student support. From helping to teach English, to assisting teachers with lesson plans and identifying pupils with remedial needs, AI tools are helping to bridge learning gaps that widened in India's schools during the COVID-19 pandemic. From AI-enabled tablets, curricula and operations to robot teachers, India has seen AI integration in its schools in various ways over the past couple of years.

About the author

Ajay Kashyap is a Technology and Data expert who has built data driven and AI based products in education and ecommerce. He built and sold Boxx.ai to Netcore Solutions and has built Likh.ai for education. Currently, he leads the Product and Academic teams at LEAD Group as Chief Product Officer and in his spare time, solves Maths problems with his son, Abhi.

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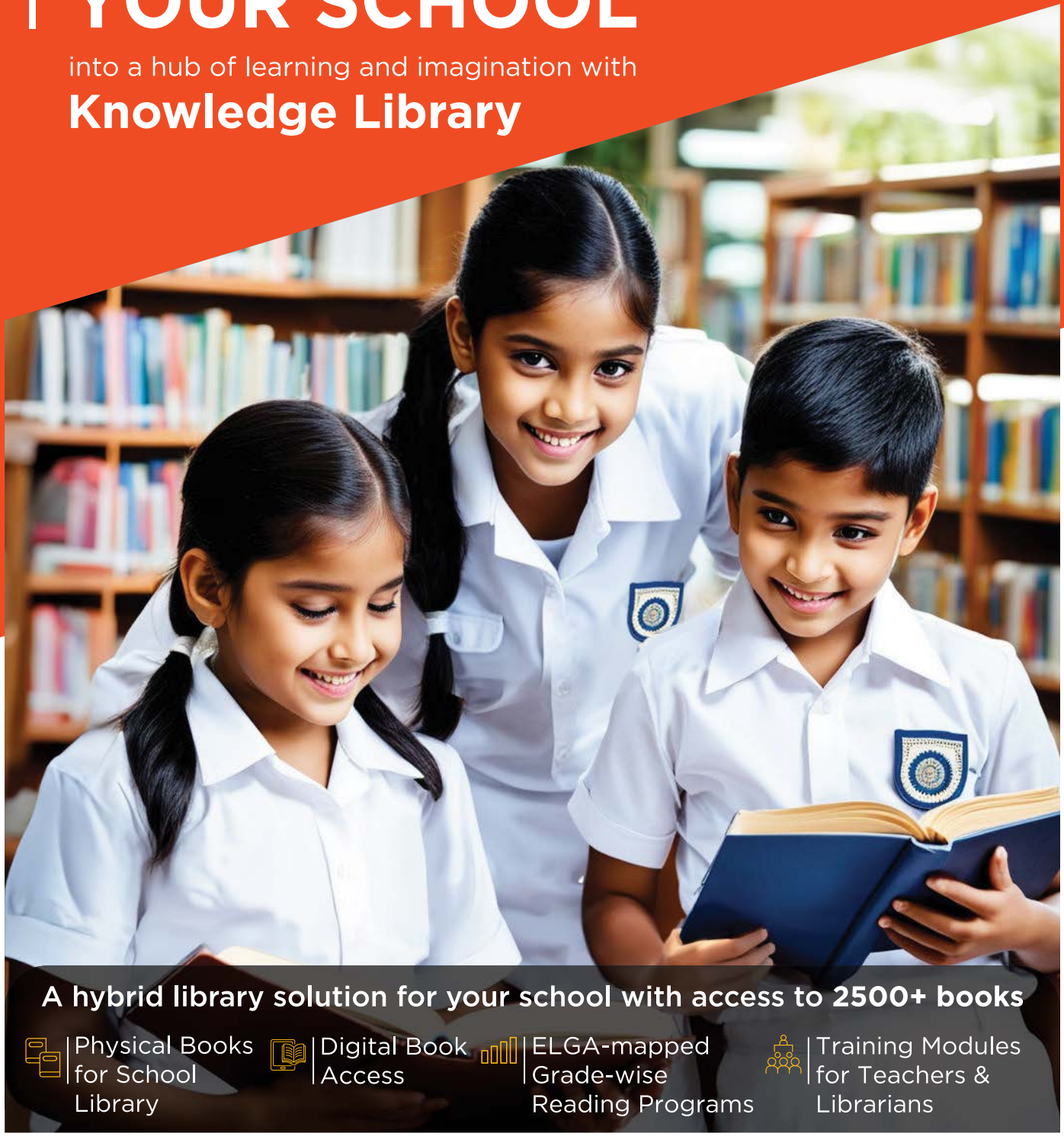

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Improving Learning Outcomes via Teacher Growth

HOW CAN YOU TRULY UNLOCK THE POTENTIAL OF STUDENTS THROUGH TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT? WE EXPLORE SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE LEARNING OUTCOMES.

By **Ramya Venkataraman**

As a school, you want your students to learn well. You want learning outcomes to be great for each and every class, each and every student. You want learning outcomes to grow better every year. Let us assume that you also understand how to measure this. While our board exams and competitive exams serve as one kind of metric, there are also many strong assessments that test students' conceptual understanding and more comprehensive evaluation methods where you can get a view of their holistic development.

Now the question is – what does it take to improve learning outcomes? And improve them, not just one-time but on a sustainable basis, year after year, for batch after batch of students?

There is no magic bullet single answer to this question. A wide range of factors come into play.

On one hand, you need pedagogical methods that focus on concepts, on application and skills and on overall development, rather than just knowledge.

Technology can support teachers in implementing such pedagogical methods especially for concepts that can benefit from videos, simulations and so on. You need assessment methods that allow teachers to continuously find out where their students stand and what it will take for their learning outcomes to keep improving. You need a school environment that is comfortable with some degree of trial-and-error with such methods and technologies. Very often, you may have to gain parental support actively since outcomes will take time to become visible.

On the other hand, naturally, your teachers need to be trained and supported to do all of the above.

I am going to focus on a third angle in this article: How do you **motivate** your teachers to do all of this, or for that matter, even to get themselves trained or upskilled to be able to do all of this? As a school leader, you may be able to mandate that teachers should attend a particular training, but you may often find that only some of the teachers are actively engaged in the training. What

does it take for a much larger percentage of teachers to be actively engaged, in their own learning and in student learning outcomes?

In the past, when I used to ask school leaders this question, I would commonly hear things like, "Teachers **should** be motivated and committed...", "It is their **responsibility** to focus on learning outcomes, to build the future of the nation...", "It is a noble profession...". All very positive sentiments of course. But the question that these statements did not answer was – why should the teacher do all this? That is, how does the teacher's own **career, financial rewards, recognition,** etc. grow as a result of doing all this? Questions that are considered normal in most other professions.

Further, how can we create a great career for the teacher, without putting that load on the school, and in fact, **making it valuable for the school**?

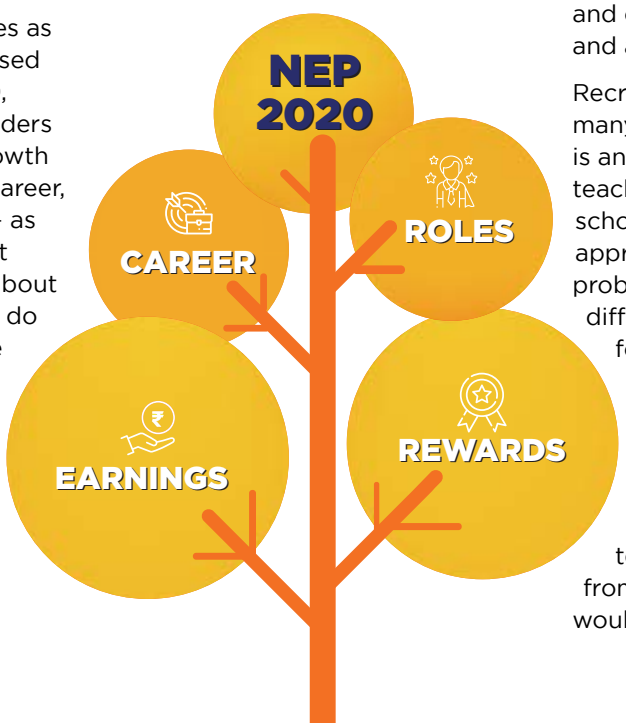
Trying to answer this set of questions has been my main focus over the last several years and the main thrust of the organization I run.

Thanks to many such initiatives as well as the thrust on merit-based teaching careers in NEP 2020, today, I hear many school leaders talking about professional growth for the teacher – in terms of career, roles, earnings, rewards, etc. – as an important agenda. So what can a school that is thinking about teachers' professional growth do concretely? I want to propose 5 specific action points for a school or school leader:

1. Measure teacher competencies regularly using a widely-accepted tool or certification:
Just like the first step to improving student learning outcomes is to understand how to measure them, the first step to rewarding teachers in a merit-based manner is to measure their competencies.

