

# fenestra

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**A window to our culture of learning and sharing**

For Internal Circulation

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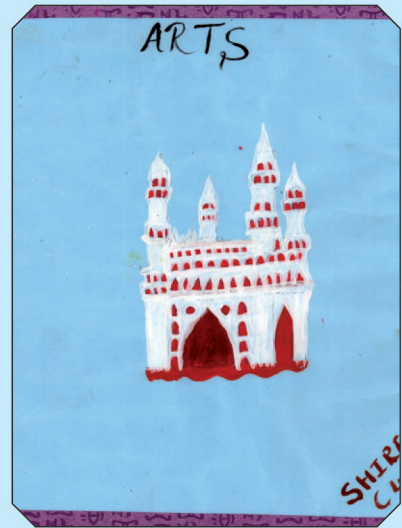




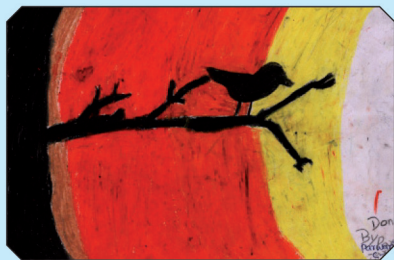
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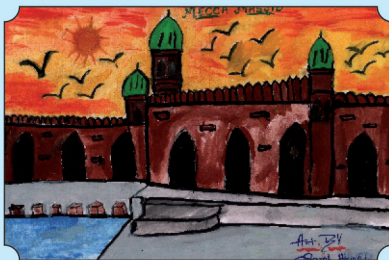
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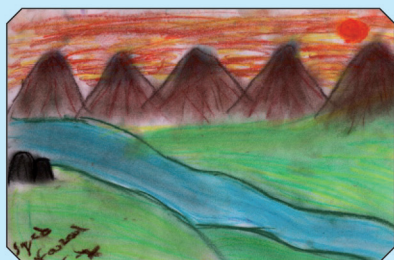
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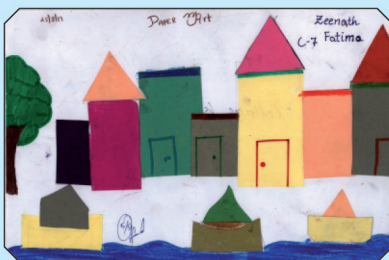
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## From the Leadership Desk

### The Essence of Our School and of Human Life

*Minhaj Arastu, Principal*

In a TED talk titled, 'Zombie roaches and other parasite tales', Ed Yong presented an unsettling observation about how animals behave. Some crickets commit suicide by jumping into water. And, there are mice that love the smell of cat urine so much that they cannot stay away from their predator. What is it that causes these creatures to behave in such harmful ways?



Like the perfect proportions of the Charminar or entrancing bird songs in the jungle, these behaviours reminded me that curiosity and wonder are the most powerful and important forces that can act on human beings. Curiosity drives us to observe closely, to puzzle, to discuss with others. This process is called inquiry and it is uniquely human. What is more, it is infinitely engrossing.

Every Teacher's Day, we hear guiding words from our correspondent, Aga Mujahid Hussain. This September, he reminded us that our school was founded with a lofty mission, one that is worthy of human beings. Our school is a place where children (and adults) explore the limitless world of questions and ideas. Like TED conferences, our school is a home for 'ideas worth spreading'.

Focus HS will soon complete 5 years of existence, and so it is the right time to reflect on what we have accomplished and what challenges lie ahead. How far have we been able to wrestle with ideas, pursue questions and build a community of lifelong learners?

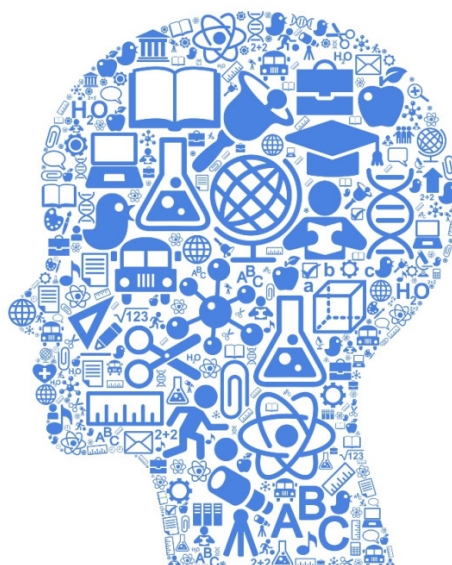
I am very pleased to observe this spirit of inquiry and experimentation in most of our teachers. One of our teachers completed a research project on barriers to learning through the Programme for International Student Assessment (<https://www.pisa4u.org/>). Our counsellors regularly attend workshops on topics such as autism and assessment. Primary and high school teachers collaborate to figure out the best way to build basic understanding of Mathematics. One of our interns reflected on her experience last year by writing, "The most interesting part of this organization is that here, all members are hardcore learners. Cooperation among the staff is worth seeing."

Taking the lead from teachers, students are also showing initiative and curiosity. From learning Urdu calligraphy to amateur "HAM" radio skills, children are pursuing knowledge in a variety of areas. In their units of inquiry, PYP students have engaged in conversation with RJ Adil (regarding the impact of media) and Dr. Anand Raj Varma (regarding our city's heritage). A group of children participated in a Model United Nations debate organised by Meridian School. Although we would like to see ever improving performance, these examples show that students, too, find joy in learning.

I would say we have made some solid progress in nurturing a spirit of inquiry among our students and teachers. Still, we look forward to improvement and growth in several areas. We hope to have a more diverse student body, composed of children from various religious communities. Diversity among students challenges our ideas and holds up a mirror to our thoughts, so it is very valuable for our school's mission.

We are also redesigning our curriculum to ensure that every child builds up basic skills in languages and Mathematics. We observed that several students in each class were not picking up new skills and concepts simply because they did not have the prerequisites. To move closer to our mission, we must ensure that every child has the foundation to grapple with ideas using the basic tools of reasoning, observation, and collaboration.

Returning to Ed Yong's TED speech, what could possibly have gotten into those crickets' brains? Why didn't the mice know better?! The answer lies in parasites that enter other organisms' bodies and take them over. Gordian worms infest some crickets, then release hormones that make them restless. When the crickets jump in the water, they die and the Gordian worm comes out to lay its eggs. The daredevil mice have a bacterial infection. Because the bacteria needs to be eaten by a cat for its reproductive cycle, it releases neurotransmitters that make the mice run after cats, to face their death. Science and nature raise so many fascinating questions: could there be parasites that affect human behaviour? If so, how much free will do we actually have?



In some ways, we at Focus High School also have a bug in our brain. It drives us to be curious and to explore ideas about the universe. Thankfully, the bug in our brain does not make us suicidal – in fact it gives us the very essence of our life.

## **Mastery-based Learning – A Natural Way of Learning**

*Mustafa Zaidi, Vice Principal (Curriculum Development)*

Mastery-based Learning, also called as Competency-based Learning, is a system of learning that allows a child to master knowledge and skills by individualizing their learning process. A learner goes to the next skill after mastering all the prerequisites. This process seems to slow down the conventional learning pace but it leaves no child with learning gaps. It transfers the ownership of learning to the student while the teacher *actually* becomes guide and facilitator.

At, Focus High School, we are working towards modelling this system of learning. That means, we are shifting from teaching and assessing all at the same time to allowing children to master concepts and skills at their own pace. The learning gets accelerated over time when the learner understands his/her own learning style and employs diverse learning methods and tools best suited to his/her style. The subject teachers are, therefore, required to be proficient in the child psychology and skilled in mapping the learning profile to a learner's aspirations and interests.



The top 5 skills listed by World Economic Forum for the world of 2020 are: *complex problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, people management and coordinating with others*. Metacognitive skill is also identified as a key skill for the world of tomorrow. The conventional classroom setup, inherited from the mass educational programme of the industrial revolution to train people to work in large factories, will not allow children to be collaborative problem solvers, independent lifelong learners and innovative thinkers. Sal Khan, founder of Khan Academy, has crystallized his vision of tomorrow in these words: *"I really think that this is all based on the idea that if we let people tap into their potential by mastering concepts, by being able to exercise agency over their learning, that they can get there. And when you think of it as just a citizen of the world, it's pretty exciting. I mean, think about the type of equity we can have, and the rate at which civilization could even progress. And so, I'm pretty optimistic about it. I think it's going to be a pretty exciting time to be alive."*

## **The Best Own the Future: Helping our Children to Excel in Life**

*Mohd Ghouse Ahmed, Vice Principal (DS)*

Children are the backbone of educational organization. All children are not same in all aspects. They differ in terms of intelligence, understanding, mannerism etc. The reason can be family background and culture in which they grow up. They are all the gift of God, innocent by nature and most vital source of prosperity in a family that completes it. The power of creation vests with the God; we only provide nurturing atmosphere. Since the conditions in which children grow are different, the mindsets also vary. We are always asked to give 'quality time' to kids. What does this exactly mean? How will it impact the academic performance and behaviour of the students?

I had many instances of successful conflict resolution. Students approach me with different problems which may not be significant at times. But I give all the students a fair chance to speak out their heart. Here, time is important and listening is the key. I make them realize the consequences of their actions and reach to conclusion with mutual consent. Students must be strategically involved in the resolution of the conflict. The same is expected from parents in supporting your wards by giving quality time to understand their problems, strength and weaknesses and providing best solutions for them. Nobody can understand the needs of your children better than you. Simple acts like listening to a child can take lot of stress off him/her.

The best can only come out in our kids by our support as it is rightly said 'The best own the future'.

## **Community Participation – An Important Aspect of Personality Development**

*Ms. Sherbanoo Fathi, PYP Coordinator*

Society is based on learning, communities are held together by learning, and people construct identities through learning. With this ideology in mind we, at Focus High School, provide ample opportunities to students to participate in varied activities that will involve interaction with students and adults outside the school. Focus High School's Primary Years have been very active in their interaction with the wider community of PYP Network Schools in Telangana.

Students participated both in sports, as well as academic and cultural activities such as the Inter School Football hosted by Focus High School, Cricket Competition hosted by Oakridge International School (Newton), the PYP Music and Dance Fest at Meridian School Madhapur, Literary and Art Fest at the Aga Khan Academy and the OakPMUN (Mock United Nations) at Oakridge International School (Newton) to mention a few. Students also had a chance to have a Skype session with



International School Bombay to celebrate International Mother Language Day to widen their exposure to different cultures.

