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(Pg # 10-14)



Rina Mitra
Daughter Reminiscences –
Art, Teaching, and school as the
crucible of aesthetics...
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Who are the educators today?

Where are they and what are they doing?

(Pg #3)





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Who are the educators today? Where are they and what are they doing?

Education for democracy must be our goal! Our education must build a robust democracy! Now we are ranked, not as a big democracy! But a flawed democracy, you know?

Corona virus and our current education practices are a deadly combination! There is an undeclared lockdown whose timing and extent is very uncertain and there is no one soul in the country who hasn't any grasp of the enormity of the problem. There are of course many highly talented experts, also highly decorated ones with distinctions like FRS and other titles and who can surely guide the political leaders. But then, sad to say, where are they, the leaders, the political masters, and their servants? Yes, the time is here, right now to ask some uncomfortable questions.

The political ecosystem is such that the very ethos and the current habits of the exercise of power has become chaotic. A sort of what we should call now as the Leyton mafia, the very power elite comprising of all who find an excuse to find a residence for a few years why some others even for a lifetime as some members of somebody and they all learned to exist this way for many years. We have come to live in Delhi and learned to hang on as members of this or that society or committees and by now the very facets of Indian society have changed to become an anarchical group.

The Legislature is only one face of the democratic system, even that Democracy Index calls Indian democracy as a flawed democracy. We have seen many such international indexes.

Why we hesitated the issues of the education system to be downgraded to the last?

Education? What is the meaning of education? It is something that touches all facets of human existence. Education is a definition of what constitutes a society's total capabilities. Education is different to each country with a long history. India is perfect suited to such a definition and suited for a deeper enquiry.

We have been independent nation only for less than a century and as a democracy, we are only some 75 years. Already, we have been facing many challenges.

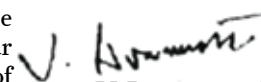
There are real challenges to far and correct the many deficiencies.

In education, we have to reverse the British hold. The British system of education has taught us to build a bureaucratic machine and this habit persists still. We have to reverse this and we have to create an independent Indian mind and we have to teach an entrepreneurial learning Indian mindset. The over-dependent British method of rote learning still persists and this must go away!

Also there is so much craze for IAS training academies, so many are exploitative. And the so-called educator-entrepreneurs-the new moneyed class who are now penetrating the political, electoral system and damaging the democratic values too badly.

In the recent assembly elections some states come to the top in the collection and seizure of unaccounted money and other valuables in IAS training classes, we have to teach the research findings of the independent organisations whose objective data and other findings must be set for competitive exams! This only can be the new education awakening process.

Unless you have such awakenings, our so-called educational reforms, in whatever forms would only produce nil results and nil benefits to create robust citizens. Our democracy would continue to produce the same type of


V. Isvarmurti
Founder & Chairman

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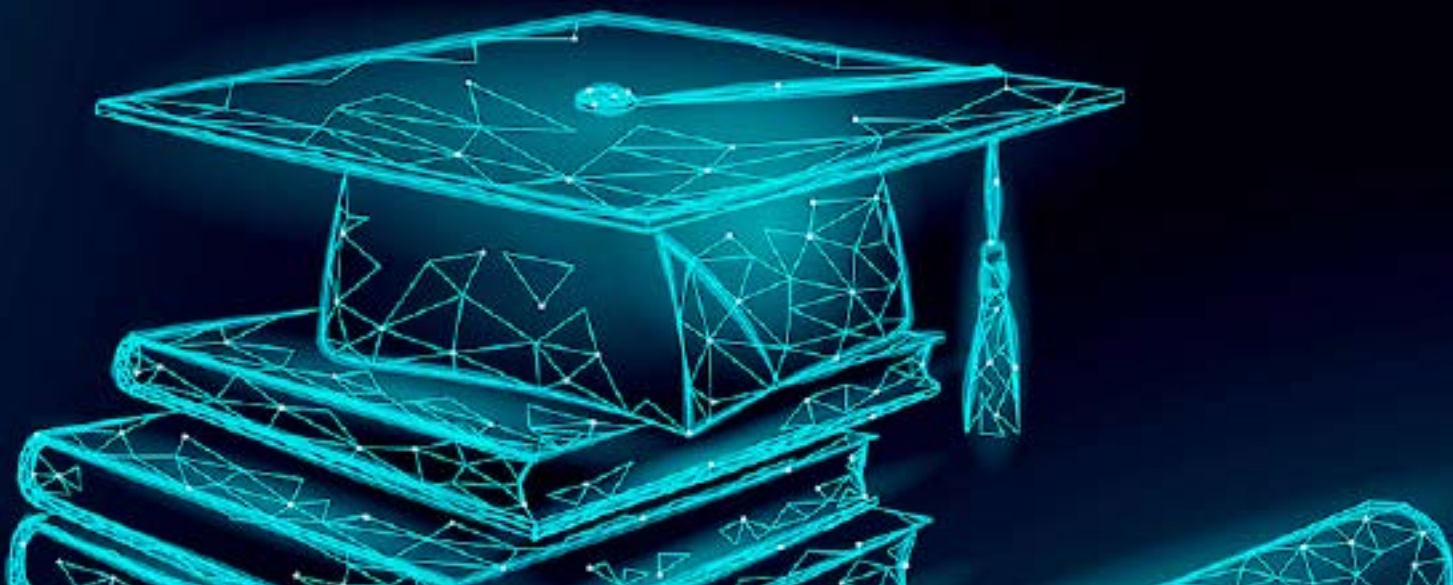
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INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION IS IN DEEP CRISIS!

