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LEADING THE WAY ON NEP EXPERIENCE LEARNING STATIONS



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A Fair Game
With Childhood?

A 'Responsible'
Teacher

Student-led
Inquiry Through
Questioning

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Teachers, Manage Your Exam Stress Better

■ RASHMI MARIAN FURTADO

Senior Editor, TeacherTribe.world



As the end of academic year approaches, there's a lot of talk around examinations and how to manage the stress it brings. However, most of the talk revolves around how students can manage their stress and how teachers can help lessen their stress.

What I am going to address in this article is the stress teachers go through during exams. While I personally believe teachers are far more stressed than the students, I am sure all the educators will agree with me when I say that teachers are equally stressed if not more, as compared to the students.

Teachers have a lot of prep to do for an examination. From setting the paper, conducting revisions with pupils, calming the parents, achieving the higher result goal set by their superiors, corrections and so on. Along with this, teachers also feel responsible for the results of the pupils. More often than not, they are held accountable for the lower results or failures and not always lauded for high achievements of the students. Irrespective of the outcome, teachers feel accountable for their students' results. Using simple math, one can guess the stress teachers go through year on year. Just multiply the number of students they teach each year by their years of experience.

In the November issue of TeacherTribe.world magazine, I spoke of eustress and distress, which loosely means positive and negative stress. While eustress helps us perform better, distress can be harmful in many ways including our physical and mental health. Whether positive or negative, stress needs to be managed. One needs to develop certain

coping mechanisms to manage any kind of stress or pressure. Here are a few easy to implement coping mechanisms a teacher can use to manage exam stress -

- 1. Recognise** – To scale a mountain one must first recognise and accept the existence and height of the mountain. It's very important that we accept the presence of exam stress. Accepting the reality, however difficult it may be, is the first step towards the solution.
- 2. Sleep** – Your students are not the only ones who need rest and adequate sleep. You too need the same. Inadequate sleep is usually at the root of most health issues today. To manage your students and their parents, you'll need to stay calm and have patience. Adequate sleep will help you with both.
- 3. Eat** – You may not have the time to have a meal peacefully during exams. But believe me, this is the time you need to consume a healthy and a balanced diet. It gives you the energy required to cope with the events of the day.
- 4. Exercise** – You may wonder how one can make time to exercise when the schedule is extremely packed. Try taking a 15 to 20 mins exercise break. The endorphins that you get from exercise will ensure higher energy and better mood all through the day.
- 5. Limit Caffeine** – Having one or two small cups of coffee a day may not create any discomfort. But you may resort to having multiple cups of coffee or any caffeinated beverage as an easy fix to maintain your energy levels. While this is true, it's not a solution in the long run. It will affect your sleep patterns and may also create acidity.

Think of situations or problems that may occur and possible solutions for the same. Plan out your days in a manner that you don't feel overwhelmed or exhausted.

6. **Take a break** – All of us go through situations where we feel overwhelmed, blank or stuck. The best practice to have at this point is to take a break. Close your eyes, take a few long breaths, look outside the window, listen to your favourite song, do anything to get yourself out of the situation. When you come back after a short break of 5 to 10 mins, it's possible that you'd have a solution or a way forward to the situation you were facing earlier. and relatable characters.
7. **Prepare** – Just the way you prepare your students for the exams, you need to prepare yourself. Think of situations or problems that may occur and possible solutions for the same. Plan out your days in a manner that you don't feel overwhelmed or exhausted.




Dear teachers, try to follow at least 5 of the suggestions from this article this exam season and promise to take care of yourself, because you deserve it!
8. **Visualise** – Visualise what you would do after the examinations. What we sometimes call daydreaming, will actually help. Think of all the things you'll be doing with your family, the vacations you'll be on, the places you'll visit, and so on. This will help you look forward to the time after the exams and motivate you to manage the exams better.
9. **Share** – Share your stress with a friend, family member, a mentor or a colleague your close with. Share with empathy and listen with empathy. Sharing does help you calm your mind and not feel alone.
10. **Positive Affirmations** – I can't stress enough on how important positive affirmations are. Positive affirmations are statements that you say to yourself or write in a journal every day, which will brighten and create a positive outlook towards the world. This practice changes your approach, attitude, mindset and stance. We all can use positivity in our lives every day.

What I have mentioned in this editorial is not rocket science but sometimes even the best of us require a reminder on the small little things we can do to make our life easier, positive and productive.

