



The Power of Storytelling

Geeta Dharmarajan

Padma Shri Awardee, Writer,
Educator and Founder of Katha

Ten changes that
would impact the
future of learning

An exclusive
app to monitor
student
achievements
and behaviour

Why breakfast
is the most
important meal
of the day

TEACHER TRIBE

.world

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We Recommend App and Book



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Positive Engagement for Teachers too!

■ **RASHMI MARIAN FURTADO**
Senior Editor, TheTeacher.in




Teachers play a vital role in the life of students and the spirit of the school itself. If a school has positive, high energy teachers, it is automatically a high energy school radiating positivity. This is what many loosely call a 'Happy School'.

The schooling system shapes the personality of a student and plays an essential part in how the student turns out to be in future. Various activities are held and conducted for the growth of a child. Each of these experiences shape the character, focus, courage and capabilities of a child.

We all know the positive impact of engaging activities for students. We are aware of the impact of positive engagement on human beings. Then, why are the teachers left out? Why aren't such activities held for teachers? Learning is a continuous process. One of the best methods of learning is 'on the job' or through simulation. The engagements we have for children become a form of simulation. They learn new things, form friendships, have new experiences and have a wider horizon through these engagements. Why aren't similar techniques used for teachers? If teachers have to constantly upgrade themselves, unlearn and relearn to ensure they are relevant to their students, why aren't such activities held for teachers to build their skills?

We at TeacherTribe.world, have always had a single and simple objective, that being, to **'Celebrate the Teacher'**. In our quest to do so, we realised

A horizontal bar with a rainbow gradient from pink to grey, positioned below the title.

the lack of opportunities teachers had to showcase their talents, learn, and form friendships that will help them especially in their professional lives. Inspired by the creator of the idea, Mrs. Rama Ranganathan, TeacherTribe.world along with TCS iON created the World Teachers Quiz, 'Qnow it All'. It was a testing ground for us to check if our theory on positive engagement for teachers had value.

The overwhelming participation from teachers all over the world from India, Morocco, Zambia, Kuwait, UAE, Oman, Malaysia, United States and so on, validated our belief. We have only scratched the surface. There are so many teachers all over the world who would love to take part in such activities but are not able to. With the entire world going digital, many see organising such events as a difficult task. The flip side of this difficulty lies an opportunity where we had teachers taking part from all over the world in large numbers. Location or venue of the event would have otherwise been a biggest obstacle. In this case, being able to take part in the quiz without hindering their daily schedule was the biggest benefit!

There are many benefits of having such activities for teachers.

KEEP THE CHILD IN YOU, ALIVE

First and the most important one is awakening the child in you. It's very important for all of us to keep the child in us alive. It helps us to have a fresh perspective towards our lives, but most of all, in the case of a teacher it builds empathy and relatability. When teachers go through similar situations and experiences as their students, they understand what exactly children go through. A child relates to a teacher better, knowing that she or he has been in similar situations. This will lead to a student opening up to a teacher, as they see their teacher as someone who knows exactly how they feel.

BUILD PROFESSIONAL FRIENDSHIPS

Secondly, teachers build professional friendships that help them widen their horizons. A common trend that we observe in almost every profession is that people belonging to similar professions are often able to help each other when they are faced with tricky situations. We at TeacherTribe.world

have seen teachers from two different parts of the world sometimes face similar problems. How amazing would it be for teachers from different parts of the world to share their experiences with each other and help with solutions?

YOU DESERVE ENTERTAINMENT!

The third benefit that seems like the most important one today, is keeping up the morale and motivation of a teacher. Teachers have had to adapt themselves to a whole new environment, teaching methodologies, roles, responsibilities, technology and so on, in less than a month's time, because of the pandemic. Many teachers experienced a drop in their motivation and their morale, which in turn effected the child. Yes, the teachers have hardly any time for anything beyond their professional duties. Although, we observed that the teachers who made time with the support of their respective school managements, experienced higher levels of motivation. They felt happy, refreshed and elated with the experience. They had new energy to channel into their profession.

Teachers, after all transfer energy to students along with knowledge and as we all know, children are like sponges. Hence, it becomes imperative that us teachers and educators involve ourselves in positive engagement to keep our energy high and pass on the same to our students.

Can we look at a teacher as a grown up student and do everything the student does (well... maybe not everything!)?

Yours Positively!



 @rashmimfurtado

 @rashmimfurtado

 Rashmi Furtado

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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. She is one of the founders of TheTeacher.in. 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. 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 and Travel Quest by Thomas Cook.