A call for a bolder vision

A call for reversal of mass migration of Indian students to foreign shores for higher education

Indian lives are disrupted! When we will recover and our lives will become normal? Corona Virus has disrupted the lives of a mass of people. Every day, it seems, there is a day of a great many tragedies. Yes, the government is struggling to contain the crisis. As we write there is a hopeless scenario. A big disruption is a great opportunity for radical reforms in education. But do we have any idea of what needs to put lives back on normalcy?

Exactly, a century ago, during the Spanish Flu, the world witnessed the flu of global proportions and millions died. Is the current Corona Virus a similar visitation. Rational thoughts fail and normal thinking eludes. Of course, it is science and rational solutions that only can save us. This is not a time for criticism. Or partition talk. Many aspects of our lives are of course disrupted. But one sector that is creating great gory is the education of children. Even as the crisis is getting out of control we see certain orthodox thoughts and orthodox habits grip us.

In 2019-20 alone, it is reported in the Financial Times of London, we have of course reported already that is an outward migration of something like 2 lakh Indian students to the shores of UK and

USA by Indian students. As we have some inside experience that also, something like 2 billion dollars in foreign exchange has gone out by way of student fees alone. The other countries benefiting from this migration are Australia, Canada and some other countries.

And also one more serious development is that Britain is gaining more as the student placements there in the UK and USA are also getting over-filled there are more students coming out of schools in all countries of the world. So, there are a lesser number of places in the older and prestigious universities. And so the competition is intense.

For example for those parents who want to send their children to prestigious schools, like Eton College in the UK the student fee is something like 80 thousand pounds!

It is sheer nonsense to pay such atrocious sums for an education whose beneficiaries are no more the older upper class and the so-called Public Schools produce only leaders like Boris Johnson whose policies have led to the fall of Britain as an empire and Britain is no greater but only little England and it is also facing so much of internal rebellions and at any time in the near future Britain might even split into three countries, Scotland and Wales and

even Northern Ireland. Also, Britain is no greater. It already is degenerating and its economy is shrinking. There are also indications of economic and social pressures within Britain itself, there are already quotas and reservation for deprived classes and so even at Oxford, they reserve seats for lower classes, and that some reason why Indian students are pressed to pay 60 thousand and more of pounds as foreign student fees!

Is British education worth so much costs? Indian university education is still caught up in the old legacies and in spite of creating new universities, there is no further progress in the sector.

Instead, we see a new type of university politics, and Governors as Chancellors are indulging in a new type of university politics. All this must stop and we need great minds and stronger individuals.

There is still some hope and we see some recent controversies as in a new private university struggling to uphold.

Academic freedoms. Let the new universities bring in foreign scholars to teach on short terms contracts and let us shed the inferiority complex and slavish mindset so that a new type of education renaissance blossom in the academic field of free and critical education totally freely.

Teacher converted his scooter into mobile classroom

Chandra Shrivastava is a government teacher from the Sagar district of Madhya Pradesh. Recently his efforts towards teaching his students were appreciated nationwide. Regardless of the pandemic school shut down he kept trying to come up with ideas that would help the children from lower-income society or rural areas in learning better.