Competitions and fests such as these play a role in motivating students to perform and excel and offer a lot more reward than just the winning prize. Competitions offer a chance for participants to gain substantial experience, showcase skills, analyze and evaluate outcomes and uncover personal aptitude. Competitions also encourage students to adopt innovative techniques and develop their ideas and skills.

Very few opportunities in the average student life provide such exposure and realistic outlook towards the competitive nature of real life in such a short span of time as competitions provide. Students recurrently go through a series of brainstorming sessions, rapid problem solving sequences and experience a totally diverse form of learning, which they usually don't practice in their schools

Community interaction was not only restricted to the students, our teachers also actively participated in Job Alike sessions with teachers of different PYP Schools, wherein they shared their teaching pedagogy. With this we may conclude that, individuals learn in the interest of communities that matter to them. They learn in order to know how to be productive in the community, and to gain access to valued forms of community participation. Their reward is in seeing their contribution, knowing that others recognize their contribution, and forging an ever changing sense of themselves.

## **Teaching - My Dream Profession**

*Ms. Munazza Fatima, HS Math Teacher & HS Coordinator*

*"I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think." (Socrates)*

For me teaching is not just a profession. It is something that completes me. It would not be wrong to say that I was just born to be a teacher.

As a child, I used to teach to empty rooms and as I grew, I started taking tuitions and then I took it up as my profession.

Well, the love of taking up teaching as a profession blossomed in me when I used to see my parents giving so much respect to my teachers. I realised that no one, irrespective of age, can ever have the respect, love and importance a teacher has.

After my parents, I give credit for taking up this profession to my teachers. Because of them I realised how much tolerance and patience is required to be a teacher.

Contrary to believe that teaching is a cake-walk, it requires a lot of effort. A teacher has to be everything because a student just not learns but inherits almost everything from his teacher. He learns how to be a good human being. He learns how to treat people. He not only learns lessons from books, but also lessons from life. I think that is why teaching is known as a noble profession.



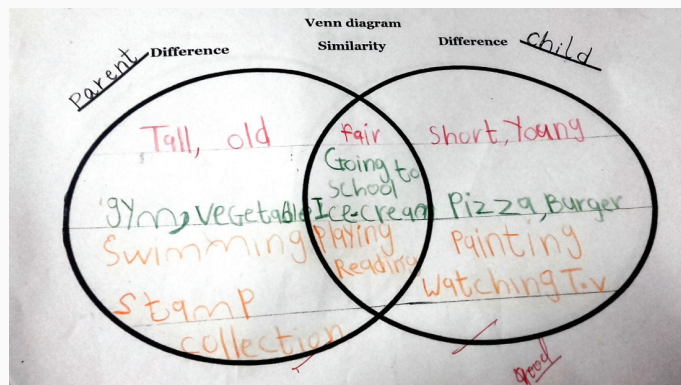
## From the Teachers' Desk

### Creating a Thoughtful Classroom

Ms. Azra Fatima, Class 1A Homeroom Teacher

*Thinking is the hardest work there is, which is the probable reason why so few engage in it. (Henry Ford)*

Would you like a classroom where students are sitting in rows in front of the board and copying each word? Or a classroom where students are engaged thinkers and learners and take pride in their work? What if something could do all this and enhance students' thinking skills? Every committed educator wants better learning and more thoughtful students. 'Visible Thinking' is a way of helping to achieve that without a separate *thinking skills* course or fixed lessons. Visible Thinking is a broad and flexible framework for enriching classroom learning in the content areas and fostering students' intellectual development at the same time. Thinking happens mostly in our heads, invisible to others and even to us. Effective thinkers make their thinking visible; they externalize their thoughts through speaking, writing, drawing, or some other method. They can then direct and improve those thoughts.



*Comparing me with my parent using a Venn diagram*

Being a first grade PYP facilitator, I have been implementing the *visible thinking* routines in my classroom. I adapt routines to meet the standard of my students, and make it as hands on and interactive as possible using manipulatives and movement as well. There is much more than what can be shared here! To name a few, KWL, Zoom in or Think Pair Share involves posing a question to students, thinking individually and then sharing their thoughts with their classmates. Some of the other activities are:

See, Think and Wonder – a routine to make careful observations and thoughtful interpretations.

**Colour, Symbol, Image** – a routine for distilling the essence of ideas non-verbally

**What Makes You Say That** – a routine for interpretation with justification

**Connect, Extend, Challenge** – a routine for connecting new ideas to prior knowledge

In my class I found the Concentric Circle or Doughnut Activity quite thrilling among the students as it involves movement and provides a structure for participants to discuss issues according to the topic given. Responses are brief and partners keep changing, so at the end of the activity, each participant will have made a personal connection with a number of people. One more delightful activity is using a Venn diagram to compare and contrast information and recognize relationships between concepts. Venn diagrams encourage higher order thinking by enabling students to go beyond simply identifying similarities and differences to see the relationships between and among the information.

I would like to leave you with a quote by Ron Ritchhart:

*Most of all have the confidence in every learner's ability to think and your capacity to nurture that thinking. The results will amaze and energize you.*



## he Key is to Build Expectations from the Beginning

*Ms. Maryam Mirza, Class PP2A Homeroom Teacher*

Classroom management is the key to teaching everything in any grade and is very important in the kindergarten where we have children who never had any school experience before. We kindergarten teachers must teach children all classroom expectations from very beginning - from lining up, sitting and listening in the class, behaving with their friends and teachers and the list goes on.

One of the most important things which I feel that should be practiced in the classroom is discipline and behaviour. To discipline my students I use pro-active techniques. For instance, I never ask them to sit longer than they can. So when they start to get wiggly I ask them to stand and sing rhymes and do the actions. This helps them get their blood circulate faster and sends oxygen to their brain to feel refreshed and happy. If the children are misbehaving in the class, I choose a child who often misbehaves in the class to demonstrate the correct behaviour. When the child demonstrates she understands exactly what is expected from her.

## Essential Thinking Routines – Raising Inquisitive Learners

*Ms. Syeda Kulsoom Jafar, Class 1C Homeroom Teacher*

*Intelligence is something we are born with. Thinking is a skill that must be learned.* (Edward de Bono)

When a child starts schooling or a new school year, the students, parents and teachers are all enthusiastic about venturing on a new learning experience. In addition to this, students must be taught to have an attitude that would make them lifelong learners.

Through my journey as a teacher, I have realised that along with a hundred classroom management techniques, something that adds life to the entire teaching and learning process is routines - through which students mentally engage with the content by offering their ideas, explanations, reasoning, evidence, perspectives, alternatives, and questions. These routines are tools which help, support and guide the students' mental processes.

I found that through such routines, students build meaningful connections between the school and everyday life. They begin to display the sort of attitude towards thinking that we would most like to see in young learners - not closed-minded but open-minded, not bored but curious, neither naive nor sweepingly negative but appropriately sceptical, not satisfied with *just the facts* but wanting to understand.

Following are a few routines I have implemented in my class with successful results:

Introducing and exploring ideas – See, Think and Wonder activity (useful for inquiry based observations)

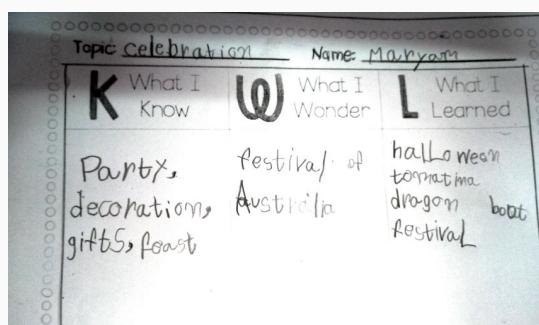
Synthesizing and Organizing Ideas – KWL activity - a self reflection tool that examines how one's thinking has changed over time regarding a particular topic.

Mind map – allows the students to record ideas in a simple way, digging deeper into ideas and questions that teachers can pose to push the students to support their thinking with strong evidence.



*Students seeing, thinking and wondering authentic materials*





*A student's reflection on her learning about the festivals*

Apart from the above mentioned thinking routines I also follow routines that aim to keep the students clarified about how we begin our day (prayer, date/day, attendance, submission of school diaries / homework, timetable), how we go about our activities and how we end it (distributing diaries & reflection of the day).

To sum it up, I have found routines to be an enjoyable and effective teaching technique for a fruitful learning experience.

## **Involving Students in Maintaining Discipline**

*Ms. Aameena Farhat, Class IB Homeroom Teacher*

Every class and every student provides somewhat different challenges. There are many classroom management strategies and each teacher has to find out what works best for them. Here are some practices which I follow in my class to maintain discipline. I prevent all the disciplinary issues by keeping interest in learning through the use of exciting classroom materials and activities.

It is important that we should set consequences for indiscipline that students choose for themselves.

I always invite students to ask follow-up questions that take the discussion in the direction of critical skills development. Group activities bring out positive results; so students who work inside and outside the classroom in a group will develop more respect for each other, they will develop leadership skills and will learn to be more responsible.

## **Transform the class into an amazing place**

*Ms. Kaiekashan Anjum, Class PP2A Co-teacher*

I have been working with kindergartners for the past 14 years but the strategies used then were quite different than what we use now. I think that half the battle in kindergarten is won if the kids get into a routine so that they can easily follow your instructions even when they couldn't pay complete attention. We need certain ways to deal with them as force or anger usually gets negative results. Children are usually moody and they want everything to be interesting. When we turn boring things into play, they tend to give more attention. School should be turned into a fun place where they not only learn and grow mentally and physically but also have fun in the whole process. When we make classroom an even more interesting place than their playing areas, it does magic.

I usually make tracker chart in the class to keep a track of the child's behaviour, academics and their grooming. I strongly feel that when the children are given stars and are being appreciated in front of their friends they feel good and other students of the class get motivated by this and try to behave well, be groomed and perform better in their academics. By using this strategy I handle my class in an effective way and my students also feel encouraged and boosted !



## Thinking Routines – The Golden Egg

*Ms. Hyderi Moosvi, Class PP2B Homeroom Teacher*

Classroom routines which make the learning, thinking rich are *thinking routines*. These are simple set of questions depending on the grade level and the content, which help in the inquiry. Thinking routines include open ended questions, zoom-in etc. While introducing it, pictures and photographs can be used and, later on, they can be used with a story or a poem.