In the absence of such measurement, "merit" gets defined in one of two extreme ways. One way is using student learning outcomes of that teacher, and as seen in certain countries, this can lead to many negative consequences, e.g. completely wrong measurement because student learning is impacted by many factors, unwillingness among teachers to work with the students who need them the most and keenness to show student learning rather than understand gaps. The other way is to use only qualitative factors like the views of the coordinator or HOD or Principal, and this leads to a lot of subjectivity and sometimes a negative dynamic in the school.

Therefore, measuring teacher competencies using a strong tool or certification that combines subject understanding, pedagogical practices, communication and so on, is important.



2. Define both salary increments and career paths in line with teacher competencies:
Today, there are many schools that provide an additional bonus or increment for teachers when they achieve a certain level of competency or a particular cut-off score in the certification. This acts as a huge impetus for teachers to keep upskilling themselves and building these competencies – which in turn translates to better student learning.

While increments may be easier, career paths become more challenging especially for single schools or small school groups where there are only a limited number of positions. However, we have seen creative approaches taken by school leaders, where career path is not defined simply as becoming a coordinator or vice-principal etc., but also has options like spending a percentage of your time on coaching others; or creating content or assessment; or becoming the champion of a new technology implementation or a new pedagogy; or being part of a committee that decides which textbooks to use; and so on – things that keep infusing freshness and challenge into a long career and are also useful for the school.

Recruiting new teachers – which many schools do continuously – is another great place to reward teacher competencies: we find school leaders using creative approaches such as shorter probation periods or even differentiated starting salaries for teachers meeting a competency benchmark.

3. Leverage external opportunities for teacher rewards:
All the rewards for competent teachers do not have to come from within the school. That would put too much load on a

> "In the long term, such an approach can make teaching itself a much more aspirational profession, giving all schools the ability to find more high quality teachers."

school. There are many external options that schools can use on this front.

For example, we have seen several schools actively supporting their teachers in the CENTA International Teaching Professionals' Olympiad and helping teachers win various international awards. While the competencies may be demonstrated by the particular teacher, the school's support (e.g. logistics, timings, preparation support) makes the teacher feel particularly motivated and committed to the school.

4. Make professional development 'pull-driven' rather than 'push-based':
When teacher competencies are specifically measured and rewarded, there is a natural motivation for teachers to improve them. Then professional development no longer needs to be 'pushed' by you as the school leader. Rather, it becomes the responsibility of each teacher – like any other professional – to figure out what he or she needs to learn (the competency reports can help a lot here) and use a wide range of avenues to learn these skills.

The role of the school becomes one of providing options for professional development – and again, many external resources can be leveraged here – and allowing teachers to 'pull' for the options they want. Of course, based on the competency reports, the school may also take special concerted efforts in areas where several teachers are found to be struggling, but here again, it becomes easier to convince teachers of the importance of this effort.

5. Showcase your teacher competencies to the world, especially to your parent audience:
A natural question for school leaders with respect to all these initiatives can be – how does the cost-benefit work out for the school? Of course, increased teacher motivation can lead to better student learning, but schools also operate in an economic reality.

We find that the schools where this cycle works best are the ones who are then able to convey to their parent audience that they have "XX number of certified teachers", clearly distinguishing them from neighbouring schools. Then the increased ability to attract students, while retaining the best teachers through career growth, makes this a virtuous cycle for both teachers and schools.

In the long term, such an approach can make teaching itself a much more aspirational profession, giving all schools the ability to find more high quality teachers.

In conclusion, let us absolutely focus on student learning outcomes – that is the main purpose of all our schools – but let us recognize that professional growth for our teachers is an important cornerstone to achieve this sustainably.

About the author

Ramya Venkataraman is Founder and CEO of Centre for Teacher Accreditation Private Limited [CENTA], the world's largest professional platform for teachers. An alum of IIT Delhi and IIM Calcutta, Ramya has been widely recognized for her work in education as one of 15 Women Transforming India by NITI Aayog and UN, among Distinguished alumni of IIM Calcutta, Outstanding Contribution to National Development by IIT Delhi and various other forums.

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Building Inclusive Schools

Many years ago at a TED Talk, Zoe Weil, President of the Institute for Humane Education stated - "The world becomes what you teach". She was obviously implying that the experiences of school and the nature of learning that takes place in them, determine the character of the future citizens of the world.

The quality and language of personal interaction in schools across India – teachers with students and students amongst themselves, is often marked by harshness of tone, insensitivity towards others' feelings and an inadequate fluency in expressing thoughts, ideas and feelings. Moreover, many of our children are unable to sit and actively listen.

So what do we teach in our schools? The trend in an overwhelming majority of our schools continues to be one of exams and marks; of rote learning and incomprehension; of boredom, stress and distrust. We teach students subjects disconnected from life and living; we teach them to remember rather than to think and feel; we teach to compete rather than cooperate; we teach mediocrity rather than mastery; we teach our students to stay on the beaten track rather than risk failure. We preach about the goals of NEP 2020, but sadly fall short when practising the same.

NEP 2020 mentions the importance of inclusive education. It states, 'Inclusive and equitable education - while indeed an essential goal in its own right - is also critical to achieving an inclusive and equitable society in which every citizen has the opportunity to dream, thrive and contribute to the nation."

However, for inclusive education to flourish in our schools, it requires an environment that fosters respectful interaction, empathy, open-mindedness, authentic communication, flexibility, courage and collaboration.

The questions that must get raised are – do we teach kindness, gentleness, empathy, resilience, respect for others' right to opinions different from ours? Will these qualities develop naturally in people if we preach sufficiently or do they need to be nurtured through explicit practice?

To extrapolate Weil's quote,

> "The world will not become what we don't teach."

Our newspapers and social media are full of reasons why all schools in India need to sit up and take notice of factors that irrevocably affect the lives of children far beyond academics and exam results.

"Beware, there could be a bully on the school bench,"screams a leading national daily's front page headlines.

"Standard 8 Students kill Classmate: 2 Boys in Gurgaon School pump 4 bullets into 14 year old bully", declares another newspaper headline.

"The problem of bullying exists among students from all strata of society", says the Principal of a large public school in New Delhi.

"There is so much exclusivism in society today. We don't celebrate each other and there's no room for tolerance. And this has percolated down to the school level," rues another School Principal.

"There are a lot of things we want to discuss, but there's hardly anyone to talk to in school. Teachers are not really bothered," reveals a disillusioned 12 year old.

"There are certain issues one can't discuss openly with parents. Most teachers also don't understand us either," says a 17 year old from a leading public school.

To compound matters, the quality and language of personal interaction in schools across India - teachers with students and students amongst themselves, is often marked by harshness of tone, insensitivity towards others' feelings and an inadequate fluency in expressing thoughts, ideas and feelings. Moreover, many of our children are unable to sit and actively listen. They are unable to take turns or to share ideas or to contribute to a group situation, all of which are basic requirements for engaged and inclusive learning. The problem stems from teachers themselves having been subjected to such interactions while they were students. It is this reality that they replicate, wittingly or unwittingly, despite the 'surface adherence' to student-centred policies.

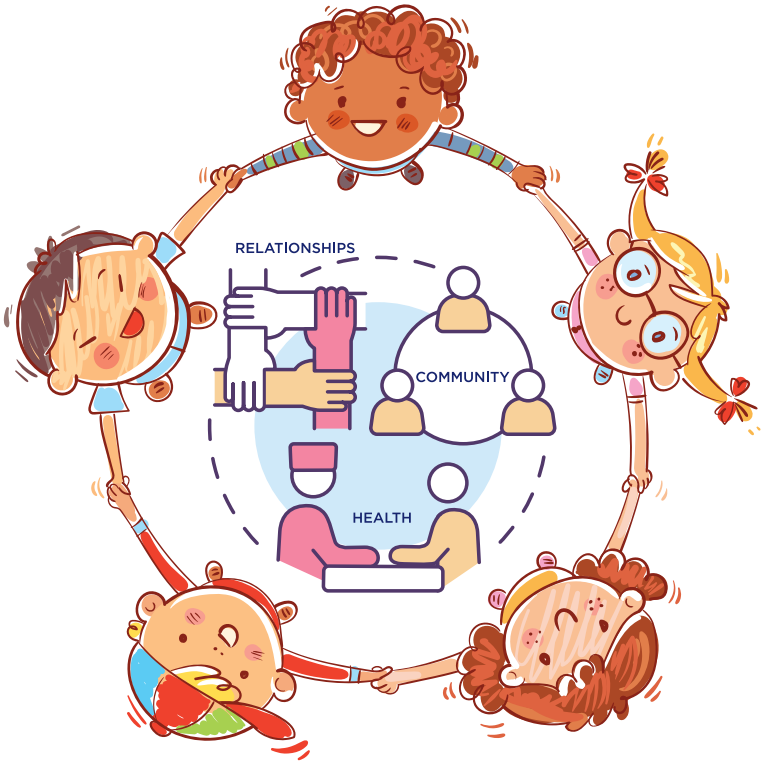
And yet, we all aspire for a world that is more humane, tolerant, creative and peaceful! Schools today need to address these aspirations with a deep sense of urgency and priority! It is becoming imperative that we reduce the widening disparity that exists between schools and within schools in India. Our media regularly highlight shocking instances of schools being perilous places for children's emotional and physical safety. What doesn't get highlighted enough in the media, is the absence of equity in our schools. It is important to 'soften' our schools so that they are safe learning environments for all our children. To make this happen, teachers need simple ideas to translate these aspirations into reality.