Since these children could not afford mobile phones or digital devices for online classes their teacher made it happen on his scooter. Initially, he used to download videos on his phone and

show them, he later realised that it was not enough. That is when Shrivastava began riding down to different villages in the Sagar district on his scooter that he turned into a mobile classroom. On one side there is a chalkboard to write and on the other is a mobile library that contains books and notebooks.

Shrivastava gives away some of the books and storybooks and then some other he loans so that they could be shared with all the children. His efforts made it possible for children of rural background to continue attaining

knowledge despite a worldwide pandemic that put a stopper to the education sector everywhere.

Teachers like Chandra Shrivastava are a benchmark of morals and duty towards being an educator. Such teachers make the teaching community proud!

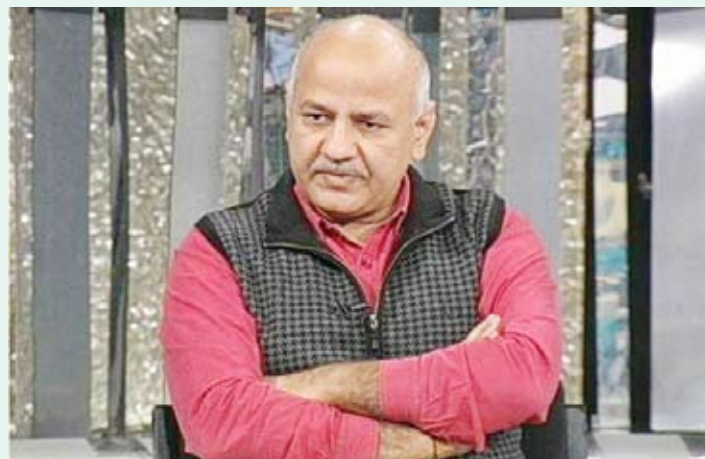
Source: www.scooneews.com



Delhi govt. honours teachers for outstanding performance

The Delhi government honoured 98 teachers and principals from government and private schools here for their contribution to school education. “We are here exactly a year after the complete lockdown was imposed for the first time in our country. Our education system was badly hit by the pandemic as school closures left everyone clueless about the teaching-learning during the COVID times,” Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said at the award ceremony.

“But, our teachers and school principals really stepped up to the occasion and showed unparalleled grit and determination in responding to this situation,” he added.



“They ensured learning never stops by reaching out to their students through innovative means. Teachers who did not know how to use a smartphone equipped themselves with the knowledge of how to use it. Teachers went above and beyond to ensure that children were learning daily. Their efforts are really praiseworthy,” the deputy Chief Minister said.

Imploring teachers to rethink strategies on assessment and learning, Sisodia said, “We need to build correct approaches and develop 360-degree assessments for our students. The premise of rote-learning evaluated through an end-of-year three-hour exam is an injustice to our students and teachers.” “The challenge is to eliminate rote-learning practices and this is why we are at the juncture of establishing the Delhi Education Board,” he added.

Of all the teachers and school principals who were hon-

oured, 69 awardees were from Delhi government schools, 18 from private schools and 11 from Municipal Corporations of Delhi schools. The awardees comprised special educators, arts and music teachers, librarians, mentor teachers, sports teachers, and vocational teachers.

In addition, the Delhi government also awarded 11 teachers and officers for their exemplary commitment in executing semi-online teaching-learning activities and COVID relief work. Continuing the tradition from previous years, two special awards were given to teachers doing exemplary work based on the observations of Deputy CM Sisodia during his school visits.

Source: www.ndtv.com

RINA MITRA

A DAUGHTER REMINISCENCES – ART, TEACHING, AND SCHOOL AS THE CRUCIBLE OF AESTHETICS...

What were your experiences of growing up as a daughter of an eminent artist like Shri Rathin Mitra?

Memories of my father always have pipe smoke and turpentine. We weren't allowed to touch the things he used. But, he would make an Art setup for us. We had our own boards, brushes which were very similar to his. So, we always felt that we were also artists. Back then, I didn't know that I would grow up learning art or design; it was a very organic process for me.

The biggest learning I have got from my father is aesthetics. I have grown with a certain sense of Beauty and Design, which my father had around himself. It was not a contrived sense of aesthetics. My father was very organic by nature. I remember going around collecting driftwood and he would do driftwood sculptures. He would show us how it could be assembled to look like figurines of birds etc.

