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Let's Talk About Bullying



Vandana Saxena

Principal, Learning
Paths School, Mohali

Relevance Of
Play In
Formative Learning

Teachers - Building
Futures | Part 2

Simple Ways To
Strengthen Your
Knee

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What Is The Value Of Having Open Discussions?

■ **RASHMI MARIAN FURTADO**
Senior Editor, TeacherTribe.world



Often as adults, our approach towards students is that they are young and do not understand situations or life the way we do. While it may be the truth, this approach has a flipside. This prevents the students to come to us with the problems they face and have open discussions, as we are constantly making them feel that they are immature and don't have a complete understanding of life.

With the kind of emotional and mental turmoil students go through today, it's important for them to feel the comfort to have an open discussion with a trusted adult. It's a sad truth that this trusted adult is mostly the therapist and no longer the parents or teachers. Bullying, social media, competition between contemporaries, pressure on academic performance, delicate family situations, abuse are all the issues the students of today face. One may argue that students upto a certain age are not on social media, but that doesn't mean there is no pressure on looking a certain way or buying certain toys, games and brands or going to specific destinations on vacations. They may not be on social media, but the pressure of so called trendy and classy social life, exists.

Being honest with ourselves and the students is vital. Firstly, we need to admit that the maturity and experience we have is from the mistakes that we have made, that are more in number than our students. When




our students realise that our mistakes have provided us with the clarity on how to make better decisions, they will find the courage to speak to us and find the trusted adult they need.

Today, honest discussions help with the safety and security of our students. It will help our students to open up about the mental and emotional turmoil they face. It could be uncomfortable family situations, it could be about abuse, it can also be about anxiety or depression that they feel. Whatever they may be facing, speaking about it is the first step they take towards finding a solution.

So, as responsible adults, let's motivate our students to open up about themselves and what they feel to someone they trust. Let us help children enjoy their childhood and not get entangled in emotions that don't help them, with a simple first step of speaking up. Let us be the mature friend to them, we needed when we were their age. And as always, TeacherTribe.world will be by your side and be your trusted friend. ■

Yours Positively!
Rashmi Furtado



 @rashmimfurtado
 @rashmimfurtado
 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.

Relevance Of Play In Formative Learning

■ 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.



Play has a particularly important and significant role in the formative classrooms. It is an integral part of the learning input and has never to be considered external to a learning situation. Teachers need to be adequately trained to adopt play as a pedagogy in the course of curriculum and in clarifying concepts to ensure effective understanding.

Play, as a pedagogical strategy, can help in improving cognition, optimal emotional responses, accepting credible and valid feedback for improvement of performance. At the formative stage, it is a wonderful tool to enhance the quality and effectiveness of relationships.

Play as a strategic pedagogical intervention, will help in effective cognition, cognitive consolidation, cognitive response to non-curricular domains and in expanding the horizon of knowledge from known spaces to unknown spaces. It eliminates fear of learning, adventurism in learning, compulsive learning, forced learning and threatened learning.

What are the advantages of the play-way method in formative classrooms?

- It facilitates stress-free learning.
- It helps in informal learning.
- It provides opportunities for peer learning.
- It helps in collaborative exercises for learning.
- It triggers curiosity.
- It is engaging and experiential.
- It helps in self-learning and self-directed learning.
- It helps to build a self-image and confidence profile.

How could teachers adopt play for effective formative learning?

- Teachers could provide play to have a fun-filled environment to enhance the comfort levels of the learners.
- They can organise play to build a positive mindset among the learners.
- Play can be used to prepare a team spirit and to accept the members of the team as they are.
- Play can be used to accept failures and to trigger better effort towards goal-directed behaviours.
- Play can be used to develop logical thinking, critical thinking and problem solving alongside spatial/visual competencies.
- Play can be used to organise coordinated kinesthetic mobilities with bodily consciousness
- Play can be used to improve several sensory responses and to improve coordination between sensory organs.
- Play can be used to interpret value consciousness and respect interpersonal relationships.
- Play can be used for testing boundaries and move towards open vistas of knowledge as an exercise towards learning to learn.
- Play can be used to improve reflection of performance and self-assessments for improvement.

play could help in improving and consolidating integrated sensory coordination and responses. E.g. Eye-eye coordination, eye-ear coordination, eye-hand coordination, eye-ear coordination and the like. The most critical part of the play way method is personal involvement of the teacher or the parent so that there is a free intercourse of emotions, feelings and dialogues so that learning environment is liberated and offers a conducive environment and opportunity for joyful learning.

