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*Celebrating 10 Years*

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## Experiential Learning: Emphasis is on Life

### **Vrinda Coutinho**

Director, Deva Matha Central School

Ten Suggestions For Institutional Leaders To Be Successful

Silence in the Classroom - Boon or Bane

AI and the Future of Teachers

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*Celebrating 10 Years*

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## Do Children Need To Keep The Child In Them Alive?

### ■ RASHMI MARIAN FURTADO

Senior Editor, TeacherTribe.world



I have spoken at length about why it's important for us to keep the child in us alive. At the many quiz shows that I have been hosting, I have been fortunate to meet and interact with many educators across India. Funnily enough, the teachers are way more involved and are emotional like a child, but not the students. This has been the behavioural pattern for some time now. Teachers keep the child in them alive, but the students are growing older at a faster pace.




On one side there is a section of the student community that is very creative and innovative. But another part of the community is not able to ideate and innovate as effectively. Most of the ideas and innovations are merely minor adjustments of existing solutions. Has the time come for us to remind our students to keep the child in them alive? Has the advent of technology, social media, excessive exposure and comforts made our students so passive that they have forgotten how to be a child? It may be too soon to ring the alarm bells. But it's time we discuss the advantages and characteristics of a child's mind.

1. **Boundless Imagination** - Boundless imagination is one of most important characteristics of a child's mind. We have to agree that imagination has taken a huge hit among our students and it's time they reignite it.
2. **Endless Curiosity** - Curiosity is a blessing that children have. Us adults have to put in additional effort to stay curious. Curiosity also leads to the ability to question and understand the world around us better.

- 3. Unbounded Creativity** - A strong capability that most children possess, and most adults strive hard to maintain.
- 4. Creative Problem Solving** - Have you wondered how students sometimes are able to come up with simple and effective solutions that seem to be straightforward, but as adults we are not able to think of the same? Unbounded creativity and imagination automatically lead creative problem solving.
- 5. Quick learners** - Children are quick learners. They can learn anything new in a shorter time span than adults.
- 6. Free from Conditioning and Prejudices** - Their minds are free from the unwanted conditioning and prejudices, which helps in focussing more on the above-mentioned characteristics.

So, as teachers it's our responsibility to mould their future while ensuring they keep the child in them alive. In the month of November when we celebrate children, let's help them be children. Albert Einstein said, "The mind that opens to a new idea never returns to its original size." Let's help our children broaden their horizons by tapping into their mental ability and harnessing their gifts. ■



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 Rashmi Furtado

*A natural writer, teacher and a passionate content creator, Rashmi has authored the Cu and Rio series and created the Keystones program on Values Education from Greycaps Knowledge Tribe. She is one of the founders of TeacherTribe.world. She is a sought after speaker at educational conferences, facilitator programs and for motivational talks to students at schools across India. She holds a Master's Degree from the prestigious NIT Suratkal where she also taught before joining Greycaps Knowledge Tribe. Rashmi is also a popular quiz host for schools, colleges and large corporate audiences. She has co-hosted the Tata Crucible quiz, Canara Bank National School Quiz, Travel Quest by Thomas Cook and QNOW it ALL? World Teachers Quiz.*

# Ten Suggestions For The Institutional Leaders To Be Successful

## ■ G. BALASUBRAMANIAN

*G. Balasubramanian is a doyen of school education in India. He has held several positions of leadership at CBSE, including Director Academics. He was the brain behind the introduction of several innovations at CBSE, which included frontline curriculum, communicative approach to language teaching, Information Technology, alternatives to homework, etc. He is also an author, poet and a sought-after speaker at educational conferences world over.*

*This article has been taken from G. Balasubramanian's LinkedIn Page.*



The way academic institutions are being led or to be led is fast changing, thanks to the multidimensional impact on them spearheaded by technology and its allied instruments. The impact is not only significant but so overriding the existing and time-tested methods which are currently operating. The leaders of academic institutions can no longer hold a priestly approach to their leadership, nor can they continue to lead the institutions with whatever they know, or they have been taught. They need to be sensitive not only to the changes that happen transforming the curricular, pedagogical and assessment issues, but the way they lead the human resources at all levels. The fundamentals with which they operate standing on the top of an ivory tower may not be any more valid and may not help them to keep the team glued to either concepts or to processes which are not pragmatic and relate to the current skills. The institutional leader must be an all-rounder

empowered with concurrent skills in all the operatives of institutional management. To be successful in the emerging scenario, the institutional leaders need to keep in mind the following suggestions:

## 1. Avoid Being A Boss

An academic leader is essentially not a 'boss'. The traits of a 'boss' displaying a sense of authority may not yield proper results where equity, authenticity and currency of knowledge is celebrated. As an academic head, the institutional leader should exhibit a sense of readiness to understand, respond, facilitate, lead and mentor the members of the team. The leader should identify the self with the entire team and exhibit a sense of belongingness with everyone. The institutional leader should, as a member of the team feel the relationship, if not the ownership, with others. The leader should function as a lighthouse of knowledge and wisdom. In the emerging knowledge society, this role of the institutional leader as a harbinger of new knowledge and new skills immersed in competencies, is vital.

