

# feneestra

High School Edition, Volume - VII, April - 2019  
A window to our culture of learning and sharing

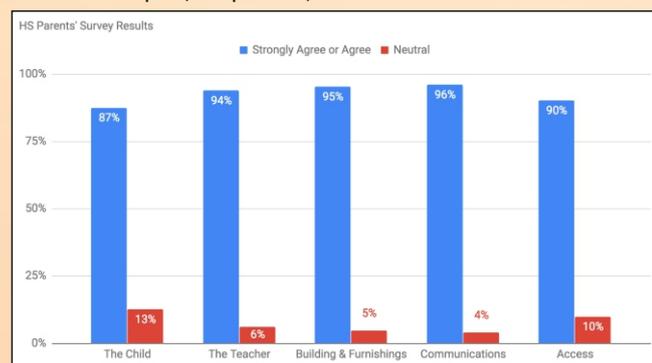
## FROM THE LEADERS' DESK

In the morning rush, we hardly have time to glance at the mirror to see if we look presentable. Even if we had time, we feel a little guilty about gazing at ourselves for more than a second. The mirror is such a tricky and complex tool! But, as a school, we must take some time to look in the mirror. We must gaze, examine, and critique ourselves, especially now that we have completed our 6th year and are embarking on the IB Middle Years Programme.

The mirror for our school is the school community and especially the parents. In October 2018, we conducted a Parents' Survey during the distribution of 1st term performance reports. The survey focussed on 5 key areas which are central to our mission statement: The Child, The Teacher, Building & Furnishings, Communication, Access. In each key area, we asked parents about their level of agreement with 4 or 5 statements. Parents had to choose from these options: Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), or Strongly Disagree (SD). This article is an overview of the results of the survey, highlighting areas of strength and areas to improve.

One general observation from the parents' survey is that our school had very high satisfaction on the clincher question: "My child enjoys studying at Focus School. I recommend the school to other parents". 95% chose SA or A. Across all the questions in the survey, 92% chose SA or A, while 7% chose N, and less than 1% chose D or SD. This general pattern is very encouraging and inspires us to keep on striving towards our shared goals. It means that to a very large extent, parents believe we are delivering on our mission statement.

The specific areas of strength were: Building & Furnishings and Communications. This means that 95% or more parents chose SA or A for statements about the areas above. The building is safe, clean, vibrant and provides varied resources for learning. Communications with the school are open, respectful, and clear.



## PARENTS' SURVEY

by Minhaj Arastu, Principal

Some of the areas for improvement were: The Child, The Teacher, and Access. 9% of parents chose N when asked about whether their child is challenged to excel; 13% chose N about whether their child is pushed to think critically. 14% of parents chose N when asked if the school guides their child to be principled, and caring; 22% of parents chose N about whether the school helps their child become balanced.

In the area of Teachers, although 94% chose SA or A, 6% chose N across the 5 statements. This outcome means that most parents do believe our teachers are qualified, give appropriate academic work, encourage open-mindedness, give individual attention, and make learning practical. But there is a consistent pattern in which 6% parents chose N on this area.

In the area of Access, 10% were neutral about how well the school provides support for parents who are not fluent in English; 8% were neutral about equality of access for boys & girls; and 14% were neutral about whether the school's fee structure gives value for money and about the fee collection policy.

Based on the survey, our school has a course of action laid out by our community mirror. For us to educate children better, we must differentiate more. This means we must challenge the gifted and talented students; we must support the academically weaker students; and we must focus increasingly on values and life skills.

Based on the feedback about our fees and fee collection, we must streamline our collection systems. And we must share more information about our fee structure and budget so that parents can understand the value for money that they receive in our school.

Finally, in the High School especially, we must have more discussion with parents to understand why only 50% of them completed the survey. (This is in contrast to PYP parents of whom 87% completed the survey.) We will have to understand better parents' expectations; could it be that parents of high school children feel anxiety for marks, syllabus completion, or pressure for academic improvement before the board examinations?

In the end, I am happy that our school looked in the mirror because it has encouraged us and pointed the way to improve. Every mirror has flaws and distortion, but with parents' active and constructive engagement, we hope to keep getting feedback that will bring us closer to the vision that is summed up in our motto, 'Curious minds, caring hearts'.

# DEVELOPING CURRICULUM CONTINUUM THROUGH VERTICAL PLANNING

by Mustafa Zaidi, Vice Principal (Curriculum Development) & MYPC

One of the most challenging scenarios we faced, as a school offering International Baccalaureate's Primary Years Programme in the primary school (Nursery - Class 5) and State Board (SSC) curriculum in the high school (Class 6 - 10), is the vertical alignment of the learning outcomes across all the classes. It was entirely a new learning experience for the Vertical Planning Collab team consisting school leaders, Team Leaders (PYP) and the Heads of Departments (HS). The effort was to connect the previous grade's learning outcomes to the next grade's learning requirements, especially for those involved in the academic planning throughout the year.

To accomplish this task, the Vertical Planning Collab team was scheduled to meet on the first Saturdays of the month. The objectives of the meeting were:

- To plan vertical alignment of curriculum from primary to high school.
- To map learning outcomes, in terms of content, for each grade level based on the subject guides.
- To resolve issues related to pedagogical approaches in the academic disciplines.
- To plan learning engagement and professional development of subject teachers.
- To facilitate the academic transition of PYP graduating students to the high school.

The planning process went through the following stages:

## REINFORCEMENT: THE POWER OF IMPLEMENTATION AND VISIBLE CHANGES

By Mohd Ghouse Ahmed, Vice Principal

Many changes that happen in the world cannot happen overnight as the process of change is time consuming. Might be curdling of milk can happen but lot of events may not happen. Implementation of teaching methodology or new skill set among the students may take days, months or sometime years to see the actual outcome. We need to consistently implement the same practise repeatedly over a period of time to actually see the changes brought in the system according to our expectation. As a result the method is quite important because that will have a direct impact on the outcome.

I was teaching C language to grade 10. We started with algorithms, flow charts and finally with coding of the program. The entire class showed a great deal of enthusiasm at the beginning but soon this interest faded with the passage of time i.e by the time we reached the stage of writing the programs. Though as ICT teacher I provided the complete steps of writing a program, different sections of the program, generating the output and recording the same but still some students were not able to understand the concept.

respective curriculum documents.

- Developing a concise single - window view of the continuum for each discipline without compromising the grade-level expectations.
- Develop check point tests for Class 5 during the transition period to assess learning outcomes (knowledge and skills).

Following curriculum documents were referred to map the learning outcomes:

- PYP Scope and Sequence issued by the IB.
- Subject Handbook published by State Centre for Education, Research and Training, Telangana.
- Common Core State Standards

(courtesy: <http://www.corestandards.org/public-license>)

Though developing a single - window view of the continuum still remains task in progress, the design and the administration of checkpoint tests was successfully implemented with the help of recurrent feedback from all the concerned teachers. The results from the checkpoint tests are analysed by the respective HODs to fix gaps in the learning continuum.

The vertical planning was a meaningful exercise for the educators and academic leaders. The minutes of the vertical collab were logged and the collective experience of the vertical planning team will play a pivotal role in developing more effective procedures and concrete deliverables.

Bringing back the motivation is a difficult task but not an impossible one. I adopted a very simple method and that was after I explained a program by giving a demo on white board, I gave the students a program to solve in their books. I asked the students, what's the first section in the program, initially very few answered and then moved on to next section. Likewise the curiosity grew and all became interested in writing and answering section wise. Even the ones who couldn't write started answering and developed the skill of writing a program. I used this technique for quite a lot of programs which helped them to develop the logical skills of writing a program with expected outcomes. The other method was, I used to call students to write program on white board, once they have completed it in their books. Each student was picked up randomly from the group to write a statement for the program

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and also state the outcome of the statement written. This strengthened their programming skills and lot of students were interested and eagerly waiting for their turn to write the program on the whiteboard.

The result of implementing the above two methods was that all students became interested, motivated

and were on the task until they completed and finished it. This also helped them in debugging the program at the time of actual execution. Now they were thorough with all sections of the program, could write a structured program and were able to clarify and explain the significance and content of each section.

## STRATEGIZING THE ACCUMULATION OF READING SKILLS

by Zainab Taiyebi, HS Coordinator

The focus of my research is to improve reading skills. Time and scale: 2 months.

Just like any other muscle in the body, the brain requires exercise to keep it strong and healthy, so the phrase “use it or lose it” is particularly apt when it comes to our brain. Doing puzzles and playing games such as chess have also been found to be helpful in cognitive stimulation.

Everything you read fills you with new bits of information, and you never know when it might come handy. The more knowledge you have, the better equipped you are to tackle any challenge that you'll face and this knowledge comes when you have the habit of reading daily.

The more you read, the more words you learn, and you'll inevitably use these words in your everyday vocabulary.

When you read a book, all of your attention is focused on the story—the rest of the world just fades away, and you get immersed in a completely new world that the book offers.