‘Zoom-in’ is the routine I have recently used in my class. It helps in making interpretations and displaying the understanding of the students. I have used a picture from the story ‘The goose that laid the golden eggs’ and showed a very small part of the picture and the students guessed the story and answered different questions which helped in developing their logical thinking ability.

Thus, thinking routine helps in:

- keeping the students on task
- developing understanding
- generating responses
- developing communication skills

## Hands-on Learning

*Ms. Afroz Jamal, Class PP1C Homeroom Teacher*

Hands-on learning requires great efforts and preparation. Once the students get adjusted to this teaching method, the learning process becomes an enjoyable experience for both the teacher and the students. In pre- primary, the children can use clay, ice-cream sticks, sand, etc, to form letters and numbers. When teachers make use of hands-on activities to introduce a new concept, for example in mathematics, by asking them to bring objects from home and compare (Big/small, circular/ square, etc), students perform better because their level of thinking and curiosity increases resulting in their active participation in the learning process. When using this hands-on approach with manipulatives, teachers enable students to become good problem solvers and inquirers.

## Classroom Management

*Ms. Sana Fathima Zaidi, Class 2A Homeroom Teacher*

The teacher must be able to observe all the students at all times to monitor work and behaviour. The teacher should also be able to see the door from her desk. Frequently used areas of the room must be easily accessible. Students should be able to see the teacher and the presentation area without undue turning or movement. Commonly used classroom materials, e.g., books, attendance pads, absence permits, and student reference materials should be readily available. Some degree of decoration will help add to the attractiveness of the room.

### SETTING EXPECTATIONS FOR BEHAVIOUR

Teachers should identify expectations for student behaviour and communicate those expectations to students periodically. Rules and procedures are the most common expectations. A small number of general rules that emphasize appropriate behaviour may be helpful. Rules should be posted in the classroom. Compliance with the rules should be monitored constantly.



## BEHAVIOUR CHART

This strategy was very helpful for the children. It helps them maintain discipline in class. They are very curious to see their position on the chart and independently work in group to gain teacher's appreciation and move a level up on the chart. Remember, good discipline is much more likely to occur if the classroom setting and activities are structured or arranged to enhance cooperative behaviour.

## GIVE ME FIVE

This strategy is used as an attention grabber in the class. When students get involved in other things apart from studies we use this to get their attention back to class. This includes calling out - eyes on teacher, ears on speaker, hands-on lap, zip up mouth etc. to maintain discipline in class.

## Classroom Management

*Ms. Aysha Farheen Makki, Class 2B Homeroom Teacher*

*Nurturing our kids' hearts and souls as well as their minds and their bodies is educating the whole child. (Maggie Dent)*

Students are the backbone of an academic institution. We, as teachers, need to take special care while dealing with kids with different mindsets. The most important aspect is praising the kids at every level to motivate them and keep them moving ahead not only in academics but also in life skills that have a direct impact on the day to day activities of children. We always use words such as 'you are important and special to us', 'we believe and trust you', 'you are listened to and your opinion matters', 'we respect and care about you', and 'you are a winner and we help you succeed'. The concentration of the student is very significant to classroom discipline. Finally, the most important thing for a teacher is that the students should love the teacher and at the same time respect her. They should always feel relaxed and happy in the company of the teacher. The love and care brings in discipline preparing the students to face the newer challenges in life and emerge successful. I normally use the below attached clips in the classroom management to motivate the students and keep them on.

## Hands-on Activities Stimulate Brain

*Ms. Amena Ara Imran, Class 3A Homeroom Teacher*

It is essential to understand the connection between body and mind in the process of learning, because physical movement and change stimulate the brain with fresh supply of oxygen and attention which in turn helps the learning task at hand.

We all know that a healthy mind resides in a healthy body. Interactive learning utilizes the body, involves multiple senses, more than sedentary experience of a lecture. Students are more engaged and focused when they're working on hands-on projects.

In my classroom, I have figured out that the best way to engage kids' brains is by having them move their hands. Kids learn through all their senses, as they like to touch and manipulate things. When we combine activities that require movement i.e. talking and listening, it activates multiple areas of their brain. The more parts of their brain are used the more likely they are to retain information. If the kids are only listening, they are activating only one part of the brain, but if they are drawing and explaining to a peer, then they are making connections in the brain.



When I did the topic related to landforms, hands-on activities helped students understand and imbibe the concepts well, by making landforms in the sand, using the globe to do 'ME ON THE MAP' and 'find and sort out' the seven continents and the five oceans.

Another example was during the discussion on measurement. Students were made to measure by themselves using standard and non-standard tools of measurement. And last but not the least, hand-on activities are used as a medium for imparting skills, attitudes as well as knowledge for the children to become lifelong learners!

## Thinking Routines

*Ms. Nazia, Class 3B Homeroom Teacher*

A tree is known by its fruits, a man by his deeds, and a school by its students and teachers.

The prime aim of our education is the development of humanity and improvement of the quality of life. When we think positively, sound becomes a piece of music, a movement becomes an act of dance, a smile becomes a splinter of laughter, blindness becomes an opportunity for meditation and life itself becomes a moment of celebration. If we think negatively, just imagine what will happen.

It's a proven fact that extraordinary thoughts coupled with creative actions alone can make an extraordinary personality who can do wonders!

Following routines are used in my class for *active* reasoning and explanation, and for digging deeper:

**Think-Pair-Share:** Students were encouraged to think about landforms, and then articulate their thoughts. It promoted understanding through active reasoning and explanation because students were listening to and sharing ideas. Think-Pair-Share encourages students to understand multiple perspectives.

**See-Think-Wonder:** A routine for exploring continents, oceans, and countries and other interesting things. This routine encourages students to make careful observations and thoughtful interpretations. It helps stimulate curiosity and sets the stage for inquiry.

**Parts-Purpose-Complexities:** A routine for seeing layers and dimensions of the different landforms with their physical geography that has an impact on human interaction and settlements in the concentric circles. This routine helps students build a 3D image of a topic by identifying different layers of the topic and illustrating the complexities of the topic at hand.

*Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire. (William Butler Yeats)*

The minds of the little ones when pricked and praised at the right time will erupt like a volcano where from flows the wonderful literary work and creativity which needs a proper channelization and outlet. Confidence and determination are two weapons that can guard us against a likely plunge into the abyss of disgust and disappointment.



*Students using concentric circle routine to make their thinking visible*





Think-Wonder activity



Think-Wonder activity

## Classroom Management

*Ms. Kaneez e Zainab, Class 3 Intern Teacher*

When I started my career as teacher, for me classroom management was all about whacking and scolding children as it was done for us. My views changed after I attend a 3-2-1 workshop\* where they shared with us a lot of strategies for classroom management and how I could manage the class without raising my voice. The techniques that I used to manage my class are as follows:

**Special Call:** This strategy is used for asking the question to help those children who feel shy to give answers. First, we ask the questions and give some time for thinking then use attendance register or ice cream sticks for calling out their names by doing this they will get alert and get ready to give answer.

**Dramatize:** This technique is used to get students excited and attentive for the lesson, especially during the explanation. First, I select the part of the lesson for dramatization, then, I enact that part. The students are given time to think about the action question and then answer. The children love to do this.

**Energizer:** This works as a break from their monotonous routine, acts as a change and peps up the children for the next lesson. Some examples of energizers are poems, songs or physical exercise.

**Instant Check-up:** This strategy is used at the end of the lesson. It's fun-filled and a quick activity to know what the students have learnt. For checking the learners' understanding there are many activities like Red lamp, Green card, Exit slip, Student poll, Hand signal, etc. I choose a few questions with short answers to match the activity to the question type. I tell the students how to give the answer, ask the question, count the correct and incorrect answers, note down the correct and incorrect answers in my book and, finally, follow up with children who had not answered correctly.

### DECISION CARD

Re-teach

Revise between

Move on!

### DECISION NUMBERS

$\frac{1}{2}$  or less

$\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{3}{4}$

$\frac{3}{4}$  and more

\* 321 Foundation workshops focus on teaching-learning knowledge improvement and skills resulting in the best classroom practices in the partner schools.





*Hand signal strategy*



*Red 7 Green card strategy*

## **Reflection Time - A Tool for Classroom Management**

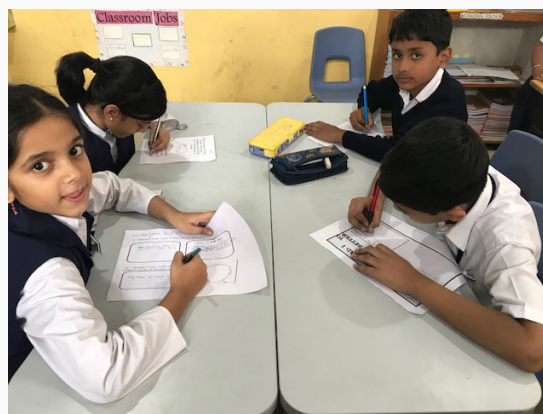
*Ms.Syeda Tatheer Fatima, Class 4A Homeroom Teacher*

Classroom management has been one of the most challenging parts of the job for me as a new teacher. As a teacher, I have felt that the teachers should make the child feel that this is the place where they are safe and could discuss what they feel and find positive solutions. Knowing that they are in safe environment makes it easier for students to concentrate on their work. The most critical thing about classroom management is to know the answer to 'what is the ultimate aim of this effort?' Are we producing our children just to get good results? Is that the only thing we want to develop in our children? More than just meeting the behavioural expectations and getting good grades our children need to learn empathy, perspective taking, social problem-solving skills, anger management, self-regulation and, last but not the least, honesty.

The strategy which I have adopted in my class is, to teach students vocabulary words related to feelings and practice identifying their emotions and discuss it in their reflection time, during which they express their feelings and solve problems together.



*Expressing emotions through play*



*Reflecting their emotions and writing about importance of expressing feelings*

## **Action Research in Time Management Skills**

*Ms. Shaher Bano, Class 4B Homeroom Teacher*

As a teacher, I felt it is desirable for teachers, in their own search for better ways of meeting their students' needs, to become reflective practitioners of their professional practices. Action research can play a role in promoting reflection among teachers and teacher educators alike; and thus in promoting change in educational settings. The main focus of my research was to develop



concentration and self-management skills in students by guiding them to create self-regulation and conscious discipline.