## 2. Position 'I' In The Right Place

In any teamwork the 'I-we' relationship is important and must be managed with care and poise. Though the academic leader might have brought with the self, years of experience woven with wisdom, they need to understand that the current knowledge dynamics has ushered in newer perspectives of knowledge with which they may have only limited interaction. There may be several members in the team who have had this opportunity and their currency of knowledge may be more appropriate and relevant. This knowledge might help to break several barriers to growth. Hence, hand holding them and moving to the roads less travelled may help them to change the existing picture of the institution. That would indeed mean that the institutional leaders should be able to place their 'I' in a more acceptable position rather than at the top of the tower. I was reading an interesting

book titled, 'what brought you here will not take you there.' They should not have the 'He-Man' or the 'Tarzan' attitude. The institutional leaders need to understand their role both as a game player and as a game-changer.

### 3. Know Where You Are On The Learning Curve

The learning curve is unique to everyone at whatever level they operate. Understanding the professional learning curve and relating it to the institutional curve is important. This offers opportunities for introspection and reflection. The lessons learnt on this exercise will help understand one's position in the learning curve. Further, it will show the inadequacies and the learning gaps to the leader so that they can immediately engage themselves with further learning lest they are marginalised and become dropouts from the system. The inability to move ahead with the learning system and holding to a static position in the learning curve will deprive them of all leadership features sooner than later. Any superficial projection of relocating the self through false practices or recommendations will reveal the reality soon and could lead to self-defeating exercises. As 'digital immigrants' their managing organisations with a population of 'digital natives' is a paradox in educational administration.

### 4. Celebrate The Uniqueness

Every learner is unique. Every colleague in your team is unique. Superimposing one personality over another would lead to intellectual and emotional paralysis. Trying to evaluate uniqueness against a set of given norms would lead to every individual being declared 'short' of the defined goals or expectations. Acknowledging and using the talents and skills of every member of the team, and thereby bringing to light the uniqueness of every member to the learning table is important. Acknowledging uniqueness leads to celebrating the identity, the self-esteem and success of every individual. This will lead to enhancing the trust and confidence of the member on the leadership and supporting and



developing the institution with diverse skills. Schools of the future will be nurseries of human curiosity, innovation, and uniqueness.

## 5. Learn To Appreciate The Team

Institutional leader is not a lone citizen of an island. He is a vibrant constituent of a glorious team that is handed over to him. As much as the leader is hungry of name, fame and power, so are the other constituents of the team. Every member of the team looks for a word of appreciation and a word of praise which could trigger their performance levels. While it is important to correct them when they are wrong, put them on the track when they are likely to derail, it is equally important to give them a word of appreciation. That could drive their adrenaline for better cohesion, cooperation and collaboration. A world of appreciation will help them to open and share their knowledge and experience without any inhibition. As such this would help in developing a legacy of leadership in the organisation. The future academic institutions would need leaders in different verticals, both latitudinally and horizontally. ■

...continue reading the article on the [TeacherTribe.world](https://www.teachertribe.world) website.

## Experiential Learning: Emphasis is on Life

### ■ Vrinda Coutinho

*School Director, Deva Matha Central School,  
Garden City Group of Institutions*

*Vrinda Coutinho is the incumbent School Director for Deva Matha Central Schools (DMCS), under the aegis of Garden City Group of Institutions, Bengaluru.*



*With a postgraduate degree in Business Management and being active in the education sector for more than a decade now, Vrinda has spearheaded path breaking school initiatives, benchmarking her group of schools with the contemporaries. An array of emphatic workshops, training and development modules have adorned her educational journey.*

*An illustrious corporate career has also made Vrinda a woman of great mettle and has added new vantage points to her perspectives and decision-making skills. She loves reading classical literature and is earnestly involved in many social and community initiatives.*

### 1. **If you have to pick 2 major improvements or innovations in the education sector in India, in the past 10 years, what would they be and why?**

I think investing and engaging in faculty training, workshops and creating an overall culture of Innovation for the school has been a game changer in the education industry. Teachers and faculty members have been assessed as the talent pool and, teachers are

being encouraged for brainstorming and discussions to arrive upon path-breaking pedagogies.