Ten changes that would impact the future of 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 official website balaspeaks.in



Futurologists have positioned the change dynamics of the future in the following three words – Skill, Scale and Speed. The future will be characterized by continuously changing skills, the scale at which these changes occur and the mind-boggling speed at which such changes would occur. The nucleus to such changes would be a world led by a thought leadership and the emergence of newer knowledge, newer technologies and innovations which trigger these changes creating a compulsive need in the minds of consumers. Market forces will articulate these changes as drivers of economy and as wealth generators. The consumerist attitudes of the society would fashion their hunger for novelty by painting a modern art of

IMPACT PREVIEW

- » Influencers of the quality, content and delivery of education
- » Artificial Intelligence derivatives
- » Design thinking

Computers will overtake the humans with AI within the next 100 years. When that happens, we need to make sure that computers have goals aligned with ours.

Stephen Hawking

these new products, whatever be their length of life. All these have a prime market and would impact the educational portals of the country, as a subject of current knowledge with a futuristic perspective. Based on these assumptions, the content and delivery of education and other knowledge tools have taken new 'avatars' from time to time. They have impacted the learning style, learning constructs and their delivery architecture. On an ongoing note, it is possible to predict the ten influencers of the quality, content and delivery of education in the next decade of the twenty first century.

**If quantum mechanics
hasn't profoundly
shocked you, you have
not understood it yet**

Neils Bohr

1. The 5G Spectrum and beyond

The bandwidth of the spectrum has always played a significant role in the knowledge management and its processing. The quality and the speed of the bandwidth has a direct relationship with the speed of access and the effectivity of the data management. The information access, information quality and accuracy have significantly improved over the decades, with every door of the spectral gateway opening. On similar lines, the availability of the 5G spectrum and its successors in the next couple of years will impact the way we learn, the way we store knowledge, the multiple pathways of knowledge management and its delivery. Education at all levels will respond to these changes and will re-engineer itself to meet the impatience of the restless human mind. "We will have an infinite bandwidth in a decade's time," says Bill Gates. One could hardly imagine how it could impact our universe of knowledge.

2. Artificial Intelligence derivatives

"Computers will overtake the humans with AI within the next 100 years. When that happens, we need to make sure that computers have goals aligned with ours," said Stephen Hawking. The logistics of functioning of Artificial Intelligence is not too complex as compared to the logistics of the functions of the human intelligence. However, the man-machine interface has created a magic by re-articulating the truth and the fancy of human execution of certain functions. The derivatives of Artificial Intelligence in assisting manufacture, services and social relationships appear to be

triggering a cultural change. Its catalytic effect in impacting human thought designs to replace their own presence through these fabricated technologies is ushering a new dimension in our functional platforms. Naturally, education being an instrument of designing thought architectures, will get influenced and evolve into a newer generation. Enough evidence is already available on how content and the delivery of the content and its auxiliary systems are responding to Artificial Intelligence. Its multiplier effect in the next few years would completely redesign the content architectures and its delivery systems – and as a resultant, the way people handle knowledge or learn.

3. Quantum computing

“If quantum mechanics hasn’t profoundly shocked you, you have not understood it yet,” said Neils Bohr several decades ago. From its evolution as a simple calculating machine, the computers have gone through several generations of evolution, simultaneously bringing unprecedented changes in human life systems, social architectures, communication, knowledge processing and management and so on. Its impact on edutainment, entertainment and infotainment have brought changes which were least imagined or expected. We are presently stepping into the world of ‘quantum computing’ from ‘classical computing’. The ability of qubits to design and articulate parallel universes for all systems, its ability to create millions of perceptions unimaginable, its operational fantasy that would provide possibilities and decisions which would challenge human intelligence, its possibility of taking man-machine interface to an entirely different plane of ideation, will attract initiatives which will impact the next decade of learning experience and hence its associated infrastructure – hardware, software and human ware.

4. Design Thinking

“The human brain has 100 billion neurons, each neuron connected to 10 thousand other neurons. Sitting on your shoulder is the most complicated object in the known universe,” says Michio Kaku, the author of “The Future of Mind.”

To continue reading, log on to [TeacherTribe.world](https://www.teachertribe.world). ■

The power of storytelling

■ GEETA DHARMARAJAN

Padma Shri Awardee, Writer,
Educator and Founder of Katha



Geeta Dharmarajan loves writing for children. She received the Padma Shri in 2012 for her work in literature and education. She was named 'frugal innovator' by the Millennium Alliance, set up by the governments of India and the US; and co-winner of Business Standard Social Entrepreneur of the year for 2018. An award-winning writer for children and adults, she has over 30 years of professional experience having served at the India Today Group of Companies, The University of Pennsylvania and INTACH, before Katha.