We used to go on picnics in Mussorie etc., by brooksides. He used to pick pebbles and show us the colors of stones underwater and how it changes outside after it dries up. Things like these.

We have had a fabulous collection of fruit trees in our garden. Most of the fruits I have eaten have were off the tree. We had lots of flowers in Dehradun that adds a lot of color to all my memories. Those colors, fragrances, tastes, and voices of nature are my memories. So, for me, art is not just on a piece of canvas; it is an experience.

My father was an extreme hard-core disciplinarian. The fruit of his works shows his dedication and discipline. He has created nearly 10,000 sketches recording Heritage buildings all over India. Before coming to Kolkata, he was a highly prolific oil painter and water colorist, he would paint and just give those works away. I have seen him pro-

ducing art without effort. Today being a teacher, I take away from my father that you have to practice restraint from imposing your sense of aesthetics onto your students. You have to allow the students to seek and evolve their own sense of aesthetics. That is the challenge an artist who is also a teacher faces.

What are your memories of life as being a student at the Shantiniketan?

I had acquired a very distinct insight with my experience because I came to Shantiniketan from a girls' boarding school at Dehradun. I was very new to Bengal. I came to Kolkata with my parents, who shifted here in 1980. I came here after my Class X. Hence Bengal and being amidst Bengalis were very new to me, at the time. Within a couple of years, I was admitted at Shantiniketan. I wanted to go to NID - I studied Arts in Class X and XII, and I always wanted to study design.

Unfortunately, our PM, Indira Gandhi, was assassinated at the time whilst I was in Class XII, and Gujrat was a big no-no, and so I wound up in Shantiniketan. My father had always harbored a desire that I study there. He had wanted to study there but couldn't. When he met my mother, she was a practicing nurse; however, she was also an artist, and she is an ex-student of Shantiniketan.

Hence, my going to Shantiniketan has many currents to it, I guess. After her stint at Shantiniketan, my mother was the arts and craft teacher at Doon School for about 16 years, along with my father who was the HOD.

My experience in Santiniketan was very different from my mother's. I must admit, it took me a while to get used to the place. It is a true blue Bengali space. Being within the space, I have seen a side to it that is not the Viswa Bharati that is well-heard of. Outsiders were most often a separate group, and Bengalis



In a candid and pleasant exchange with Kartik Isvarmurti and Kaustav Bhattacharyya; Rina Mitra, daughter of the eminent artist Shri Rathin Mitra, legendary Arts teacher of Doon School, reminisces the fond memories of growing up as his daughter and charts her own life's journey with the influences drawn from that inheritance. Rina Mitra, an educationist in her own right, an art teacher, art director, and currently the Head of The NSHM, Center for Creative and Performing Arts in Kolkata. Rina followed in her father's footsteps to study Fine Arts at the prestigious Shantiniketan securing a First class Bachelor's Degree and then followed by her higher studies in the UK at the Kent Institute of Art and Design. Over the course of a quarter of a century, Rina taught at various institutions such as Kinder garden Starters and ECMIT, Dubai, Trivandrum International School, Calcutta International school.



held up their traditions. I grew outside Bengal. So, fitting in was quite a challenge for the first couple of years. But with time, things shaped up. I had many interactions with both the seniors and juniors. We had a lot of outdoor work, specially sketching and studying from nature.

We rode cycles in saris balancing our sketching book and boards etc.; my memories are of this small little town cut off from the rest of the world. I am talking of those days when there were no magazine stalls or movie halls. I studied in Kala Bhavan for five years. I did my BFA there. Then, I was in England studying in the Kent Institute of Arts and Design.

Tell us about your student life in England.

England was one of the best years of my life. That was the one year when I crossed the borders of India, and that was the farthest I had gone on my own. I didn't know, at the time, what to expect. I had heard stories from both my parents, who had both lived in England. My mother studied nursing at Hammersmith Hospital for four years and worked there for a year and a half before getting back to India. My father had gone on a Teachers' Exchange Program to Bryanston Public School to teach for a year.

Kent is one of the most beautiful parts of England, and I have been an avid reader ever since I was a child, and Enid Blyton was one of my favorites. In Kent, I met this family, who were very happy to be my local guardians there. They invited me to their countryside home on Sundays etc. The Kent countryside is such a picturesque place which brought to life my Enid Blyton memories. I did Design Foundation in England. I received the Charles Wallace Fellowship for this course after somehow convincing the British Council that this is what I wanted to do.