Digitisation of education has burgeoned into another top notch improvement in the education sector.

Smartboards, interactive video lessons, quizzes and personalised learning contours are the order of the day. Easy availability of information in the digital universe has indeed changed the face of the ever-evolving education sector.

**Encouraging students to engage in social and community services will seamlessly make them a part of the society and empathise with the difficulties and tribulations of the less fortunate.**

## **2. What have been the top 3 lessons that you learnt in your corporate career that have helped you immensely in the education sector? Why?**

My corporate career enthused the seeds of people management skills in me as a leader. Handling a team of multiple resources with variant skills and personality traits; converging them into a synergy of collaborative team output has been indeed memorable. I also learnt to take failures and adversities in stride and pushed myself to go the extra mile to give quality deliverables to my organisation.

Failures are a quintessential part of the growth spectrum and we should welcome them for the lessons that linger around them. The '360 Degree Feedback' mechanism is another profound takeaway from my corporate career. It gives immense opportunity to create equal pedestals for supervisors and peers to present deep seated development insights about each other. I am personally a stickler of the 360 Degree Feedback methodology and have driven it quite intently in my educational career path too.

### **3. If you had to pick one memorable incident from your stint as an educator, what would it be?**

As educators, we have taken humble inspirations from one of our deep-seated Social Responsibility Initiatives, 'The Special Adult Literacy Programme: Shiksha ka Aarambh'. Under the programme, the student council members were given the responsibility to conduct classes for the 'Housekeeping Staff', under the guidance of faculty members to promote literacy and teach basic reading and writing skills. This empowering initiative for the current academic year 2023-2024 is under the Foundation Literacy and Numeracy Programme (CBSE FLN Programme).

The aforesaid initiative has greatly promulgated the mission and vision of DMCS- 'Emphasis is on Life'- wherein our aim is to encourage experiential learning opportunities that engage in imagination, creativity and innovation through teamwork and collaborative activities.

### **4. What do you think is the most important value that students of today need to have?**

Promoting a culture of community service is at the helm. The future of students and their impact on our society has a predominant influence that determines the progress of human civilisation. Learning environments uplift the holistic development of children and empower them with values and life skills, impacting the foundations of a progressive society and, culture is the key.

Encouraging students to engage in social and community services will seamlessly make them a part of the society and empathise with the difficulties and tribulations of the less fortunate. The eye lens of students needs to be changed. Being partners in the journey of the needy section of the society will evolve them into finer human beings.

## 5. Your school has implemented several initiatives on experiential learning. Which of the initiatives has been most effective and why?

Experiential learning as a concept has always been very catapulting and inspiring. It opens up new avenues of hands on experience for students and bestows life-changing lessons. To promote the right values of social welfare and camaraderie, our students visited the 'Love in Action Charity Trust' and distributed books and goodies as a token of warmth and love. It was a day well-spent with the residents wherein many heartfelt moments were shared.

Students surely enjoyed learning by doing, wherein the life lessons of empathy and compassion came alive. This was indeed a first-hand exploration of the lessons that they have learnt in their life skills textbooks. This is one of the many community visits we have undertaken as a school in past few decades, and our journey still continues with full vitality.

## 6. Your message for teachers & educators...

Keep the flame of freedom of exploration and expression aglow. Always be a learner and look forward to adding new knowledge, skills and experience to your repository of core competencies. The work doesn't stop there. We have to be mindful of transferring our tapestry of learnings to our future generations too. We need to equip them with our best takeaways from the educational journey. It's an uphill task, nevertheless it is incumbent on the present generation of educators to lead by example and carry the mantle forward. ■

# Example Is Better Than Precept

## ■ S. Indira Narayan Educator

*S. Indira Narayan is an educationist with more than 35 years of rich experience in the teaching field. She has held multiple portfolios. She has been associated with St. Ann's High School, ICSE, ISC, Secunderabad, for over three decades, teaching English language and English literature for classes 10, 11 and 12. The last portfolio she held was as Academic Coordinator, St. Ann's High School, at Kompally Hyderabad, under the same management.*



*Indira Narayan has conducted numerous workshops for school teachers and continues to do so. She is also interested in writing and blogs regularly on - <http://vinplaksha.wordpress.com/>*

I would always love to talk to children of the kindergarten and primary classes during break times or when I would walk into their classes when the teacher was absent. In every class, there would always be some smart sparks ready to take over the conversation and some little ones who would take a long time to speak to you. Nonetheless, good 'speakers' were not lacking in this section of class 1.