I observed that the students were not taking interest in reading lessons thoroughly. If they read it, they definitely can score better marks. Based on this, I decided to start preparing worksheets with questions of varying rigour, so that students could find answers only with a thorough reading of the textbook.

I divided the lessons into small topics and prepared worksheets with 5 questions for each topic. Students

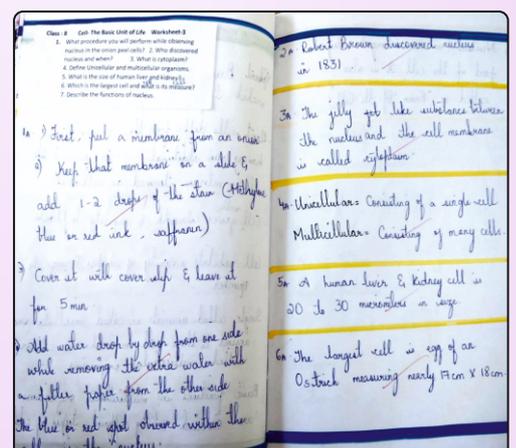
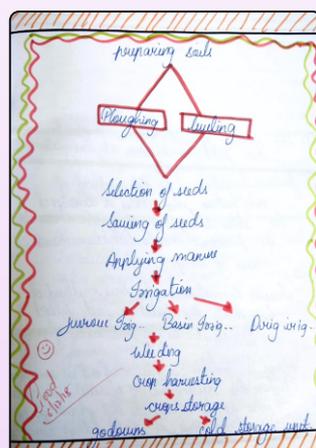
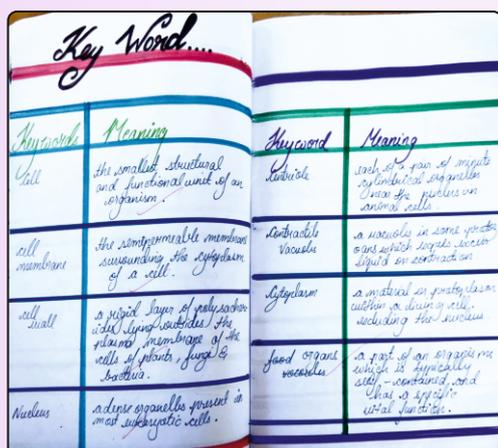
then have to search the answers from the reader and If they don't get sufficient time to search the answers during class time, they can complete it as homework.

In the beginning, the students were not ready to read the lesson and they were directly searching the answers from the internet. It was easy for me to recognize plagiarism and I would then ask the student to rewrite it. Giving only 5 questions at a time made corrections easy. I was able to check the answers thoroughly. With the entry of the marks in the subject register it became easy to track students who did not complete the worksheet (eg: I prepare 5-6 worksheets

per lesson and for every worksheet, data of the students is recorded. If they complete it in the next class they get 5 marks, if not a yellow card will be issued). This made it easy to track student's work.

They became habituated to these worksheets and also found it easy to complete their Written Work (for which we assign them marks in FA's). With little work, they were very happy as their work was completed on time. Especially girls started doing their work brilliantly. For me, it became easy to track the student who did not complete his/her work (As I have already mentioned marks were noted down in subject teacher register. If the columns remain empty, we can easily find out who has not completed the work).

This research was very useful and made corrections easy and effective and I would like to carry this research further with little changes so that students start reading the lessons more effectively.



## COUNSELLING INTERVENTIONS: CBT

*by Syed Murthuza Hussaini, Counsellor and HOD*

### Introduction:

Everyone is a counsellor at some basic level and everyone needs counselling at some point of time. Parents are the ultimate counsellors for their children and the stronger the bond between parents and children is, the healthier the relationship. However, due to the increase of day to day activities and constant bombardment of stimuli on our senses, we are finding less time for this natural counselling relationship and the children are bearing the brunt of it. Hence, the responsibility of school counsellors is to provide some sort of guidance, increases in many folds. Also, due to the advancement in technology, children are exposed to a myriad of issues that parents sometimes are unequipped to handle.

### Personal development (PD):

A school counsellor with educational background in clinical, child or counselling psychology must be accessible to all school children. Every trained counsellor will employ multiple approaches to address the variety of issues he/she faces on daily basis. However, every counsellor will have a favourite approach, technique or therapy that he/she uses extensively. I and my colleague Ms. Mamta attended a workshop on Five Area CBT from Hope Trust. The acronym CBT stands for Cognitive Behaviour Therapy. I like this approach as it's based on addressing the core issues before focusing on the symptoms.

### The Problem:

Many a times, children approach us with a problem and present symptoms that are causing pain,

discomfort or distress to them and we with all the good intentions immediately rush to alleviate the pain, before pausing, thinking and figuring out the reason that might be causing the pain or distress. The CBT technique teaches us to identify and focus on the core issue. Below is one such example out of many that we have addressed.

One day a boy approached me with a complaint of chronic headache and lack of focus in the class. He also added that he is feeling sleepy in the class which is affecting his performance. This was surprising as the child was a good performer and never had health issues before. Upon having a detailed conversation and probing further, I was able to find out the real reason.

### The solution:

The reason for the stress for this child was the parental discord. Counselling the child in multiple sessions and counselling the parents and informing them about the distress the child is going through because of their discord, made them realize the mistake. Providing a healthy support system to the child at school also helped him cope with the problem.

### Outcome:

The child fared well like many others that we helped using the CBT approach. First Aid provides immediate relief but a proper diagnosis and identification of the underlying cause will permanently cure the condition.

For those who are interested in this approach, they can visit <https://courses.lttf.com> for a free course on CBT.





# छात्रों के लिखित तथा पठन की क्रियाओं में सक्षम कराया

by Rohini Srivastav, Hindi Teacher & HOD and Saba Fatima, Hindi Teacher

## \* शिक्षा की जड़ कड़वी है, पर उसके फल मीठे हैं \*

**अध्यापक द्वारा की गयी विधिक प्रक्रियाएँ :** जिस किसी छात्र को अक्षरों का ज्ञानोदय नहीं था, उन्हें अक्षरों का ज्ञान निपुण रूप से कराया गया। शिक्षण में मददगार सामग्री, श्रुतलेख तथा हस्तलेख की प्रक्रियाएँ द्वारा छात्रों को ज्ञानोदय कराया गया। हस्तलेखन में छात्रों को विकाशन करने के लिए कक्षा में लिखावट के लिए प्रतिदिन २० मिनट का समय दिया गया ताकि हर छात्र सुंदर अक्षरों में लिख सके। छात्रों की प्रगति के लिए अध्यापक द्वारा कार्य-पत्रक दिया गया जिसमें विद्यार्थी निपुण हो सके। कार्य-पत्रक जैसे: वर्णमाला, दो, तीन और चार अक्षर वाले शब्द, मात्राएँ, मात्राओं से बने शब्द, मात्राओं से बने छोटे वाक्य तथा छोटी सी नीति प्रथ कथाएँ और कविताएँ दिया गया। कुछ ऐसे छात्र जो अपने से पढ़ने या कार्य करने में सक्षम नहीं थे। उन्हें अध्यापक की सहायता से अधिक समय देकर निपुण कराया गया।

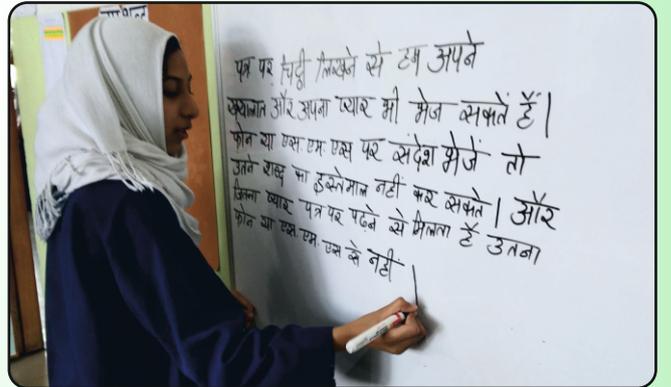


यूँ ही नहीं मिलती राही को मंज़िल,  
एक जुनून सा दिल में जगाना होता है,  
पूछा चिड़िया से, कैसे बना आशियाना  
बोली---

भरनी पड़ती है उड़ान बार-बार  
तिनका-तिनका उठाना होता है।

- |                                 |                              |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| * संसाधन जो प्रयोग में लाया गया | * नीति पथ कहानियों के पुस्तक |
| * कार्य-पत्रक                   | * ज्ञानरचनावाद               |
| * वीडियो                        | * आओ शब्द बनाएँ              |
| * शिक्षण में मददगार सामग्री     | * वर्ग पहेली                 |
| * अक्षर गेंद                    | * शब्दकोश                    |
| * वर्णमाला चार्ट                | * समाचार पत्र                |