Dear teachers, try to follow at least 5 of the suggestions from this article this exam season and promise to take care of yourself, because you deserve it! Good luck with your exams, I will meet you in the next edition of TeacherTribe.world. ■

Yours Positively!



 @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.

Are We Playing A Fair Game With Childhood?

■ 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.



“One of the luckiest things that can happen to you in life is, I think, to have a happy childhood.” Agatha Christie

I recall the famous words of a poet who said that when you are stressed, look at the face of a child and all your stress will be relieved. Childhood has been considered for a long time, as a great blessing in the growth profile of an individual. It is a time when every member of the family pays some attention to the child, seeking an opportunity to be with the child and play with him/her to relive their own childhood. One wonders today whether this scenario is valid.

In a fast-moving life, the child at home is possibly the most ignored member, nowadays. Time to care for the child and time to bestow some unconditional love and affection is scarcely found or is being considered

not a priority. Thanks to an increasing consumerist attitude to life, even relationships are measured by their material value. With increasing media presence, the families find it convenient to leave the kids all alone with a cartoon on the screen.

When one of my colleagues I work with told me that both in the morning and evening, he hands over his mobile phone to his one-year-old baby at home to play with, I was shocked. His argument that the child should feel comfortable with technology as he grows, appeared to me as a poor argument.

Some important thoughts we need to keep in mind regarding childhood are:

1. Childhood is a celebration.

A child at home is the nucleus of a celebration. The innocence of the child is indeed a gift that radiates divine and positive energy all around. Every member of the family needs to participate in this celebration actively as it gives them an opportunity to relive their own childhood. The faith of the future is only in the growth profile of the child. No wonder Rabindranath Tagore said, "Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged by man."

2. Innocence is joy

The innocence of the child is indeed a joy to admire and interact with. Parents need to take extra care to protect this innocence without making frivolous attempts to remove it with the idea of showering wisdom on their fragile minds. Innocence is also probably the starting point for pursuing curiosity and seeking answers to questions that are latent and unique to the child. Playing with the innocence of the child returns mirth and laughter to the elderly as it is an acknowledgement of their purity of mind. "If you carry your childhood with you, you never become older," says Tom Stoppard.

3. Need for family time

Family time for the little ones is very important and critical for their growth. Many children today do not get adequate family time, which is essential for developing relationships and social responses. Isolation, loneliness and indifference to the children will have a serious impact on their mental and emotional growth. There is every possibility that in such an environment the children could become introverts later, apart from being inadequate in their empathy and concern for the community in which they are cohabiting. "I cannot think of any need in childhood as strong as the need for a father's protection," says Sigmund Freud.

4. Need for personal care

Children at the formative age need a lot of personal care. Individual attention to them would help in understanding their emotional profile, needs, levels of sensitivity, kinesthetic mobility, curiosity and the like. Research findings do indicate that personal interactions between the mother and the child, as well as with others facilitate enhanced levels of communication, verbal and non-verbal vocabulary and social compatibility. It helps in nurturing their self-esteem and comfort levels thereby improving their confidence profile. 'Children are living beings - more living than grown-up people who have built shells of habit around themselves. Therefore, it is necessary for their mental health and development that they should not have mere schools for their lessons, but a world whose guiding spirit is personal love.'

5. Providing play time

Over the last few decades, with the professional engagements of parents multiplying, the play time with children is slowly declining. Play time is very important to develop a wide variety of physical, mental, intellectual and psychological faculties of young ones. Play triggers their thinking skills, their problem-solving skills and decision-making skills.

It helps the young ones to reach out as well as to withdraw from situations and does offer an opportunity for experiential learning. Play time helps children improve their levels of confidence. It is said that parents consciously fail while playing with their children to make them win. It is an exercise in improving their self-esteem and persuading them to challenge and accept challenges. To leave the children isolated with play kits does not serve the required purpose of play. Parents need to get involved in play too.

6. Story telling

Bedtime stories and dining table discussions go a long way to consolidating the relationship and in providing a sense of security and transparency. The stories indeed trigger their levels of imagination, fantasy, creative thinking and listening skills. They trigger a sense of wonder in the minds of children and they engage with the events, characters and emotions in their own minds and at their own emotional levels. The stories help in facilitating them to construct their own visual universe and models of what is heard and thereby empowering their own constructivist approaches and in social constructivism

With the National Education Policy emphasising childcare right from the birth of the child (0-3 years), it is important to take country-wide initiatives to educate the parents on developing the mental and emotional health of the children right from home. Some important concerns presently about the emotional and mental health of the younger generation are:

- a. Overload of information
- b. Exposure to inappropriate technology
- c. Competition and setting high achievement targets
- d. Failing to accept and appreciate their uniqueness
- e. Indifference to nutrition
- f. Promoting emotional consumerism

- g. Inadequate physical work
- h. Poor personal social relationships

‘The child is the father of the man’ is the most quoted proverb. What is the role of family and school both individually and then collectively to facilitate this proposition? “What was wonderful about childhood is that anything in it was a wonder. It was not merely a world full of miracles, it was a miraculous world,” said G.K. Chesterton

The question before all of us today is ‘Are we playing a fair game with the childhood of the current generation?’ Time to reflect! ■

LEADING THE WAY ON NEP EXPERIENCE LEARNING STATIONS

Sumalini B. Swamy is the Director & Principal of Silicon city Academy of Secondary Education, Bengaluru. She holds a master's degree from Osmania University and a Bachelor's degree in Education from Bengaluru University. After a decades experience teaching in an International school, she has completed another 10 years, in the Silicon City Academy.



Sumalini is a national level athlete who believes in giving equal importance to academic excellence, sports and co-curricular activities. She is the recipient of many prestigious awards like - 50 Effective Principals Award by Education Today, Best Principal Award by Helpage India Jaipur, Youngest Principal Award, Active Principal Award and Ideal Principal Award and Stalwart Achievement Award 2021 by DK Education to name a few.

Under her leadership, the Silicon City Academy of Secondary Education has become a pioneering NEP model school in Karnataka, having launched the NEP Experience Learning stations. Recently, the school has also collaborated with CCE Finland to adopt the best practices of Finnish education to create global leaders.

The Learning Stations

The National Education Policy 2020 talks about play-based, activity-based and discovery-based education. At Silicon City, Sumalini and her team have made sure that children learn by doing. Hence, these learning stations are an excellent way of displaying how children learn the core concepts and ensures that real learning happens. With the



theme 'FARM TO HOME', the NEP Experience Learning Stations are really one of its kind. There are five learning stations, which are –

- 1. Rich world of languages:** NEP emphasises mainly on multilingualism. Language facilitates us to have meaningful interactions with people around us. In this station, children get hands-on experience with various activities about different languages like English, Kannada and Hindi. Here, they pretend to be a farmers using miniature ploughs that cuts through the field of soil. They are introduced to various strokes and curved lines they use while writing, they also identify the type of soil that is suitable for the plants to grow.
- 2. Exploring and interacting with the environment:** In this station, children learn to distinguish between good and bad seeds through a simple activity of 'sink & float'. They understand the conditions for

the seeds to grow and the different stages of germination. Children are also exposed to mathematical education by performing the addition activity.



3. Diverse forms of expression: Here, children are free to express their views through different art forms like dance, music, art, etc. These art forms not only create curiosity but also enhance creativity in a child. They also have the experience of cutting crops, separating the grain from the husk using a stoneroller and winnowing to separate the minute husk.

4. Taking care of myself and managing daily life: In this station, children learn to take care of themselves and also become independent at managing their daily lives. They visit the market, pick the items, weigh it themselves and finally come to the billing counter and pay for the items they have picked. They also make a paper bag to carry the items home. Children learn important concepts of adding, counting and sequencing here.



5. I grow, move and develop: In this station, children get a real-life experience about different people serving our community. Here, children get hands-on experience about the base camps (soldiers). This activity helps them become physically and mentally strong. Firefighting is yet another activity at this station, where students drive a fire engine to douse a fire in a hospital to save an infant. In this manner, students experience what it is to be a farmer, a soldier and a firefighter through fun-filled activities. ■

Translating Passion for Teaching into Passion for Learning, through Teacher-Student Connect

■ Lalitha. S

Practice Head, Azvasa Education,
Bengaluru

Lalitha holds a double master's degree in Life science and has a research experience of over 7-8 years. She has been instrumental in developing nutraceutical products and she has co-authored books and has research papers published in National and International Journals to her credit. Through her career as a researcher, she has guided and mentored many students in their thesis, which kindled the teacher in her.



Lalitha has been in the field of education for over a decade now, and has been closely associated with teaching, teacher training and integrated curriculum development along with school administration. She strongly believes that it is imperative to have a multidirectional approach in curriculum and content developed.

As students, we all had that one favorite subject. Let's take a moment and think, was that particular subject favorite because we found it easier/interesting than the others, or was it because we liked the teacher teaching it? Often, it is the liking for the teacher which makes the subject favorite for the students.