Parents also have a significant role in empowering the learning profile of their children before they enter into the formal schools. The NEP has said this in no uncertain terms. Preparing the child to go to school by providing a conducive learning environment at home is an important indicator in the NEP.

Play helps in ensuring the following in the learner:

- Cognitive competencies
- Emotional competencies
- Kinesthetic competencies
- Listening competencies
- Communicative skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Organised behaviour
- Discipline and self-regulation
- Respect for law and rules/regulations
- Planning and readiness

Transformational exercises must be carried out to make the teachers and parents understand the emerging approaches to implement the curriculum more meaningfully.

Schools would do well to revisit their idea and concept of play in schools beyond the routine games or as an exercise that is instrumental to fun and enjoyment. “The creation of something new is not accomplished by the intellect but by the play instinct,” says Carl Jung. ■

Let's Talk About Bullying

■ Vandana Saxena

Principal, Learning Paths School, Mohali

Vandana Saxena is the Principal of Learning Paths School, Mohali. She has illuminated the path for countless young minds over three decades. Her contributions have been recognised with notable accolades, including the 'Tricity Educators Award'. As a certified CBSE resource person, she has trained over a hundred teachers in North India.



As a principal for disadvantaged students at The Tribune School, Vandana undertook a paradigm shift, revamping the curriculum to spotlight creative expression. This innovation earned her national acclaim, including the prestigious Ashoka Change Maker's and TERI Search Impact Awards. Currently, at the Learning Paths School, she has introduced ground-breaking practices of self-reflection and a comprehensive counselling framework.

With experience backed by engagements at global institutions like IIM-Ahmedabad and Harvard's Graduate School of Education, Vandana has seamlessly integrated language proficiency, innovative assessments and collaborative approaches into the educational matrix.

As a principal for over a decade, I have closely observed what bullying can do to a child. Bullying can affect everyone—those who are bullied, those who bully and those who witness bullying. Through this article I hope to inform parents and teachers that it is important to talk to kids regarding bullying. We need to inform that it can have serious impact on their well-being, and they should raise their voice if they experience it.

Bullying is an unfortunate reality in schools and communities worldwide, and its consequences can be devastating, especially for the victim. It's not just a part of growing up, it's a pervasive issue that can have long-lasting effects on a child's mental health. Kids who are bullied can experience varied kinds of issues that may include negative physical, social, emotional, academic and mental health issues.

Research has consistently shown that being a victim of bullying takes a significant emotional toll on children. **Children who have been bullied can become socially isolated, withdrawn or reluctant to attend school, hindering their academic and personal growth.** When you're being bullied, you can feel constantly insecure and on guard. Even if you're not actively being bullied, you're aware it could start anytime. It has a big mental and emotional impact—you feel unaccepted, isolated, angry and withdrawn. You're always wondering how you can do better and how you can escape a bully's notice. You're also stunted because of the constant tension and because maybe you forego making certain friendships or miss out on taking certain chances that could actually help your development.

Research has found that children who were bullied experienced negative physical health. They experience anxiety and depression and can also experience eating disorders. Chronic stress resulting from bullying can trigger physiological responses, such as elevated cortisol levels, which, over time, can lead to long-term health problems, including cardiovascular issues. The toll on a child's physical health can persist into adulthood, further emphasising the urgency of addressing this issue.

Kids who are bullied often suffer academically too. Bullied kids struggle to focus on their schoolwork. In fact, slipping grades is one of the first signs that the child is being bullied. A study conducted by the University of Virginia showed that kids who attend a school with a severe climate of bullying often have lower scores on standardised tests. Bullying even impacts students who witness it!

Not only this, but there can also be a long lasting impact extending well into adulthood. In fact, one study found that the consequences of being bullied by peers may have a greater impact on mental health in adulthood than originally thought. What's more, the impact may be even more significant than being mistreated by adults.

Parents can play a crucial role in prevention of bullying. In my opinion, it is very important that parents build an environment at home of trust and open communication. Take out time every day to talk to your children and ask them questions about how their day at school went. Listen to them when they speak. By doing that, the child understands that the parents are interested to know about their day.