**\* छात्रों पर सुचिंतित रूप से प्रभाव \*** पहले तो विद्यार्थियों को अक्षर का ज्ञान हुआ। छात्र अपने से मात्राओं का प्रयोग करते हुए सुंदर-सुंदर वाक्य बनाने लगे, निबंध लिखने लगे, नीति पथ कहानियाँ तथा कविताएँ वीडियो द्वारा देखकर स्वयं कहानी लिखने लगे। और चित्र का अनुसर करते हुए कहानी तथा कविताएँ बनाने लगे। पुस्तक से पाठ, कविता, कहानी, संस्मरण आदि पढ़कर स्वयं समझने लगे, शब्दों के अर्थ लिखने लगे, प्रश्नोत्तर तथा व्याकरण लिखने लगे। कक्षा ८, ९ और १० के छात्र संवाद, पत्र-लेखन, विज्ञापन, सूचना, पोस्टर, नारे, तथा दिए गये विषय पर सारांश लिखने लगे।



## విద్యార్థులలో భాషా జ్ఞానం

by Kavitha Akula, Telugu Teacher & HOD and Md. Saber, Telugu Teacher

పుట్టుకతో పిల్లలు తల్లిదండ్రుల వద్ద మాతృభాష నేర్చుకుంటారు. తరువాత పాఠశాలకు వెళ్ళి మాతృభాషతో పాటు ఇతర భాషలను నేర్చుకుంటారు. నేటి విద్యార్థులకు రాష్ట్రభాషా దేశ భాషా అంతర్జాతీయ భాష తప్పని సరి. ఈ భాషలపై పట్టు ఉన్నప్పుడే విద్యార్థి పెరిగి పెద్ద వాడైన తరువాత అంతర్జాతీయంగా ఎక్కడైనా మంచి పోదాలో ఉండగలుగుతాడు.

విద్యార్థికి భాషపై ఆసక్తి, అభిలాష ఉన్నప్పుడే ఇతర భాషలను నేర్చుకోవడానికి ఇష్టాన్ని వ్యక్తం చేస్తాడు. ఇతర భాషలను నేర్చుకునేటప్పుడు విద్యార్థులకు ఆ భాష తెలియక, అర్థంకాక అడగటానికి సందేహ పడుతుంటారు. ముందుగా ఉపాధ్యాయులు ఆ భాషపై ఉండే భయాన్ని, బిడియాన్ని విద్యార్థులలో తొలగించాలి.

దీని కొరకు మేము మా పాఠశాలలో విద్యార్థులకు తరగతి గదిలో ఒక పాఠాన్ని వివరించే ముందు ఆ పాఠ్యభాగ సంబంధిత కీలక పదాలను ఇచ్చి వాటిని మాతృభాషా దేశ మరియు అంతర్జాతీయ

భాషలలో పదాల అర్థాలను వివరిస్తు విద్యార్థుల చేత సేకరింప చేస్తున్నాం. వారు ముందుగా ఇచ్చిన కీలక పదాలను నిఘంటువు సహాయంతో మాతృభాష మరియు ఇతర భాషలలో వాటి అర్థాలను సేకరించగలుగుతున్నారు. కీలక పదాలను నేర్చుకున్న తరువాత విద్యార్థులచేత పాఠ్యభాగాన్ని చదివించి వారి నిరీతి మాటల్లో వివరించే విధంగా ప్రోత్సహిస్తున్నాం మరియు కీలక పదాలను వాక్య రూపంలో ప్రయోగించ గలుగుతున్నారంటే పాటు పాఠ్యభాగంలో అడిగిన ప్రశ్నలకు సమాధానాలను స్వతహాగా రాయగలుగుతున్నారు మరియు నేర్చుకుంటున్నారు.

ఈ విధంగా మేము విద్యార్థులలో వేరు వేరు భాషల పదాల అర్థాలను, ఉచ్ఛరణను మరియు విభేదాలను స్పష్టం చేయగలుగుతున్నాం. దీని వల్ల మాతృభాషతో పాటు ఇతర భాషల పైన కూడా పట్టును సాధించగలుగుతున్నారు.



## తెలుగు భాష ప్రాముఖ్యత

by Rudranki Prathyusha, Telugu Teacher

మనం కొరుకున్న తెలంగాణ రాష్ట్రం MELN జూస్ Mవ తేదిన ఆవిర్భవించిందిB రాష్ట్రంలోని అన్ని పాఠశాలల్లో తెలుగును ఒక తప్పనిసరి బోధనాంశంగా అమలు పరచినందున, తెలుగు భాషను నేర్చుకోవలసిన ఆవశ్యకత ఉందిB పిల్లలందరికీ మాతృ భాషను నేర్చుకునే సామర్థ్యం సహజంగా అందరిలో ఉంటుందిB కాబట్టి తమ పరిసరాలలో అర్థవంతమైన, సందర్భోచిత సన్నివేశాల ద్వారా పిల్లలు భాషను అత్యంత సులువుగా అలవరచుకోగలరుB మైనారిటీ పిల్లలు మాతృ భాషతో పాటు ద్వితీయ భాషగా తెలుగును నేర్చుకోవల్సి ఉంటుందిB కాని కొన్ని కారణాల వల్లA పరిస్థితుల వల్లA కొంతమంది పిల్లలకు తెలుగు భాషపట్ల అవగాహన లేకపోవడం చర్చనీయంశంB

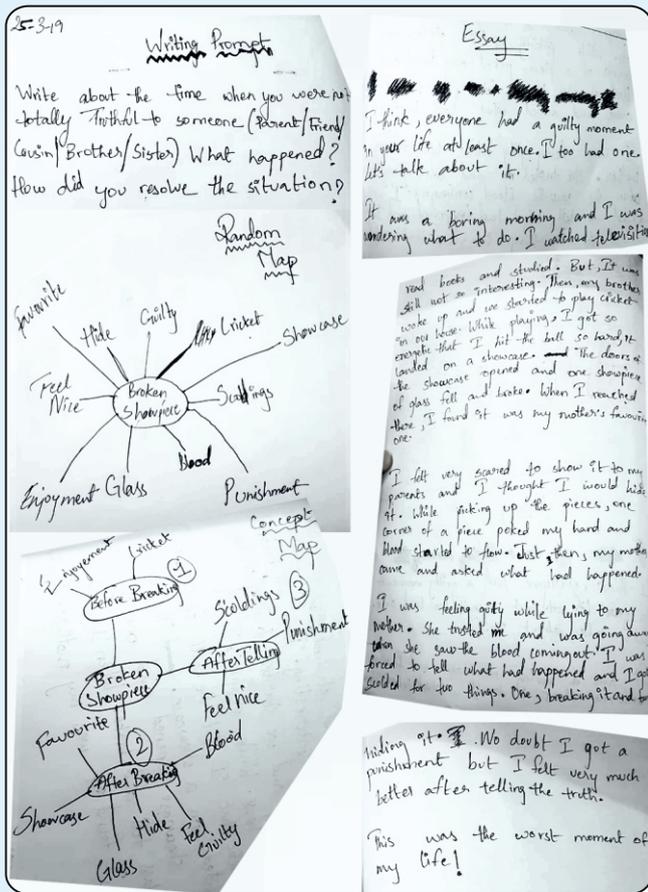
పాఠ్యశాస్త్రాన్ని వివరించే సమయంలో ప్రతి విద్యార్థి పెన్సిల్ తో ఆపదానికి అర్థాలను రాసుకొని ఇంటి వద్ద నోతంగా వాక్యాలను తయారు చేయగలగాలి అలా చేయడం వలన ఎక్కడ దోషాలు జరుగుతున్నాయో గమనించి వాటిని సరిదిద్దుకుంటే అప్పుడు ఎలాంటి ఇబ్బంది లేకుండా తెలుగు భాషను సులువుగా నేర్చుకోవచ్చు ఇలా చేయడం వల్ల కొంతవరకు భాషాజ్ఞానాన్ని సంపాదించవచ్చు. ఇందుకు కావలసింది విద్యార్థుల శ్రద్ధ ,ఉపాధ్యాయుల సహకారం ఈ రెంటితో తెలుగు భాషను అవలీలగ నేర్చుకోవచ్చు .

నేటి సమాజంలో ఆంగ్ల భాషపట్ల పై ఉన్న మక్కువA ఆవశ్యకత వల్ల తల్లిదండ్రులు ఆంగ్లభాషకు ఇచ్చిన ప్రాధాన్యత తెలుగు భాషకు ఇవ్వడం లేదు. తెలుగు మాతృభాష కాకపోవడం వల్ల ఇంటి దగ్గర తెలుగు వాతవరణం లేక మరియు తల్లిదండ్రులకు కూడా తెలుగు రాకపోవడం వల్ల విద్యార్థులు నిస్సహాయులు అవుతున్నారు. కావున ఉపాధ్యాయులు తమ వంతు కృషిగా పాఠశాలలోనే వారికి అవసరమైన రీతిలో అర్థమయ్యే విధంగా పాఠ్యాంశాన్ని భోదిస్తూ వారి మాతృభాషలో వివరిస్తూ తెలుగులో ఆ పదాన్ని ఏమంటారో తెలుపుతు తెలుగు వాతవరణాన్ని కల్పించాలిB ప్రతి రోజు మన నిత్య జీవితంలో అవసరమయ్యే వాక్యాలను క్రమం తప్పకుండా ఉచ్చారణ చేయడం వల్ల ఉపయోగించడం వల్ల కొంతవరకు భాషాజ్ఞానాన్ని సంపాదించవచ్చు.