Did you always plan on returning to India from England?

Always! I have travelled through India, by road, with my father. He was fond of travelling by road. He had rode down Dehradun to Kanyakumari on his scooter. We have travelled through India in our Fiat. We had gone from Dehradun to Kashmir, Dehradun to Goa, Dehradun - Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra, Bihar etc.

I just love my country. I have seen parts of it which I think many people haven't. We have picnicked on the roadside and I have eaten at the most basic of hotels. Our road trips were never about stopping and staying only at 5 star hotels or crashing at friends' place. We were more like nomads on the road. My country has grown on me. I am the kind who came back from Dubai just to make sure my son grew up in India.

How has your experience been of teaching art in schools in today's age?

Most schools consider art to be just something that needs to be check marked because they have no choice. ICSE offers art in Class X. So, students who take it up from Class 9 have to study it in a disciplined manner.

There are two other curriculums offered in our country as well - the IGCSE and IB. In India, thankfully, I have not

taught art just as an art teacher in a school.

At Doon School, students could explore art like artists would. They are given enough paint and canvasses, papers and other materials etc. They would do large works like sculptures, pottery, etc. It was like a treasure trove.

At most other schools, art is not considered to be something important and usually parents do not wish to invest in resources for students of different streams etc. I have been extremely lucky and privileged to teach IBDP curriculum for the last 7 years. The IB curriculum is highly rigorous. Art under IB is everything that can be classified under art. It is not just painting, sculpture, photography, etc. It is everything and all of it! The fact that such a board is gradually becoming popular is a good thing as it encourages research and critical thinking. It is very tough unless a student is highly driven. There is a lot of self reflection involved in this syllabus. With my experience, it was a very easy fit to be able to guide in this manner. I wouldn't teach art in any school where we are just teaching a craft and then its side tracked. It is not something I enjoy. IB is very challenging and rewarding at the same time and to teach it you have to undergo IB training.

Many of my ex-students revert later in life telling me how they recognize certain things we had discussed in class a long time ago. How things get clearer in life etc. Art and aesthetics are life lessons.

Are you teaching currently at any institution?

I am currently heading a center for Creative and Performing arts at NSHM, a college based in Kolkata and Durgapur. We provide students choice-based extended learning where a student can choose to enhance or learn certain new skills. I take the art appreciation class and introduce them to spaces they may not be familiar with because they may not have had art in their growing up years. I introduce them to artists, different mediums, art styles etc.

What have you taken away about the art of teaching from your father who also happened to be a legendary teacher apart from being a distinguished artist?

Doon School is a campus with separate buildings for the academics, dormitories and masters' houses. They are all in close proximity to each other. My father was the HOD for the Doon School's Art Section for 25 years. It was a building by itself situated very near our house. It was something I could walk in and out of when I was little. That was the atmosphere. I think subconsciously all the observations that came my way, showed me how he always let the students do their work without assisting them in what to do.



It is very easy for an art teacher to finish a student's work or improve it. If a student is struggling, some teachers feel that completing it for them gives them a sense of relief. Or if the teacher gives it a touch, the student would feel better. But that is not neces-

sarily the best way to teach. I have learnt not to do that and keep a restraint which I follow having watched my father. I never work on or improve my students' work, for whatever reason.

Art is all about allowing the student to reflect, refine and develop confidence. If the foundation is good, the student is guided with a subconscious. You can't learn everything only in your higher education years, especially things like art, music, dance etc. It should be a part of you when you are younger. Dance and music are disciplines which command a lot of practice whereas art doesn't demand so much of practice - it is what you inculcate in your sensibility as you grow up. You project these learnings in your later life in any of the areas you are practicing in.

Honestly, I have never aspired to be a teacher, and although it's been in my calling I have always shied away from being one. However, later in life I realized how gratifying a profession it is when students tell you how they have been inspired, etc. There is a longevity in your relationship with the young people you associate with. It goes a long way.

Have you gone back to Shantiniketan recently?

I went a couple of years ago with my students from The Calcutta International School to show them around. But, I didn't get a chance to interact with anybody because we went during the holidays. So, I wouldn't be able to comment on how things are now. But I do know that things have changed. I do get to hear that there is a lot of openness. There are many young people involved now. The older generation of teachers are not there any more and with younger minds there are bound to be a lot of changes.