Having a conversation around boundaries and why bullying is not okay, is also very important. Children will not know right from wrong until unless it is explained to them. By giving examples on how bullying happens, the child gets clarity.

Last but not the least, set up a good example. Children learn a lot by observing. The way you talk to others and behave with others is where the child picks clues on how to behave. ■

Teachers - Building Futures

Part 2

■ Lt Gen. Arun Anathanarayan

Lt Gen. Arun is the General Officer Commanding Dakshin Bharat Area, prior to which he was Director General, Strategic Planning at the Army HQ.



Lt Gen. Arun's stint with the armed forces began when he joined the National Defence Academy (NDA), opting not to join the IIT, despite an all-India rank of 13. He has enormous experience in planning and delivery of personnel management and logistics in International Task Forces across terrains like Cambodia and Sierra Leone, to forecasting and structuring of large at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. He has completed the prestigious Senior Mission Leaders Course conducted by the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

Lt Gen. Arun has multiple master's degrees and is a Fellow of the 'Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies' in Canberra, Australia. A veteran of many a battle, he is a recipient of the Sena Medal for Gallantry, Yudh Seva Medal for Outstanding Leadership in Conflict, the Vishisht Seva Medal for Distinguished Leadership and Outstanding Service in Jan 2018. He has also been awarded the Chief of Army Staff's Commendation four times in addition to the 'North Star Medal for Excellence'.

He is also a sought-after public speaker who has conducted about 800 sessions across a variety of audiences on varied topics.

5. What according to you are some of the challenges that school leaders face and how can they be prepared for it?

Leaders are those who are able to see the future. That is why they are called leaders. The future is not always predicted by forecasting the trends of the past or the present. It is also by looking into the future...for which we need visionaries. But not everybody has got that gift. The second-best gift, if you do not have the first one, is the willingness and the ability to be proactive and accept change as it comes.

- The 'human phase' in teaching is going to be replaced by electronic or electronically assisted machines. This is already clear now. But we are multiple countries in one country. While what we are speaking might be very urban and what is true for only a small percentage of India, there is still a huge percentage that is a couple of paces behind. It will take us a while to get past all of these.

Content is available across, but will a teacher be replaced by an electronically created smart bot or a humanoid? The answer is NO! Because you will still need the kindness, the compassion and the patience. You will still require the human ability to loop multiple things together. The teacher should have to accept the new role.

- Here is another major challenge. Typically, in schools, school leaders are picked based on their academic excellence. But we end up dumping the entire administration of the school on them. I think this is incorrect. I strongly believe that at a leadership level, there needs to be two distinct positions – one who runs the school administration and one who runs the school academics. You should not load one with the other as each of them is a separate specialisation.

A best school leader, academics, is one who is not saddled with administrative responsibilities alone and vice versa, because both

these are full-time responsibilities. Ideally, a principal must take 2 to 3 classes a day, he or she should teach their subject like any other normal teacher and should sit into the meetings of head of departments for briefings, apart from managing his/her role as a principal.

- I also think standalone schools will disappear, because with content being available easily, it is possible to centralise the formulation or the presentation of a topic or a subject, put in all resources into one basket and use the content to disseminate it outwards.
- The other change that will come by is the issue of outsourcing. There will be more of professional who will come by to teach a segment or a chapter.
- Industry interphase into high school education will increase exponentially, because we expect the students to be either highly educated or highly skilled. For that, industries will start reaching out to highschoolers.
- Man-management – This is a problem because we are in a generation which is agile. The wanderlust is too strong, and everyone wants to move often. But if you want to build an institution, you need permanency. The leader might be permanent, but if the bricks in the building are moving around, it becomes very difficult to build an institution.

With all these changes around, the real challenge for school leaders will be to manage these changes and continue with the regular exams and assessments.

6. Can you please share an incident of how you have seen people react to change?

Here is an interesting incident that happened recently. During a

session I was having with schools and school teachers, I saw a young teacher seated in the front row with a few younger girls, all draped in sarees. I asked the young teacher if she had asked her high school girls to come dressed to pose as teachers. She told me that all the 11 young girls with her were her students in school, who had graduated, had finished their BEd. and had rejoined the same school as teachers. That for me, was an example of building an institution! It is retaining legacy and building a tradition. The kids in school will know about this and it will become an interesting tradition to have.