# WRITING BLUES

by Vaseema Sultana, English Teacher & HOD



I was in conversation with my 9 year old son and we were discussing the impacts of technology in our daily lives. We had varied inputs on how communication channels have improved and become easily available. Earlier, if we had to communicate with someone living outside India or even belonged to another state, we wrote letters. Nowadays, we have social media apps like Whatsapp, Twitter, Facebook etc. which have not only shortened distances but also reduced writing to acronyms like OMG, LOL, hw r u? That brought our conversation to an interesting closure, "Is the birth of technology the death of writing?"

A recent study by National Commission of Writing has published that businesses are spending around 3.1 billion dollars on remedial writing training. It has also mentioned that according to 21st Century Skills Forum 26.2% college students are deficient in writing skills. This scenario is reflected in my classroom where 9 out of 10 students are not able to structure a paragraph properly, which is alarming. So the English team targeted writing skills as our Action Plan.

While working on the action plan we realised that it's important for students to form concepts and be clear about what idea they want to convey through a paragraph. For this we introduced concept maps which help students form concepts and segregate its related sub-concepts. These sub-concepts are then mapped to a paragraph. Once this is done, the next step is to structure the paragraph correctly. To help with this, PEEL was introduced to students. PEEL is an acronym for:

- P - Main Point
- E - Evidence
- E - Explanation
- L - Linking or Concluding statement

This helped the student realise that a paragraph starts with the point that you want to introduce. Following which they give supporting details in the form of evidence and explanation of the main point. The paragraph then ends with a concluding sentence or a linking statement, if it is the precursor to the next paragraph.

Writing is important because it helps preserve memories and history. So with great hopes, this is the first step towards preserving writing and we are working towards making our students capable and exemplary writers.

## HOW DO I WRITE EFFECTIVELY?

by Syeda Masooma Fatima, English Teacher

'Clear thinking is not possible in the absence of clear writing' - Thomas Famula

After reading this, I was encouraged to do my Action Research and I realized that it could help me improve some of my students' interest in writing. This I pursued, so that my students would get more benefits from my Action Research.

Well, up to now, I think Action Research has helped me and my students a lot. It makes my students become interested and gain confidence in learning English and also improve their writing abilities. And to me as a teacher, it makes me realize that the Action

Research is not only for the toppers, but for all students in the class, especially for those who have some difficulty in learning.

Secondly, I think it is very helpful for a teacher to accomplish his or her teaching tasks to increase the learning level of the whole class.

### Problem Identified:

Writing plays several roles in the classroom. It helps further cement new concepts by allowing students to describe items in their own words. It encourages

logical thinking by forcing students to organize their thoughts. It also helps them learn how to tell a story, communicate ideas and record important moments. I found following writing patterns in my students' writings:

- Run on sentences (no comma before coordinating conjunction).
- Sentences missing a subject in it.
- Sentences are verbose.

### Planned Action

#### Make my expectation explicit:

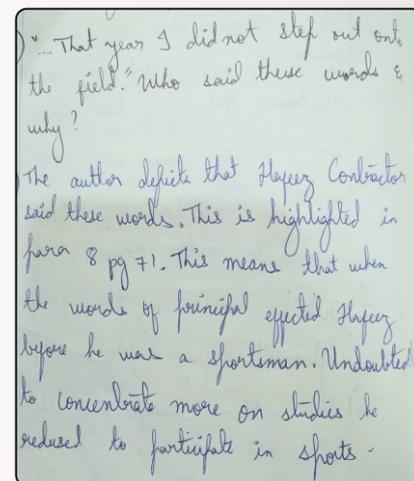
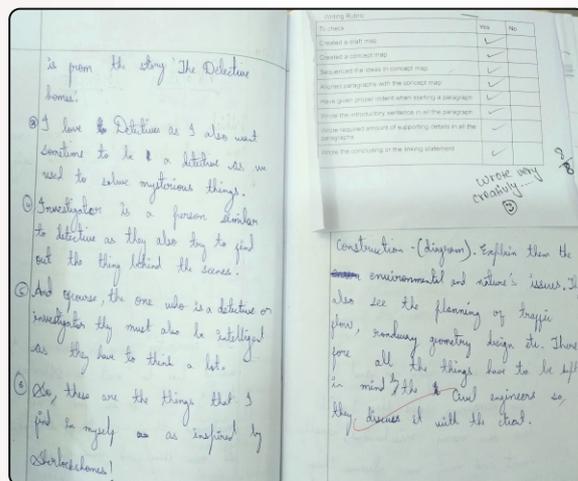
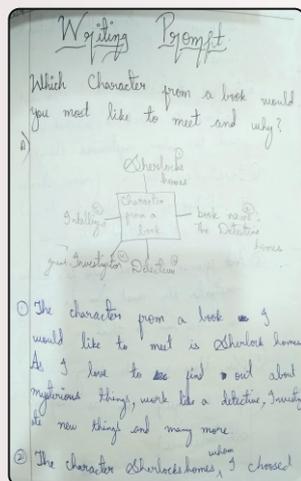
To incorporate writing skills in the classroom, I kept in mind that long form essays are just a single facet of developing writing skills. In the future, students will spend much more time writing brief replies to emails or jotting down to-do lists. So, I incorporated these types of tasks in the classroom, so they have experience with both essays and more day-to-day writing skills. The following model was formulated to solve the problem.

#### Model to approach writing task

- Questions asked to begin writing: (You might, for example ask : Who is my audience? What am I trying to convince them of? What do I want to say, and what evidence can I use to back it up?)
- Using PEEL writing format.
- Point
- Evidence
- Explanation
- Link/conclusion
- How do you go about writing? (sketching out ideas in graphic organiser, writing an outline)
- Writing diagnosis (Peer Review- Asking peers to read and comment on your work through rubrics.)
- This is not always easy and the instructor needs to explicit the process unconsciously and automatically. However it is a useful exercise, illuminating both me and my students about writing.

The above writing structure was modeled for writing process in my classes. We used **Writing prompts, PEEL paragraphing** tools in order to groom the **writing** style of students.

Meanwhile, I think I will keep on doing Action Research on "How can I help to develop my students' English writing ability?" Writing prompts would help students sharpen more day-to-day writing skills.



## IGNITE PROGRAM 3.2.1 WORKSHOPS

by Zainab Kirmani, English Intern

I am writing about 3.2.1 Ignite workshops which I have attended through Focus High School. These workshops are held by 3.2.1 Education Foundation. There is a lot of exposure for teachers who are beginners, in these workshops. Here teachers get equipped with different methodologies and strategies of teaching. They train teachers on how to apply knowledge from this program and implement it in the classroom. There is a great deal of professional development for the teachers. It is a certified program. I found it very beneficial and advantageous for personal growth as

well as professional development. These programs cater to individualised support for teachers through workshops and one to one coaching.

I came to know my glows and grows from the coaching. I am able to see a change in my teaching style after implementing the ideas and methods which are taught in the workshops. Things are not easy for me. But I think that I am able to handle everything smoothly. For me, it was a great opportunity to work with 3.2.1 and to get trained by such efficient trainers.

All the teachers including me, have got individual support from the trainer to improve student learning.

I implemented these strategies and methodology in the classroom and I could see that there was a difference in the classroom. This was a challenging task for me. But I was able to engage the class with full attention. From the workshops I have used:

'Attention Grabbers' to get the attention of the students from the distractions in the classroom.

Ex: If the students can hear me clap once.

I use special calls, to get students back on task and

help them to be alert.

Ex: The student who is wearing a red watch can answer.

I prepare an agenda of the period before the class starts so that students have a concrete and precise picture of what is the schedule of the class and they do not get bored.

The outcome, that I see in my classroom that after I implement solutions from the workshops, the children are amazed and excited. Classroom management was very satisfying. These methods and strategies work out very well.

## LEARNING BASIC MATH CONCEPTS AND OVERCOMING MISCONCEPTIONS IN MATH THROUGH ACTIVITIES.

*by Sajid Naqvi, Math Teacher & HOD and Farah Baquri, Math Teacher*

Many students faced a peculiar problem in mathematics. That is of repeatedly committing the same mistake or developing a misconception which is hard to remove from their minds.

In order to overcome such difficulties, it is always useful to do related hands on activity. This helps the students to understand basic concepts on their own or helps them overcome a misconception, if any.

The benefits of activity over other methods of learning are many. The most significant being that activity involves all the learning faculties. This gives the student a much better chance of learning or retaining a basic concept for a longer duration of time or overcoming a misconception.

- In performing these activities we make use of the component in FA namely 'project'.
- Activities are given in all the branches of mathematics namely number system, algebra, geometry, mensuration, trigonometry and data handling.
- They are conducted across all the classes in high school from classes 6 to 10.
- Activities can take the form of models, paper folding, cutting and pasting, overlapping of tracing papers or butter papers etc.
- Sometimes it can also be a PPT.