Educators often focus on building and improving parent engagement, but student engagement is just as essential. The relationship between a

teacher and the student is one the most influential factors in a learning environment. The teacher-student relationship has an impression on classroom management and affects the learning circumstances. Teachers who have a positive interaction with students create a conducive place for learning and meet students developmental, emotional and academic needs.

Is it possible for teachers to reach out to every student? Yes, it is!

A few strategies to build positive teacher-student relationship:

- 1. Know your students:** Teachers must take time to know their students' interests and about their families. Classroom activities as 'lunch with the teacher/class teacher', can help build the teacher-student relationship.
- 2. Frequent calls home, for good behavior:** The role of parents in emotional and academic development of children cannot be overlooked. Involving parents will demonstrate to the students the coherence between school & home. Teachers must call up the parents or send an appreciation note to the parents, acknowledging the students' positive behavior. The impact of this will be everlasting. The students will come back to school with a sense of gratitude.
- 3. Laugh with your students:** Humor lightens the environment. It is an excellent way to bond with children. It makes learning engaging and fosters a positive relationship with the students.
- 4. Believe that all students can succeed:** The belief of the teacher in his/her students will subconsciously affect the way the teacher treats the students. It is essential for teachers to believe in each child and demonstrate that belief to students.

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- 5. Accept students and their mistakes:** It is imperative for teachers to be impartial and treat all the students alike. Accept all students despite their quirks and differences. Teachers must remember that mistakes are a natural part of learning and instill this belief in the students.
 - 6. Consistency:** Trust and reliability go a long way in sustaining relationships. Students need to know that they can count on their teachers. This way, students feel more confident. Consistency is essential when it comes to attention and giving an ear to the students. Discriminatory behavior many a times, triggers unwanted behavior in students.

Teachers have a great impact on the students. The teacher's approach towards the students can have a positive or negative impact on the teacher- student relationship. The teachers must try to create a positive learning environment where students feel heard, understood, appreciated. When teachers make an intentional effort to get to know each of their students, it fosters in students a sense of belonging and connection to school—which then builds the foundation for academic success. ■

Fever In Adults

■ **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.



A fever is an increase in body temperature which can occur for a number of reasons. **Note:** If you are reading this and are looking to manage fever in your child, I would suggest you contact your pediatrician immediately.

The normal body temperature is 37 degrees Celsius (or 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit). Fever is defined as a body temperature that is higher than normal. Generally speaking, a mild temperature increase that lies below 102 degrees Fahrenheit is not serious. However, a temperature above that is considered serious and needs some form of medical treatment other than simple, first aid measures.

Before we get into fever first aid, let's look at how to take your temperature.

Measuring Your Temperature

Place a clean mercury thermometer or digital thermometer under the tongue and close your mouth. Hold the thermometer in your mouth for

5 minutes (or until the beeper rings on the digital thermometer). Check the reading and record it on a piece of paper. If using mercury thermometers, do not bite on the thermometer, as this can break the bulb and cause the mercury to leak. This can be dangerous. We, therefore, recommend using a digital thermometer at home.



The temperature can also be checked by placing a thermometer under the armpit. However, this is not a very accurate way of measurement. With the passing of COVID, most of us have grown accustomed to using infrared thermometers. If you are using a good-quality infrared thermometer, then you should be able to get accurate results, with that too.

First Aid Management Of Fever

1. Check your temperature as described above.
2. If the fever is less than 102 degrees Fahrenheit, then simple measures can help reduce the fever. These include –
 - a. Apply a cold, wet cloth onto the forehead. This is called ‘tepid ponging’.
 - b. Take medication like paracetamol (Crocin) on the advice of a doctor. In most cases, this will not be necessary.

3. If the fever is over 103 degrees Fahrenheit, then your doctor may prescribe drugs like paracetamol, acetaminophen or ibuprofen to help bring the fever down. Aspirin may be prescribed, though not in all cases. These drugs are available without a prescription, but I still advise speaking with your doctor before you take them.
4. Keep well hydrated by drinking plenty of water. Oral rehydration solution and tender coconut water may also be helpful.

Some cases of fever are more serious and require urgent medical attention. The table below discusses this further.

When To Seek Medical Attention Urgently

1. Persistent fever above 103 degrees Fahrenheit despite simple measures to reduce it.
2. The patient is shivering and has body pains.
3. The presence of pain, swelling, redness or discomfort anywhere in the body.
4. The fever is accompanied by a skin rash or a stiff neck.
5. The patient becomes extremely sensitive to light.
6. The fever is accompanied by continuous vomiting.
7. The patient is confused.
8. The patient experiences a burning sensation when passing urine.
9. The patient has breathing difficulty and low oxygen levels. ■

A 'Responsible' Teacher

■ **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/>

A teacher can make or mar a child's future, a student's future, so to say.