It doesn't require an expert to identify the many issues that bother our students -

- **Heartache, the pains of growing up and adolescent infatuation**
- **Mounting academic pressure and curricular overload**
- **Economic disparity and the social inequalities that arise**
- **Being the 'odd one out'- not fitting in with the 'rest of the gang' and peer ridicule**
- **Comparisons of physical appearance lead to trauma - being fat or thin, tall or short, dark or fair**
- **Domestic unrest, marital strife, broken homes**
- **Not being ' heard'- at home or at school**
- **Increasing prevalence of depression amongst young adolescents**

One powerful and practical idea is the tried and tested **Whole School Ecosystemic Model of Quality Circle Time (QCT)** model developed by the well-known UK-based teacher-trainer and best-selling author Jenny Mosley. The Teacher Foundation has been using the QCT model in schools across India (both private and government) for over two decades. The model is highly flexible; cuts across cultural and geographical barriers; and requires no expensive resources for the school, apart from the investment in its teachers for being trained effectively.

> "What makes the QCT approach particularly challenging for teachers is the need to shift from conditioned ways of responding and reacting to children."



What is QCT?

Simply put – QCT is an exercise in authentic group listening. At the heart of the Circle Time model for pupils (from ages 2 onwards) is a period time-tabled to take place once a week. It involves the whole class sitting in a circle – non-hierarchical and inclusive – to learn relationship skills and explore issues relating to personal, social, moral and health education. All the participants including the teacher, sit in a circle and take equal responsibility for solving issues the group members have themselves highlighted. The Circle meetings aim to encourage participation; the development of self discipline; negotiation; and assertive and democratic conversations using the skills of speaking, listening, observing, thinking and concentrating.

As a structured group process, QCT teaches young people how to understand themselves and relate to others. The structures and techniques within QCT teach individuals to communicate more clearly, directly and honestly with each other. By learning to articulate their feelings, they learn to develop positive relationships. The strategies involved for children include cooperative games, pair work, rounds, drama techniques, puppet play - each strategy appropriate to the emotional and intellectual level of the group. Through the cooperative activities and discussion, QCT ensures that each child experiences success and, used on a regular weekly basis, it promotes a feeling of equal value and group identity.

Teachers trained in the Circle Time approach are able to get pupils to meet in a circle to effectively engage in games, exercises, discussions designed to promote trust, respect, empathy and understanding. QCT goes a long way to foster student success – both at the social and emotional level, as well as at the academic level.

What makes the QCT approach particularly challenging for teachers is the need to shift from conditioned ways of responding and reacting to children. The habit of moralising and telling is so deeply ingrained in a teacher's psyche that the switch to becoming non-judgemental, authentic, warm and respectful towards students really calls for a profound paradigm shift!

Why Ecosystemic?

Any whole school change initiative that's worthwhile needs to permeate the entire ecosystem. So too with QCT. The role of the principals and heads of schools here is crucial. They are responsible for institutionalising policies and systems that embed the QCT ethos in the school. Otherwise, while a few inspired teachers may make valiant attempts at enabling and equipping their students, no meaningful impact would occur unless principals mandate system-wide norms and practices.

They also need to actively nurture staff self esteem and students' self esteem and put into place clear listening systems which can pave the way for a Whole School Behaviour Policy that is inclusive, positive, caring and assertive for students and staff. This way all experience success in school - the gifted, the average and the special needs individuals.

Enabling success for all needs to be the cornerstone of inclusion. However, most educational reforms in India continue to focus, albeit inadequately, on developing literacy, numeracy competencies or infrastructure development. The Whole School Ecosystemic Model of Quality Circle Time places the well-being of people (pupils and teachers) at the heart of school improvement. While thousands of teachers across India are becoming aware of the technique of conducting QCT, this in itself does not engender a positive school ethos unless bolstered by changes in school policies and overall nature of personal interactions. The Teacher Foundation has for the past several years, been addressing this issue by working on a concerted holistic Safe and Sensitive Schools initiative, which now also includes the assessment of students' social-emotional learning competencies. This is a year-long project for schools who wish to embed the Ecosystemic Model in their institution. Such schools are trailblazers purposefully attempting to create a better world through what they teach and the way they teach.

Is Your School Inclusive?

A self appraisal checklist for schools

1. Some children 'dominate' others in most classes.
2. Students are often labeled e.g lazy, naughty, dumb, slow, arrogant.
3. Teachers praise children mainly for good academic work and punishments are meted in an inconsistent way.
4. Only a small percentage of children regularly receive good news about themselves, and which also goes home to their parents.
5. The average 'middle-plodder' child gets overlooked.

6. Every class teacher has a regular designated time to discuss problems with individual children.
7. There is a system that allows children to record and monitor their own progress.
8. All children's anxieties and fears about class time or playtime are listened to.
9. The quiet children are given the same attention as the more vocal ones.
10. Students are involved in formulating the school's rules and behaviour policy.

11. Sarcasm and cynicism is a common feature among staff members.
12. Staff members avoid the staff room because it lacks an agreeable atmosphere.
13. Some staff members rarely speak out in staff meetings.
14. Staff frequently grumble about their workload and responsibilities.
15. Staff rarely experience praise from each other and from the head.

Adapted from Jenny Mosley Consultancies, UK

About the author

Maya Menon is Director of The Teacher Foundation and a well respected Teacher - Educator in India, with over four decades of experience. She has trained several thousand teachers over the past 25 years, and has presented at leading education conferences nationally and internationally. She has also been involved in the development of the National Education Policy 2020.

How To Make Your School Green

By **Loluck Baby**

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 emphasizes a holistic and multidisciplinary education, encouraging schools to integrate environmental awareness and sustainability.

It emphasises the need for a vibrant knowledge society and ensuring high-quality education for all, integrating sustainability and environmental consciousness into the curriculum. It encourages critical thinking, problem-solving and empathy among students, which are crucial for addressing environmental issues. The policy also encourages educational institutions to adopt practices that contribute to sustainable development and environmental stewardship.

Schools reflect the community we live in, embodying its goodness and greatness, as well as its challenges. As the world strives for environmental sustainability and resource efficiency, schools play a pivotal role in fostering these values from an early age. The influence of a school extends well into a student's home, making it clear that changes in school practices can lead to character development in children. Building an environmentally sustainable and resource-efficient culture in schools is not a formidable challenge. However, developing a mindset that embraces trial and error is crucial to initiating this change. Once this is underway and maintained, the benefits extend far beyond academic enrichment, to include financial and operational efficiency.

Schools that successfully cultivate environmentally sustainable and resource-efficient practices can be termed **'Green Schools'**.

Isolated decisions on school transformations seldom yield the expected results. Many sustainability initiatives, such as plastic-free campuses and water conservation campaigns, fail or eventually falter when decisions are made without sufficient evidence, discussion and collaboration between parents, teachers and students. The first step in preparing a community involves creating a formal group of like-minded and dedicated individuals, including parents, teachers, and students.

Leadership within this group should be student-led. Why? Because the ultimate goal of building green schools is to secure their future, making it fitting that they take the lead. Let's refer to this group as the '**Green Committee.**' This committee should focus on establishing green school practices through a framework comprising three simple steps.

Step 1: Awareness based on evidence

The primary responsibility of the Green Committee is to designate 'foot soldiers' in each classroom

to initiate an audit of resource use. This process, known as a 'Green Audit,' can help measure the consumption of water, power, paper and other resources within the classroom. The audit should also consider the sources of these resources and the costs associated with them.

In a school that I used to work with, we installed a weighing scale to measure the food waste from students' lunch and snack boxes. The amount of food wasted was displayed in kilograms, along with the average cost of this waste, in every classroom. By conducting this exercise daily, we began to raise awareness about food waste. Within weeks, we observed a significant reduction in food waste, eventually reaching near-zero levels. This project was spearheaded by the school's Green Committee. Evidence-based awareness campaigns are therefore an effective means to alter perceptions and foster student agency in schools.