This method of training throughout the year has fetched very good results in terms of inculcating basic concepts of integers (addition and multiplication rules) or removing the misconception of writing  $3^2$  as 6 instead of 9 to cite a few examples.

A very heartening and visible outcome of this training over a period of time was manifested prominently in an inter school Math Olympiad competition held by Sreenidhi Institute of Science and Technology this academic year (Dec 2018).

In this competition, around 30 students from our school participated in the category of model presentation only. Out of these 20 got recognized and received merit certificates. The school also bagged 1st and 3rd prizes in the same category. Out of two gold medals that were at stake, we received one "GOLD MEDAL" for overall performance of the school. One must appreciate the fact that the students were participating for the first time in an interschool competition of such magnitude. They came out winners despite having tough competition from 12-15 elite schools of the twin cities having years of experience in conducting and participating in such competitions.

Taking all the above observations into consideration, we can conclude that "ACTIVITIES" form a very effective tool in teaching high school Mathematics.



# DEVELOPING CONCENTRATION THROUGH SUFFICIENT SLEEPING AND PLAYING

by Syed Murtuza Hussain, Math Teacher

Research at McGill University & Douglas Mental Health University have discovered that good 'sleep efficiency' is associated with higher academic performance in subjects like Math and foreign languages.

## Situation / Problem : Inter-connected problems

- Low performance in Mathematics of Class 10 – 21 boys during the Fa2-3 cycle in 2018 - 19 and the class average was 42.6%.
- Poor classroom/homework participation of pupils in Math. Only 3 out of 21 boys participated meaningfully.
- Feeling sort of drowsy / sleepy, exhausted, thinking slowly and struggling to recall the taught concepts.
- Students' academic performance especially in mathematics can be significantly improved by fixing unhealthy sleeping behaviours. This relation between the sleep and math skills have been observed in our school and particular classes.

How to diagnose if the student is suffering from poor sleep? There are 3 signs:

- Sleeping during daytime
- Difficulty to sleep during night
- Regular over sleeping.
- Causes and their ranking (Identified through questionnaire, one to one conversations, brainstorming and observations):
- Poor Study Habits - 7
- Weakness in reasoning and proof; problem solving skills – 6
- Unwilling to approach teacher - 4
- Poor sleep - 1
- Engaged with electronic gadgets (Social Media and Online Games such as PUBG) - 2
- Low grasping ability of the pupil – 9
- Absenteeism / tardiness of the pupil - 5
- Lack of family support - 8
- Lack of physical activities after school - 3

**Objective:** To increase the participation, establish new sleeping habits and increase the performance of the pupils in Math.

**Time period:** 3 Months

**Action strategies used:** To start with the action plan, a formal debate was followed by discussion among the students (in groups) about what is their requirement and what things can be adjusted in the revision plan. In this approach, mutual understanding and consideration of values/opinions of others were

focused. We have successfully modelled a new sleeping habit and an early wake up habit in them, by organizing revision classes at 6:00 AM (5 weekdays). This affected not only their behaviour towards studies but it also made them self-reliant in studies. One of the successful outcome of the strategy is that they went beyond the expectations and asked the management to arrange early-morning classes on Saturdays, Sundays and even on public holidays.

The motivational spirit behind this is the early morning breakfast with classmates which helps enhance the harmony among each other. The most remarkable approach in the plan is to provide play time immediately after the class until the starting of the school. Daily 30-45 min of play has added an essential value to their physical health, to become proactive, and also made them more willing to study enthusiastically.

Many sessions on teaching life skills which can add value to their education and motivational session with seniors and alumni students were organized which have engaged students in interaction with the guest visitors. Also, our Principal offered extra support by providing morning Tea / Coffee, every 10:30 AM to energize the students.

Thus, the overall statistics of growth, engagement and confidence level got developed and it reflects from their ability to work independently and support their friends.

*Mathematically, Sleep+FoodStress=% of Growth*

**Resources used:** Revision material SAP module is used for daily practice and test to know specifically about which student is lacking or weak in a particular chapter. Buddy support is the most useful tool throughout the programme which has become a routine practice in each module. HOD reflection and parental feedback were the best resources to analyse and interpret the test results and overall development. Timetable and daily routine charts and few mathematical instruments (students' handmade) were used in the inquiry based learning. Different syllabus books and study materials and academic standards based worksheets have shown superb results towards developing understanding of mathematical concepts and problem solving skills along with sound reasoning for the same.

**Changes Noticed:** Changes are observed at individual level as well as group level which has great impact on their learning. For example: Fazal Moosavi, who was

quite weak in Math from the beginning of the year. Parents and teachers were concerned about his performance. But we took the challenge and now he is able to compete with the topper of the class by only 10 seconds behind in answering some specific chapters. Other examples are: Abuzar, Wasi, Qasim and Taqi who have gradually increased their speed and have an average of 30% growth in their academic performance and also in the level of mastering the concept in Math, is clearly seen. On the other hand Iyyan, Ishaq, Affan and Saad have shown drastic change in the level of their involvement / engagement with the help of buddy system. It helped in clearing their doubts and overcome barriers in the understanding difficult mathematical concepts. Simultaneously, Alamdar, Muzzamil, Bahbood and Hasnain promoted their work to par expectations

which is reflected when they answer more confidently than before.

Ultimately, 90% of the boys have become more capable of understanding, analysing and solving moderate to difficult level of math problems.

**Plans for Future:** Would like to go a bit deep in knowing and identifying the habits that affects the mathematical understanding of the students from the start of the year. Deeper level of engagement of students in terms of sports and early morning physical fitness and some part of meditation practices. I will invite my colleagues and interns to see how they can adopt and implement similar kind of ideas in their classrooms (for Class 10). I wish our school leaders must include these practices for all class 10 students every year.



## EFFECT OF WORKSHEET ON STUDENT LEARNING

*by Adeeba Anjum, Math Teacher*

**THE PROBLEM :** Prescribed text book is not designed with conceptual clarity.

**THE CAUSE :** Limited number of practice questions in the given text book.

Topic wise connections are missing from class to class in the text book.

**THE SOLUTION :** Worksheets are provided in order to address the given problems.

The learning objectives are set as per the students' level of understanding.

Provide interesting and challenging questions using different board syllabus / curriculum (ICSE, CBSE and other).

Deliver basic math vocabulary that helps the child to understand the concept well.

Frame the questions in sequential order to proceed with easy questions to questions of higher order thinking.

It gives the clarity of thoughts and ideas and develops a connection between known to unknown.

Develop a rigour in practice of solving variety of problems.

**PLAN OF ACTION:**

Improve child's basic concepts and math vocabulary.

Develop strategies and techniques in solving problems.

Overcoming difficulties through basic questions given in the worksheet.

Rewards were given in the form of tokens.

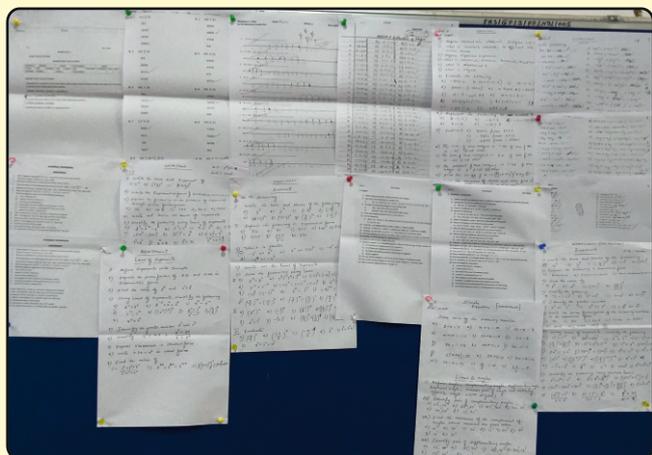
These rewards have the potential to keep them motivated and boost their performance.

Students are not only able to solve problems but are also able to connect it with real life situation. They are also able to express their ideas clearly.

**CONCLUSION:**

Impact created by such worksheets was positive.

There was a great deal of improvement in terms of



understanding basic concept and at the same time ability to solve variety of problems connected to the concept.

This gives them lots of scope for rigorous practice which is necessary in Math.

These worksheets also give an idea to the parents as to what transpired in the classroom.

Formative interaction shows there is a lot of improvement in many students.

Finally I can conclude that, worksheets were very helpful for the progress made by the students in understanding the concepts.

*“A WORKSHEET PER DAY KEEPS THE TUITION AWAY”*

## STATE LEVEL SCIENCE SEMINAR ON NATIONAL SCIENCE DAY - 28TH FEBRUARY, 2019

*by Mohammad Abdul Mumeed, Science Teacher & HOD*

Theme : Science curriculum - needs and challenges.

Topic : Mastery based learning approaches in science learning and teaching.

Paper presenter at SCERT auditorium :

Mohammad Abdul Mumeed

“What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you have to make”- Jane Goodall.