1. What or who motivated you to start 'Katha'?

I had been working with the Pennsylvania Gazette at The University of Pennsylvania in the US, and had just returned to India. Upon returning, I joined INTACH as a Director of Education. I was also working with Avvai Home, an orphanage. Through these roles, I interacted with children and teachers, and got to know the kind of issues and challenges that they face.

Later, my husband was transferred to Delhi, and so we moved cities. In some of Delhi areas, the plight of children was awful. Being a writer, I offered something to ignite the minds and the imagination of the children. It was around 1988 that I came across a poster, which said that close to 400 children were dying every day, due to diarrhoea. When I asked a few people how I could help, they asked me what I had in mind. Since I had already

been writing on science-related matters, I brought out Tamasha! – a health awareness and environment magazine. The magazine started reaching the children in the slums, and the kids there started enjoying the stories because of the simple language of the stories. As I was also working with UNICEF around that time, the funding from them was helping me with this project, and ‘Katha’, slowly but surely, came into being.

2. How did ‘Katha’ get its name?

I used to go to the town hall every day to get the organisation registered. I ran around for 9 to 10 months for this, and every time I went there, the man at the desk refused to accept any of the names that we suggested. He had a problem with the ‘a’ or ‘the’ in the names. It was disappointing since my father – a Sanskrit scholar – and I had selected beautiful names for the society, and yet all of them were rejected.

One day, I just walked in, and said that the name was going to be ‘Katha’. And serendipitously, we were registered on the 8th of September, which is World Literacy Day! So, Tamasha! and Katha have set the tone and culture for all the work that we have been doing all these years.

Stories and storytelling can be great unifiers through which people forget their differences, understand one another, and come together.

3. There are programmes for women and teacher trainings that you do. How did it all begin?

When the Tamasha! magazine went out, UNICEF liked it and shared it with the Delhi Government, and the officials liked it too. The Municipal Corporation in Delhi bought a few copies. When I went to meet the Commissioner, he spoke to me about their newly constructed building, and asked me if I wanted to start a school there. I was a little hesitant as I had never run a school before. But he liked my ideas, and he persuaded me to start a school. They wanted 5 schools in different constituencies, and they encouraged me to start one school. This was how Katha Lab School started in 1990.

At the beginning, we did not get enough enrolment. I had to think on my feet. I realised that you would have to be disruptive every moment when you are starting a non-profit school. We thought: if the women started earning, children would not be forced to earn for the family. That is how our women programmes were started. They started with cooking and embroidery programmes and teachers' education.

By 1994, we had grown to 1600 children. The women we had trained were doing really well. By 2008, when we did a survey, we found out that the women were earning 10 times their prior family income. And when it came to children, the drop-out rates reduced, and some of our students had gone on to do their college education. Today, 80% of our children reach the tertiary education stage, and many are working in reputed companies, have businesses of their own or have joined the administrative services.

4. What is the curriculum that goes into teaching children in your schools?

Speaking of curriculum, what we needed was a holistic model at development while overcoming poverty. When you are working with children in poverty, and you know that you are looking to disrupting poverty, you have to think: 'what kind of knowledge do we need for this?' From this question, I developed the teachers' education programme and the right content. The content had to be exciting for children, and something that would allow them to dream and think of a career path. The content had to be page-turning for them to read till the last page. So, to teach them reading, we had to train our teachers who themselves came from the slums. We never used textbooks. We experimented with different methods. We used stories and storybooks. Everything we needed to teach the children came from the stories. Even now, we teach mathematics, history, geography and science through stories. This is what made the difference.

Using relevant, contextual and engaging stories enabled the children to think within the classroom space, and to ask questions.

5. What is the 'StoryPedagogy' that is used as a learning tool in Katha?

In 1992, I set up what I called the 'Katha Relevant Education for All-round Development'. I realised that, in slums, unless the education provided was relevant to the child, they would not come to school. And most of them would help their families in small household chores to earn money. While teaching concepts, such as the *maatras* did not matter to the children, stories that were told – mattered the most. That was how StoryPedagogy was born. The stories became important. Using relevant, contextual and engaging stories enabled the children to think within the classroom space, and to ask questions. We led our children to think and imagine of how things could be different through the stories we brought to our classrooms.

I believe that the story is in the silences and not in the words.

I would develop a story for the whole year which the teachers would use to teach the different subjects. The stories involved history, mathematics, geography and all other subjects within the storyline. For example, if the story was about Queen Razia of Delhi, the math classes would involve learning about the distance and length of the tunnels built by her, cooking classes would involve asking children about the kind of cuisine that was prevalent at the time, etc.

For the child, it would be unique as there were no bells that rang and told them to go to the next class and forget the previous one. All the learning was experienced as a flow. There was integration of knowledge through the stories. From 2008, we have been focussing on the topic of climate change so that our children are aware of it as a global problem.