Step 2 - Actions, powered by belief and behaviour change

Top-down mandates and imposed rules based on perceived external best practices or assumptions may not always foster a genuine and enduring cultural shift towards sustainability practices in schools. However, a Green Audit provides ample empirical data and evidence that naturally spurs action. In fact, changes in belief and behaviour stemming from one's own experiences and understanding can spark generational mindset shifts.

Let's hark back to our history books for a bit. When Mahatma Gandhi initiated his freedom movement, he didn't begin by resisting British rule through force. Instead, he fostered a change in mindset and behaviour, advocating for non-violence and non-cooperation, which emerged as a tool more potent than anyone had imagined it could be. Such transformation is possible when we pose powerful questions; and is often more sustainable and impactful because it is rooted in genuine belief and engagement.

Here's an example. In one Green School in Kerala, the Green Audit revealed excessive electricity use as a challenge. Students often forgot to switch off fans and lights upon leaving the classroom. The school's Green Committee addressed this issue by posting the problem statement on the school notice board, along with evidence of the resulting losses over time for the school. Each class was tasked with devising their own plan and implementing their strategies for a month. After this period, the most efficient plan would be adopted and implemented in all classes across the school.

The plan executed by Class 8 students was exceptionally effective. Termed 'Last Man Standing,' the initiative assigned a new student each day the role of being the last to leave the classroom, and thus responsible for ensuring all lights and fans were switched off. Some students went beyond merely turning off lights and fans; they also ensured the tables and chairs were neatly arranged before leaving the room. This transformation in behaviour underscores the impact of fostering a culture of evidence-based ownership.

Step 3: Appreciation of success; and learnings

Positive outcomes and shifts that remain unnoticed or unappreciated scarcely qualify as changes at all. Not every Green Audit by a school will achieve its full desired outcome. However, invaluable lessons can emerge from such projects, offering profound learning opportunities for students and other members of a Green School Committee.

I have seen schools very successfully implement initiatives such as **'Green Assemblies'.** Conducted monthly, such an assembly is dedicated to recognizing and celebrating students who have taken the lead on sustainability initiatives. These eco-champions were honoured with the title of 'Green Warrior,' and their achievements were celebrated in the school magazine and via Social Media, elevating them to hero status among their peers. This recognition and visibility served as powerful inspiration for other students to participate in eco-friendly projects and initiatives.

> "Primarily, the integration of Green Initiatives bolsters a school's image as socially responsible and innovative."

Such gestures of appreciation are pivotal. They not only acknowledge the hard work and dedication of these young environmentalists, but also foster a culture of sustainability and collective responsibility. Every school can carve out its own unique way of celebrating these green efforts. The act of recognition serves as a powerful motivator. Do not overlook this crucial aspect when nurturing a generation of conscientious and proactive environmental stewards among your students!

KEY 'GREEN' INSIGHTS

Here are some guidelines for a school to effectively implement its proprietary Awareness - Actions - Appreciation (AAA) Green School framework:

Beginning with the formation of the Green Committee and progressing through Green Audits to Green Actions, a school should allocate up to two hours weekly to transition into a Green School.
Documentation plays a pivotal role; all records and studies pertaining to the Green School initiative must be digitally stored and made accessible to students.
Every student, parent, teacher and non-teaching staff member — including administrative staff, bus drivers, and security personnel — should be informed about the decisions and measures enacted by the Green School committee. Furthermore, students should lead training sessions for all stakeholders, elucidating the committee's decisions and actions.

In conclusion, the adoption of sustainable practices within schools yields more than environmental benefits by also offering substantial marketing leverage for these institutions. Primarily, the integration of green initiatives bolsters a school's image as socially responsible and innovative. Additionally, it paves the way for positive recognition and word of mouth in the local community. By engaging students, parents and staff in eco-friendly initiatives, every school can foster a sense of belonging and pride.

Globally recognized awards for sustainable practices in schools include the Green Ribbon Schools program in the United States and the Sheikh Zayed Sustainability Prize in the UAE.. In India, awards such as the Green Schools Programme (GSP) Awards administered by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) and programs like Eco-Schools India recognize schools for their commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainable development. These initiatives not only recognize exemplary efforts, but also inspire other schools to adopt eco-conscious practices, fostering a culture of sustainability across the Education sector.

About the author

Loluck Baby, Senior Zonal Academic Excellence Director, LEAD Group.
Loluck believes that every school, regardless of location, size or other factors, can adopt long-lasting Sustainability initiatives involving all school stakeholders such as students, teachers, parents and the local community. "In a world where resources are finite and environmental stewardship is paramount, a school that implements a sustainability framework not only educates its students about the importance of preserving our planet but also sets an example of responsibility and foresight for future generations to follow," he says.

Cracking The Code: An IITian's Journey To Mastering JEE

As an IIT graduate, I am often asked about ways to crack the JEE exam. As much as I wish I had a sure shot 'formula' for guaranteeing success in the exam, the truth is that nobody can guarantee you a seat at an IIT. Hence, I write this letter not as a JEE 'expert', but as a student who once aspired to get into an IIT.

A small caveat before you go forward - This letter is not intended to offer more advice on how to crack one of the most difficult exams in the world, but rather to share my journey and the lessons I learned along the way.. My hope is that it helps you, no matter how small the contribution, in your pursuit of achieving a breakthrough rank in the IIT JEE.

26th May, 2010. I vividly remember the day when my JEE results were declared. I recall not having the courage to open the JEE website to see my result. This was because my JEE paper hadn't gone as well as I had hoped. I didn't want to let my parents, teachers and friends down. They had high hopes for me! I remember having a flashback of all the years of hard work and effort that I'd devoted to preparing for the exam.

Grades 6-8: Building a Strong Foundation in School

My fascination for Maths and Science began here. The shift from memorizing and mugging up formulae and answers to actually understanding the concepts happened at this time. A large part of the credit for this goes to my dad (who is an engineer himself), who spent countless hours ensuring that I understood each and everything that I was taught. I started to enjoy subjects which I had earlier dreaded and began appreciating the application of these concepts in the world around me - for example, looking at a rainbow as dispersion of light. This was the first time the thought of becoming an engineer crossed my mind.

In hindsight, building a strong Conceptual Understanding of subjects in school has helped me in life. It not only helped me develop an aptitude for quickly understanding difficult and complex topics, but also improved my ability to see them in action in the real world.

Grades 9-10: Navigating the Transition

By now I had decided I wanted to become an engineer and that too from the top engineering college of the country - IIT. Board examination marks were important since they formed the basis of admissions to top coaching institutes. This was the first time that I was competing with students beyond my classroom and across the city, state and country.

My grade percentage and, more importantly, city, state and country rank mattered. One incorrect answer or a missed question could result in a big delta in my performance.

This is when I realized the importance of accuracy with speed. Practice was the single most important tool that helped me hone this skill. I spent 3 - 4 months solving hundreds of questions and tens of mock papers, building confidence and gaining speed over time. This helped me secure a spot among the top 3 students in the city and the top 10 in the country in the ICSE board exams that year.

> "The journey to cracking the JEE exam is a marathon, not a sprint. Stay motivated, stay determined, and never lose sight of your goals."

Grade 11-12: The Final Sprint

The jump from Grade 10 to Grade 11 is perhaps the biggest academic jump for a student in India. It feels like there's an almost 7X jump in the syllabus! Like many students, I was also advised to go to Kota (the Mecca of IIT preparation) if I was serious about cracking IIT. However, I decided against it; partly because I didn't want to stay away from home and partly because I was confident that if I gave it my 100%, I could crack the exam from anywhere.

The next two years went by like a flash. I studied more in those two years than I had in Grades 6 - 10 combined. There was a lot of pressure and unfortunately, I saw a lot of bright students give in to the stress. I was lucky to be taught and coached by teachers who had cracked the JEE exam themselves.

One invaluable lesson I learnt from them was that mental composure is as important (if not more) as Conceptual Understanding and accuracy with speed to crack the JEE exam. Your nerves during the exam can be the difference between you getting into an IIT or not.

I finally mustered the courage to open the JEE result. Before I could fire up my PC and open the result, I received a call from Dutt Sir, my Chemistry teacher. He started by saying, "Well done, Ishan! You are going to an IIT". The world stood still for a minute as I couldn't believe my ears. I started to laugh and cry at the same time. All the effort and hard work had finally paid off!

Long story short, after counselling and seat allotment, I was fortunate enough to end up at IIT Delhi. Life inside an IIT was very different from what I could have ever imagined, but more on that another day.

For now, here are some techniques and best practices that can help you in your IIT JEE preparation journey:

01. Choose understanding over memorization: Dive deep into the essence of what you learn, aiming for solid Conceptual Understanding rather than mere rote memorization. This approach not only makes learning more enjoyable, but ensures that the concepts you grasp are forever etched in your memory, and you are able to apply them to real-world scenarios around you.