The strategies which I adopted for my action research were:

1. Conducting one-to-one meeting with the students every week and assigning a task to students in two groups while monitoring their work.
2. Frequent explanation, motivation and guidance was given to every student individually.
3. By differentiating their work students were asked to read small passages from any story book and find out the meanings of new words/hard words using a dictionary.

The main aim was to encourage students to develop time management skill for completing their work in class. Various strategies were used like competing with peers, giving stamps to appreciate them and motivate them to achieve higher goals. The changes were easily noticed within a short span of time. Students gradually started and took their own time to get involved and achieve the desired result.

## **Thinking Promotes Better Learning**

*Ms. Atiya Fatima, Class 5A Homeroom Teacher*

As a homeroom teacher of a graduating class, it is absolutely essential for me to analyze student's understanding of the lessons taught. Grade 5 students, as the culmination of their PYP experience, will participate in the PYP Exhibition where they are expected to apply the knowledge, concepts, skills, and attitudes that they have developed over their entire schooling experience. Therefore, a greater need to reach out to their thinking pattern and, most importantly, to channelize their thought process in the right direction.

Learning is a consequence of thinking. Students' understanding of content, and even their memory, increases when they think. Fostering thinking requires making thinking visible. In my class, simple questions turn into provocations with the advancement of the unit and this becomes a learning routine giving structure to their thinking.

Visible thinking routines are patterns of action that can be integrated and used in a variety of contexts. They are goal oriented and consist of only few steps. Therefore, they can be used repeatedly during lessons or at any point of the inquiry cycle. These short, easy to follow steps not only keep students positively engaged in the classroom but also act as an effective tool in assessing their understanding.

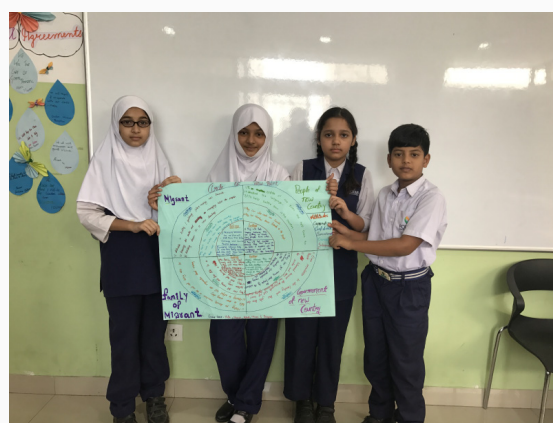
During our first Unit of Inquiry on 'Migration', we tuned in using 'I See, I Think, I Wonder' strategy. Students were shown a picture of people moving and they had to think carefully about why it looks the way it does. I was happy to see students making careful observations and thoughtful interpretations. It worked as an apt strategy to stimulate curiosity and set the stage for further inquiry. Further down the unit, when we had reached the third line of inquiry, I used the 'Circle of Viewpoint' strategy in assessing students level of understanding about Migration. Students considered different and diverse perspectives involved in and around Migration and understood that people may think and feel differently about settling down temporarily or permanently in a new location.

My fifth graders are a bit of experts in using Visible Thinking Routines and try their best to reach the desired goal. Having a structure to thinking, they quickly get a gist of what the line of inquiry is aiming at and effortlessly connect it with the central idea of the unit.





*Sharing ideas in concentric circles*



*Students exploring diverse perspectives on Migration*

## **An Open-ended Approach To Learning – Report**

*Ms. Atiya Fatima, PYP Team Leader*

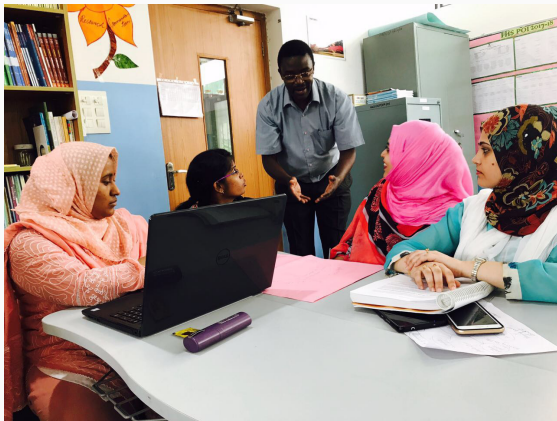
We, teachers of Focus High School, were lucky to be a part of the in-school workshop on 'Inquiry' held on 4-5th August 2017. The workshop was led by Mr. Jacob Lumumba, an eminent member of the IB community. Having 26 years of experience in imparting IB beliefs and values to learners of different age groups, as a homeroom teacher and also as PYPC, Mr. Jacob proved to be an excellent leader.

On 4th August, Friday, the workshop began precisely at 9:00 AM. Mr. Jacob shook us from our comfort zones, where we were seated with our co-teachers and were asked to regroup based on colour coded strategy. From then onward, we changed many groups throughout the session. We had 7 hours of learning packed with detail and demonstration. From attention grabbers to classroom management; from lesson planning to collaborative team working; from using effective teaching tools to differentiated learning and everything that is needed to make us smart educators. I always assumed that 'Clap once-Clap twice' attention grabber was too kiddish for my 5th graders and something involving movement would be more effective. Apparently, I was wrong. Mr. Jacob quickly had our attention each time he asked us to clap once and then clap twice. He had to use this strategy a lot, as we were so enthusiastic about getting involved in tasks and doing our best, we hardly noticed that we were stepping out of the given timeframe. Our homework for the day was to inquire about Differentiated instructions.

On 5th August, Saturday, we were asked to come with our planner ready for the next unit. This gave us an opportunity to reflect on our previous unit and plan for the next. The sessions were quite enriching in many ways. We delved into knowing more about differentiated instructions and how effectively we could use it in our classrooms. He demonstrated strategies of how differentiated instructions could be used at any point of the inquiry cycle to generate precise responses. We did the 'Y-Chart' and Kahoot as a tuning in activity which was followed by 'Speed dating' activity at the finding in stage. We went about sorting concepts and did an interesting 'Musical-reflection'. This was a fantastic self-assessing strategy that was appropriately placed at the ending of our first unit and at the beginning of the second. We now knew our areas of strength and the shortcomings that needed attention and proper planning. All the days' work and our presentations from the previous day were displayed in a class. We did a gallery walk and got notable ideas from others work.

My favourite part during the workshop was when Mr. Jacob asked us to relate the concepts with the central idea of our unit. It fascinated me to know that concepts play a vital role in giving structure to the unit and must not be considered secondary in imparting proper understanding of the unit. A big thanks to our Principal and Coordinators for giving us this opportunity and heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Lumumba for leading this important workshop in our professional development ladder that left a positive impact on us. We definitely walked out of the classroom with a new outlook on inquiry based learning in a PYP classroom.





*Educators learning how to teach*



*Probing into techniques of inquiry*

## **Hands-on Teaching: Making Learning Visual**

*Ms. Arshia, Class 5B Homeroom Teacher*

In a traditional way of teaching, a teacher walks up to the classroom, writes some words on the board and delivers some ideas through lectures. A vast majority of teaching and learning is done through just 'words'. Words are not always needed for great Math, Social and Science teaching. But how do we tell the students what to do?

Here is a typical question from my fifth grade history syllabus 'What famous landmark did many immigrants pass through at the beginning of the twentieth century?' The answer is Ellis Islands. All those names of long - dead people, places and dates are not exciting to the young children. But, students can interpret this in a whole different way when they visualize, feel and experience the content. For example, watching animated videos, project-based learning and hands-on activities. It not only replaces the unappealing lectures, but also provides more instructions than a simple lecture can ever do.

Hands-on teaching is so powerful that it can be used to teach advanced subjects. In another instance of a question from science 'How chemical energy is transformed into light energy?' is pretty advanced. A majority of students will fail to comprehend this in a traditional setting. If this is taught visually, which allows students to touch, feel and interact with the experiment, it solves many of the mysteries about how and why the transformation happens.

A simple innovation of removing the traditional lectures and bringing in visual games and different hands-on activities is able to elevate real learning. Instead of throwing a bunch of lectures at students, it creates rich opportunities for the students in connecting them to their own doubts, which plays an active role in figuring out the solutions.



*Identifying energy transformation*



## Music & Dance Fest at Meridian School – Report

*Ms. Maleha, Class 5 Intern Teacher*

The morning on 14th September was like no other with students ready and excited to be a part of the Music and Dance (MAD) festival hosted by Meridian School, Madhapur. Organised by the PYP network, this event was celebrated with great fervour and the students of Focus High School sure did enjoy. Two students from each grade level (C1-C5) were selected to witness this event and obviously, they did more than 'being spectators'. Besides Focus High School, five other schools, led by their music teachers, were invited to the event. The school campus at Madhapur was one jovial place to be, swarming with young learners driven by passion to learn the language of music.



*Posing at the artistic photo booth*

The event was inaugurated sharply at 10:30 AM and the students were positively engaged every minute until they climbed back into the bus to return to school. Students from their respective schools were segregated grade-wise and taken to different rooms where they had age appropriate musical sessions. While students of grades 2, 3 & 5 were busy singing solo or performing choir with a twist, the students of grade 1 & 4 moved to the grooves and danced to express. Among the class-wise sessions were - fusion of four styles of dance, using age appropriate instruments to create beats, African drum beats, Cups Song and using indigenous natural instruments to create melody to name a few.

The students were, for the most part, delighted and bemused with the ongoing activities and actively participated in them all. The best session of the day was the Flashmob. Students of all the participating schools practiced for the Flashmob with their Music Teachers and later performed in the campus. The choreography was amazing and served the purpose of entertainment and delight with an artistic expression that kept the spectators talking about it long after it was done and dispersed. Oh, and not to forget the artistic photo booth. Students donned on creative accessories and cheerfully posed for photos with peers of other schools. This perfectly matched with the theme for the day and will always remain a cherished souvenir.



*Beat-makers at work*

To sum up, the Music and Dance festival, entitled 'Exprimere', was a great learning experience for the PYP students. Music enhances and supports the unit of inquiry under any given theme. Exposure to such events therefore develops PYP skills and attitudes thereby building international mindedness among students.



*Students singing to the tune of our Music teacher, Mr. Abdullah*



## Technology At Our Fingertips

*Ms. Ramya Kerla, C2-10 ICT Teacher*

*We are changing the world with technology. (Bill Gates)*

Technology refers to the collection of tools, which makes our work easier to access, create, manage, and exchange information faster. Learning with technology has become essential in modern education. It helps us to think innovatively and helps in improving teaching methodology.