One particular day during the snack break, a group of children from one of the sections of class 1 literally held my hand and pulled me into their class. A little girl named Pinky was up in arms, picking an argument with a boy in her class. Standing beside, as if accused, was slim and tall (for his age) Sunil of the same class. Suddenly the classroom became a

courtroom with prosecutors and defence lawyers. They were waiting for a judge I am sure.

The case was this, as told by the ‘prosecutor.’ Sunil had written ‘I love you Pinky’, on a small sheet of paper and left it on her desk. The young lady was offended and started scolding Sunil. The boy looked askance and said he had not written the note. His ‘defence lawyer’ friends supported him vociferously saying that it was not Sunil who wrote the words. I asked them to show me the note. Out came a very crumpled, tightly rolled bit of a paper. On uncurling it, I found it was a very small, badly worn-out piece of paper torn from the corner of a notebook. On it was written ‘I love you Pinky’, signed by Sunil. Class one love? It had me jolted!

I looked at Pinky and Sunil by turns, wondering where they learnt these things. One loud voice from the class broke out saying that he saw what Pinky had done. He also said that the handwriting in the note was not Sunil’s (handwriting analyst?) He was RIGHT! On comparing the handwritings, it was easily visible that it belonged to Pinky. So, this was the mystery. Pinky wanted to be Sunil’s friend but Sunil was a somewhat shy boy, good in his studies, close to only a few children in his class. This little ‘love’ploy was the lady’s plan. She tore a piece of paper from her note book, wrote ‘I love Pinky’ on it and wrote ‘from Sunil’ below it, kept it on top of her desk and pretended to have come across it. Then she showed it to some of her friends. The entire class was shocked. Pinky was accosting Sunil at the time I entered. When asked why she did this, she very sheepishly said she wanted to be Sunil’s ‘special friend’. She had not anticipated that her trick would be unravelled so easily.

Is it pure innocence or do we get a not-so-nice glimpse of a tender mind that may go haywire if it is not corrected in time? A question comes to my mind; where did she learn this expression; from movies, parents expressing such feelings in the presence of the child or friends talking about it? Parents, school and society have a conscious role to play in the

upbringing of a child at this impressionable age. We become role models for our children who learn many things by observing their elders.

Narrating this incident reminds me of some more such cases where I find elders somewhat responsible. Let me narrate two of them. The primary section of our school would be over an hour before the middle and senior sections. One afternoon, after the school gave over for the lower classes, the lady servant assigned to check the washrooms and have them cleaned, was in for a surprise. She heard a banging on one of the washroom doors accompanied with frightened screams. She rushed towards the door and found that it was bolted from outside. Locked inside was a primary section girl Rupa, crying copiously. Rupa could only guess who the girl who locked her could be and told the name to a teacher in the staff room. The next morning, that girl was called and on repeatedly asking, she confessed that she had locked Rupa, her classmate, in the washroom. Why did she do it? Pat came the answer - 'when I am naughty at home, my mother locks me in the bathroom for some time. Rupa was mean to me and so I locked her'.

In another case, a teacher of class three came to me to say that one of her students would hit her friends with her school belt if they irritated her. All caution, talking and explaining could put a stop to this for a day or two and it started again. Upon asking her where she learnt this, she said her father would hit her and her brother with his belt when they were naughty. So, what she did was emulate it and also find an outlet for the outrage she would feel whenever she was hit with a belt. Can we say 'example is better than precept' in this case?

Remember parents, teachers and elders, you are being observed closely by children! So, watch out! ■



## Silence in the Classroom - Boon or Bane

■ Bhavna Tandon | Founder, QEDRAK

*Bhavna Tandon holds a Master's degree in Clinical Psychology, a Diploma in Fashion Designing and has 18 years of experience as an Educationist. She has successfully led a team of teachers to attain excellence while stressing upon holistic growth of students.*



*Bhavna is well-versed and adept with the nuances of dealing with children, parents and staff for their mental well-being while working in one of the leading schools in the city of Vadodara. She has also lent her expertise in the development of academic curriculum, not just for generic schooling but also for students struggling with emotional, behavioural and academic concerns.*

*In January 2021, she founded QEDRAK, with an aim to plug the gaps in school education by enabling School institutions for restructuring and aligning their operations to NEP 2020, as well as empowering teachers through the variety of QEDRAK professional development courses, workshops and webinars.*

In today's fast-paced world, silence seems like a luxury! With constant notifications on the phone, the ever-present hum of technology, ears stuffed with air pods, the continuous bluster of traffic, and a restless world.... I am not surprised that silence doesn't find a place quickly in our lives. However, silence can be a powerful tool for students and teachers. In this article, we'll explore the less talked about concept of "Silence in the Classroom – boon or bane", delving into the factors influencing it, its benefits and challenges.