Tolerance, patience, discipline, commitment and involvement are a good teacher's forte. They play a vital role in empowering the learners and helping them evolve as competent, healthy minded citizens of a country, acknowledging that they are the future pillars of the society.

A teacher's responsibility lies in knowing their students, understanding them and connecting with them both in academics, and on a personal ground. By 'knowing' and 'understanding, I mean going beyond their presence and participation in class, to observing their body language, their manner of speaking, their subtle yet clear messages through this.

Some children are attentive, participative and good in their studies, some make efforts to move up the scale, but some are slow and maybe indifferent too. A teacher should take the time to give a thought to the point, 'Why is this child not receptive to my teaching or to my instructions?' To get an answer to the 'why' requires devoting time to study the child and the situation. Many children come from homes that are beset with problems big and small, financial, emotional ones, and so on. To the sensitive mind of a child, these become obstacles preventing them from giving their total attention. This in turn signals to the teacher that it is 'lack of interest in studies'.

Sadly, marks obtained by a student in a particular test/exam become a yardstick of achievement, intelligence and diligence. Opinions are formed on this.

Give a minute to read this -

Mrs. R is an efficient teacher, with a good command over her subject. She is prone to forming opinions very soon and sadly those opinions remain with her. If a student in her class is caught doing something wrong; is not regular with their studies or fails in some class exam, she does not forget it, even if it was not a deliberate error. If, by chance, the same student is found repeating the error, Mrs. R would brand them as naughty, disobedient or a failure. They are not given a chance by her to explain or correct their wrong nor given proper attention. In fact, the student is usually ignored or rebuffed in class.

Mrs. R carries her opinions to the staff room too and shares it with her fellow teachers, making some of them targets of her ire.

Now, can you record what you would feel if you were the student sidelined by Mrs R.

In your opinion how should teachers like her be handled? Is being humane and understanding, an asset for a teacher? How?

Would you give a thought that Mrs. R may have some personal problems that make her what she is, intolerant of human ineptitudes? Then, is it right for her or for any teacher, to let that interfere in their work? Finally, how would you help her?

Please note, this is NOT directed to any particular individual. It is just a case study.

An observation made by a teacher on this query was that the teacher may be facing some personal problems and hence, may not be paying attention to the student's problem. Is this acceptable?

I keep reminding teachers that, when they want to raise their hand to hit or say detrimental words to their students, they should pause for a moment and think 'would I like my child's teacher to do the same to my child?' In the same breath, would the teacher like it if their child's teacher allowed personal problems to interfere with their teaching?

I, for one, believe that once a teacher enters the portals of the school, all personal problems should be left behind or put aside as far as possible. Subconscious pressures may cause irritations while at work, but allowing them to surface or manifest as visible displeasures towards some student/s is not befitting of a teacher. Agreed, that it is easier said than done. Also, if a teacher loves teaching and is quite absorbed into it whilst doing so, there should not be any scope for personal problems to surface or manifest physically.

Can a surgeon say that the surgery they performed was not successful because they had some personal problems that troubled them during the surgery?

Back to the initial question, should a child bear the brunt of a teacher's personal problems?

Student-led Inquiry Through Questioning

■ Aanchal Shah, IB PYP Educator

Aanchal Shah is a graduate from Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra, with a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration. She has a Master's degree in Business Administration from Symbiosis Institute, Pune. She has completed her post-graduation in Elementary Education and Post Graduate Certification in Teaching and Learning - a UK level 6 certification, and is also a trained IB educator.



Aanchal is an Adobe Creative Educator and Microsoft Innovative Educator. She has also worked with UNSDSN as the Global Schools Advocate.

Questions are very important in an inquiry-based classroom. It is not only teachers who ask probing questions but if students learn to ask the right kind of questions, they can become agents of their learning and can drive the inquiry further.

I am a Grade 5 educator, at Prometheus School in India. I recently underwent a workshop training hosted by the Right Question Institute where I learned about teaching students to ask their own primary source questions. I was so glued to the idea of teaching students to ask their questions that I immediately applied the question formulating technique into our unit of inquiry on energy stores and transformations.

I collaborated with the STEM educator in my school and planned the provocation for the unit integrating STEM. The lab had pre-designed

stations with different kinds of windmills built using Legos - some with two-blades, some with weights, a few were functional using motors, rest of the windmills were manual.