This year, I took up ICT to spread knowledge about the use of technology and introduced many software applications to the students of different grade levels. I faced many challenges in the lower primary classes, teaching them how to start and shut down a desktop computer. It gives me great pride to see the tiny tots being able to start and shut down systems by themselves perfectly. For classes 2 and 3, I taught PowerPoint presentation, MS Word, Word Cloud and other different games for keyboard skills. They are now aware of using technology in a well-balanced way for visualization and practical work, which helps them to accelerate their learning.

My best experience in teaching technology to class 4 & 5 was unbelievable. The students were excited to learn email etiquettes. The parents were also happy to see their children using email. When a student shared her work during the demo through email, her father immediately replied. This made the student excited to use the email and share the learning with the family in an interesting way.

After this experience, I was encouraged to teach more ICT skills to the students and requested parents to encourage their children in using the technology and take their ICT skills to the next level.

In my new journey of learning, I learned lot of things (Edmodo, Info graphs, Web 2.0 tools, etc.). One of my enriching experiences was attending the workshop by Google where I learned to create animation-using Scratch. I look forward to introduce this skill in my classroom.



*C5 student creating interesting posters on Energy using*

## Caught In Action!

*Ms. Asma Fatima, PYP Librarian*

I wanted to share an action taken by my daughter, Syeda Khadija Fatima, a student of Focus High School studying in class PP1B. My daughter usually shares her classroom activities with me soon after she comes home. She talks about her unit related issues and how her teachers make the classes interesting. One day, we were going to visit my mother and she was quite excited about the trip. I asked the auto driver to get a change of Rs. 500. As he went to the shop beside a construction site, Khadija saw a man with three very young children working there. Khadija went to the man asking, "Why are you making such small children work?" Feeling embarrassed, I told her, "Khadija, please go and sit in the auto." She turned to me saying, "No, Mum. They are small children, their hands and legs will pain. They will get tired, we should care for them."



Then she turned up to those kids and asked them where their mother was. She was shocked to see such young children working. As the auto driver returned he asked me in which school is she studying? I said, "Focus High School." He then asked me her age. He was impressed that a 4 year old kid stood up for the rights of the children. By seeing her courage, confidence, and caring nature, I felt very happy. These qualities are developed in her through her school and her teachers.

## Learning By Doing

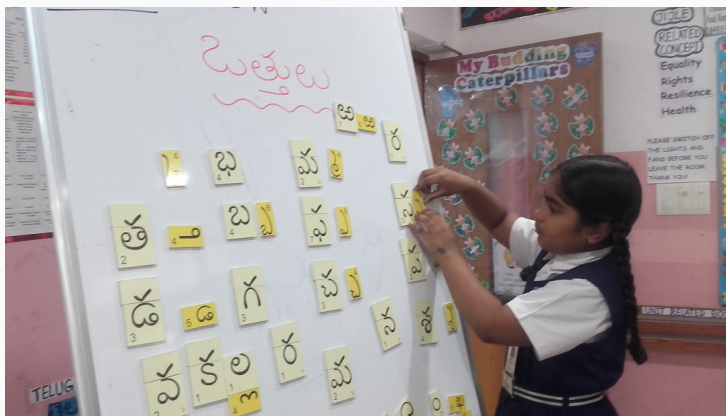
*Ms. Amina Nawaz, PYP Telugu Teacher*

Learning from sources apart from books or lectures and personally getting involved actively in doing something is far more effective. Scientists believe that when children use all of their senses it helps the brain create pathways that make it easier and quicker to retain information.

Studies have shown that a kinesthetic learner, carries out physical activities rather than just listening to a lecture – 'doing' helps them to gain a better understanding of the material. It allows them to experiment with trial and error, learn from their mistakes and understand the potential gaps between theory and practice. And most important, it provides educators with a unique opportunity to enrich the minds of their students in new and engaging ways—even those who fidget during large-group lessons, this can help prevent daydreaming and restlessness during a learning experience. Even in the most tough situation, hands on teaching is practically problem solving.

In my class I make children do magnetic tiles activity which is about arranging the letters in sequence and also, they join them to make new words. Flashcards are shown to recollect what they have learnt instead of the routine board work. The other activity is snow ball activity in which children write alphabet on a paper, crush the paper and throw it across to the other child who picks it up and says 3 words with that alphabets. This way the children are learning the new vocabulary and the usage in an interesting way.

Hands-on learning is a great way to teach new skills that build on what children already know, but it can be difficult to keep activities interactive and fun while still teaching important concepts that build a strong foundation for future learning. Children are more likely to develop skills when they are having fun, but also when the skills have meaning for them; hands-on learning aims to provide for both of these characteristics of learning.



*Using magnetic tiles to learn Telugu alphabets and words*

## Journey From White Board Teaching To Building Electric Circuits On Breadboard & Using Simulations

*Abdul Mumeed, HS Physical Science Teacher*

Around thirty students and ten teachers of our school sought to prepare for Radio Amateur Station Operator's Certificate Examination without expecting any pecuniary gain. In pursuit of Amateur Radio (as a hobby) we are showing that there is no age limit for learning. We are exploring about communication technology building blocks - audio amplifiers, modems,



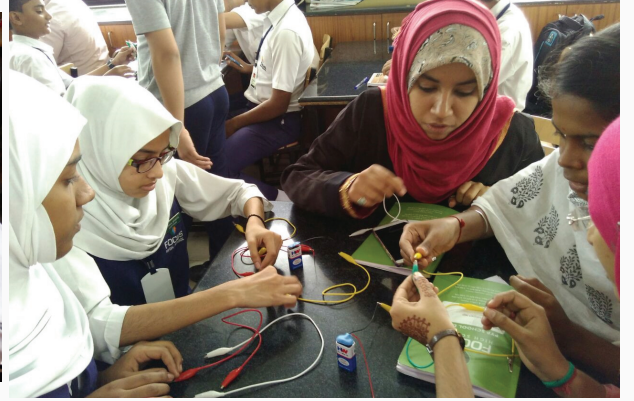
transmitters and receivers. Initially, we had hands-on activities of connecting LEDs and transistors on breadboards with tiny power packs. We went a step ahead, and now we are using National Instruments Multisim software which contains a workbench having several dozens of electric & electronic components and measuring instruments like Multimeter, Function Generator, Oscilloscope, etc.

Multisim allows instrument components to add to the schematic page which will display readings and shapes of input and output graphs on Oscilloscope much like their real-world counterparts after connecting them in the circuit. Hands-on activities using breadboards and live simulations using Multisim software are providing a better conceptual understanding of semiconductor devices.

Thumbs up to all the students and teachers for exam preparation! Hoping all these teaching and learning techniques will provide a good starting point for most of HAM Radio aspirants of our school.



LED on a breadboard with jumper wires



LED on a breadboard with jumper wires

#### తరగతి గది నిర్వహణ

Mohammed Saber , HS Telugu Intern Teacher

పాఠశాల అంటే పిల్లలకు చదువు ఇవ్వడమే కాదు వారిని ఒక ఉన్నత స్థాయికి చేరడానికి తోడ్పడుతుంది. ఉన్నత స్థాయి పిల్లలలో తమ చుట్టూ మారుతున్న స్వభావాలను అర్థం చేసుకోగలిగే మానసిక స్థాయి కలిగి ఉంటారు. అందుకే వారు తరగతి గదిలో కొత్తగా ఏదో నేర్చుకోవాలని, తమ జీవితంలో మార్పు కొరకు మరియు సరైన జీవితం కొరకు ఆసక్తితో పాఠశాలకు వస్తారు. తరగతి గదిలో వారు తమ శక్తిమేరకు నేర్చుకోవడానికి ప్రయత్నిస్తారు. ఒక్కోసారి వారికి విషయం అర్థం కానప్పుడు లేదా ఏదైనా విషయం గురించి అడిగి తెలుసుకోవాలని అనుకున్న విద్యార్థులలో చాలా మంది భయంతో అడిగి తెలుసుకోరు. ఉపాధ్యాయులు కేవలం సమీకరణాలు, సూత్ర సిద్ధాంతాల భోదనలతో విద్యార్థుల చురుకైన శక్తిని తృప్తి పరచలేరు. ప్రతి విద్యార్థికి తరగతి గదిలో వారికి కనీస విద్యను ఉపాధ్యాయులు అందించే విధంగా ఉండాలి. ముఖ్యంగా వారికి తెలియని భాషను పూర్తిగా అందించడంలో ఉపాధ్యాయులు విఫలం అవుతుంటారు. అందుకే భోదనలో క్షేత్ర, ప్రయోగాల ప్రాధాన్యం ఎంతో ఉంటుంది. అంటే విద్యార్థులకు నేర్పించే విషయాన్ని మాటలతోనే కాకుండా చేతలతో, కృత్యాలు, సంభాషణలు, చర్చలు, ప్రాజెక్టు పనులు, ప్రయోగాల ద్వారా నేర్చుకోనే వాతావరణాన్ని తరగతి గదిలో వారికి కల్పించాలి. విద్యార్థులకు ప్రతీ విషయాన్ని సరళ, సామాన్య పద్ధతిని అర్థమయ్యేరీతిలో భోదించాలి. అప్పుడే తరగతి గది నిర్వహణ, ఉపాధ్యాయులకు భోధనాభ్యాసం మరియు విద్యార్థులకు అభ్యాసం సరైన క్రమంలో జరుగుతుంది. అందుకే మేము విద్యార్థులకు నాటక పద్ధతిని, చర్చ పద్ధతిని, ప్రతి పదం యొక్క అర్థాన్ని చెప్పడం మరియు వారిచేతనే కొన్ని బిట్స్ చేయించడం ద్వారా తరగతి గది చాలవరకు సఫలం అవుతున్నది.



## Examinations

*Ms. Zainab Taiyebi, HS Biology Teacher & HOD*

*I am not telling you it is going to be easy, I am telling you it is going to be worth it.* 'Examination' is a word that increases the level of stress in students, who are soon going to face examinations which are meant to be a turning point in their life. Teachers and parents have lots of expectations with their wards, and just because of this pressure of high expectations sometimes a student can't perform his/her best in the examinations. Words like goal setting, motivation, and inspiration seem meaningless to students but they really work out in this situation where they are struck between overcoming expectations of parents and teachers and preparations of examinations. Here are some tips to score good marks in your examination without giving much stress to your mind and body.