Students' silence in the classroom has lately become an area of attention for educators and scholars. However, the factors influencing students' classroom silence have been regarded as a problem of the relationship and communication between the educator and the learners. These are pivotal factors in understanding and addressing classroom silence.

Years back, when I began teaching, one of the questions that always echoed through my mind was whether to embrace silence in the classroom. For me, a traditional classroom was where teachers talked, students listened and discussions happened. It was a place where talking was teaching, and the students' silence was golden. That Golden Silence, as I understood, was more about exerting power over pupils and restoring order. At least when I was a student, teachers would expect pin-drop silence in the class to ensure discipline and complete control. The most commonly used phrase, "finger on your lips", was a favourite amongst teachers and class monitors. Maintaining silence was a way to create an environment where students could focus on the teacher's instruction and absorb the information being shared to acknowledge the teacher's expertise and authority. I wouldn't say I liked the idea of a silent classroom in those days, as I found it very restrictive and suppressive from a student's perspective. However, when I became an educator, I learned to appreciate the profound impact that silence could have on the teacher and the taught, and thus on the teaching and learning process. It's important to note that the approach to classroom discipline has evolved. Modern educational theories and practices promote more interactive and student-centred learning environments. While silence still has a crucial role in certain situations, many educators aim to balance maintaining order and fostering a more dynamic and engaged classroom environment.

So, silence in the classroom can neither be strictly classified as a boon nor a bane. Its impact depends on how it is used within the educational context. It can be beneficial and challenging, depending on various factors and how it is integrated into the teaching and learning process.

Let me highlight how it can be helpful, if used judiciously, to enhance children's learning experiences.

To begin with, a creative way is to allocate 'ME Time' during the day from lower grades onward. It could last from 15 minutes to half an hour, depending on its objective and the teacher's and student's needs. This particular time could be utilised in the following ways:

- **Reflect & Introspect:** Students must be allowed to quietly/silently reflect on what they've learned and process new information, thoughts and experiences, making meaningful linkages with their real world.
- **Setting personal goals:** Students can be encouraged to set personal goals, both academic and non-academic, to help them develop a sense of purpose and motivation.
- **Guided mindfulness and relaxation activities:** Such methods and techniques can help students manage stress, improve focus and enhance emotional well-being.
- **Journal Writing:** Providing silent time for students to write in a personal journal entry can encourage introspection, self-expression, creativity and a means to process their thoughts and experiences.
- **Silent Reading or Learning:** Allowing students to choose a book to read independently or explore a topic of interest can promote a sense of autonomy and a love for learning. For silent reading, DEAR Time (Drop Everything and Read Time) is a common practice in schools today. It can be a meaningful practice only if DEAR Time applies to all present in the school; from the guards, peons and support staff to the teachers, students and leaders, everyone should pick up something to read in quietude.

Unfortunately, oftentimes in the classroom, for a lot of students, the opposite of speaking is waiting to speak again. Students mostly think about what they want to say, rather than listen to what others have to say. Building a culture of silence as part and parcel of a regular class session can be a boon. Ideally for 'silence' to be an effective tool in the classroom one can look at the benefits it offers:

- As an educator, I realise that silence can work to the advantage of teachers and students, especially in enhancing communication skills. Remaining silent helps students focus on the teachers' explanations and develop their listening skills. I used to think, 'Be attentive and listen carefully!' were the be-all and end-all phrases for students to listen, aka 'Sit straight and pretend to listen!' I took some time to realise that active listening is a critical part of the teaching and learning process. Listening is not a 'soft' skill, but a paramount component of communication and collaboration that caters to students' socio-emotional development. Inviting students to pause, reflect, pair and share allows them to participate in their learning.

They listen to what others are saying and learn to respect and appreciate diverse perspectives. Teachers can model active listening skills, but there is no substitute for students practising those skills in the classroom with classmates, beginning with pairs. So, once the students get into active listening mode, it leads to better comprehension and improved communication skills.

- A silent classroom also fosters 'inclusion'. Not all students learn in the same way. Some may need extra time to process information or think deeply about a topic. Silence ensures that all students get an equal opportunity to formulate and reorganise their thoughts, thereby eliminating the dominance of more vocal or assertive students and creating space for those who are less vocal and hesitant to participate actively.