Step 1

Students divided themselves into groups. They chose stations and observed the windmills carefully. They formulated questions that came to their mind while observing. It was explained to them that no question is small or irrelevant. They created as many questions as possible in 5 minutes.



Step 2

Once students formulated questions, they classified the questions as open-ended and close-ended. The meaning and difference between a close-ended and an open-ended question was explained to them. They collaborated and discussed amongst their group and reasoned out the possibility of close-ended or open-ended questions from the ones they had formulated. They were principled as they finished the task in the allotted time frame

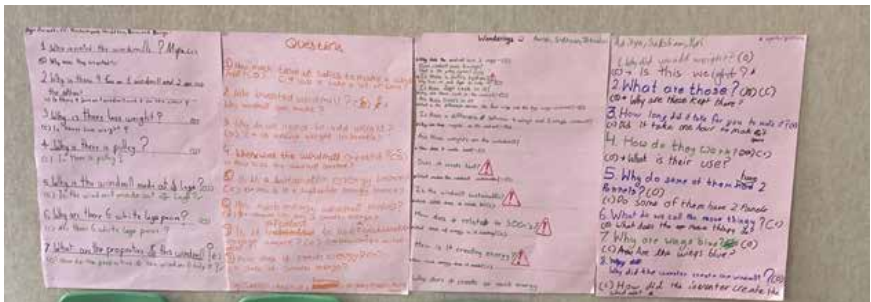
Step 3

Students converted open-ended questions to close-ended and vice versa. For example, one of the groups had the question, 'Does the weight attached to the windmill affect its functioning?' Students identified this as a close-ended question as it will have a 'yes' or a 'no' answer. They rephrased the question as 'How does the weight attached to the windmill affect the speed of the moving blades?' This question became open-ended. Students at this stage understood that

open-ended questions have a scope of inquiry and dive deeper into the ongoing concept. The excitement and feeling of ownership for their learning was evident in their active participation.

Step 4

Now, students prioritised the questions. They were told the meaning and purpose of priority questions. They identified three questions from their list of questions that were very important. Students were introduced to the word ‘burning questions’ that are necessary to delve deeper to find answers about their wonderings.



Step 5

Students had 12 burning questions ready at the end, as there were four groups. Students collated all the questions on a chart paper and decided to fix the chart paper right on the front wall of the classroom. They matched the questions and removed the ones that were repetitive.

Step 6

At this step, students unpacked the central idea of using the noun project. For this, related concepts were given as cues. Further, the lines of inquiry were shared with them.

Step 7

Now, students categorised the questions they had formulated under each line of inquiry. They added more questions if they had any, looking at the scope of inquiry and related concepts. Students this time created open-ended questions without any reiteration for the same. At the end of this step, students had their driving questions under each line of inquiry.

Step 8

The next step was to identify primary and secondary sources of information to find answers to the questions. Students identified books from the classroom reading corner, a few articles online and some experts they can connect with to find out answers to the questions.

Step 9

The last step was to design the research plan and achieve the learning outcome for the unit of inquiry. Students created flowcharts and sketch notes to plan the inquiry further. When students completed the inquiry, they revisited the questions and cross-checked if they had the answers to all their burning questions. When students ticked off all the questions from this list, they had their 'aha moment' as they had a feeling of accomplishment. They became knowledgeable, reflective thinkers and displayed ownership of their learning.

Teaching students to ask their own questions develops critical thinking in them. Students were more engaged in meaningful collaborative discussions. I aim to refine this technique further and use it not only at the beginning of the inquiry, but also during the inquiry. ■

What Qualities Lead To Innovation And Creativity?

■ Mr. Prem Kiran

*Head of Transformation,
AZVASA EDUCATION, Bangalore*



Prem is a seasoned educationalist with an experience of 12+ years in education. He has capped different roles in administration, operations, training, implementation and marketing. In his current role as the Head of Transformation at a Bangalore-based ed-tech company, he is involved in teacher training, implementation, strategising learning and development for students and teachers. As an avid reader and blogger, he writes pieces in education magazines and enjoys networking.

"Every child is an artist; the problem is staying an artist when you grow up" – Pablo Picasso

In today's fast paced world, it is tougher by the day to hold people's attention unless something is interesting and creative. We seek novelty in almost everything today – ranging from the food we eat to the clothes we wear, television channels or programmes that we watch to careers that we choose.

The demand and pressure to be creative is more than ever. More often we hear the phrase, 'Think out of the box'. Competition is a stress that is affecting children too! Thus, the need to stand out from the crowd and draw attention, which is highly rewarded, has grown multi-fold.