02. Consistent practice is key: Remember, there's no ceiling to practice. The mantra 'practice makes perfect' holds especially true in the IIT JEE preparation journey. Cultivate discipline by setting daily, weekly, or monthly targets for practice questions. Enhancing your speed and accuracy comes from this relentless dedication to practice.

03. Combat nervousness with resilience: Nervousness is your biggest enemy! You'll win half the battle if you can stay calm and composed during the exam. Build mental resilience through meditation, working out, or playing a favourite sport.

04. Build a supportive peer network: Surround yourself with a circle of peers who are as dedicated to their preparation as you are. This network will not only provide emotional and academic support, but will also spur healthy competition, propelling you to strive for greater heights.

05. Maintain perspective: While setting your sights on IIT is commendable, it's crucial to remember that it's not the sole definition of success. The world is full of illustrious individuals who have carved their paths to achievement without an IIT badge. Your journey is unique and numerous paths lead to success.

As a final parting thought, remember that the journey to cracking the JEE exam is a marathon, not a sprint. Stay motivated, stay determined and never lose sight of your goals. Believe in your abilities and remember that with hard work, dedication and strong conceptual understanding, **anything is possible.**

Signing off and good luck!

Yours truly,
Ishan Jain

About the author

Ishan Jain is an alumnus of IIT Delhi and IIM Ahmedabad. He has worked at Kearney as a consultant and is now dedicated to helping more students pursue their interest in STEM education. He currently leads the development and delivery of LEAD Foundation classes that help middle and high school students prepare for IIT-JEE, NEET and other competitive exams.

India's Elite 16: Schools At The Forefront Of Multi-Modal Education

FUTUREPATH EM HIGH SCHOOL
Andhra Pradesh

SRI KAKATIYA HIGH SCHOOL SAINIK NAGAR BRANCH
Andhra Pradesh

SRI KAKTIYA HIGH SCHOOL LBS ROAD BRANCH
Andhra Pradesh

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN'S PUBLIC SCHOOL
Andhra Pradesh

NAGARJUNA MODEL SCHOOL MAIN BRANCH
Andhra Pradesh

SHREE T.R. PATEL PUBLIC SCHOOL DHANGAON KHANDWA
Madhya Pradesh

ANNAPURNA HIGH SCHOOL
Andhra Pradesh

LITTLE PARADISE SCHOOL TANUKU
Andhra Pradesh

NEHRU NIKETAN CONVENT
Andhra Pradesh

SARVODAY INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH SCHOOL
Madhya Pradesh

SIVATEJA ENGLISH MEDIUM SCHOOL
Andhra Pradesh

SRI KAKATIYA HIGH SCHOOL SAINIK NAGAR BRANCH
Andhra Pradesh

SRI VISWAM HIGH SCHOOL
Andhra Pradesh

THE RAMESHWAR VALLEY SCHOOL
Jharkhand

VIDYODAYA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL
Madhya Pradesh

NEW MALWA SEN SEC SCHOOL
Punjab

School of the Future
Futurepath E.M. High School

It all began when **Mr. Mamidi Srinivasa Rao, Founder, Correspondent and Head Master of Futurepath E.M. High School**, attended Polytechnic coaching lessons as a student himself and noticed the students' attraction to the coaching techniques at the institute. This observation sparked the idea of establishing an educational institution that would offer high quality yet affordable education to the local community, especially for students from low to mid-income families. Deeply convinced, Mr. Rao established **Futurepath E.M. High School** in April 1994, starting with 76 students. He was only 23 years old at the time.

Today, Mr. Rao still teaches Class 10 Mathematics at the school. He says, "I firmly believe that education is the most powerful weapon which can bring a great change in a person's life and among generations yet to come."

> "Our focus is on providing quality education and a homely and friendly atmosphere to every child entering our school compound."

Mr. Mamidi Srinivasa Rao, Founder, Correspondent and Head Master, Futurepath E.M. High School

Partnering with Parents for Student Success

Differentiated Pedagogical Approach

Today, Futurepath E.M. High School has nearly 800 students, most of whom hail from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. The average monthly income of a Futurepath E.M. High School parent is about Rs 20,000.

Futurepath E.M. High School leverages innovative methods to engage the local community, encouraging low-income parents to enrol their wards in school.

Mother's Workshops - An interactive Mother's Workshop is held on the school premises every second Saturday of the month. The goal is to orient parents to the school's multimodal teaching practices, facilitate parental involvement in their ward's educational journey, and establish a partnership between the school and families regarding educating children at home. At least 60% of parents attend these workshops.

Home Visits - The concept of 'Home Visits' by class teachers, as practised by Futurepath E.M. High School at the beginning and end of each academic year, represents an innovative and personalised approach to school education. Class teachers of Futurepath E.M. High School visit at least two to three homes each day, completing scheduled visits within a couple of weeks into the start of the school

year. This helps the school build trust and communication with student families; understand a student's home environment; learn about students' interests and habits outside of the classroom. Futurepath E.M. High School's class teachers conduct at least 1,400 Home Visits each academic year.

Mr. Rao credits the inspiration for initiatives such as Mother's Workshops and Home Visits to a visit to a school in Ahmedabad a few years ago. It was here that he first came across these practices and realised their tremendous potential for positively impacting student learning outcomes.path E.M. High School uses innovative classroom pedagogical approaches such as **Playway** and **Activity - Based Teaching**, especially in early childhood and primary classes, recognizing that young children learn best through experiences that capture their interest and stimulate their curiosity. The school, therefore, integrates play into the educational framework for very young students, encouraging them to explore, discover and learn about the world around them in a relaxed and enjoyable environment. The overall aim is to develop the social, cognitive, emotional and physical skills of students and foster a life-long love for learning.

Activity - Based Teaching in Futurepath classrooms is all about learning through doing. The school

Mothers Workshop

engages students in hands-on tasks and projects that are designed to teach specific educational concepts or skills. These activities range from science experiments, mathematical puzzles and art projects, to field trips and group work.

Student-led Conference

Home Visits

Student-led Conferences:

Futurepath E.M. High School conducts two to three Student-led Conferences (SLCs) each year. In these in-school events, students act as teachers for a day, choosing and explaining topics in creative ways beyond traditional textbooks. This approach not only improves student subject knowledge, but also boosts their Communication skills, thereby increasing their Confidence levels. These in-school events attract nearly 80% of parents and promote a collaborative learning culture within the school community.

> "Mr. Rao's firm belief that, irrespective of economic background, other circumstances, or location, every child has the right to a high-quality education."

Monitoring Academic Progress

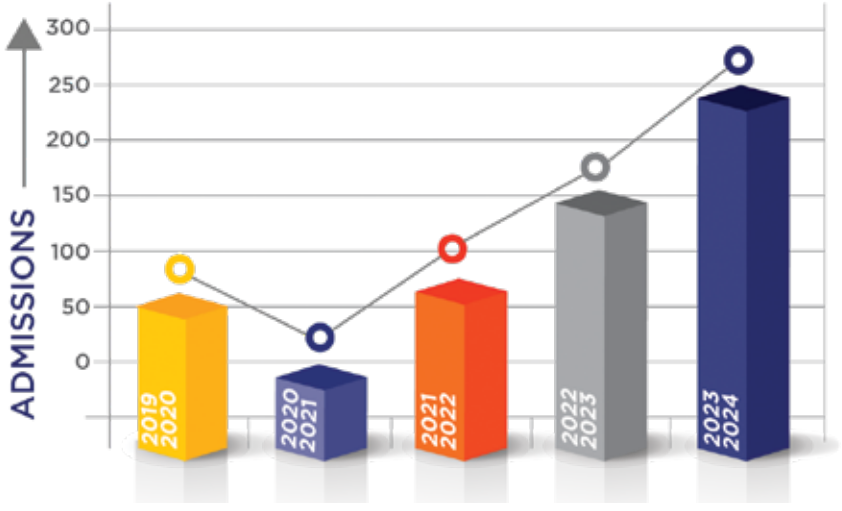
At Futurepath E.M. High School, **Principal Mrs. M. Madhuri** personally monitors the academic progress of each student at the beginning, middle and end of the school year, with a strong focus on remediation to ensure all students reach grade-level proficiency. Remedial classes are conducted regularly to ensure no student is left behind, reflecting Mr. Rao's firm belief that, irrespective of economic background, other circumstances, or location, every child has the right to a high-quality education.

With LEAD as its Academic Partner, Futurepath E.M. High School students develop deep conceptual understanding of concepts and this progress is reflected in the year-on-year growth in their learning outcomes. The percentage of students requiring remedials has been reducing steadily since 2020.