1. Go through the syllabus of each and every subject and try to recall important things that you were taught in the classroom.
2. While recalling try to make a picture of each thing, it helps you remember the topic for a long time.
3. Consult and discuss your problems and difficulties with your concerned teachers and try to summarize it in your notebooks.
4. Read thoroughly (at least twice) and try to understand deeply.
5. You can take an instant test, for example, when you are in leisure, recall what you have learned and test yourself.
6. While studying take a break every 25-30 minutes, have some water and get back to studying. This helps you concentrate on your targets; continuous studies with no break may affect your brain adversely.
7. Avoid late night studies, it is not a good option for scoring marks, rather you might feel drowsy next day.
8. Never opt for mugging up answers; instead, try to understand and describe it in your way.
9. Give a push on quality learning instead of quantity learning.
10. Try to evaluate, review, combine and analyze.

**NOTE FOR STUDENTS:** Always stay motivated, never lose your self-confidence, surround yourself with positivity, stay away from social media and other distractions which can affect your studies.

**NOTE FOR PARENTS:** As a parent we have a lot of expectation with our ward, but expressing it too much in front of them can sometimes distract them from their aim and affects their preparation because of continuous pressure.

(Every child is unique; never judge them with their marks).

## Model United Nations – A World-Class Learning Experience

*Ms. Somana Fatima, HS Social Studies Teacher & HOD*

Model United Nations is an authentic simulation of the UN General Assembly, UN Security Council, or other multilateral body, which catapults students into the world of diplomacy and negotiation. In Model UN, students step into the shoes of ambassadors of UN member states, from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe to debate current issues on the organization's vast agenda. The students, better known as 'delegates' in Model UN, prepare draft resolutions, plot strategies, negotiate with supporters and adversaries, resolve conflicts, and navigate the UN's rules of



procedure – all in the interest of mobilizing ‘international cooperation’ to resolve problems that affect almost every country on Earth.

Students do research on the particular global problems to be addressed. The problems are drawn from current affairs.

Why should we take part in MUN?

- Participating in MUN makes you globally aware, which is very important.
- It encourages team work. So, knowledge and ideas can be exchanged.
- The MUN gives a chance to overcome fear of public speaking because it supports delegates’ personal growth and triggers self-confidence.
- This allows every participant to understand how existing international bodies work and the contribution they themselves can make to help solve issues and challenges that are affecting our planet today.
- It helps in developing strong leadership skills.
- Moreover, chairpeople also develop good evaluation skills, since they assign awards to the best delegate and the best delegations at the end of the conference..

## **Responsibilities - The Foundation to Build a Strong Human Being**

*Ms. Vaseema Sultana, HS English Teacher & C6 Class Teacher*

*It is not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves, that will make them successful human beings. (Ann Landers)*

On the way to class, I saw our Principal, Mr. Minhaj Arastu, pick up a candy wrapper which was thrown in the corridor. I was awed because, like me, many others had just passed by without picking the wrapper. It is just one of the many things that Mr. Arastu does that shows all of us what responsibility is.

It is important that we adults inculcate the sense of responsibility in our children. It is an inherent trait in all humans but if it is not nurtured, it disappears. Today’s generation lacks a sense of purpose or a clear direction in life because they expect spoon-feeding. This happens mostly because we adults fail to give children the opportunities that help them realize responsibility.

So how do we create a platform for our children that help them become a responsible human? At home make the child accountable for:

1. Keeping their things in place.
2. Taking care of their basic hygiene which includes
  - a. Making their beds in morning
  - b. Picking up their plates and putting them in sink
  - c. Making sure their nails\hair are well-groomed
  - d. Making sure their clothes are clean
3. Making sure that they are ready and prepared for the next day at school which includes
  - a. Organising their bags for the next day
  - b. Making sure their uniform is ready for the next day

Children, older than the age of eight, should be able to do the above tasks by themselves. For kids below the age of 8, we ought to guide them. Let the idea be clear to the children that it is their job and they are not doing anyone a favour.



If I have to define responsibility, I would say it is taking care of yourself, your family, your work, your interests, your environment and your belongings. For example: A small boy who loves his toy is going to ensure the safety of it. People who believe that the planet belongs to them will take care of it and be respectful towards nature.

When we delve a little deeper into this thought, it primarily means that you have to take care of every relationship that you have created. Let us pledge to raise responsible children who truly are capable of taking care of this world

#### प्रेरणासोत्र

*Ms. Rohini Srivastav, HS Hindi Teacher & HOD*

जैसे एक अच्छा शिल्पकार किसी भी प्रकार के पत्थर को तराश कर उसे सुन्दर आकृति का रूप दे देता है। उसी तरह प्रत्येक छात्र को समाज की आवश्यकता के अनुरूप एक सुन्दर आकृति का रूप प्रधान कर उसे समाज का प्रकाश अथवा उसे विकृत रूप प्रधान करना एक अध्यापक का अधिकार है।

हमें प्रत्येक छात्र को सभी विषयों की सर्वोत्तम शिक्षा देकर उन्हें एक अच्छा डॉक्टर, इंजीनियर, एवं प्रशासिक अधिकारी बनाने के साथ ही साथ उसे एक अच्छा इंसान भी बनाना है। क्योंकि सामाजिक ज्ञान के आभाव में, जहाँ एक ओर छात्र समाज को सही दिशा देने में असमर्थ रहता है तो वही दूसरी ओर आध्यात्मिक ज्ञान के आभाव में वह गलत निर्णय लेकर अपने साथ ही अपने परिवार, समाज, देश तथा विश्व को भी विनाश की ओर ले जाने का कारण भी बन जाता है।

इसलिए प्रत्येक छात्र को सर्वोत्तम भैतिक शिक्षा के साथ ही साथ उसे एक सभ्य समाज में रहने के लिए सर्वोत्तम सामाजिक शिक्षा तथा एक सुन्दर एवं सुरक्षित समाज के निर्णय के लिए सर्वोत्तम आध्यात्मिक शिक्षा की भी आवश्यकता है

अध्यापक आपको प्रेरित करते हैं, आपका मनोरंजन करते हैं, और आप कुछ ना जानते हुए भी बहुत कुछ सीख जाते हैं ।

#### Acrostic poems

*Ms. Seema Sultana, HS Social Studies Teacher*

##### **SOCIAL STUDIES**

**S**tudy of Human behaviour

**O**utstanding

**C**ulture

**I**ntertwined with

**A**ncient

**L**iterature

**S**tudy of space and

**T**rue facts

**U**nderstand in

**D**etail

**I**mpact on

**E**ducational

**S**tatus

##### **HISTORY**

**H**eart touching stories of

**I**ncredibly events

**S**ing the praises of heroes

**T**each the triumphs

**O**ffer respect to the fallen

**R**ediscover the memories of

**Y**esterday's



### విద్యార్థుల అగచాట్లు

*Ms. Kavitha Akula, HS Telugu Teacher & HOD*

నమస్కారము,

పాఠశాల-విద్యార్థులు-ఉపాధ్యాయులు ఈ పదాలు చాలా శక్తివంతమైనవి. ప్రతి సంవత్సరం పాఠశాల నుండి ఎంతో మంది విద్యార్థులు ఉపాధ్యాయుల చేతుల మీదుగా సమాజంలోకి పంపబడుతున్నారు. పాఠశాలలో రకరకాల మనస్తత్వం కలిగిన విద్యార్థులు ఉంటారు. వీరిని ఓపికగా పరిశీలించి వారికి అనుగుణంగా విద్యను అందజేసే ఉపాధ్యాయులకు పాదాభివందనం.

తెలుగు ద్వితీయ భాషగా కలిగిన విద్యార్థుల అగచాట్లు చెప్పనలవికావు. వీరిలో ఎక్కువ శాతం పాఠశాలలో కాని, ఇంటి పరిసరాలలో కాని తెలుగు వాడుకలో లేనివారు. కావున వీరికి తెలుగు చదవడం, రాయడం కష్టంగా అనిపిస్తుంది.

మనం నివసిస్తున్న ప్రాంతం తెలంగాణ. తెలంగాణ రాష్ట్రంలో తెలుగు తప్పనిసరి. దీనికోరకు తెలుగు ఉపాధ్యాయులు తరగతిగదిలో తప్పనిసరిగా ప్రతిదినం విద్యార్థులతో తెలుగులో మాట్లాడాలి. వారిని మాట్లాడించాలి. వాడుక పదాలను ప్రతిదినం విద్యార్థులతో పలికించాలి. వార్తా పత్రిక పఠనాన్ని అలవర్చాలి. వీరికి ఇంటివద్ద ఈ సదుపాయం ఉండదు. కాబట్టి పాఠశాలలో తగిన అవకాశాన్ని కల్పించాలి. విద్యార్థులలో తెలుగుపట్ల గల భయాన్ని తొలగించాలి.

నాటకాలు, మౌఖిక ప్రశ్నలు, విహారయాత్రల వలన విద్యార్థులలో ఆసక్తిని కలిగించవచ్చు. అనుక్షణం విద్యార్థుల వెన్నుతట్టి ప్రోత్సహించాలి. గుర్తింపు కార్డుల ద్వారా విద్యార్థులలో ఆసక్తిని ప్రేరేపించవచ్చు. వీడియోల ద్వారా విద్యార్థులకు తగిన జ్ఞానాన్ని అందించవచ్చు. పాఠశాల గ్రంథాలయంలో వీరికి తగిన సదుపాయాలను కల్పించాలి. పెద్దబాలశిక్ష, డిక్షనరీలను చదవడం అలవాటు చేయాలి. అక్షర్-బీర్పల్, పేదరాసి పెద్దమ్మ, నీతి కథలు, తెనాలి రామకృష్ణ కథలు విద్యార్థులకు వినిపించాలి. వారిచే చదివింపాలి. ప్రాథమిక స్థాయి విద్యార్థులతో అక్షరాల జోడింపును చేయించాలి. దీనితో వారిలో ఉత్సాహం పెరిగి అక్షర జ్ఞానం కలుగుతుంది. ప్రాథమికోన్నత స్థాయి విద్యార్థులతో నాటకాలు, క్వీజ్ నిర్వహించవచ్చు. ఉన్నత స్థాయి విద్యార్థులకు వీడియోల ద్వారా, కథల ద్వారా విషయాన్ని గ్రహింపజేయవచ్చు.