Regarding people reacting to changes, I have observed that a few of the older leaders, those who do not have frequent contact with students, don't quite respect the youth as they should. This is for a variety of reasons. One can be due to the simple reason that we never argued with teachers or elders during our time. These teachers would have grown up in an era where argument was not considered polite, disagreement was an absolute taboo and dissent was unheard of. Argument today is the essence of learning. I believe that argument is the best form of education.

7. **A message from you to the educators...**

You all have the best job in the world... after probably mine! But you should always believe that you have the best job in the world. If you see yourself as just teachers/school leaders and principals, you are doing yourself and the system grave injustice. You should see yourselves as somebody who is building the future, not just of the school, the city or the country, but of the world. If you see the enormity of what you are delivering in those few hours in class, I am sure you will go back and say, 'Wow', and you will tell yourself that you are doing an awesome job each time you step out of home, to work. And each time you do that, you start doing a better job and we'll end up having a better country. That's the way you need to see yourself, as that's the way we all see you! ■

Simple Ways To Strengthen Your Knee

■ **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 drvivekbaliga.com.



Strengthening the knee joint and keeping it that way is crucial for a healthy lifestyle. The capacity to walk, run and leap depends on the health of the knee joint because of the support and stability it provides for the rest of the body. Yet, knee discomfort and pain can develop with age or after an injury.



To avoid this, consider the following six methods for bolstering your kneecap's stability and strength.

1. **Maintain your weight**

Extra kilos place extra stress on your knees, which can cause injury and discomfort. By keeping your weight where it should be, you can reduce pressure on the joint and boost its durability. Maintaining a healthy weight can be accomplished by eating a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, complete grains and lean protein.

2. Exercise daily

Regular exercise is essential for keeping the knee joint strong. Cycling, swimming and yoga are examples of low-impact exercises that can aid with joint flexibility and mobility. Joint strength can also be increased by working the muscles around the knee, specifically the quadriceps, hamstrings and calves.

3. Hydrate well

Maintaining healthy joints requires a commitment to adequate hydration. As a result, the likelihood of damage to the cartilage in the knee is decreased.

4. Eat foods rich in calcium

Bone and joint health can be maintained in part by eating foods high in calcium and vitamin D. Dairy products, leafy greens and fortified cereals are all good sources of calcium, and fatty fish, egg yolks, and fortified meals are all good sources of vitamin D.

5. Wear the right footwear

To lessen the force exerted on the knee joint during exercise, use shoes with appropriate arch support. Try to find some shoes with a good amount of padding and arch support.

6. Take a break

Reducing strain on the knee joint during physical activity is as simple as taking a rest every so often. Don't overwork the joint by doing the same thing repeatedly without taking breaks to stretch and relax. Exercises to strengthen the knee joint.

Let's discuss ways to strengthen the knee joint through exercise.

Squats: Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and lower your body down as if you're sitting in a chair. Keep your knees behind your toes and your back straight. Hold the position for a few seconds and then slowly

rise back up. Repeat for 10-15 repetitions.

Step-ups: Find a step or platform that's around knee height. Step onto it with one foot and then step back down. Repeat 10-15 repetitions on one leg before switching to the other.



Squats

Lunges: Stand with your feet hip-width apart and take a large step forward with one leg. Lower your body down until both knees are bent at a 90-degree angle. Hold the position for a few seconds and then rise back up. Repeat 10-15 repetitions on one leg before switching to the other.



Step-ups

Leg curls: Lie face down on a mat with your legs straight out behind you. Slowly bend one leg and lift your heel towards your buttocks, keeping the other leg straight. Hold the position for a few seconds and then slowly lower your leg back down. Repeat 10-15 repetitions on one leg before switching to the other.



Lunges

In conclusion, a strong knee joint is essential for an active and healthy lifestyle.

Joint health can be enhanced through a combination of a healthy diet, frequent exercise and effective weight management. Joint strength can also be increased by doing workouts that target the muscles close to the knee. Never begin a new workout program without first talking to your doctor. ■

No Time to Play

■ **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/>

When we were young, life had a certain system, a time table as it were. Time to wake up (after a proper night's sleep), getting ready for school, off to school, happy to be with friends, sharing thoughts, learning, eating and playing together. Once home, we would rush out to play after changing our clothes, eating a snack, etc. Play time was a must, but with time restrictions. There was enough time to complete our homework and revise the day's lessons. Those were the days!