6. You have translated many books. How can one retain the essence of the original text after translation?

I believe that the story is in the silences and not in the words. Stories are beyond the sentences and paragraphs. Unless you understand what is in

the mind of the author, you will not be able to do a translation which is true to the story. For example, people say 'I know language A and language B, so I can translate'. But the important question is: Do you know the culture where the languages are used? Unless a person is able to invest the time and energy to understand the culture, the translation will never be true to the original.

Another important aspect is that you should be a reader. You cannot be a translator or even a writer if you are not a reader. While reading, I get into the literary language and I know how to express myself in fewer words.

I think translation involves entering into the spirit of what the writer has written and understanding what was running through the writer's mind when she or he was writing the story.

Translation is also about being the conduit between the writer and the reader. If I am completely with the writer, I will not please the readers. But if I completely go with the readers, I am not being true to the writer and the story.

When we become too serious about teaching and learning, the joy is no longer there; not for children or for teachers.

All said, it has been a huge experience for me – 33 years and counting of translating experience, to be precise!

7. Your message for educators and teachers...

My message is very simple: Just be yourself and enjoy your time with children. Have fun with them, and they will learn. Learning is something that happens when children and teachers are enjoying the interaction and the process. When we become too serious about teaching and learning, the joy is no longer there; not for children or for teachers. We should laugh more, smile more, be kind, say something nice to the child encouragingly for the little things they do. And finally, we have to be 'awesome'!

To read the complete interview of Geeta Dharmarajan, log on to TeacherTribe.world ■

Breakfast - The most important meal of the day

■ **DR. VIVEK BALIGA**
Cardiologist and Consultant Physician

Dr. Vivek Baliga B. is a consultant physician and cardiologist, and director of Baliga Diagnostics in Bangalore. He is a keen advocate of patient education and loves to blog about all things health related. Learn more about him at drvivekbaliga.com.



They say that breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and whoever this 'they' is are right!

Eat breakfast like a king, and you are looking at a long and healthy life. Studies have shown that missing breakfast can increase the chances of gaining weight and developing heart disease.

In this article, we shall look why you should never miss your breakfast, and what choices are the best.

The benefits of eating breakfast

There are several reasons why you should never miss your breakfast, and here are some of the top reasons why.

IMPACT PREVIEW

- »» Benefits of breakfast
- »» Features of a healthy breakfast
- »» Quick breakfast tips

The nutrient boost you get from a good breakfast can keep you focused on the job, allowing you to perform better and more efficiently.

1. Breakfast can reduce your chance of developing heart disease

A scientific study that was performed over a period of 16 years in male patients showed that individuals who missed their breakfast had a higher chance of developing coronary heart disease when compared to those who had a healthy start to the day.

In fact, eating breakfast reduced the risk by nearly 27%! Similar studies have been published in women cohorts as well.

Breakfasts that are high in fiber content can reduce cholesterol levels.

So, if you are in a rush to get to work every morning and end up missing your breakfast, remember that spending a few minutes chomping down on a bowl of fruits or a healthy cereal can be a lifesaver.

2. Improves performance and enhances focus

The nutrient boost you get from a good breakfast can keep you focused on the job, allowing you to perform better and more efficiently. Missing breakfast can be associated with a slump in efficacy.

After all, 'a hungry man is an angry man', and not eating for long hours after your last meal (which is the night before) will undoubtedly make you cranky.

Clinical studies that have assessed nutrition in children have clearly stated that the overnight fast and the missing of breakfast in combination can affect their cognitive function, particularly reducing their capability of retrieving information from memory quickly. Short term and long-term recall memory were also affected, in addition to the ability to perform arithmetic. Missing breakfast also reduces school attendance rates.

Not so good when studying in a competitive environment, is it?!

3. Maintains healthy body weight

If you miss breakfast, you will put on weight. The concept is simple and dates to our ancestors and normal physiology.

Instead of boring you with scientific detail here, we shall try to simplify it. The human body derives energy from the food that is eaten. This food is rich in nutrients that supply the muscles and vital organs with the nourishment it needs.

However, what happens if you do not eat your food on time or miss your breakfast? Well, you have effectively starved yourself for a period of 12 to 15 hours! The body thinks you are 'starving' and converts whatever energy or nutrients that are in the body to fat tissue. Fat generates a greater amount of energy compared to simple carbohydrates.

This fat is broken down gradually to supply energy to the body slowly and over a long period of time. In fact, the human body can survive for 3 weeks without food, so in anticipation of that the body starts to generate fat.

Increased body fat means increased weight gain, which over time leads to obesity.

Missing breakfast can increase the tendency to snack mid-morning, and this often includes unhealthy foods. This too can lead to an increase in body weight.

