

The Teacher-Student Bond

In Conversation with Teacher Aarti

Ms Aarti has a total experience of 11 years in teaching various subjects to children till up to class 8. Her focus has been on designing and implementing creative solutions to bring up the educational level and learning capacities of children, especially from the marginalized sections of the society.

Q1. How do you engage with parents who complain about their child's lack of concentration in studies?

A1. Parents should make an effort to provide their children with a suitable learning atmosphere so that they can concentrate on what they have to learn. Education is a two-way process where parents should also (ideally) try to learn about their children's problems and preferences instead of expecting children to keep rote learning before examinations. Parents should attempt to identify the issue as soon as they realize that their child has any learning impairments that affect his/her ability to concentrate. More importantly, they should take appropriate action in time. Further, the parents should ensure that their children take breaks from continuously studying because prolonged reading or memorizing can mentally exhaust a child. After taking a resting pause, a child gets time to re-fuel, re-energize and re-focus on studies again.

Q2. How do you engage with students who are stressed about the exams?

I make sure to remind children that they need to get the recommended eight hours of sleep each night, irrespective of exams. A



healthy diet and nutrition are additionally helpful in their ability to focus so that is another non-negotiable for them. Thirdly, in order for a child to feel comfortable asking questions or clarifying doubts about the course being taught, as teachers we should nurture a strong bond with the child to enable that kind of a constructive conversation flow. That is most essential if the child were to learn to his/her best potential. When all these things are taken care of, there is little reason left for any negative kind of stress.

Q3. Are co-curricular activities also important for children along with studies? What are the ways to hasten learning among slow learners?

Co-curricular activities are crucial for a child's overall growth and personality development. For encouraging

participation in those activities, and there can be a range of them right from arts and crafts to sports and other skills, a teacher should use a comprehensive and creative approach. Teachers can help children develop self-confidence by giving them little tasks around their areas of interest, and wholeheartedly praise them for their hard work and effort. This way a child is inspired to self-discover, and gradually starts working with ease in his/her area of interest.

Peer learning is also very useful in this regard. For instance, teachers also have the option of putting students in groups that include both slow and fast learners. This way, the children get a healthy push toward academics and co-curriculars both with help from peers. In a mixed group, children end up inspiring each other in unobvious ways. The fast ones tend to learn teamwork as that requires slowing down a bit and matching pace with everyone. While the slow ones learn to pick up pace as they look at others, learn what is needed with practice, and become more productive, eventually. Another technique to help children pick up learning speed is by giving them real-world examples. From my own experience, sometimes my students struggle to understand fractions. In order to help them, I make interesting stories and give them realistic examples which aid in their grasp of the subject matter. Giving children examples from everyday life really helps in quick and effective learning.

Q 4. What do you think about the prescribed curriculum?

The thing is we are prescribed what we have to teach, and then it is up to us to make it suitable, relevant and interesting for the students as well. Having said that, I do wish to say that an age-appropriate

curriculum is vital even though we don't get it in that format all the time. We get different kinds of students who are at different levels of cognitive, mental and emotional growth, and we have to adapt the curriculum content to the capacity and potential of each student. Each child has a different ability to think critically and analyze situations and no child can be hurried on the path to true learning.

Further, co-curricular activities should also be given equal importance within the curriculum to promote children's observational, analytical, even social skills etc. through pleasant, and happy, uplifting activities. Fundamentally, an ideal curriculum needs to emphasize a child's overall development and growth when they set goals for children to achieve at the end of the academic year.