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

In India, access to IB programmes is extremely limited because almost the only schools offering them are privately and commercially funded. Fees for IB programmes in these private schools are beyond the reach of common people.

Focus High School is a low budget school which is located in the heart of the city of Hyderabad, behind Salar Jung museum.

The high school curriculum prescribed by the SCERT offers an inclusive approach to develop creative communication and collaborative problem solving skills in the students, preparing them for a technology and innovation driven 21st century.

Our Vice Principal (Curriculum Development) and MYP coordinator of Focus High School (FHS), Mr. Syed Mustafa Hussain, has motivated all staff members to practice Mastery - based Learning at our School.

### **Design of innovation of Mastery based learning (MBL) in Science:**

MBL is a shift from teaching and assessing all learners at the same time to individualizing and personalizing education through collaboration and innovation

among the learners. This is also one of the motives of SCERT.

### **Description of innovation of Mastery based learning (MBL) in Science:**

Each learning unit is broken down into achievable and measurable learning tasks. Each New Learning Task (NLT) is checked for gaps before the learning commences. Mapped prerequisites are checked through gap tests and gaps are subsequently closed by repeated administration of assessments. After the prerequisite learning gaps are closed, the learner must be assigned a new learning task guided by the teacher. Evidence of progress and mastery is created through a battery of diverse formative assessments. Competent learners are recommended Enrichment Tasks specifically designed to develop academic rigour and enable deeper learning.

### **Outcome of innovation:**

The learners shift from ‘all-finish-at-the-same-time’ practice that leaves them with academic gaps to mastering the concepts and skills at their own developing pace. Individualized learning helped young



learners achieve more milestones and develop self-regulated learning skills like meta-cognition, collaboration and innovation.

Learners of 21st century are expected to be more independent in learning approaches and develop effective communication and collaboration skills for global solutions. Personalized learning ecosystems in the context of technology facilitate evolution of holistic education with evidence-based academic rigour.

#### My presentation and proposal:

I explained about my action research during a presentation and discussed about the results. Finally, I requested all officials of SCERT to consider the MBL approach and become pioneers to implement it in all India by bringing revolutionary shift from 'all-finish-at-the-same-time' practice that leaves them with academic gaps to mastering the concepts and skills at their own developing pace to achieve more milestones and develop self-regulated learning skills like meta-cognition, collaboration and innovation. This shift has to be perceived at all levels including management, teaching staff and parents.

#### Reflections of SCERT officials on MBL approach:

Two officials of SCERT reflected on MBL after my presentation. They appreciated my action research and classroom content but they feel that the MBL is a time consuming approach. They said that this

approach is an innovative and a novel way which requires more integration and orientation and it can't be implemented in all schools.



## CREATING INTEREST IN LEARNING SCIENCE WITH ACTIVITY BASED TEACHING

by Rumana Aleem, Science Teacher

My association with the Class 6 students is my inspiration for writing this article for this edition of FENESTRA.

Firstly, I would like to start with a student. A student of today is one who becomes the foundation for tomorrow. As a Class 6 Science teacher, I have noticed that initially many students were not showing a great deal of interest in Science and they needed a lot of practice to gain conceptual understanding.

For this, I have focused on activity-based teaching and conducted many activities. Some of those activities are - measuring the area of Darshifa ground, FHS ground, and sandpit area using a measuring tape, foot span and hand span.

Students enjoyed identifying parts of the plants and discussing their functions by doing experiments like absorption of water in roots etc. I have also conducted many quizzes and have called a student randomly to pick a chit from other chits which had random topics of the chapters they have studied and make a presentation on it in groups.

I have encouraged my students by giving tokens of appreciation for a performance done well or a good behaviour. I have noticed a drastic improvement in students interest in Science and feel comfortable that my frequent counselling and motivation has brought positive results.

During this short time, I have noticed that students have a lot of hidden talents. These talents can be nurtured only with care, love and respect. My association with my students have fostered strong relationships with them. I hope my hard work will be fruitful and many of them will pursue Science as a career.



# BEHAVIOURAL STRATEGIES IN CLASSROOM

by Somana Fatima, Social Teacher & HOD



**Behaviour problems** in class interfere with learning, for all students in the classroom. The behaviour of my students - impulsiveness, aggression, inattention, or hyperactivity were getting him/her in trouble with the classmates and teachers. So I started thinking of strategies to improve their behaviour. To begin with -

**I made a list of Students' Behavioural Problems :** The first step in figuring out how to approach my students' unwanted behavior was to make a list of all of the undesirable behavior the students were exhibiting. I observed the following issues-

- Calling someone names they did not like.
- Verbal insults
- Provoking others

**Choosing the Behaviour I wanted to correct :** I observed that most of the time, students who have behavioural issues have more than one. My goal during this step was to choose just one behaviour to correct at a time. So I took for one that disturbed more, like blurting out or bothering other students.

**Action :**

**Apologies :** Apologies help to repair the social conflicts between two individuals. So I encouraged apologizing by all offending parties.

**Reduce privilege access :** I starting taking away the privileges that those students had. For example, things like having free time or being able to talk with friends are removed when rules are broken.

**Praise :** Praising positive behaviour (not just expected behavior) it was also a way of managing negative outcomes. When I praised, students more readily changed than when I scolded them, the students learnt that to get attention he or she must act positively.

**Awards :** The monitors were given the duty of informing the behaviour of the listed students each day. The students were questioned about the information given by the monitors. Daily at the end of the day the students who behaved well were awarded with a token of appreciation.

**Outcome :** There is a lot of positive change in the students' behaviour.

## Managing Classrooms to Prevent Bullying 8 Tips for Teachers

- ✓ Develop rules with your students.
- ✓ Use positive terms, showing what to do rather than what not to do.
- ✓ Support school-wide rules.
- ✓ Be a role model and follow the rules yourself.
- ✓ Set clear expectations, keeping your requests simple, direct, and specific.
- ✓ Reward good behavior.
- ✓ Use one-on-one feedback and do not publicly reprimand.
- ✓ Help students correct their behaviors.

## STRATEGIES TO ASSESS A STUDENT'S WORK

by Seema Fathima, Social Teacher

Action Research is action taken in the course, by using different activities. Every student is involved in different activities like role-play, quiz, project work, project reflection, reflection on news/ different articles.

**Role Play :** Students performed this activity in groups. They discussed the role of each student in their group and then the play was performed in front of the class. They were marked for this.

**Project work :** It was planned by the students. Topic was given to them. Each student gave his best to the project. Each one of them wrote a reflection on it.

They were marked for it.





**Quiz :** Students prepared questions and then sat in groups. Quiz was conducted in groups. Each group got points on framing questions and for the correct answer.

**Reflection on news / articles :** Article was selected by the students. They read the article or news and then wrote a reflection on it. They were marked for it. In this way we encourage the students to take part in all the activities done in the classroom.

## HOW TO DEVELOP POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A TEACHER AND A STUDENT

*by Seema Sultana, Social Teacher*

Developing positive relationship between student and teacher is a fundamental aspect of teaching and learning. Students look up to a teacher as their mentor and guide. So, the teacher should not let them down.

A teacher is the only person who is treated as an equivalent of parents. So, it is the responsibility of a teacher to make a child feel comfortable in school.

Positive relationship between teacher and a student helps a child to improve academics, prevent behaviour issues in classroom and develop social relationship between classmates.

Strategies for Developing positive relationship between student and teacher.

1. Remember the student by his / her name as quickly as possible: - Getting to know the student by his / her name helps create a strong bond with the student.
2. Say hello and goodbye to every student every day:- This is the simplest way I feel I can make connections with my students.

3. Knowing some personal thing or habits: - Get to know personal things about each student helps prevent behaviour issues and can also help them to improve in academics.

4. Be positive and enthusiastic while teaching :- It helps to motivate students, we can demonstrate the interest and joy in teaching and being with students, so they will also enjoy the classroom atmosphere.

5. Talk for five minutes: - Talking for few minutes in which we can discuss about their problems or anything they want to share makes them feel happy, boost their confidence and guide or suggest them how to deal with the problem they are facing.

6. Keeping the discussion confidential :- Sometimes some students want to share some things which they don't want to discuss with any one. So, by keeping the discussion confidential we can build the trust among them.

“Teacher is like a tree, who gives the shade of love and care and fruit of knowledge to every student.”



# PRIMING FUTURE GENERATION TO EMBRACE COMPUTATIONAL THINKING

*by Armeen Fatima, ICT Teacher*

Scratch is a multimedia authoring program which allows students to create and program his or her own stories, interactive games, and animations in an online community.

With Scratch, students can program their own interactive stories, games, and animations — and share their creations with others in the online community.

Scratch helps young people learn to think creatively, reason systematically, and work collaboratively — essential skills for life in the 21st century. Scratch is a project of the Lifelong Kindergarten Group at the MIT Media Lab. It is provided free of charge.

Learn to Code, Code to Learn

The ability to code computer programs is an important part of literacy in today's society. When people learn to code in Scratch, they learn important strategies for solving problems, designing projects, and communicating ideas.