It may be quite surprising to hear that studies have shown that obese women tend to have a smaller breakfast than women who are slim and lean!

In a study looking at consumption of breakfast by school children in Delhi, Arora et al found that those who ate a regular, healthy breakfast had lesser weight gain and a lower chance of becoming obese. It is therefore important that parents stress to their child how important a meal breakfast is.

4. A regular breakfast lowers blood cholesterol levels

Yet again, a regular breakfast comes out a winner here.

Starting your day the healthy way can reduce blood cholesterol levels, research has shown. However, most of these studies have looked at the

consumption of cereals rather than traditional Indian breakfasts, which makes it difficult to interpret in the Indian context.

As a rule, breakfasts that are high in fiber content can reduce cholesterol levels. For example, a breakfast rich in psyllium fiber can reduce the levels of LDL, which is the bad cholesterol in the blood (Roberts, 1993).

But a word of caution. If you decide that cereals are the breakfast for your family, then choose carefully. Many cereals available on the market have added sugars and additional ingredients, many of which are not very healthy. Choose oats or whole grain cereals that have no added sugar. Want some sweetness? Add a tablespoon of honey or slice up some fresh fruit into it!

What is a healthy breakfast?

There is a big difference between eating a 'breakfast' and eating a 'healthy breakfast'.

Features of a healthy breakfast

1. High in fiber
2. High in protein
3. Moderate in carbohydrates
4. Low in fats
5. Low in sugar



In India, a simple breakfast can be anything ranging from idlis, vadas, dosas, baturas, pooris, chappatis, rice and rava products, to name a few.

But how do you separate the best from the rest?

It is very simple. Any breakfast foods that are fried are unhealthy, period.

- Steamed foods such as rice idli or rava idli are very healthy. Baked dishes without any oil such as chapattis and rotis are healthy as well. Stuffed wheat parathas made with very little oil and vegetables can be a great start to your day. Upma prepared the healthy way can be an excellent breakfast.

- Despite its popularity, dosas can be quite unhealthy, especially because of the oil that is added to make them. Each dosa is around 400 to 500 calories, which can take you an hour on the treadmill to burn! If you can make dosas at home with the tiniest amount of oil, then most certainly enjoy them in moderation.
- It is said that the healthiest part of a donut is the hole, and the same holds good for the vada.
- Always have a piece of fruit for your breakfast. Papaya, bananas, apples, grapefruit, oranges etc. are all a good choice.
- Finally, make sure your breakfast is high in fiber. Fiber can reduce the chances of developing heart disease by a significant margin, even if you already follow a low-fat high protein diet.
- Cereal bars are not the way to start your day. They are packed with sugar and additives that make it an unhealthy breakfast solution.
- Adding protein to your breakfast has been found to have additional benefits to health. It can keep the stomach fuller for longer, can reduce snacking and can also reduce weight gain significantly.
- If you are a non-vegetarian, or do not mind eating eggs, then eating the egg whites can be a great source of protein.

If you normally maintain a healthy lifestyle and exercise regularly, then one whole egg a day is recommended.

Make sure you exercise!

Remember, eating a good and healthy breakfast is all well and good, but make sure you get regular exercise as well. Just a simple walk for 45 minutes a day at a medium brisk pace can help keep the heart healthy.

Breakfast is without a doubt the most important meal of the day, and scientific evidence presented here confirms it. It is not just you who must follow it – make sure your family does too! ■

Evolution of education

UMA VENKATARAMAN

Teacher, Cambridge Public School,
Bengaluru.



Uma Venkataraman is the Head of Department of Social Studies for High School, in Cambridge Public School. She is the Faculty Advisor for MUN for her school and has mentored the students in several Model UN sessions in different schools across India and abroad. Uma has also guided delegations of the school on educational tours to Kennedy Space Centre (NASA), USA. She is the recipient of the Times Award For Innovating Teaching (TAFIT) in 2015 and Bright Spot Award by Pearson Schools in 2016.

Teaching has always been considered a noble profession and teachers have been generally held in high esteem. But the role of a teacher has undergone drastic changes over time, from the exalted position during the Gurukul period, to one of reverence and respect and now to a mere profession. Here, I attempt to trace the evolution of teaching in different phases of history.

During the ancient times, children were sent to a Guru for learning, whether they were from a king's palace or from a trader's or a farmer's household. The children stayed with the Guru and the Gurukul took care of all their needs, including food, education and shelter. The education happened not during fixed hours but throughout the day, the children learnt the values of empathy, honesty, punctuality, discipline and good manners apart from words and numbers. The Gurukul prepared the children to lead a life of simplicity, helping others, forgiving and contentment. The Guru was

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- »» Evolution of education
- »» Changing role of teachers
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respected and considered equal to God, so much so, that the students had unquestioning obedience. The apt example of this is Ekalavya, who cut his finger and offered it as fees to his Guru.