I remember a student named Naman, from the early primary wing, who often felt anxious about speaking in class. This was very different from how he was in his kindergarten years, when he would participate freely in any discussion. But to my surprise, he had become reluctant to share his thoughts, fearing judgment from his peers as he would usually say random things without any relevance to the topic being discussed. I was his English teacher and understood his struggle. To help him overcome his anxiety, I introduced short moments of silence before discussion and Q&A sessions. During these moments, Naman found solace. He could gather his thoughts and formulate his responses, and with motivation and appreciation, he could voice himself fearlessly. This simple practice boosted Naman's confidence, transforming him into an active participant in class discussions. A solution like this ensures that diverse voices are heard and valued, leading to richer discussions and a more equitable learning experience.

- Silence in the classroom is a valuable tool for cultivating critical thinking, analytical ability and logical reasoning in students. It provides the mental space and conducive environment necessary for deep contemplation and the ability to analyse and thus encourages thoughtful responses. These skills serve students well academically and are highly transferable to real-world problem-solving and decision-making, thereby ensuring that learning was happening at the higher levels of Bloom's Taxonomy pyramid – extending into analysis, evaluation & creation. ■

...continue reading the article on the [TeacherTribe.world](#) website.

## AI and the Future of Teachers

■ **Dr. Uzma Akhtar Ansari**  
*PGT Economics, Allenhouse Public  
School Khalasi line, Kanpur*

*Dr. Uzma Akhtar Ansari has been a classroom teacher for the past 10 years in various capacities and grade levels. She is a qualified UGC NET and has completed her PhD in Economics from Kanpur University. Dr. Uzma has received the 'Exceptional Academic Mentor Award' by AKS Education Awards and 'Innovation Ambassador Award' by the School Innovation Council, Ministry of Education.*



The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into education has the potential to reshape the role of teachers in the future. However, it is important to note that AI has the potential to greatly enhance education and bring about positive changes. Here are a few ways in which AI could impact the teaching profession:

**Personalised Instruction:** AI can assist teachers in delivering personalised instruction by analysing student data and providing insights into individual learning needs. This can help teachers tailor their teaching methods and content to address the unique requirements of each student.

**Administrative Tasks:** AI can automate routine administrative tasks such as grading, scheduling and data management. By alleviating teachers' administrative burdens, they can devote more time to lesson planning, student engagement and providing personalised support.

**Intelligent Tutoring:** AI-powered tutoring systems can provide students with additional support outside the classroom. These systems can offer targeted instruction, adaptive feedback and individualised learning pathways, extending the reach of teachers and addressing students' specific learning gaps.

**Content Creation and Curation:** AI can assist teachers in creating and curating educational materials. It can generate interactive lessons, recommend relevant resources and help in developing engaging learning content. Teachers can then focus on adding their expertise, context and creativity to these materials.

**Collaboration and Communication:** AI can facilitate collaboration and communication among teachers. It can support knowledge-sharing platforms, provide access to best practices and foster professional development opportunities. This can create a networked community of educators who can learn from each other and collaborate on innovative teaching approaches.

However, it is important to note that while AI can enhance certain aspects of education, it cannot replace the unique qualities that human teachers bring to the classroom. Teachers play a crucial role in building relationships, providing emotional support, fostering critical thinking skills and guiding students' overall development. The responsible integration of AI into education should be aimed at augmenting these aspects rather than replacing them.

The future of teaching will likely involve a harmonious collaboration between AI and human teachers. AI can act as a valuable tool, complementing teachers' expertise and enabling them to focus on higher-order skills such as creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, and socio-emotional learning, which are essential for preparing students for the complex. ■

# Amazing Health Benefits Of Cucumber

## ■ Dr. Vivek Baliga

Cardiologist and Consultant Physician

*Dr. Vivek Baliga B. is a consultant physician and cardiologist, and director of Baliga Diagnostics in Bengaluru. He is a keen advocate of patient education and loves to blog about all things health-related. Learn more about him at [drivekbaliga.com](http://drivekbaliga.com).*



Everyone has a diet that works. Many make claims that sometimes sound too good to be true, making it hard to know what to choose. Over the years, I have met a lot of people who have tried different diets, like the keto diet, the DASH diet, the HCG diet, and so on.

The cucumber diet is one type of eating plan that some people follow. Even though it sounds strange, cucumbers are good for your health in a number of ways. If you have ever wondered, 'are cucumbers healthy?' this article will answer your question.

Let's look at what cucumbers have to offer in terms of nutrition.

## The Cucumber

This green vegetable doesn't look like much, but has a huge number of fans. Cucumber is not only thought of as a healthy food, but it is also used in many beauty products around the world. Pumpkins and watermelons are also in the same family as cucumbers. This family is called Cucurbitaceae. It is mostly water, just like the other vegetables in



this group. This makes it a great way to stay hydrated if you don't have any water with you on a hot summer day. But if it's mostly water, does it really provide any nutrients? Is it good for you to eat cucumber?