Beyond The Classroom: Exploring Holistic Education

Nearly 400 Futurepath E.M. High School students lead social awareness campaigns or Student-led Movements (SLMs) each year. Usually, three SLMs are conducted during the school year, before Pongal, Dussehra and summer vacations. Students are encouraged to explore and research issues impacting nearby communities and to travel to these neighbourhoods to create awareness and present possible solutions. SLM topics chosen by Futurepath E.M. High School students include 'Voting Is Your Right', 'Save Money - Money Will Save You', 'Empowering Education For The Girl Child', 'Stop Plastic Pollution' and 'Water Conservation'.

Other student development focus areas include theatre, creative writing, and arts and crafts.



The school has seen a steady rise in admissions over the last few years. says **Dr. Nagaraju Baydeti**, Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Science and Engineering, National Institute of Technology, Nagaland and alumnus of Futurepath E.M. high School, "My parents were not educated. Shri M. Srinivasa Rao Sir laid the path for my career by guiding me on my post matriculation options during my school days. He used to take personal care of me and has been instrumental in shaping my career. I salute his commitment to transforming the younger generation!"

Today, Futurepath E.M. High School stands as a beacon of innovation in education in Kedareswara Pet, Vijayawada. With a rich history of multimodal education, Futurepath E.M. High School is reaffirming its role as a cornerstone of the community it serves. The school is fostering an environment where every child can realise their potential; and serves as a nurturing ground for the leaders of tomorrow.

Student Spotlight
Haifa Shahid and Hafsa Feroz
The 13 Year Old Techies from J&K

In today's fast-paced world, **Coding and Computational Skills** have become the cornerstone of technological advancement. **Hafsa Feroz and Haifa Shahid**, two bright Grade 7 students from Radiant Public School in Jammu & Kashmir, exemplify the importance of nurturing young talent in the field of technology. In a candid interview, they shed light on their journey as budding coders and their recent endeavor in developing a mental health application.

Both of you are 13 years old. What sparked your interest in Coding?

Haifa: Coding allows me to blend creativity with problem-solving. It's a skill that lets me see the direct impact of my efforts on solving real-life issues. I've always been drawn to challenges, and Coding offers endless possibilities to tackle them head-on.

Hafsa: Coding is a pivotal skill shaping the future of technology. I am drawn to this field because it will revolutionize careers of the future, and to be a part of this journey early on is something I am keen on doing.

Can you share a project where you applied your Coding skills to address a real-life problem?

Hafsa: We developed the 'Therapist Bot', an anxiety tracker aimed at promoting mental well-being. Recognizing the growing importance of mental health discourse, especially in Jammu and Kashmir, we wanted to bridge the gap by leveraging technology. Therapist Bot offers emotional support and helps users manage their emotions effectively, thereby fostering a healthier and more resilient mindset.

Hafsa Feroz and Haifa Shahid receiving awards at **LEAD Student Championship 2023.**

Haifa: By the way, it took us 60 days of hard work and creativity to bring our idea to life. Not only did we create this app, we were able to present it at the LEAD Championships 2023 which was a turning point, as it not only validated our hard work but also helped me hone my communication and presentation skills

How does your school support your journey as young, talented coders?

Hafsa: Radiant Public School has been instrumental in nurturing my passion for technology. Through partnerships with organizations like LEAD Group, I've had access to opportunities beyond the conventional curriculum. LEAD Championships, for instance, provided me a platform to build and demonstrate my coding skills. Moreover, subjects like 'ELGA' (English Language and General Awareness) and interactive science classes have enriched my overall learning experience, helping me to develop a sense of curiosity about the world around us.

Haifa: To add to what Hafsa already mentioned, our school's Coding and Computational Skills curriculum dives deep into app and game development, website design, and multimedia content. Our teachers mentor us through trial and error, with a hands-on learning environment every Saturday in the school computer lab.

Besides Coding, what other subjects do you enjoy that complement your technological skills?

Haifa: I believe that Confidence and Communication are essential in any field, including technology. Subjects like English Language and General Awareness (ELGA) at my school not only strengthen my communication skills but also push me out of my comfort zone. Presenting in front of classmates and engaging in creative tasks enhance my ability to articulate ideas effectively.

Hafsa: Haifa is right. In fact, ELGA has helped improve my English proficiency. Science is taught in a practical way in our classrooms, through smart boards, books, and activities. This approach has helped improve my understanding of complex concepts. The focus isn't just on exams; it's about helping students be better prepared for the challenges that lie ahead.

What advice do you have for young girls aspiring to pursue a career in technology?

Haifa: Stay hungry for knowledge and embrace the journey of learning. Technology offers endless opportunities for growth and innovation. Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone and showcase your skills. The world of technology is waiting for you to make your mark.

Hafsa: To all the young girls out there, embrace technology fearlessly! Dive into coding, explore, and don't be afraid to fail. The world of technology is vast and ever-evolving, offering endless possibilities for those willing to explore. Believe in yourself, and the rest will follow.

Teacher Spotlight

Alluri Tulasi,

UKG Teacher, Pre-Primary Coordinator
Gopi Krishna Central School, Andhra Pradesh

Engaging Teaching-Learning Experience In A Classroom

In the bustling classrooms of Gopi Krishna Central School in Andhra Pradesh, **Alluri Tulasi**, UKG Teacher and Pre-Primary Coordinator, orchestrates a symphony of learning experiences for her students. As a driven professional, Alluri's journey from homemaker to educator exemplifies the transformative power of pursuing one's dreams. As she graciously shares her insights, we delve into her world, exploring her innovative teaching methodologies, unwavering commitment to student success and the pursuit of classroom excellence everyday.

What drew you towards teaching UKG students, and how do you make learning enjoyable for them?

Little minds are the most impressionable and they learn best through the Play-Way method. I utilise this method in my classroom to transform lessons into fun and engaging experiences. Whether it's through storytelling or roleplaying, I ensure every lesson is an immersive experience, steering clear of rote learning and focussing more on concept-based learning.

How do you effectively engage young children in the learning process?

Young learners thrive on interaction and visual stimuli. I use flashcards and group activities to create a collaborative learning environment in which every child feels involved and valued.

Could you share insights into the Teacher Training you underwent and the strategies you implement in your classroom?

My training has helped me better leverage multimodal resources and manage time effectively. I employ innovative strategies like the "Four Corner" approach. Each corner of my classroom represents a different learning activity - one for music, another two for hands-on activities, and one for reading. This allows students to choose their preferred area of interest and move freely around the classroom. By incorporating movement into our lessons, I ensure maximum engagement and concentration from all learners. Plus, it gives students the autonomy to decide how they want to learn.

What role does technology play in your teaching, and how do you address diverse learning needs?

A: Embracing technology has helped me engage students in my classroom better. From interactive smart screens to tailored group activities, I ensure every student, regardless of their learning pace, receives personalized attention and support.

Reflecting on your journey, what challenges have you faced as a teacher, and how do you continue to evolve?

Recognizing the uniqueness of each student and adapting my teaching style accordingly has been a significant challenge. Continuous learning, especially in embracing technology and refining teaching methodologies, remains pivotal in my quest for excellence.

What message do you have for educators nationwide?