On the other hand, we also see several individuals succumb to this pressure which can have an irreversible effect on their self-image. So, how do we prepare our children better for these kinds of situations and demands? Is creativity something that we are born with or it is a learned skill? Is it possible to train someone to think out of the box?

Children are not governed by rules and structure. In fact, most of childhood is marked by creative potentiality – especially during the early years, till about the age of ten. It slowly declines later due to pressures conforming to social norms. A lot of this also depends on the kind of safe and encouraging environment that is provided to express themselves freely along with several processes and skills that can foster the development of creativity. Certain personality traits or qualities also often contribute to developing creativity and innovations.

Here is a list of five simple qualities or characteristics that parents, and we as adults, can demonstrate and thereby encourage our children to adopt, aiding in the process of developing creativity and being innovative:

- a) **Being Open-minded** – To be open to new experiences sends across the message that it is important and possible to think beyond a certain framework. E.g. Scheduling different activities with children over weekends which involves learning, visit to the planetarium, volunteering at a children's home or old age home, campaigns related to the environment etc.
- b) **Non-judgmental** – Being able to move beyond classifications such as right or wrong; viewing things in context or in relation to the environment and conditions is vital. E.g., not criticising children for any varied answers that they provide for questions. Reasoning out rather than putting to shame. Also demonstrating being non-judgmental and biased towards people of other faith, race, gender, etc. This teaches children to not judge easily/readily

without understanding or considering all the factors.

- c) **Empathy** – Understanding the context and environment is key in problem solving. For this, it is important to encourage children to ‘get into the shoes of the other person or situation’, i.e., being empathetic.
- d) **Fearlessness** – Fear of being judged or fear of failure can create huge hindrance and inhibit expression of ideas. It is therefore important to encourage children to be self-confident and express themselves. Research has demonstrated that when children experience a feeling of ‘I think my parents/teacher listen to what I have to say’, their self-confidence improves. So active listening to children is also important, where we pay undivided attention to them. Additionally, children who are active in sports are able to accept failure and demonstrate better fearlessness.
- e) **Being curious** – An enriching, fearless environment supplemented with experiences helps children in being keen and curious to explore and learn new concepts on a daily basis. It has been proven that curiosity also leads to improved memory. Motivating curious children to share their experiences also improves communication which is an integral part of being innovative. ■

To Buy or Not to Buy

■ Aarti Tibrewala Darooka

A chartered accountant and MBA, Aarti is an entrepreneur and financial literacy advocate. She has over 15 years of combined experience in consulting, advisory and travel industries.

A national ranker in CA, Aarti is a published author, who has written a plethora of books for children's financial education and is currently helping build awareness for financial literacy for women through her platform, Sthreedhan.



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Shruti is an HR professional. She lives in a major city and has been working with a reputed IT firm for over 6 years. She commutes 35 minutes each way, every day and has been using public transport in the form of buses, auto rickshaws and taxis throughout her life. Although her father owns a car, he uses the car through the day and despite knowing how to drive, Shruti doesn't have much access to the vehicle, except at night or over the weekend. It has been one of Shruti's lifelong dreams to own a car. She has finally decided that this is the year when she will take the plunge, but is stuck on 2 key decision parameters.

The first major problem Shruti is facing is how to decide how much to spend on the vehicle of her dreams. Since she earns about ₹100,000 per month, she feels that after taxes and recurring expenses, she has about ₹50,000 left monthly, since she doesn't have any dependents. But that amount goes into a number of investments and she doesn't want to stop them all. So the question is- what is the maximum she can afford to pay for her vehicle EMIs in a month?

The second major problem and the biggest question of all is: is it even wise for Shruti to buy a car? Does her usage justify buying a car or not?

You might wonder why we are not starting with question 2. There's a very good reason. Learning how to make the judgement is more important than whether or not you need to make that kind of judgement immediately. So, we will analyse in the same order in which Shruti has listed her questions.

Based on the information Shruti has shared, it seems she has a disposable income of ₹50,000 a month.

The benchmark rule is that you should be spending about 40% of your monthly income after taxes on necessities, 20% on discretionary purchases, 30% into savings

10% into a contingency fund. If the way your life is going and your minimum monthly spend is higher, then your discretionary expenses go down to 10%, savings go to about 25% and only 5% will go into a contingency fund. Since Shruti has the choice of buying or not buying a car, for her, the car purchase becomes a discretionary spend. Therefore, in this case, she should not be paying more than 20% of her monthly income after taxes for the car EMI. Given that Shruti pays almost ₹10,000 monthly in TDS, 20% of 90,000 works out to ₹18,000.