I would say being a school going child in present times is no pleasure. Childhood is lost and submerged under loads of school work. Small pleasures are deprived, feeling free is a forgotten joy. Now it is- get up early in the morning, get ready and rush to catch the bus or to sit in the auto honking away. After school, it is time to attend the tuition classes.

Not a very happy situation to be in! Going for tuitions when we were young was not something to be told to others because the conclusion would be that we lacked intelligence or we were slow in our work or backwards in our studies. Today, tuition has become a part of the academic sphere for most students.

Children deserve a happy childhood which does not deprive them of the little but vital joys of growing up.

This brings my thoughts to the case of little Chatura, a class 2 girl. In the school where I taught, after the lunch break and before entering the class, all students (primary section), had to keep their lunch boxes open to show the teacher that they had eaten the lunch packed for them. If the food sent was not eaten, the child was made to sit on a bench outside the class and finish it. The teacher would, of course, use her discretion if she found that the parents, in their bid to make their ward eat, had packed more food than their ward could manage. Knowing this practice of checking, many children would eat their food. But here was Chatura, who would hardly touch her lunch. Almost every day, she would be seen sitting out, with her lunch box and in the process, missing the class that was going on. Upon asking, the teacher would say that the little girl would run off to play after pecking at her food.

A little tete-e-tete with Chatura revealed this to me- her day's schedule was; to be woken at 6 AM, pushed to get ready for school, have her breakfast (if she gets up on time) and wait for her van that would pick her up at 7.30 AM. She was one of the first students to be picked up. The van had to wind its way to pick another 7 to 8 children before reaching school at about 8.25 AM. The first bell for the morning assembly would ring at 8.40 AM. After school, she would go to the van driver, who would be waiting to lead her and other kids to the van. Most of the van kids would be dropped home, but Chatura would be dropped at her day care centre, as both her parents were working. After she

refreshed herself, ate the snack packed for her, drank the milk given at the centre, she would be led off to her tuition class, get back and wait for her mother or her father to pick her up. This would happen around 7 PM. By the time dinner was done, Chatura would be tired and would hit the bed.

In the day's schedule set for this poor child, was there a time set for her to play, to expend her energy, to feel free to dance about? Hardly any! This explains why she pecked at her lunch in school and ran out to play. Eating was not important to her. This freedom to run around with her friends and play was her priority. More than that, it was her need. In a bid to help her, I requested the teacher to send Chatura to my room as soon as the lunch bell rang. I asked the little one to come to me with her lunch box. She did that. I explained to her that if she wanted to play she should eat her lunch without being distracted, and complete it. While she ate I would talk to her. She would eat her lunch as fast as she could (without gobbling it) and then give me a sweet smile and rush to play. She may have got a little less time than before, nevertheless she did play happily! Her class teacher too helped her by pretending to ignore that she returned to class a few minutes after the others. This was just one small step from us towards helping Chatura, but a big step for her.

There may be many children in the world facing such hassles which come as packages in life, if not the same situation. Let a child grow happily without fears of wanting to live up to expectations beyond their capability. Children deserve a happy childhood which does not deprive them of the little but vital joys of growing up. Let growing up in a child's life be a joyous journey which they savour and not a fast forward one which they swallow quickly and move ahead. ■

Book - A Gateway to Another World

■ VANITHA ASHWATH

Primary Teacher,
National Hill View Public School (Unit 1)

Vanitha is an enthusiastic, dedicated and a passionate primary teacher with 20 years of experience. She is committed to creating a classroom atmosphere that is stimulating and encouraging to students, and able to act as a facilitator of effective learning experiences while allowing children to retain curiosity.



An enchanting adventure awaits you
Concealed between those covers
As you turn those pages anew
A world of fantasy hovers
Places and people of every kind
From wondrous lands far away
The like of which is hard to find
All mirthful, joyous and gay
As you merrily turn the page
And soar into the blue sky
You end up in a different age
You'll never want to say goodbye.
So beautiful. Oh, books of mine! ■

We Recommend - Wizer



wizer.me

Wizer is a worksheet based digital tool for teachers. It is a platform that supports augmented digital worksheets for any subject. This can help to build a visual, auditory model of learning in the classroom.