### Remain Calm and Respond Right When a Student Challenges

*Ms. Batul Taiyebi, Class IA Co-teacher*

Classroom Management is challenging for most of the teachers, especially, for the new ones. As I was new to this profession it was quite difficult for me to handle the class. But fortunately, I got a chance to attend the 3-2-1 workshop which helped me to grow as a teacher. Some of the classroom management strategies which I have learnt and am implementing in my class may be summed up as 'remain calm and respond right when a student challenges'. Here are some of the things I do:

- The first step to maintain discipline in the class is to remain calm, do not shout at the students.
- Greet every student and welcome them with a smiley face when they enter the classroom. This sets a positive tone for a lesson to start.
- Move around in the classroom; do not stand at one place; frequently make eye contact with them and encourage every student to complete their task by motivating them.
- Use attention grabbers during the class activity like shake your pencils or 'one two – eyes on me'.

These strategies have helped me manage my class in an effective way.



## **A Strong Foundation In Mathematics Minimizes The Risk Of Losing Interest**

*Ms. Farha Fatima Baquri, HS Math Teacher & C8 Class Teacher*

*"Mathematics is not about numbers, equations, computations or algorithms: it's all about understanding."* (William Paul Thurston)

Mathematics is the queen of all sciences. Mathematics is only subject which develops the logical and critical thinking of a person. It is the root of almost all professions. It is the beauty of the math to have different methods to solve a problem but the answer will be the same. The facts of math doesn't change in any manner, like 2 times 3 will always be 6, the odd number is  $2n+1$  at all times and there are many more such examples. Math gives the freedom to think about the solution of a problem in many ways. Math increases the concentration and the focussing power. The amazing thing about Math is that every fact has a reason behind it. Also, every concept is related to another concept. For example, repetition of addition with same number is multiplication ( $2+2+2+2+2 = 2 \times 5 = 10$ ). There are so many other such examples.

Then why is it that the students feel that Math is a tough or boring subject ? Some of the remedies for this problem are:

1) Visit to basics: The building is as tall as a mountain, if and only if, the foundation is strong. If the Math basics are strong, then the person can find and understand the many ways to solve the problems. He/ she can take interest in Math. But several students miss a strong foundation in Math. If the students don't know addition, subtraction, multiplication tables and division proficiently then they face problem in Mathematics.

2) Daily practice: Math needs daily practice. If a student practices daily then they will be better conditioned to solve unfamiliar problems. Students usually forget the mathematical methods due because they don't practise enough and face the risk of confusion in exams.

Math is the spiral subject because the concepts are connected to each other. For example, prime factorization is a method to find the factors of the number using the square roots or the cubic roots of the number which, in turn, needs skill of adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing.

We have rolled out a Mastery-based Learning system to strengthen the basics of the students. I am strongly hopeful that it will not leave anyone with gaps in their fundamental knowledge and skills.

## **Overlooked Learning**

*Ms. Masooma Fatima, HS English Teacher*

*"Education is not the learning of facts, but the training of the mind to think."* (Albert Einstein)

Lesson begins as the child walks in the classroom. Once I started teaching my biggest fear was that I will not be able to control the behaviour in my classroom. I was afraid that I might be too pushy or too nice. Major role of teacher is to effectively utilize classroom management techniques which are often overlooked by many. But how can measurable results be achieved is the question.

From the 3.2.1 learning program I learned that students need structures to feel good about them and to feel safe and secure. So I have incorporated positive reinforcement from the beginning of the academic year to set an effective learning tone.

These are some of the techniques that I use and they have worked out really well.

1. Mentioning the student's name during the discourse transaction without pointing at the behaviour gets his/her attention instantly.
2. It is very important to set up Noise Levels for different activities in class. This helps students use the required pitch relevant to the activity.



3. Rhythm Clapping gets the attention of the entire class.
4. Energizer gets students moving when their energy is low.
5. Reinforcing the behaviour 'Stop-Do-Praise' is a 3 step process:
  - a. Tell the child to stop the action publicly or privately when required. Condemn the action and not the student.
  - b. Tell the child to start the positive behaviour.
  - c. Praise the action the student has done to follow the rules.

Positive behaviour provides a cue to other students too to follow along. For example: "Thank you Shafi for answering in the right way. Let me see who are the excellent hand-raisers."

If student expects to be complemented for a task well done, in hope of receiving the next complement, they try to do the right thing. I also give a great amount of praise to the students who are able to stay focused and not disturb the class as this ensures that they leave the room feeling good about themselves. When the students know they are being trusted they will do anything to show that they can be trusted.

The biggest classroom management challenge is the submission of assignments on time. To assure they submit assignments on time, I give small incentives for their engagement and adhering to instructions. I care about what they are doing.

Parent contact is also a very powerful management technique. Parents, when informed that their child has been rewarded for showing positive behaviour in the class, not only feel happy but also show stronger confidence in their child. Connecting with all learners like students and parents is productive to student success.

I've come to the frightening conclusion that I am the paramount element of the classroom. My approach will always be to try new things; always seek to learn and delve into subjects with more proficiency. Thinking and reflecting at every opportunity is the motto of evaluating progress.

At the end, it gives me immense satisfaction to know that I was able to water a seedling and ensure that the seedling grows into a beautiful plant.

### **Attending Child with Special Needs**

*Anjum Fatima, Shadow Teacher*

Children with disabilities are like butterflies with broken wings. They are just beautiful as all others, but they need help to spread their wings.

To mend the little wings of these special students, I have used the following:

Firstly, communication is the heart of any achievement. So to achieve this, I ensured that I become a good communicator. As a teacher, it's important that I make a positive connection with students. The result was that 'my butterfly' has openly communicated with me.

Next, I worked on developing fine motor skills. To do this, I used materials like clay, sponge balls, punching machine, paper balls, crayons and activities which involved tracing flour, sand, water and air to make their fine motor skills better. These in turn also make the activities enjoyable for students and also help develop their writing skills. The promotion of this skill is one of the classroom planning activity and it works very well.

Then, I used 'Thinking Keys' and to understand this I went an extra mile. This strategy helps unlock their minds to absorb the new concepts being taught in the class. I believe every butterfly learns differently and my butterfly was amazing. I used pictures, models, words and surroundings as thinking keys in my class. Having said that, I do like to share one of my best learning feedback, which I received from a parent. To quote one: "I am overwhelming happy with my son's progress and he's happy too. The benefits of the skills taught at school are visible at home".

Lastly, successful writing is through fun and hands-on activities. This will make their understanding clear and can help the students complete their task in an appropriate way. I faced a lot of challenge in the beginning as the child didn't respond to any topic related question. The difficulty was dealing with the swing in moods. The biggest gap that I helped my butterfly fill is spotting the who and what of something. It is still in progress and I believe this outcome will be achieved sooner than expected.

My achievement is my butterfly who is gaining its strength from the hard work, which it puts in by trying and never giving up. At the end of the day, it gives me satisfaction and pleasure when I reflect that I have spent moments of my life with the butterfly who always mirrored the evidence of our progress.



## From the Students' Desk

### My School Days

*Zainab Shabbir Karjatwalla, Class 10 Student and School Captain*

Someone has correctly said that “for every dream that is born, there is a dream that dies and for every happy Hello, there is a Goodbye.”

I find these words highly relevant as we, the students of Class 10 (batch of 2017-2018), are about to make a smooth transition from school life to college life.

Favours to none,

To all their smile extends often,

They reject but never once offend

Bright as the sun,

Their soul like the sun,

They shine on all alike.

My dear teachers, you may think its flattery, but no! These are my thoughts about you! Thank you. Thank you for supporting me when I couldn't believe in myself.

Thank you for consoling me when I was afraid, thank you for forgiving me when I gave you scares, and I am really sorry for all the trouble I gave you over the years.

Thank you for teaching me the meaning of AIM. A for achieving, I for inspiring and M for motivating, and thank you for correcting me when I went wrong.

Let's not focus on the sorrow of leaving, but the joy of beginning something new. We all are destined to leave everything one day. Today is school, tomorrow it may be the world. You never know and with this message, I appeal to my fellow mates to look optimistically at life and things that will come ahead. Let us all try to enjoy each and every moment left at Focus High School, a name so obvious in our lives.

After all “No pessimist ever discovered the secrets of the stars or sailed to uncharted lands or opened a new haven to the human spirit”, said Helen Keller.

Maybe it is for the same reason that when I woke up this morning, I could only think of these lines:

How could I speak this morning?

How could I not let my throat choke?

How could I ever manage myself

Would I hesitate like the first time I spoke?

Earlier I stammered so much,

Slowly it became a pastime

But now it is so hard to believe

Today I'll do it for the last time



So friends, aim for stars. Even if you miss stars you will surely land on the moon.

I have spent thousands of heartbeats in this fruitful institution and I have learnt one of the most important thing in my life, i.e. the true essence of the words, “love me enough to let me be.”

This school, this lovely place has encouraged me to work so hard that today I can proudly say “Thank you, thank you, Focus High School. Thank you forever.”

### **My Experience as a School Captain**

*Mehdi Ali Mirza, Class 10 Student and Sports Captain*

Leadership is a crucial quality to have in order to be a successful person. Being a successful leader requires confidence, intelligence, punctuality, smartness which are the qualities I aim to develop.

Being one of the captains of school was really a wonderful and unforgettable experience for me. I have been selected as the Sports Captain of the school. We enjoyed very much, worked hard for our school, helped juniors and guided them to avoid their nervousness on the stage.

As Captains, we were allotted duties. I always enjoyed my duties and my responsibilities. It was an awesome experience to be trusted with responsibilities. I will always thank my teachers for supporting and guiding me. You found me capable for this and you gave me an opportunity to prove myself. Thank you.

### **My Experience as a School Captain**

*Mustafa Umair, C10 Student and School Captain*

I have had the opportunity to enhance my leadership skills throughout many experiences. I have gone through a transformation from being an ordinary boy to school captain. I have witnessed the seniors before me and have thought about their leadership skills. A leader must also know how to guide and stay supportive. Though leadership is a challenging commitment, I have not given up on myself. I was counselled by my teachers to make my leadership visible by actively participating in decision making. It is important for leaders to lead by example by adhering to the code of conduct in the school. I feel proud to serve my school as a Captain.