Several changes happened in education in the subsequent decades. As the Gurukul system of education petered out, small schools were established at several villages, sometimes one school catering to the needs of a few surrounding villages. The teachers at these schools did not command as much respect as the Gurus of the earlier age, but still maintained strictness and obedience among the students. The subjects taught were mainly language and mathematics with basic knowledge of social sciences.

The day may not be far off when the teaching is customised to the needs of individual students based on their understanding and evaluation of examination answers.

During the British occupation of India, Lord Macaulay introduced western education in the early 19th century. Convent schools were set up at several towns. There was a tug-of-war between orient education and anglicism. The natives were torn between the roots of ancient Indian society and the western education which was trying to sweep away the moral ethos and beliefs. However, most such changes were confined to the upper strata of society and a new class of urban intelligentsia was created.

There were some positive effects of British education. It became a window to the world and educated Indians gained wide acceptance. Even as western education gained importance, there were conflicts between vernacular and English languages because of there being many first-generation learners.

Even for the teachers, English was a new language and they found it difficult to teach. The government policy of having three languages added to the burden of teachers and students, who had to learn the local language, the national language and English, apart from the other subjects. The teachers were required to constantly update their knowledge.

In the post-independence era, the emphasis of the government on education led to the English education being spread to towns and villages. Mathematics and science gained prominence over humanities during the latter part of 20th century. This resulted in students losing focus on humanities and resorting to rote learning for passing the examination. A number of tuition centers mushroomed during this period along with the advent of parallel colleges. The focus was not on gaining knowledge but on passing the examinations. Most students had scant regard for their teachers and believed that they could pass the examinations easily without paying attention to what the teachers had to say. The result was that the knowledge the students gained was wide but lacked depth. When they had to apply the knowledge in practical situations, they often failed miserably.

The modern age, the current one we are saddled with, is one of technology with widespread use of computers, laptops and tablets. Many schools use electronic boards, PowerPoint presentations and other audio-visual aids. The teachers of the older generation, not being used to using technology, find it difficult to adapt to the changing circumstances. Those teachers who take it in their stride and imbibe such technologies thrive in their institutions.

The future will see technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning, which have already made their mark in the business arena, being used in the field of education too. The day may not be far off when the teaching is customised to the needs of individual students based on their understanding and evaluation of examination answers. The teachers of the future will be required to invest considerable time on a regular basis to keep abreast of the evolving technologies.

The role of the teacher is getting tougher; a teacher is expected to spend considerable time in updating her knowledge and face the challenges of the digital age.

The future of India lies in the hands of the new generation and they, in turn, are moulded by the teachers in the educational institutions. The parents, schools and the society as a whole need to encourage this noble profession in attaining greater heights. ■

Education news

UNICEF's letter to the teachers of the world

In the past 6 months, the education industry has faced unprecedented disruption due to COVID-19. According to UNICEF, more than 1.5 billion children in 190 countries have gone out of school. During this rough time, teachers have gone through incredible lengths to educate their students. Hence, UNICEF has thanked every teacher in the world with a letter and pictures of some students who have eagerly shown their gratitude to the educators.

The letter from UNICEF -

Dear Teachers,

We have watched you educate, inspire, and empower your students every day. Your ability to motivate and continue to challenge them even during times like these is incredible! You continue to astonish us with all the love and support you shower your students.

Through your students you have shown that together we have the power to change the world! Your selfless actions day in and day out is what keeps us going. This week and every week we honor and celebrate you!

If there is a teacher that you want to thank and show your appreciation, please share this page with them to let them know how much you care!

Thank you,

The UNICEF Kid Power Team



International School Award winner announced by the British Council

Stantonbury International School in Milton Keynes, England has been awarded the British Council's prestigious International School Award, in recognition of its work to bring the world into the classroom.

British Council mentioned that they have done 'exceptional work in international education'.

Their international work includes partnership projects on values with India and Lebanon through 'Connecting Classrooms',

a global education project work with Spain, Greece, Poland, Czech Republic and Estonia, and many other global cross-cultural and curricular activities in performing arts, modern foreign languages and English departments.