Is Shantiniketan still a go-to prestigious institution in all respects even today?

I would definitely recommend Shantiniketan for art even today. But, every institution one goes to, one has to understand that you need great teachers who teach there. Whom are you going to seek knowledge from? You need to have a thorough understanding of the teachers and the processes taught in any institution.

The changes that have come about, not just in Shantiniketan, is the nature of freedom. The easy access. There is a tendency to restrict to freedom these days. Being one with nature and

living amidst nature is far fetched nowadays. Even at Doon School, there is a lot of documentation before one can enter the campus etc. These protocols invariably have a toll on freedom. My father never wanted to go back to Doon School. He couldn't imagine going to the gate and giving his name, etc. for entering the premises where he once had treaded freely.

Do people value art the way they did in the yester years?

IGCSE and IB certainly have a great view of art. To some degree, ICSE also has evolved. There are a lot of niche career options for students within the art framework. If students have a foundation in art and choose to specialize in, say, computer graphics, animations, etc., they do very well. I have students who are now in good colleges across the globe, and they are pursuing art and design in higher studies.

Our school, The Calcutta International School, where I taught once, was a small one and so we would have a lesser number of children in the art class. We could really devote our time to them. I know three students who had taken up fine arts just to shape up as artists and not be hired by a company etc. They are still children who come seeking knowledge in art. Yes, parents do not encourage much because money had become a very important commodity. Parents would not see a future in their children pursuing arts unless they are a prodigy of sorts.

What are your memories about being a public school girl?

Mine was an all-girls boarding school. I joined when I was in class 3. I was a boarder although my parents were in the same city. My parents would visit me on Sundays for half an hour or so. The rest of the time, I was just another boarder. Any boarding school, especially the kind like Doon and Welham brings in a certain amount of discipline, which is expected to be followed. I got to know that it is good to be an early riser. I was encouraged for being in sports. I was an athlete. I played hockey etc. as well. We would climb trees in our compound - our uniforms complimented this activity.

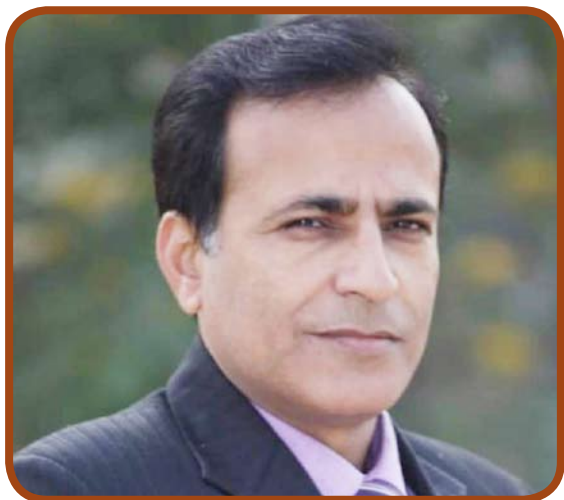
We were clad in salwars in summer, trousers in winter and shorts for sports. I have never felt that we were girls and hence were not allowed certain things. We were allowed to do anything that we could possibly do. We ate together and had bedtime prayers together. Prayers were universal. We had Kabir Doha on certain days, English hymns on others, and shlokas on some other days. Prayers had no language barrier. There were lesser filters and open mindsets. Although Doon School and Welham Girls are two of the most elite schools, we have had children from various backgrounds. I come from a middle-class background and have studied with the royalty of India. We have had children coming in with scholarships, and everybody was treated equally.

School food is something which, even today, my batchmates crave. Birthday parties are treasured memories. Being together in a dormitory is an experience unlike any other. I have had real fun memories of studying in a public school. We made friends for life and are part of a huge network of Alumni across generations!

People

Paramjit Kumar

“Some innovative ideas I have introduced as a Principal”



Paramjit Kumar
Principal Senior Secondary,
DAV Institute, Amritsar

He has won many awards like CBSE National Award for Sports Promotion, Rajiv Gandhi Sahataya Award by SOF India, Best Principal Award by Sahodaya School Complex Amritsar, International School Award Accreditation under British Council (2015-2018), etc.

In this conversation, he highlighted various innovations introduced at his school.