To get an idea of how expensive a car she can buy, you can simply multiply the maximum EMI amount by 36 instalments. So, Shruti can buy a car in the range of $18,000 \times 36 = ₹648,000$.

Now the question of whether Shruti should buy a car at all or not. Shruti currently spends about ₹4,800 a month on conveyance, including metro pass, bus, auto rickshaw fare and car rentals. Her major conveyance is to the gym 5 times a week, work 5 times a week and miscellaneous 4 times a week. Let's look at the break up of her expenses in public transport versus self-owned car.

Public transport (annual) = 3800×12	₹57,600
Public transport (3 years) = 45600×3	₹1,72,800

If she buys a car, she would end up spending the following over 3 years:

Interest on loan	₹74,300
Fuel = ₹2000 x 36 months	₹72,000
Insurance, maintenance and repairs	₹30,000
Total for 3 years	₹176,300

As you can see, in Shruti's case, the difference is not very big. Depending on your usage and your requirement, the comparison will vary. Also, after 3 years, there will be no further expense on interest as she would've paid off the loan and also there will be factors like safety, convenience and freedom to consider.

Sometimes, our decisions should be driven by pure data and mathematics, by logic and common sense. But sometimes, like the famous Danish author Karen Christence Dinesen (she wrote under the pseudonym Isak Dinesen) once said, we only need to remember this: "God made the world round so we would never be able to see too far down the road." ■

Teachers - Changing the Future for the Better

■ VARSHA PRASAD

Editor, TeacherTribe.world



In the last few weeks, I have witnessed and heard many overwhelming stories about teachers and the effect they have had on their students. These stories gave me such joy and pride that I am happy to be working with teachers and educators and interacting with them on a daily basis.

There are many quotes and speeches from renowned people on how helpful teachers are and what they mean to children. But these speeches and quotes have a greater impact, when supported by inspiring stories of people who have achieved great things because of the teachers they have had. I am putting down a few anecdotes here for you.

Recently, in a bus, on my way to work, I saw an old man sitting near the window, waiting for the conductor to issue a ticket for him. When the conductor finally navigated his way in the crowded bus and came near the old man's seat, he was surprised and happy at the same time, to see the old man. He immediately bent down and touched the old man's feet and said, "Sir, I don't know if you remember me, but I was your student in high school. If not for you and the love you showered on me, I would have ended up in the wrong place and in the wrong company." Saying this, the conductor handed over the ticket to his teacher and said, "This bus ride for you, is on me. Thank you, sir." Nobody in the bus missed observing the pride on the old teacher's face.

In another incident the very same day, there was a commotion on the road, where a lady was arguing with a man for trying to steal her purse and the man was confidently denying it. This argument had attracted a small mob, where some were supporting the lady, and some were supporting the man. Out of

Teachers do not teach or help students with the intention of making them popular or famous. Nor do they do it expecting anything in return.

nowhere, a group of boys came forward and started making calls. The police arrived on the scene within no time and with the help of CCTV footage, it was proven that the man was indeed trying to steal the lady's purse. It was later discovered that the boys who had come to the lady's rescue were her students, including the police officer who had helped retrieve the footage. The police officer also proudly claimed that he was a sincere officer because of the values this teacher had instilled in him when he was in school.

Great teachers are never forgotten! They live on, in the form of their students who lead by example. If a person is asked to name the coaches or mentors in the field of cricket between the 1990s and early 2000s, only a few people can recall them. But even a person without great knowledge in cricket will know a great teacher called 'Ramakant Achrekar', because of him moulding a great cricketer called Sachin Tendulkar.

Coming from a family of teachers, I have been very lucky to see how children, who have succeeded in life, come back and seek blessings from their teachers. They knowingly or unknowingly make a huge impact on young minds, oblivious of the positivity they are spreading and the wisdom they are imparting. Teachers, across professions, have done the same, generations over!

The best part is that teachers do not teach or help students with the intention of making them popular or famous. Nor do they do it expecting anything in return. They take children under their wing and treat them like their own, giving them unconditional love and support.

It should definitely be a matter of pride for all teachers to belong to a profession which solely helps in building others. For helping the bud bloom into a beautiful flower...for adding wings to the bird and helping it fly in the right direction...and for being the light that leads the way!

Teachers, let us continue doing what we are and have always been good at - let us change the future for the better! ■

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#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.