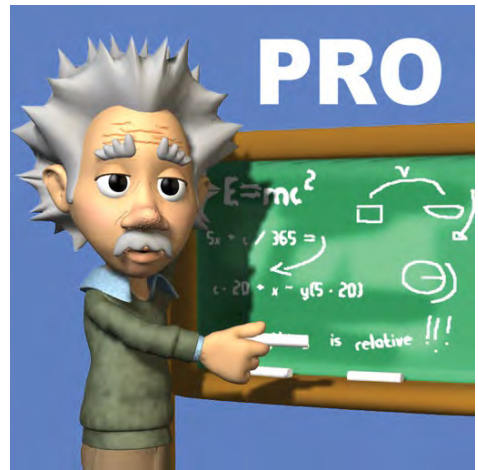
Sandra Underwood, the International coordinator and Middle Year Programme (MYP) lead in Modern Foreign Languages (MFL), said that the students are the main reason for the huge achievement. She also added that involvement in various aspects of international activities has given the students a real sense of purpose especially as they were able to work with other students in foreign countries.

The International School Award is a great chance for schools to reflect the work they do and bring the world into their classrooms. It also helps to prepare them for successful lives and careers in an increasingly global economy. ■

We Recommend App

Teacher Assistant Pro

Most often, teachers are burdened with so much work that makes them wish they had an assistant to help them with their daily activities. Some of the other work pressures that teachers face in the class apart from teaching include, class monitoring and being updated on the performance of the students in the class. Such pressures make it impossible for the teachers to concentrate on several activities at once, which makes it necessary for them to have some virtual help.



With the rise of AI technology in modern-day classrooms, several tasks can be performed by the teacher at once. Recent studies show the rising trends in mobile applications which not only enable the teacher to access content and pedagogy in class but also outside of it. For such ease of operations and access to information at any time, mobile applications such as Teacher Assistant Pro can be used.

Teacher Assistant Pro

Teacher Assistant Pro is a mobile application which helps to track and monitor the actions, achievements and behaviours of their students. The app enables teachers to create and maintain sheets or charts were

in the details of the students can be entered and maintained together. Since the app allows the sheet to be customised, teachers can edit and the way they want.

The app then helps the teachers to communicate with parents and teachers as it documents the daily activities of the students and shares them as reports on a day-to-day basis. The reports can be shared through an email or via a text message.

Additional features

Some of the other additional features of the Teacher Assistant Pro app include storing of students' and parents numbers, with additional information. The app enables the teacher to import data from other sources and help store the required information. The Teacher Assistant Pro app also comes with the features of editing the sheet and enables the use of colours, pin-ups, and to designate icons for actions.

The app enables the teacher to randomly segregate and put the students into groups for class participation. It helps in sending announcements to all the students at the same time as an email blast and not only stores information but also comes with the option of deleting past actions and history stored of a particular student without actually losing out the essential details of the student.

Finally, the Teacher Assistant Pro app allows teachers to export the data to Dropbox or take a back up on their Apple phone.

Themes

The Teacher Assistant Pro comes with personalisation app features that allow the teacher to personalise her tab or mobile phone by using the themes offered by the app. The app allows the teacher to select and use her class photo or any other picture which is related to her school or classroom as the theme of the mobile or tablet.

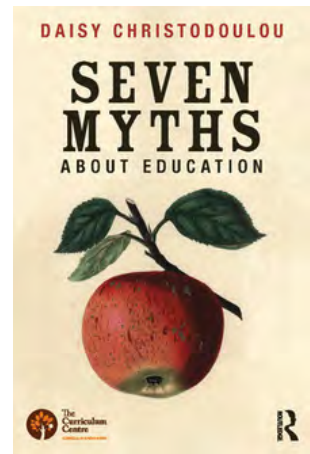
The Teacher Assistant Pro is a free mobile application and can be downloaded from the Apple store only. ■

We Recommend Book

Seven Myths About Education

Seven Myths About Education is an essential book for anyone teaching in today's standard classrooms. Written by Daisy Christodoulou, the book draws examples and instances of the author's experiences of teaching in challenging schools. The book is thought provoking and details 'how classroom practices contradict basic scientific principles'.

What if we as educators, want to achieve the goal of modelling and shaping students into well-educated citizens, but realise that it is not reached at all with the progressive methods of project-based, student-led general inquiry and discussion? What if we believe students should develop independent thinking skills, but we realise that letting them try everything by themselves while we take up the role of non-interfering facilitators, lead children to take up extremely repetitive tasks? What if the methods we use don't work to achieve the goals we share with the progressive school of education? What if we realise that teaching students the basics first gives them the necessary tools to actually later becoming independent learners?



In Seven Myths about Education, Daisy examines the seven beliefs which she thinks are withholding teachers and students. The even beliefs/myths Daisy talks about are –

- Facts prevent understanding.
- Teacher-led instruction is passive.

- The 21st century fundamentally changes everything.
- You can always just look it up.
- We should teach transferable skills.
- Projects and activities are the best way to learn.
- Teaching knowledge is indoctrination.

After detailing the seven beliefs/myths, Daisy also puts forth her point on why these are myths with references to modern cognitive science.