Yes! That's the clear answer. Let's look at why that is.

## Health benefits of cucumber

Cucumbers are good for more than just keeping you hydrated. They have nutrients that can protect the brain, make the skin look younger, and even reduce inflammation.

### 1. Cucumbers reduce cancer risk

Lignans are a group of chemicals that are found in cucumbers. These are polyphenol compounds, which can lower the chance of getting cancer. In particular, it seems to protect against breast cancer, cancer of the uterus and ovaries, and cancer of the prostate. Also, cucumbers have a chemical called cucurbitacins that can change how some of the body's signalling pathways work. It is thought that this change will lower the risk of getting some kinds of cancer.

### 2. Cucumbers protect your heart

For our heart to work well, it needs vitamins and minerals. Heart disease is becoming more common around the world, but not many people do what they need to do to keep their hearts healthy.

Potassium is a mineral that the heart needs to work well. It is needed for the heart muscle to work efficiently when it contracts and relaxes.

If you don't get enough potassium in your diet, it can change the way your heart beats. Cucumbers are rich in potassium, which helps keep the heart beating normally. They also help keep blood pressure in check by controlling the amount of potassium in the body.

So, yes, eating cucumbers can keep your blood pressure low, reduce the stress on your heart, and protect your heart.

### 3. Cucumbers are loaded with vitamins

Cucumber is full of vitamins and minerals, even though it might not look like it. In particular, it contains vitamin A, vitamin B, vitamin C, copper, manganese and vitamin K. Vitamins and minerals are very important for keeping all of the body's vital organs in good shape. Cucumbers give your body the vitamins and minerals it needs in a healthy way.

### 4. Cucumber protects your eyes and skin

Have you ever used cucumber to take care of your skin? Cucumber has cooling and anti-inflammatory effects that come from their natural makeup. Putting thin slices of cucumber over your closed eyes can help improve the look and feel of your skin, get rid of dark circles, and even calm your eyes.

Because cucumber extracts are good for the skin, they are now used in face packs. Cucumbers have vitamin E, which has the ability to help new collagen grow. Collagen is a part of the skin that helps keep it smooth and flexible. It can help get rid of wrinkles around the eyes by making collagen stronger.

Vitamin C has antioxidant properties and can make your skin look younger and brighter.

### 5. Keeps your breath fresh!

Some people think that putting a piece of cucumber on the roof of the mouth will help get rid of bad breath

### 6. Maintains healthy weight

If you want to lose weight, you need to cut the number of calories you eat and work out regularly. Cucumber is a very low-calorie

food, and if you eat it as part of a low-calorie diet, it can even fill you up. About 16 calories are in a cup of sliced cucumber, which doesn't take long to burn off. There is also a lot of soluble fibre in cucumbers. Soluble fibre makes you feel fuller for longer, which can keep you from snacking on unhealthy foods.

## 7. Cucumber protects your brain

One of the many ways cucumber can be used, is to protect the brain. It has an anti-inflammatory in it called fisetin, which has been shown in clinical studies to improve memory and lower your risk of getting Alzheimer's.

## 8. Cucumber relieves heartburn

Have you ever had acidity and burning in your stomach that was hard to deal with? Acid peptic disease is a common problem and one of the most common reasons people go to the doctor these days. Cucumbers are cooling, and they can help relieve symptoms of acidity.

## 9. Cucumber strengthens bones

Cucumbers have caffeic acid and vitamin C, which is known to help keep bones healthy and strong. Silica in the environment can also help build strong bones.

Because of these health benefits, cucumber is a great food for keeping a healthy weight. In fact, if cucumber juice is good for you, why not use it? You'll get the health benefits of cucumber in a cool drink.

If you have ever wondered about cucumber health benefits, then I hope this article has answered your question. Make sure this vegetable is a regular part of your diet, either in a salad or as a snack. ■

## RescueTime

Managing time and regulating hours spent on various digital platforms can be difficult to monitor.



# RescueTime

However, certain applications can help achieve the goal.

RescueTime is a personal productivity tracker. It helps users manage time and complete tasks as per schedule. It gives insight into how one passes the time on a desktop or mobile device.

### Features:

- The app allows for automatic time tracking without manual editing of time or tracking apps.
- It gives detailed reports with graphs and other visualisation of productive and unproductive tasks for users.
- It can help users set goals they want to achieve in a duration of time.
- It blocks distraction and monitors idle time spent on the devices as well as tracks time spent on the apps.
- RescueTime helps boost focus and completion of tasks.
- The app can be integrated into Evernote and Google Calendar among other applications.
- RescueTime does not have a start/stop button and its icon features on the system tray of the device.