To name a few – quiz on focussed topics, maths/science MCQs using google forms, integrating value education, viva systems to assess students’ understanding, encouraging online physical activities using videos, etc.

Listen to the full conversation at www.indiaschoolnews.com

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Paramjit Kumar is a Bachelor in Commerce, Master in Economics, Master in Education, and pursuing a Ph.D. in Education. He joined as a teacher at DAV International School, Amritsar, in 1998 and currently serves as the principal of the GND DAV PUBLIC SCHOOL, Bhikhiwind, Tarn Taran, Punjab.

Ravi Chatrathi

“Stress on competency vs content”

Ravi Chatrathi – IBDP-MYP BM Facilitator,
Indus International School,
Hyderabad

Ravi Chatrathi is M.Com, MBA and B.Ed. He is in the teaching profession for the past 20 years. He has been teaching several curriculums such as Telangana state board grade XI & XII – economics, accountancy; CBSE grade X Economics, grade XI & XII Accountancy; Cambridge IGCSE Economics and business studies. He is teaching IBMYP& DP Business management since 2012. He is also an IBDP assistant examiner for the subject – Business management for SL & HL.

While talking on competency vs content, he says the schools are focusing more on content than competency. Students should be workplace ready and have expertise in their chosen fields.

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Arun Jee Humour in the classroom



Arun Jee English language and literature coach

for the students to learn the basics of English grammar. He has received International School Award from the British Council for leading the integration of international learning in the school for 2017-2020 & 2020-2023.

In his presentation, Mr. Arun Jee elaborated on why it is important to laugh with your students. How do humour and language play an essential role in the classroom? What might be the consequences of embracing or limiting humour in the classroom and strategies for incorporating humour.

Listen to the full conversation at www.indiaschoolnews.com

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Kishor Kulkarni “Manifold perspectives of a teacher”

Kishor Kulkarni – Principal, NV Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Shegaon, Maharashtra

Kishor Kulkarni is M.Sc.(Physics), B.Ed. and has 24 years of teaching experience. Presently, he is the Principal at NV Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Shegaon, Maharashtra. He worked in Sri Sathya Sai Vidya Vihar GAIL GunaM.P, as a PGT Physics. He is closely associated with human values programme of Sri Sathya Sai Baba as well Chinmaya Vision Programme of Chinmaya mission. He has organised courses like – Dynamic parenting for parents, role of teachers, value education etc.

Kishore Kulkarni gave a presentation on “Manifold perspectives of a teacher.” He stressed on the following points – Teacher as a creative thinker, social reformer and leader.

Listen to the full conversation at www.indiaschoolnews.com



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People

Rajesh Vasudevan

“Being a principal – the challenges I faced and some new ideas”



**Rajesh Vasudevan –
Head of School,
Manchester International School,
Coimbatore**

ics of life. Over the last two years, he has been part of a great team that focuses on designing, implementing and assessing 21st-century skills for students and teachers.

Mr Rajesh feels that children should be involved in performing arts at an early stage to be equipped with all the necessary skills to navigate through life. He says drama and the performing arts provide children an opportunity to build on their cognitive skills.

Listen to the full conversation at www.indiaschoolnews.com

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Dr. Shilpa Jejurkar

“Some new ideas I have introduced as a principal”

**Dr. Shilpa Jejurkar –
International Educator,
Principal, CBSE school**

Dr. Shilpa Jejurkar has around 4 years of experience as Head of School with different CBSE schools. Her skills include educational technology, instructional design, curriculum development, public speaking, and teacher training. She has done a PG in management focused on education, environmental education and training of teachers. Currently she is the Thought Leader at the International Alliance of Counselors& Educators.

She said that children having an interest in learning and finding it joyful is an important thing. It ensures children to learn more. She has implemented game based learning methodology, flexible learning methods, and a woven mix of academics with extra curricular activities to achieve this. In this process, she involved families too making the online education a joyful experience.

Listen to the full conversation at www.indiaschoolnews.com



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Kanchan Misra

“Why I wanted to be a teacher?”



**Kanchan Misra –
IBMYP coordinator, IB examiner,
DP Geography & ToK teacher**

school. She taught subjects as- geography, history, civics, global perspective & theory of knowledge. She is an IB examiner for integrated humanities.