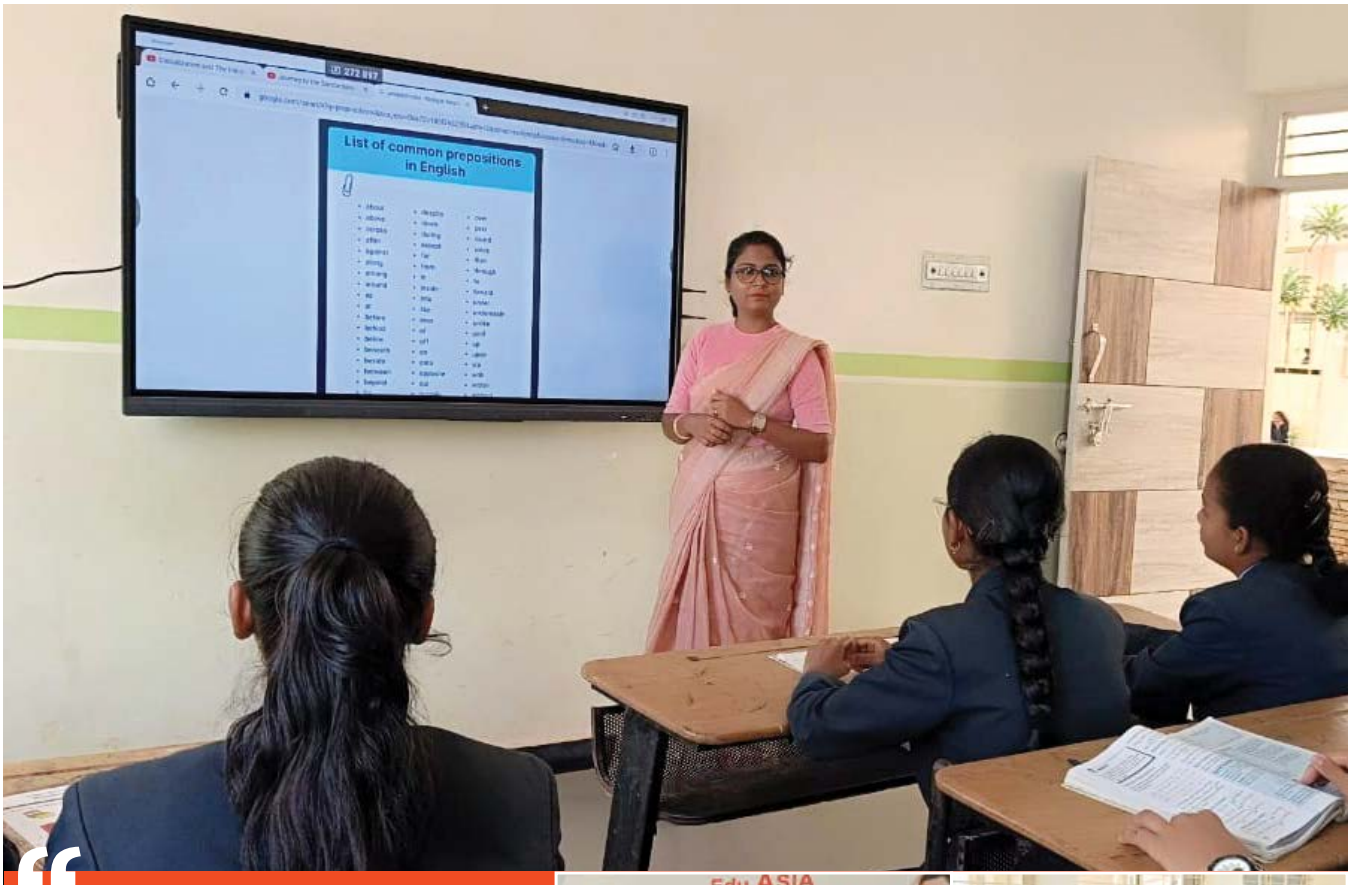
Never stop learning. To be a great teacher, one must first be a dedicated student. Strive for excellence every day!

Teacher Spotlight

Roopa Suresh,

Higher Primary Teacher, Unit Head of Grades 5-7,
Edu ASIA International Residential School, Karur

Chronicles of a Visionary Teacher



> It's crucial to invest in building strong relationships with students, providing them with the care and support they need to thrive. The future of Education in India depends on dedicated teachers who are committed to nurturing the holistic developments of their students.

> "I focus on recognising each child as an individual learner, firmly believing in the principle that no child should be left behind."

Tell us about your professional journey in Education.
I have over a decade's experience in Education. I joined Edu ASIA International Residential School in 2010 and currently teach higher primary English to over 800 students. I hold a Bachelor's degree in English, a B.Ed in Maths and Social Science methodology and I am currently pursuing an M.A. in English through correspondence. Teaching has been my passion since childhood and I take inspiration from my school teacher Mrs. Mukta.

How do you approach teaching? What are the unique practices you follow?
I focus on recognising each child as an individual learner, firmly believing in the principle that no child should be left behind. My approach involves motivating students to develop their areas of interest, ensuring a positive and inclusive learning environment where students are encouraged to express their ideas. I use differentiated instructions to meet the diverse needs of learners and use technology to enhance learning in the classroom, especially through visual storytelling and role-playing activities.

Awards or recognitions that you are especially proud of...
I have been honoured as the best Unit Head for grades 1 - 5 and am currently working as the Unit Head for grades 5 - 7. I believe these recognitions validate my commitment to fostering an inclusive and effective learning environment in the classroom.

Could you share an example of a challenging situation in the classroom and how you addressed it?
Sometimes, there are students who find it difficult to keep up with English lessons in the classroom. To engage these students, I have introduced role - play activities and assignments that allowed for creative expression, such as painting and writing their own articles. This approach has helped these students overcome their initial embarrassment of not being able to read or write English well enough.

How do you collaborate with colleagues and parents to support student success?
I believe in integrated learning and often invite other subject teachers into my classroom to provide a multidisciplinary perspective. This collaborative approach helps students grasp concepts more thoroughly and encourages them to take the lead in explaining topics, fostering a deeper understanding and engagement in the learning process.

What are your thoughts on the significance of teaching as a profession, especially in India?
Teaching is a noble profession that plays a crucial role in shaping the future of our nation. The strength of India depends on its educated citizens, making the role of teachers pivotal. It's essential that teaching opportunities are given to those who truly deserve them, ensuring that our future generations receive the best possible education.

An incidence of where you've made a difference in a student's life outside of academics?
One of the most impactful experiences I've had was taking students on a field visit to a natural farm. This trip provided them with hands-on learning about natural farming methods and the benefits of avoiding chemical pesticides. It not only enhanced their academic knowledge, but also instilled a sense of responsibility towards the environment.

What message would you like to share with future teachers?
My message to future teachers is to work for the kids. It's crucial to invest in building strong relationships with students, providing them with the care and support they need to thrive. The future of Education in India depends on dedicated teachers who are committed to nurturing the holistic development of their students.

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

SHIKSHA AWARDS

We celebrate India's Top 30 teachers who are committed to excellence, diligently preparing their lesson plans, continuously enhancing their pedagogical skills and truly embracing a multimodal teaching approach. They remediate their students to ensure every child learns and progresses in their class.

Waheeda S
KVR English Medium High School

Prasanna Krishna
St. Anthony's High School

Anamika Manna
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's Public School

Sowmya R V
SRKBV Matriculation Higher Secondary School

T. Srivani
Korutla Public School

Gomathi N
Raja National Matriculation Higher Secondary School

Jyoti Pithode
St. John Mission Minority English Medium High School, Tumsar

Jyoti Aggarwal
Bharat Bharti Public School

Rani Bommidi
Sri Prathibha Vidyalaya

Urmila Kevat
Shivpuri Public School, Isagarh

Lavanya Poluju
New Era High School

Propetha louis
Vidyanjali Public School

Ranjitha S
Shanguine Matriculation Higher Sec. School

Jyoti Gunjal
Shree Samarth School and College, Kharabwadi

P Swathi
Sri Srija English Medium High School, Kurnool

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

SHIKSHA AWARDS

Pooja Kandage
Shree Samarth School, Nighoje

Dhruvini Patel
The Wesleyan English Medium School - Dandi

Shaik Jasmin
Futurepath EM High School

Shilpa Roy
Sanskar Gyanpeeth, Dhanbad

Prity Ajmani
The Rameshwar Valley School

Krishnaveni. G
Vedavyasa Vidyanikethan School

Triveni T
Brilliant EM School

Ms. Swati
SR Vidyamandir Sen Sec School

P DIVYA
Maharshi Vidya Mandir HS

Kavya c
Boon EM High School

Poonam Tiwari
Gyansagar International School

A Prasanthi
Shiridisai Vidya Niketan

B Sreelatha
Pragathi Vidyanikethan High School

Singudasu Lakshmi Rajeswari
Bharatiya Vidyashram

Shridevi Mashyal
Vivekanand International Public School

WE ARE GSLC:

THE TRENDING SYNERGISERS IN EDUCATION

As the world of education continues to evolve rapidly, one thing remains constant: the importance of collaboration among school leaders. At GSLC (Global School Leaders Consortium), we believe that fostering collaboration among educational professionals is essential for driving positive change and ensuring the success of all students. In this exclusive insight, we'll explore the significance of collaboration in the education field and how it can benefit school leaders, teachers, and ultimately, students.

EdCrawler, as an extension of GSLC, is designed with a vision to make the academic processes simpler like admissions, faculty and student development, and information approachable to every stakeholder in the education fraternity. It is a simple one-stop solution to all the problems parents and schools face in the admissions process.

The vision is to establish an integrated ecosystem that effectively addresses the needs of all stakeholders - encompassing parents, students, schools, and service providers - by offering proactive and effective problem-solving approaches.

Breaking Down Silos

In today's interconnected world, the days of isolated educational institutions are long gone. Collaborative efforts among school leaders enable the sharing of best practices, innovative ideas, and resources across different schools and educational systems. By breaking down silos and promoting a culture of collaboration, school leaders can tap into a wealth of knowledge and expertise that can drive improvements in teaching and learning outcomes.

Cross-Pollination of Ideas

Collaboration opens the door to cross-pollination of ideas, allowing educators to learn from each other's successes and failures. Through collaborative networks, school leaders can explore new teaching methods, curriculum innovations, and technological advancements that can enhance student engagement and achievement. By embracing diverse perspectives and approaches, educators can adapt and refine their practices to better meet the needs of their students.