How does it connect to education?

Through Scratch students can gain 21st century skills as it allows for a basic programming skills, collaboration, and can also be used as an assessment tool. Teachers can use Scratch to reattach topics in a more creative way through having students author their own media to share.



## ART IN ACTION

*by Rasheedunissa, Art Teacher & HOD*

Art education encourages the development of something desirable, bright and creative. It not only provides an exposure to the arts, but also helps students to develop self esteem and is an outlet for creative expression. It connects students with their own culture as well as with the wider world. Some important skills that students develop from art education : observation, self expression, focus, discipline, risk taking, collaboration etc. Our art exhibition is prime example for developing these skills.

Art in any form can give people emotions that can lift up their spirit and make them more driven than ever. Whether its a painting or music, it can have a huge impact on our moods and emotions.



## LEAD: LEADERSHIP EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT

by Abdul Khader, PE teacher & HOD

"Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things." - Peter F. Drucker -

Leadership is important and students should not just be taught academics but to be leaders in their own right. When we look at students who will be the future of tomorrow, we perceive them as being leaders, so it is important to develop leadership skills right from the middle school such that these are inculcated in them throughout life. Long term student participation also leads to leadership in the middle school.

Problem Identified :

My students come from challenging environments. Some are reserved while others are explosive. We have some students coming from backgrounds where parents instill leadership within them. This is seen in them when they try to mirror the same type of character, while in other students, there is no exposure, no push, no encouragement, and no positive feedback. There is no one to push them into that role. So, I try to work with them to develop the leadership skills that will give them the self - confidence to move forward. I was worried about their future role. Hence, I researched and explored about this and thought of implementing an action that will structure their leadership skills.

Plan Execution :

How is leadership enhanced in middle school ?

The way leadership skills were enhanced in my students were by resolving their issues through conflict resolution and problem-solving strategy. Every week, I

started interacting with all School Captains / House Captains. I allow them to talk and voice their opinions so that others can hear and engage in the discussions, by sharing their views and giving feedback. As a teacher - counsellor, my role is to facilitate them in solving their problems and allowing them to find a resolution for the conflicts discussed.

Student's mind set is that they strongly believe that teachers play a significant role in their lives. So, the students heavily rely on them to develop their leadership skills along with academic growth. For this, there are teachers also, who are making an effort to develop leadership skills in their students by assigning monitor roles.

I believe that middle school is the best time to develop leadership skills in students as they are exposed to varied social environments that can make them susceptible to social risks. And also to embrace and understand their developmental stage, they seek and experience the challenges of independence and align themselves with new peer groups.

I will keep on doing Action research as a teacher. It helps me to reflect on myself as a learner.

Reference:

Warrilow, S. (NDI). Transformational leadership theory- The 4 key elements in leading change and managing change. EzineArticle s. Retrieved November 12, 2012, from <http://ezinearticles.com/?Transformational-leadership-Theory-The-4-Key-Components-in-leading-Change-and-Managing-Change&id=2755277>.

## TAEKWONDO: A WAY TO DEVELOP PHYSICAL FITNESS

by Afshan Begum, PE Teacher

"Physical fitness is not only one of the most important keys to a healthy body, it is the basis of dynamic and creative intellectual activity" as stated by John Fitzgerald Kennedy, serves the main objective of physical education.

The objectives of physical education are to help individuals become physically fit, develop character, learn skills and become knowledgeable about sport.

The aim of my strategy was to develop self - defense in students.

The time scale of my project was one month.

Being a Physical education teacher I focused on the Physical Exercises and apart from it, I have especially focused on Taekwondo (a Korean martial art). There are 16 *poomse* (steps) in it. At first, it was difficult for the students to do *poomse* properly. So, I started showing basic steps of *poomse*. Then I explained the basic

concepts of these steps. I also explain the importance of the Taekwondo and it's uses. The major advantage of Taekwondo is that it helps the child to grow tall. Nowadays many children are not growing properly. Secondly, if situation comes children are able to defend themselves, especially girls can use this techniques for their self - defence.

I believe that I have tried my level best to motivate the students to learn Taekwondo.



## SPEAK IN ENGLISH

*by Sabika Javeed, Bridge School Teacher*

The above phrase is a common statement in almost all schools across India. A phrase that is both inspirational as well as dominating. We all want our students to speak well in English.

So what is it that makes one master a language? Is it the brain, the tools or your interest. I looked for answers. Some books tried to explain the grammar, some talked about the brain stimulus while others gave me techniques about teaching the language. But my question remained the same.....why do years of teaching English not make the children fluent speakers?

You must have heard about a theory "Listening comes before speaking". Everyone has to listen enough to speak just a little. According to this phrase, our schools are doing a great job. All teachers speak in English all the time. Our Indian children are listening enough, let's not forget the internet and cartoon, that are all well made in English. However, the fact remains that listening does not guarantee speaking.

What the mind is absorbing, also needs an outlet. There is a connection that has to be completed. I discovered that listening has to be followed by active speaking. And this needs practice. A time when children speak and others listen. Children practise speaking, frequently and continuously in an organised environment. The lack of opportunity to speak in silent classrooms has actually killed the joy that

children get from expressing themselves. Regular practise gives them confidence, solves their writing problems and improves comprehension.

In the name of discipline, we have actually made our children silent and mute. Let the children speak. Let them make mistakes and learn from it. Encourage activities that help them enjoy the language like songs, rhymes, riddles, tongue twisters and jokes; children get a chance to talk and understand nuances of the language. Role plays, games and reader's theatre are some of the other ways in which constructive language usage can take place.

My experience at Bridge school has made me believe in active speaking. I taught children who could not even understand or speak a single sentence of English. I am sure, if the magic has worked at Bridge school, it can work elsewhere also.



## EVEN NUMBERS

*by Sajid Naqvi, Math Teacher & HOD*

It is a fact that sum of any two of us is even,  
Let me surprise you, sum of any two odds is also even.

If any 2 of us are multiplied, the product is even,  
It is so funny that the product of an odd and even is also even.

It is an irony that no prime number is even,  
The only exception being, two is prime and also even.

Any number is divisible by 2, if unit digit is even,  
By this, what do you conclude, zero is odd or even?

Any negative number raised to odd power remain negative,  
But it's amazing, a negative number raised to even power turns positive.

In terms of properties we are unique and unbeatable,  
And in terms of numbers we are infinite that is uncountable.

## ADMIN IN ACTION    **ACHIEVEMENT IN THE SETTING UP OF PAYROLL**

*by Hyder Ali Khan, Administrator*

Earlier we used to calculate salary in MS Excel which was quite difficult as it was difficult to keep record of employee details. The software we use for accounting purpose didn't configure payroll module, for which we could not show total salary of employee at the end of the year. In case, an employee wants to apply for loan in bank, they are asked to submit form 16. Form 16 is a certificate issued by an employer evidencing the TDS which is deducted from one's salary and is deposited with the authorities. It contains the information you need to prepare and file your income tax return. It is issued annually. Form 16 can be issued only when total salary is segregated. The payroll module is easily accessible to segregate the salary.

As per service rules an employee must apply for resignation 3 months in advance. If this rule is not followed, the final settlement is withheld until a penalty is declared by the Principal. Payroll module has an option to hide the employee details for the time being and after its approval, salary is credited to the resigned staff personnel. Pay slip is given on a hard - copy, once the salary is credited. An employee can lose pay slip and may ask for another one. It is time-consuming and irritating to issue a duplicate pay slip. Payroll system makes this easily accessible as it provides payslip via email and it is easy for employee to see their salary statement whenever they need.

## **FORGET ALL THE REASON WHY IT WON'T WORK AND BELIEVE THE ONE REASON WHY IT WILL**

*by Syed Baquar Hussain, Accounts Manager*

We often hear our elders say that it's better for someone to have natural talent rather than to be a little less talented and rely on pure hard work. Honestly, I am not an academic achiever and so I make up for it with my willingness to learn. I choose to believe that in order for me or people like myself to survive and thrive, the keys are hard work, perseverance, honesty, patience and loving what you do. I believe that hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard. I have been a cashier at Focus High School for almost two years now. It has been my first and only job since then. Many things I have learned throughout my time in this position and researched few areas and planned an action on it.

### **Problem identified**

Making it painless: Our Administrators, have enforced and collected fees with a fee schedule so that students know when the fee payment is due with improved transparency in collection. If fee is paid in full amount, discount is being provided. I have also created flexible instalments to enable parents to make payments. When a parent opts to pay by instalment and if they miss their instalment payment date, services will be withdrawn until payment is received. We issue Gate Pass and hall ticket to those who pay fees for last instalment. It's true that without managing fees collection, an institution cannot run which makes it that much important to be focused on resources while collecting fees. We made many easy and hassle-free ways for fee collection.

### **Planned Actions**

With the problems formulated, the following solutions were designed to solve them:

### **• Dynamic fee plans**

Not paying fee on time can have negative effect on student's progress and record.