Daisy builds an influential circumstance explaining how the governments and educational organisations around the world have let down teachers and students by promoting and even mandating evidence-less theory and bad practice.

With examples, theories and relatable scenarios, this book is an interesting read for schools and educators alike. ■



Picture credits - The Guardian

Daisy Christodoulou

Teachers, social media can be your best friend or foe!

■ **VARSHA PRASAD**
Editor, TheTeacher.in



When I was 9-years-old, I remember accompanying my mother to the market to shop for daily essentials. In the shop, I bumped into my science teacher from school. I was thoroughly surprised to see her there. I remember just looking at her and running away from her, back to my mother. I felt weird after the encounter.

Why was the teacher at the market? What could she possibly be doing outside school? And, on top of that, she was wearing a salwar, unlike the sarees she wore when at school.

During our school days, it was very difficult for us to comprehend that our teachers too had a social life and lived like every other person outside school. During school excursions, we were surprised to see our teachers dance, sing and play games with us.

But today, the situation is completely different. Children today research and know a lot about teachers - thanks to social media. They look for teachers on Facebook, Instagram and on LinkedIn, and come prepared to class with whatever details they can find about them. For instance, the kids in my neighbourhood were seriously looking for something online. I later realised that they were looking for their new mathematics teacher online and trying to gauge her background, her previous work experiences, etc. and figuring out if she was strict or not – all these based on her social media profile!

With this arises a few basic questions – Why do teachers use social media? Are teachers responsible for what they post or share on their social media accounts? Is social media helping teachers?

1. Teachers and social media

Teachers use various social media platforms for various reasons, the major one being – keeping in touch with their near and dear ones. Apart from this, few of the other reasons can be – to stay updated with the world around, to communicate better with students, to learn from others and share educational content, to learn from peers and for entertainment.

Teachers need to be extra careful on what they post, what they share and comment on and what they endorse, as what they do here, can be easily tracked by students which can leave an impact on the young minds.

2. Should teachers and students be connected on social media?

Social media usage for teachers has been a grey area from the time it has grown popular. Should teachers be friends with their students on Facebook? Should they follow each other on Twitter? Do they need to connect with them on LinkedIn? All these questions have multiple layers of answers.

While most of the social media platform restrict children below the age of 13 to register, it has not stopped children below that age group to from doing so. Also, many schools, as a policy, restrict their students below the appropriate age, from using social media. Yet, we still see younger children with accounts on social media platforms, using it with great ease. There might also be multiple examples where students have sent connection requests to their teachers. But what is the right thing to do?

3. The pros and cons

Teachers have a lot more responsibility when it comes to social media usage. Teachers need to be extra careful on what they post, what they share and comment on and what they endorse, as what they do here, can be easily tracked by students which can leave an impact on the young minds.

In my personal opinion, there are a lot of pros as compared to the cons. Social media has become a platform that connects teachers and educators across the world. It helps peers connect with each other, it is a great resource to share knowledge with fellow educators and follow each other, it is a platform with plethora of information which a teacher uses to his/her advantage.

There have been numerous examples where teachers have adapted teaching techniques and methods followed by other teachers from a completely different continent. There have been instances where teachers have learnt newer things and approaches from their 'online teacher friends'. There are various groups and social media platforms which aim to connect teachers and help them share their thoughts and ideas.

There are various groups and social media platforms which aim to connect teachers and help them share their thoughts and ideas.

Few of the cons of social media are misuse of information posted by the teachers, hacking of accounts and stalking.

With so many advantages to it, I think with wise usage of social media teachers need not worry about the cons.

4. Social media usage – guidelines

According to social media experts, the basic rule for safe usage is to be conscious of what we post and share. While some unnecessary posts can

cause negative impact on students who see these, some posts can be wrong or not trustworthy. The best option is to validate the posts before sharing or uploading them, as there is a lot of fake news and information that gets transpired on social media.

While some children send friend requests and connection requests, it is advised to not accept it, especially if the child is still a student in school. In situations where resources and materials are shared with students via social media, teachers can create common groups or pages, which do not require the teachers to be 'friends' with them.

In accounts which are public and can be accessed by everyone, teachers can avoid sharing personal information like contact details and location details. Teachers can also avoid sharing personal photographs on such pages, including posting pictures with students in it.

By being safe users, teachers can use social media to its best with multiple benefits.

What are your thoughts on social media usage of teachers and its impact? Write to me at varsha@greycaps.com.

Varsha Prasad
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Varsha Prasad is leading THETEACHER.IN initiative from Greycaps, exclusively for teachers, as its Editor. She is also the Editor of TheTeacher.in magazine. It is created by Greycaps 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.