## **Don't Give Up**

*Syed Fazal Moosvi, Class 9 Student*

Don't give up

Don't give in

There is always an answer to everything

This my friend is for you

The trials that you face

And the dreams that you chase

You're behind in your race

And you're straying from your pace

Your mind is scattered all over the place

And you're desperate for space

Little do you know this is your time to embrace

Don't give up

Don't give in

There is always an answer to everything

You know we tend to hide what we are inside

And waste time on what could have been

Key is to believe in

Don't give up

Don't give in

There is always an answer to everything

## **Friendship**

*Kaunain Fatima, Class 7 Student*

True friendship is a life till end

When we are in trouble they leave all their work for us

And encourage

We hurt them but still they help us in everything

They are the ones who help us

In our ups and downs

Keep a nick name on which we laugh

Share everything we need

The best thing that makes us friends

Are our secrets

Friends are our secret diary

Who know everything about us



Every single thing  
If you want to remain friends  
Till the end of life  
Be kind to each other and never let your friendship down  
I love you my friend  
For being so special for me

### **The Children of a Brave Father**

*Syeda Hiba Fatima, Class 6 Student*

Once upon a time, near a forest, there lived a small family of three members- A mother, 10 years old daughter, Lucy and four years old son, John. The mother used to cut the wood and sell it in the market for their livelihood. She managed to pay her daughter's school fees with it, because she wanted to make her daughter a great person. On a holiday Lucy would collect fruits from forest and earn extra money for buying things which they liked. But John was getting lazier by the day. He had no interest in studies nor in helping his mother. As an elder sister, Lucy was concerned.

One morning, Lucy started crying, so her mother woke up and asked her, "What happened? Why are you crying?" Lucy said that, she saw a dream in which there were so many varieties of food and she was not able to eat them. Her mother asked, "Why?" Lucy replied, "Because I was missing my dad who burnt the midnight oil for fulfilling our dreams and brought a variety of food for us, and I didn't eat any nice thing without him. So how can I eat those things without him?" When Lucy finished talking, John woke up and asked, "What happened?" His mother narrated everything and told him that, "Your father was a great person, and he worked hard for our family and fulfilled our dreams as well." John asked, "Where is he now and why is he not staying with us?" Mother told that his father now lives very far from them with God. "Because one day when we all were eating our dinner and you were still not born, some dacoits barged into our house and started stealing money. One of them was going to kill your sister. So your father stood in front of her and the dacoit shot three rounds of bullets and killed him. From that day we are living in poverty." John cried a little and realised that his father was really a great person.

From the next day, he woke up early, collected fruits and sold them in the market. He went to small hotels to work. After some days, he started to go to school too. They earned enough money to buy a house and new clothes. Lucy became a famous doctor, John became an astronaut. Their lives changed forever.

## **My Teacher**

*Syeda Farwa Fatima, Class 10 Student*

I'm happy that you're my teacher  
I enjoy each lesson you teach  
As my role model you inspire me  
To dream and to work and to reach  
With your kindness you get my attention;  
Every day you are planting a seed  
Of curiosity and motivation  
To know and to grow and succeed.  
You help me fulfil my goals;  
I'm thankful for all that you've done.  
I admire you each day, and I just want to say,  
As a teacher, you're number one!  
Especially teachers like you,  
I feel I'm ready for tomorrow's challenges.  
Now it's here and I can't believe,  
That time has passed so quickly  
Thank you for caring so much.  
I love my teachers and school.

## **Riddles**

*Farhaan Jaffer, Class 6 Student*

Feed me wood I will live, feed me water I will die.  
*fire*  
I have legs but I can't walk.  
*table*  
What has 5 fingers but is not alive?  
*A glove*  
What makes sound but is not alive?  
*phone/radio*  
What has a body, hands, legs and a face but can't talk.  
*A baby*  
It will start with t, end with t inside it. What is it?  
*tea pot*



## Urdu poem (Titli ka bachcha)

Musab Nawaz, Class I Student

کھا کر سب سو گیا اپنے خول میں  
کئی دن بعد پھر جاگا  
جب وہ باہر آیا  
روپ نیا تھا رنگ کئی تھے  
خوبصورت رنگ برنگی  
اوڑھنے کو تھی تیار تتلی

تتلی کا بچہ  
تتلی کا بچہ انڈے سے نکلا  
گول مٹول لمبا پتنگا  
تھا وہ بھوکا تھا وہ پیاسا  
کھا گیاسارا پتا

## Friends

Syeda Alina Rushda, Class 5B Student

My friends are smart  
Love them from my heart  
Friends are new  
We talk true  
Friends are nice  
Like candy ice

We share and care with our friends  
And our friendship will never end  
I love my friends  
The time we spent  
Is a very special day  
I like my way and I like my friends

## **I Love My Parents**

*Sara Ahmed, Class 5B Student*

Each and every child loves her parents a lot; it's true. Our parents are the best in the world and there are millions of good words to describe them. We all should thank our mom and dad for being such wonderful parents. Parents always stay with us in the best of times and also in the worst times. Without them I won't be able to succeed and reach my goals.

Parents are everything for us. They always show us the right way. The most beautiful thing is to see our parents smiling, and the next best thing is to know that you are the reason behind that smile. For me, my parents are the stars who guide me. We should never use the sharpness of our tongue for our parents who taught us to speak. We should never forget their love and care which they have given to us. When children grow up, they find their parents as burden and keep their parents in old age homes. This is really hurting. Parents work very hard for their children and always carry a smile on their face though they are tired so that they can keep their children happy.

Parents can't see their child in trouble. Nobody on earth can ever love you more than your parents. We should sincerely thank God for giving us such great parents. Parents are the best thing in the world.

## **Happy Teachers' Day**

*Syeda Rabab, S Ameer Raza and Mariyam Mohsini, Class 5A Students*

Teachers work hard all day, and sometimes let us play.

They help us in every way.

Their handwriting is very neat,

They work with rapid speed and never cheat.

They have many ideas to share,

They handle everything with care.

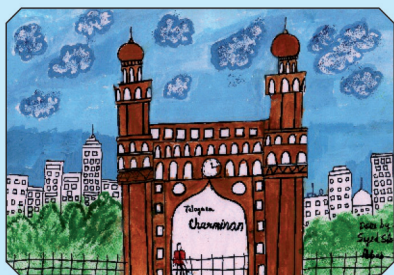
Teachers that are best

Are presently very less,

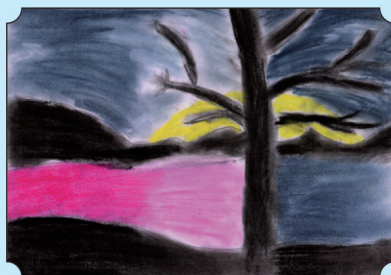
They are friendly and kind

But are not easy to find.





**C5B Syed Sibta  
Abbas Jaffri**



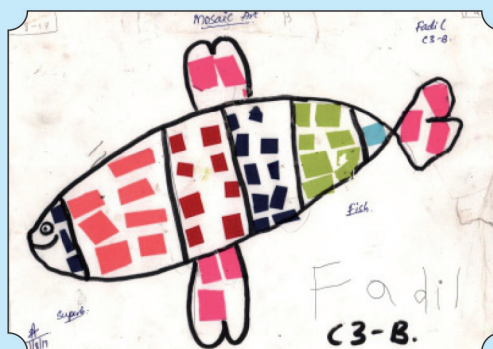
**C6 Syeda Hiba  
Fatima Moosvi**



**C3B Syeda Kounain Sakina**



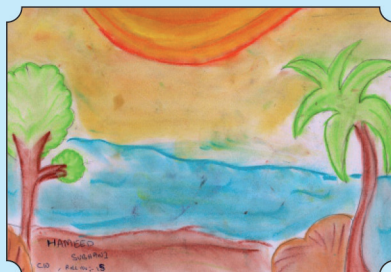
**3B Mohammed  
Junaid Abbas**



**C3B Fadil Rahman Sharik**



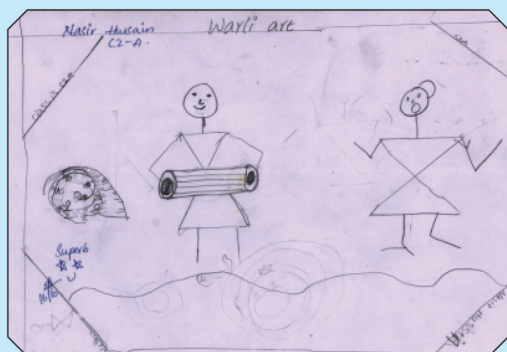
**C7 Syed Fazal  
Abbas Razvi**



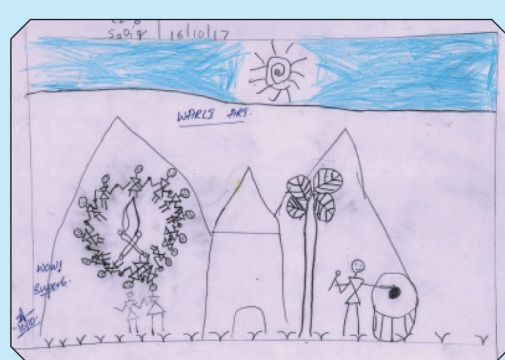
**C10 Mohammed Abdul  
Hameed Subhani**



**C3A Abrar Ali Mirza**



**C2A Syed Nasir  
Hussain Abidi**



**C2B Mirza Sadiq Hussain**





### MISSION STATEMENT

Focus High School is a community of lifelong learners that aims to enable children to excel in all aspects of life.

The school provides for students' holistic development: encouraging them to be critical and creative thinkers; guiding them to be principled and compassionate; training them for physical health; and preparing them for higher studies and work.

Convinced that education is a means of establishing justice and mercy in the world, Focus High School ensures that its programmes are accessible to all.

#### Darushifa Campus:

22-8-321, Darushifa, Hyderabad, Telangana 500 024

Phones: 040 2440 4060, 040 6530 5060

#### Noor Khan Bazar Campus:

22-2-765, 766, 767, Noor Khan Bazar, Hyderabad,

Telangana 500 024 Phone: 939 060 5070

[info@focushighschool.org](mailto:info@focushighschool.org)  
[www.focushighschool.org](http://www.focushighschool.org)  
[www.fb.com/FocusHighSchool](https://www.facebook.com/FocusHighSchool)