To avoid this, we provided facility for parents to pay fees in monthly instalments. Also, we give fee due notice to parents before the due date for every fee instalment. In the notice, we state that if fees payment is done before the due date, 2.5% discount on paid amount will be given. This resulted in many parents paying up the fee before time. In this duration, we have collected the maximum amount of fee.

### **• Gate Passes**

Later we informed parents that we are going to issue gate pass to those who paid the fee. We issued fee due notices on different colour paper related to different instalment. Like white colour is related to 1st instalment, pink colour related to 3rd instalment and green colour is related to 4th instalment. This affects parents and as a result, they started paying fees before deadline. This gate pass was pasted on the back of the student's ID card

### **• Automated Due SMS**

An automated SMS was sent from school fee software to the registered mobile phone numbers of the parents who have not paid the school fees post due date. We also communicated with parents through call log and diary notices.

All the above - mentioned activities are implemented over a 48-week period and I hope that in this way, the student fee are paid on time.

# UNDERSTANDING PARENTS: DEALING WITH MISUNDERSTANDING

*by Syed Jafer Asif, Communications Manager*

As an admin team member, handling front office is a very important task for me. Front office is considered as the face of any organization. As a result, you usually see that front office person is a charming Person who welcomes visitors and also deals with any and every kind of tough situation with a smile that is sure to win people over. Most of the tough situations are due to misunderstanding. The most important part is dealing with parents and helping them to remove the misconceptions.

The best way to interact with parents or manage the front desk is to be calm and peaceful. Front office person is a Public Relations Officer. The first step is to listen to parents patiently. Understand and accept the problem they are facing and assure them of a best possible solution. Preferably, make a note of the same to be discussed in the departmental meetings and see

## STOCK MAINTENANCE

*By Mariya Jabeen, Store Manager*

Earlier we used to maintain stock in MS Excel which is quite difficult to maintain as there are too many details like supplier details, total stock issued to whom, inward and outward entries etc. We overcame this problem since we started using proper software and maintain it systematically.

Stock can be maintained in MS Excel, but it does not provide an easy platform to generate reports of stock at the end of year. The auditor asks for hard copy of the stock for physical verification. It is very difficult to generate stock reports in MS Excel whereas this software can easily generate various reports of stock.

Our achievement is to improve the system by configuring Tally software in the store.

## STUDENTS IN ACTION

Firstly, I am honoured to be a student of Focus High School. It is very clean and well maintained. My school teachers are very nice and polite to us. My school has strict norms of study, hygiene and uniform. I like to come to school daily and even my mother says that it is necessary to go to school daily and to follow the school rules. At my school they teach us the necessities of life: manners, punctuality and other required etiquette.

The atmosphere of my school is wonderful. My school follows SSC board norms. My school has classes from nursery to class 10. The Principal, Mr. Minhaj Arastu is

that the concern is addressed and reported to the satisfaction of a parent. Sometimes parents approach with misunderstandings or misinformation. It is important to avoid expressing that the parents are wrong. We can politely state that our school policy doesn't accommodate such things and direct their attention to the school's policies. In this way, even if the matter is escalated to the higher authorities, the risk of conflict and confrontation is minimized to a large extent.

Fee issues, student's behaviour, lack of communication or missing communication link can lead to misunderstanding. Sometimes it is problems at home which gets mixed with school problems resulting in a lot of misunderstanding at school side. Front desk person should possess accurate and correct knowledge and must have clear picture of activities happening daily at school.

## SUCCESSFUL EVENT MANAGEMENT

*By Farman Ali Baig, Building Manager*

As a building manager, I faced many problems initially. Sometimes I forgot to inform housekeeping staff and sometimes I delayed the event arrangements. I couldn't get events arranged on time. Later, I discussed these problems with my leader. He told me to follow up on events arrangement a day before the event, if possible or make arrangements on the same day itself. That's how I got the idea of procedures that I can follow. I prepared my own checklist and coordinated with the housekeeping staff. From then on I keep tracking it and have been successful in completing the arrangement of events on time. After completing the event I take feedback from the event organizer or ask for suggestions that would help me make better arrangements.

## MY SCHOOL

*by Abdul Rahman, Class VI A*

an ideal person. He is the best Principal I have ever met.

All students assemble in the auditorium on Thursday morning, in which we have prayer, pledge, sometimes drama and some interesting facts.

My school provides admission to nursery class students every year. I have different teachers for my different classes like PE, Math, English, Hindi, music, painting and drawing. My school has a beautiful and well-maintained library inside the school campus.

I love my school very much and feel blessed to be a part of it.

# MY SCHOOL, MY PRIDE

*by Abbas Tayabe, Class VI A*

Focus school is my pride because in my school I learn so many things. I meet teachers who love students and talk politely with us. They give us knowledge without which my world would remain dark. I also meet my friends who make my day colourful and bright with their friendship and cooperation.

At school, I get in-school certificate for extra-curricular activities which portrays my personality. I get all round training at school.

My time just flies at school. The school years pass really fast by doing meaningful activities which develops skill.

My school is one of the most popular schools in the city. I feel proud of its various achievements.

In conclusion, I can say that school is indeed my pride. It is where I spend maximum of my time in the company of parent-like teachers and sibling-like peers. I just love my school.

## PARENT'S TALK

## THE CORRECT DOSE OF PAMPERING!

*by Mariya Ali Khan*

A morning hug and a good night kiss can make a day happening and a night peaceful!

Pampering is the essence of life. Whether it is accepted or not, it is a fact that people of all ages feel good to be pampered. It is the most important ingredient of parenting, especially for growing children. Though, it is sad to say that many people do not understand the importance of pampering. They have all sorts of excuses not to pamper their own children. Either they try to justify it by saying that it's not in their nature to pamper anyone or they do not know how to do it and some of them cover it up even more smartly saying that they do not want to spoil their kids, though there's difference between pampering and spoiling a child. There's a thin line between them which very few parents are able to understand and balance.

People assume that good parenting is to be strict with the children. They think that pampering makes children emotionally weak and dependent. Hence, they try to be extra strict with them and ignore them in the name of making them confident and independent. They don't help them in their daily routine chores or studies. They don't spend time with them or give them special attention. They don't share or express their love to them. They overlook all their wishes and desires blindly, without any consideration fearing that they may start taking them for granted, which hurts and disappoints children and make them insecure, aggressive and defiant, though some of them may become street smart but internally they're not happy. Laziness and selfishness are the other reasons for the parents to keep their children deprived of this eternal feeling of love and care, the most precious gift of life called pampering!

Parents who are over emotional and over protective by nature, spoon-feed their children at every step making them over-dependent. They over do in

expressing their love, care and concern. They do all the work for them, do not encourage them to try or initiate anything on their own with the concern of over pressure or over burden on their children. Some of the parents, instead of just helping them out, they even do their homework and school projects for them without the kids involvement or effort. They fulfil all their wishes, reasonable and unreasonable fearing that they may feel disappointed or get offended and get emotionally detached. They don't realize that in the name of pampering they're spoiling their children; such kids take advantage of their fear. They become lazy, disobedient, over confident, demanding, selfish and self centred.

Pampering has to be balanced from the day the child is born. It goes on from how you put them to sleep, feed them, educate them, and so on. Be their mentors, listen to them, guide them, support them, enjoy with them, make them feel wanted, make them feel special, help them, encourage them, motivate them, appreciate them, allow them to learn to do things on their own as per their age. Let them learn from their mistakes and experiences while assuring them you are there for them. When you stop them from doing something they find good or interesting but you do not find it suitable for them in any way or harmful for them, explain it to them clearly with logical reasons. Give them surprise gifts and treats on special occasions and on their achievements, as per their requirements and your budget, whatever you feel is best for them from their wish list.

It is very important for the parents to recognize that pampering is the most important aspect of parenting. If it is done in the way it is supposed to be done, it boosts self-confidence, develops emotional security and makes a child grow up to be a sensible and responsible individual. Pampering, which can be used as a medicine can become equally poisonous if there is an overdose.

## ART GALLERY



Zainab, VIII A



Areeba, IX B



Sadath, VI A



Hashmath, VII B



Tabassum, X A



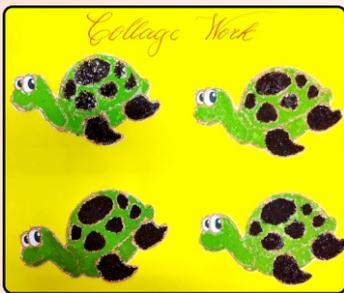
Aleem, VII B



Iyyan, X B



Sohail, VIII A



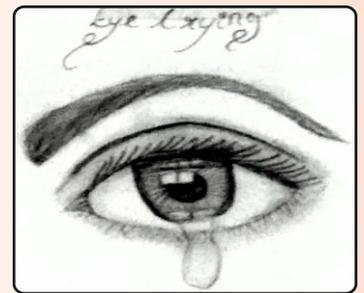
Collage Work, VI A



Kaneez e Abbas, VIII A



String Art, X A



Mayara, VI A



Salt Painting, VIII B



Fazal, VIII A



Collage Work, VII B



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