### How does it help teachers?

- Teachers can gauge the time spent on various apps and help regulate the usage.
- The app helps users learn their productivity score and how to better their concentration and focus on tasks. ■

## Left-Brained or Right-Brained?

### ■ VARSHA PRASAD

Editor, TeacherTribe.world



Looking at a few school children winning medals for their performance at a quiz competition transported me back to my school days. During my school days, toppers each year were awarded medals along with a certificate of merit. It never occurred to me until recently that these were given to students with good performances in maths and science only! Being a student who has always enjoyed languages and arts, I was always one of the top scorers in these subjects, be it English, or other languages I had opted for. Though not poor in studies, I was never a ‘topper’ in science or maths, due to which I never received a medal in school.

Looking back, I wonder why people never took (take) subjects like languages and arts as seriously as they take maths and science. Why are other subjects always given more importance than languages and arts? Aren’t these as important as maths and science? This again reminds me of another incident. After completing my pre-university in science subjects, I decided to move to humanities, looking forward to a future in writing and journalism. The reaction I got from people around me, still surprises me. There were some who thought I was a ‘dropout’ due to which I was leaning towards humanities. There were some who advised me that leaving behind science was the biggest mistake I was making. There were also some who didn’t say anything, but gave me the

empathetic look that is usually reserved for people who have already lost their way in life. It initially bothered me on why people were being so indifferent towards me. But once I started enjoying what I was learning, the others' opinions did not bother me.

This is a two-fold topic that needs discussion. Firstly, the way languages and humanities as a subject is treated and secondly, the lack of knowledge on these subjects, leading people to believe that it is those who have no hope in life that choose these subjects. It is high time we address these and start having a broader outlook.

NEP 2020 has taken the right approach towards this issue and addressed it -, *'The curriculum must include basic arts, crafts, humanities, games, sports and fitness, languages, literature, culture, and values, in addition to science and mathematics, to develop all aspects and capabilities of learners; and make education more well-rounded, useful, and fulfilling to the learner. Education must build character, enable learners to be ethical, rational, compassionate, and caring, while at the same time prepare them for gainful, fulfilling employment.'*

NEP 2020 also mentions 'promoting multilingualism and the power of language in teaching and learning', as one of the fundamental principles that will guide both the education system at large, as well as the individual institutions.

This brings us back to how each of our brains are wired uniquely. While some are left-brained people, the others are right-brained. According to Nobel Prize winner and psychobiologist Roger W. Sperry's theory, the brain's two hemispheres function differently. The left brain is more analytical, verbal and orderly than the right brain. It is sometimes also called the 'digital brain'. It is better at things like reading, writing and computations. The right brain is more visual and instinctive. It is referred to as the 'analog brain'. It has a more creative and less

organised way of thinking. While one can associate the left brain with logic, facts, linear thinking and mathematics, the right brain can be associated with imagination, arts, holistic thinking, etc.

Left-brained people tend to lean towards careers and subjects like mathematics, while right-brained people lean towards languages and arts. This does not mean that a left brained person does not like or cannot comprehend the qualities associated with the right brain or vice versa. It only means that he/she is more inclined towards the left or the right brain.

With science and research supporting the fact that people are either inclined towards arts or mathematics, based on their brain biology, it is wrong to force children to 'choose' a particular field in education only for the reason that the others consider it 'important'.

The role of teachers and parents is paramount, in encouraging children to choose subjects they enjoy and to give importance to all subjects equally. As they are the support system and role models for children, their constant support and encouragement plays a major role in shaping or breaking a child. For this, it is important for the parents and teachers to be aware of -

- The career options available
- The courses offered in various field
- The education policies and what they recommend
- Be aware of the importance of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities

Apart from these, it is very important for parents and teachers to observe the competencies that children have, and guide them in the right direction. They can -

- Encourage children to explore their interests
- Motivate them to pursue their dreams
- Provide opportunities for both left and right-brained students in class. ■

At the end of the day, work that is enjoyed more will reap better rewards. Do you have any thoughts to share on this topic? Write to me at [varsha@greycaps.com](mailto:varsha@greycaps.com).

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*Varsha Prasad is leading TeacherTribe.world initiative from Greycaps Knowledge Tribe, exclusively for teachers, as its Editor. She is also the Editor of TeacherTribe.world magazine. It is created by Greycaps Knowledge Tribe to celebrate the contributions of our teachers. She has played a vital role in creating many products, which ignite the curiosity of children, including the Global Awareness Program, also known as GAP in schools.*