Professional Growth and Development - SUPER-(School Upskilling Programme & Enrichment Route) for upskilling Teachers and providing them with correct exposure and information to enhance their teaching skills.

This visionary initiative is crafted with precision to elevate the standards of teaching excellence, impart valuable exposure, and equip educators with indispensable skills. Aligned seamlessly with EdCrawler's overarching vision of simplifying academic processes, it serves as the conduit addressing the diverse needs of parents, students, schools, and service providers.

Maximizing Resources

In an era of limited resources, collaboration enables school leaders to maximize their impact by pooling resources and expertise. By partnering with other schools, educational organizations, and community stakeholders, school leaders can access a wider range of resources, including funding, technology, professional development opportunities, and support services. Collaboration allows schools to leverage their collective strengths to address common challenges and achieve shared goals, ultimately benefiting students and communities alike.

Enhanced Student Outcomes

At the heart of collaboration in education is a shared commitment to improving student outcomes. By working together, school leaders can identify and implement evidence-based practices that support student success. Collaboration enables schools to adopt a more holistic approach to education, addressing not only academic achievement but also social-emotional learning, student well-being, and equity and inclusion. By aligning their efforts and resources, school leaders can create a supportive and inclusive learning environment where all students can thrive.

In conclusion, collaboration is the cornerstone of effective educational leadership. By fostering collaboration among school leaders, GSLC along with EdCrawler aims to empower educators to drive positive change and innovation in education. Through collaboration, school leaders can tap into a wealth of knowledge, resources, and support networks that can enhance their professional practice and ultimately improve student outcomes. Together, we can create a brighter future for all students.

From the desk of
Pankaj Sharma - Founder and CEO
Sunny Lalwani - Co-Founder and CBO

School Feature

T. M. Patel International School

Innovation And Transformation

In conversation with **K. Maxwell Manohar**, Director/Principal, T.M. Patel International School

Mr. Harishbhai T. Patel
Chairman,
T. M. Patel International School

Mr. Maxwell Manohar
Director/Principal,
T. M. Patel International School

Tell us about T. M. Patel International School?

T. M. Patel International School, situated in Vesu, was established in June 2016, marking its inception with 425 students across 18 classes ranging from Nursery to Grade VII. Our foundation is built on the vision of becoming a premier educational institution with modern classrooms and innovation studios. Our school is dedicated to fostering creativity and collaboration in arts, science and technology, while also ensuring a balanced blend of academics, sports and extracurricular activities. This holistic approach prepares our students not only for exams but for life itself, aiming to nurture high achievers in various fields.

Your school's journey so far - what has it been like?

Our journey has been filled with milestones and challenges alike. From initially starting with classes up to Grade VII and celebrating our first batch of Grade 10 graduates in 2022, to overcoming the hurdle of attaining senior secondary affiliation, we've navigated through adapting to evolving curriculum demands, integrating technology in education, and addressing the holistic needs of our pupils while maintaining high educational standards. Each challenge was met with strategic planning, resourcefulness and a commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive learning environment.

What is your vision for growth today?

Our vision for growth centers on cultivating an engaging learning environment that promotes Collaboration, Creativity and Critical Thinking. Our focus is on embracing educational advancements; on leveraging technology to enhance learning experiences; on advocating for inclusivity; and on preparing our students to navigate modern challenges. This vision is propelled by a collaborative effort involving our chairman, trustees, management team, educators and the broader community, all working towards enriching the educational experience.

They say that schools are where the future of our great nation is being shaped. Can you discuss your school's transformation initiatives?

In response to the challenges we've faced, we've initiated comprehensive reforms across our curriculum, infrastructure and teaching methodologies. These include the adoption of multidisciplinary and project-based learning; infrastructure upgrades to support digital learning tools; and professional development for teachers in innovative education techniques. We've also expanded extracurricular activities and fostered community partnerships to enrich our students' learning experiences. These initiatives have resulted in significant improvements in student engagement, academic performance and inclusivity.

What positive outcomes have emerged from these transformation efforts?

The transformation efforts have yielded remarkable outcomes, including a 22% increase in

standardized test scores across all grade levels and enhanced student engagement and participation. We've also seen a notable decrease in disciplinary incidents, reflecting the positive shift towards a more engaging and inclusive learning environment. These successes underscore our commitment to providing a comprehensive and impactful education.

Reflecting on the lessons learned, what insights can you share?

Our journey has underscored the importance of continuous teacher professional development, stakeholder engagement, and effective communication. While we've seen great success, we recognise the potential for even greater impact through increased investment in sustainability initiatives and closer monitoring of implementation processes. These lessons are invaluable for other schools considering similar paths, emphasizing the need for collaborative, well-monitored, and inclusive approaches to education reform.

What is your vision for the future of India's school ecosystem?

Our dream is for every child in India to have access to an education that nurtures their talents and prepares them for a constantly evolving world. We advocate for inclusivity, creativity and holistic development within the educational community. It's crucial to embrace diversity, equip students with critical thinking skills, and foster an environment of lifelong learning. Education should aim to develop resilient, innovative and empathetic individuals who can contribute meaningfully to society. Let's work together towards a future where every child can achieve their fullest potential.

INDIA'S BIGGEST STUDENT CHAMPIONSHIP

CONCLUDES WITH A **GRAND FINALE** IN BENGALURU.

The winners of **LEAD Championships 2023** were announced in Bengaluru on 7th January, 2024 at an event graced by Indian author and columnist Chetan Bhagat and Sumeet Mehta, CEO and Co-Founder, LEAD Group. A national-level platform for 1.2 million students from over 3000 LEAD-powered schools across India, LEAD Championships provides students from small towns an opportunity to showcase their skills and cultivate the confidence needed to succeed in life, while building essential 21st-century skills like Communication, Critical Thinking and Collaboration.

The '**Li'l Champs**' and '**English Champs**' categories in LEAD Championships 2023 helped students build and demonstrate **Communication, Conceptual Understanding and Thinking skills**, as did the newly introduced '**Reading Champs**' category. '**Quiz Champs**' focused on General Knowledge, Sports, Entertainment, History and Science; while the '**Coding Champs**' category encouraged students to demonstrate their Creativity; App Design capabilities; and Speaking and Content skills. The winners of LEAD Championships 2023 took home exciting prizes including laptops, tablets and trophies.

Author and Columnist Chetan Bhagat, also a judge at the championship, said. "**I was blown away by the talented students. More than a lakh children participated and these are the finalists**".

Sumeet Mehta, CEO and Co-Founder, LEAD Group, said, "**Congratulations to all the winners and participants of LEAD Championships 2023!** LEAD Championships brings exposure, exciting opportunities and new learning experiences to school students in India's small towns and cities; and helps them gain from holistic learning experiences that propel them to continually achieve newer heights."

2023

National Champions from among 100000+ participants!

Swadheenta
Winner - L'iL Champs
Mount Mourya International School

Adithri Rajan
Runner Up - L'iL Champs
Jeeva Public School

L. Dhruvika Aryaana
Winner - English Champs Jr.
Bharathiya Vidya Bhavan's Public School

Sakina Ali Ahmer Bombaywala
Runner Up - English Champs Jr.
Jajoo International School

Areeba Rizwan Qureshi
Winner - English Champs Sr.
Sabri Public School

Sonal Pal
Runner Up - English Champs Sr.
Futurepath E.M. High School

Aahana Ratheesh Pillai
Winner - Reading Champs Jr.
Sri Vignesh Vidyalaya Sr. Sec. School, Trichy

Daksh Tiwari
Runner Up - Reading Champs Jr.
Samagra Abhyuday Public School

Nida Fatima Dumba
Winner - Reading Champs Sr.
Poornima International School

Nimrat Chaudary
Runner Up - Reading Champs Sr.
Uma Devi Children's Academy

Anitha P
Winner - Coding Champs
Little Flower Matric HR. Sec. School, Sathyamangalam

Aradhana S
Winner - Coding Champs
Little Flower Matric HR. Sec. School, Sathyamangalam

Hafza Feroz
Runner Up - Coding Champs
Radiant Public School Batengoo, Anantnag

Haifa Shahid
Runner Up - Coding Champs
Radiant Public School Batengoo, Anantnag

Prithviraj Yogesh Wagh
Winner - Quiz Champs
Kids Kingdom Academy Sonai

Panay Jagota
Runner Up - Quiz Champs
Springdale College

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ORAGADAM, CHENNAI

BUILD YOUR DREAM HOME BY A SERENE LAKE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME

Artist's impression. Not an actual site photograph.

0 ZERO MAINTENANCE CHARGES
TILL 31ST MARCH 2027

PLUG & PLAY PLOTS

COTTAGE	600 SQ. FT.	₹ 15.59 LAKH* ONWARDS
BUNGALOW	1500 SQ. FT.	₹ 38.49 LAKH* ONWARDS

Godrej | PROPERTIES

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