Templates can be selected along with addition of voice notes and questions based on images, charts tables, videos and more. Students can have a response choice between written, drawn or verbal.

Features

- Teachers can create worksheets or customise them, to incorporate various styles of questions including images, videos or recorded instructions.
- Students can be asked to categorise information or label images, respond to open ended questions or multiple-choice questions.
- Teachers can score open ended questions and review objective ones.

How does it help teachers?

- Teachers can mark favourite answers and provide verbal and written feedback on students' answers.
- Paperless way of recording assessments and assignments that keeps the students interested and eager to respond.
- Teachers can learn how much time a student takes to complete the assigned worksheets and assess progress.
- Can be a good entry into education tech for new adopters who rely on familiar in-person worksheet-based assignments. ■

Social Media and Gen Z

■ VARSHA PRASAD

Editor, TeacherTribe.world



In recent news, a few states in the United States of America, have sued Meta and Meta-owned platform Instagram, accusing them of harming the mental health of youngsters. According to the lawsuit, “features like ‘Likes’ on Meta and Instagram promotes compulsive use and harms the mental health of young people.”

This is not the first time that people have raised concerns regarding how social media (SM) is impacting people, children and the youth in particular. There have been various case studies, research papers and discussions on the negative impact of social media platforms that have been put forth. But have these been impactful in preventing the usage or limiting it?

Like many other ‘addictive’ things, social media is a two-sided coin which has both pros and cons. True to what people say, social media platforms can be very addictive. Regular posting on Instagram, Meta and Facebook, picture and reel uploads, and travel and tour posts have become a regular part of life today. This apart, spending time on these platforms to see what the others are doing, how they are spending their time or where they are vacationing, is a major pastime. This is creating a ‘pseudo’ world where everybody wants to be someone else or wants the life the others are leading. Teenagers and youngsters are not spared here! As rightly accused by lawsuits in the US, teenagers on SM these days live on the ‘Likes’ of their pages.

To give an example of this, I met a young girl recently at a festive gathering. She looked dull and depressed throughout the event. On asking her why, I found out that her dandiya video had fewer views than that of her friends. On similar lines, there was a news article of a young adult in the US, committing suicide for having very little 'friends' on his Facebook page.

The issues with SM platforms do not end here. There are cases of cyberbullying, phishing, identity theft and a lot more, harassing users. Teenagers and young adults have become soft targets to these cybercrimes. SM platforms were plagued by dangerous challenges like the Momo Challenge and the Blue Whale Challenge, which caused serious injuries to children who participated in them. These challenges became trending on the internet, to an extent that youngsters wanted to be a part of this challenge. Some of them didn't want to be seen not following the 'trend'. This raised, and still raises the question of how children can be kept safe from the internet.

Role of Parents and Teachers

In this technology-driven era, one cannot stop children from using the internet, but one can definitely help them understand the pros and cons that come with it. Parents, teachers and caregivers play a major role here.

With everyone having pages and accounts on various SM platforms, children think it is 'cool' to be doing certain things others are doing online. It becomes the responsibility of parents and teachers to sensitise children on the right internet etiquettes. They can keep the children informed on basic internet rules like not accepting requests from strangers, not sharing personal information like address and photographs, not meeting their SM contact or friend in person, etc. Apart from this, teachers and parents can -

1. Be vocal and set a few ground rules for internet and SM usage.
2. Educate them on how it is okay to have fewer friends online, how it is okay to get fewer likes or followers and how it is okay to not be a part of a clique online.
3. Educate them on how everything happening on the internet need not be true or the correct thing to do.
4. Inform them on the various threats and scam prevalent online.
5. Be supportive and hear children out when they have anything to share, thus building trust in children to approach them when need be.
6. Build a rapport with children to make sure they approach them if necessary.
7. Keeping an eye out for any unusual behaviour.

At the end of the day, it is important to make children understand that social media is just a platform to communicate and share information and not a place to get 'validation and 'approval', and that there is a world outside social media, which is more beautiful and 'addictive'. Everything starts with raising kids that are secure about themselves and don't look for validation from any outside source. This in itself will instil huge confidence and help children understand better. ■

Do you share similar thoughts on social media and its usage? Share your views with me on varsha@greycaps.com.

Varsha Prasad



#ProudToBeATeacher

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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.