She said the teaching profession has always inspired her. According to her, this profession gives a sense of fulfillment because it deals with young minds and shapes them. She compares a teacher with a theatre artist, where he/she performs live in the classroom. The teacher gives her children a human touch, which technology can't.

Listen to the full conversation at www.indiaschoolnews.com

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Kanchan Misra started her teaching career 20 yrs back and has taught both the national (CBSE, ISC) and international curriculum (IB & IGCSE). She has taught across India and now, for the last two years teaching in a school abroad. She started teaching middle school and later moved to high

Rashmani Singh & Preeti Bhatia

“Vahani scholarship scheme for the exceptionally brilliant underprivileged children”

Rashmani Singh – Managing Director, Vahani Scholarship

Rashmani Singh Managing Director of Vahani Scholarship has been there since the inception of the Scholarship program. She is passionate about education and has a strong network which she uses unhesitatingly to forward the cause and benefit the Scholars in several areas. Having schooled at Welham Girls School, Dehradun she went on to complete her graduation at Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi.

Preeti Bhatia – CEO, Vahani Scholarship

Preeti Bhatia completed her Architecture and MBA from Pune University. She has 14 years of diversified experience in the education sector. She is passionate about training and developing the next generation leaders.

Vahani Scholarship is a non-profit organisation that recognises the importance of opening doors for the exceptionally brilliant underprivileged children in India. Our



Rashmani Singh



Preeti Bhatia

mission is to send Indian students who come from extenuating circumstances to the top universities across India. We take a two-pronged approach: full financial support combined with on-going personal mentorship.

Listen to the full conversation at www.indiaschoolnews.com

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People

Balaji Jadhav

“Teaching through conference call during pandemic”



**Balaji Jadhav –
Google Innovator Teacher,
ZPSatara, Govt of Maharashtra**

ral area, online classes became a hurdle because of non-availability of smartphones and connectivity. To overcome the difficulty, Satara based teacher Balaji Jadhav came up with the idea of teaching his students through conference calls. Jadhav has won HBN Creativity & Inclusive Award for his ‘lockdown teaching’ innovation.

In this meeting, he gave a presentation of the various techniques he used while teaching the students through conference calls.

Listen to the full conversation at www.indiaschoolnews.com

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Balaji Baburao Jadhav, from Sangavi village of Latur district in central Maharashtra has won an international award for ‘teaching through conference call’ during the coronavirus lockdown. During lockdown, for the students from the ru-

Dr Swarup Dutta

“An introduction to Lean Six Sigma in Education”

Dr Swarup Dutta – Principal, MSM English School Malkapur, Buldhana, Maharashtra

Dr Swarup Dutta has over two decades of experience as an educator of CBSE schools. He has experience in diverse fields – medicine, manufacturing, quality assurance, business management, marketing etc. He works closely with district leaders and community partners to encourage parental involvement and strong community alliances. He has transformed two schools into ‘Best in the town’ in less than two years and improved services for students, teachers and parents. He has a Green Belt in global career counselling from UCLA Extension.

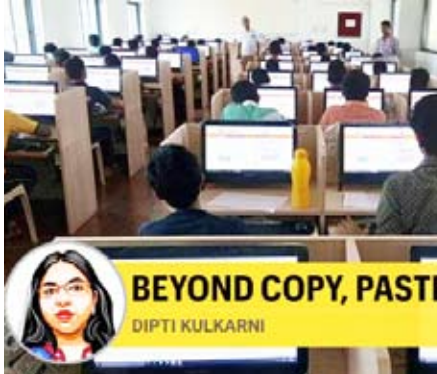
He spoke about Lean Six Sigma in education and its benefits in schools. With his presentation, he explained that Lean Six Sigma pertains to improving the quality of matter taught, the pupils’ character, and the quality of study and school life. With the revolutionary usage of audio-visual devices, like projectors, video conferencing, etc., the students can also be asked to write papers on a particular subject. After the presentation of papers, a discussion can



take place on the respective subject. Under this method of imparting knowledge of literacy with quality, the students’ thinking, writing, and presentation skills can be kindled.

Listen to the full conversation at www.indiaschoolnews.com

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Students are copying from internet since onset of COVID-19 It's because of how we teach

By leaving little time for students to grasp and reflect on what we teach them, we're lowering their engagement with what they're learning and reducing their confidence to articulate complex ideas.

Since the onset of COVID-19 last year, it's not only the virus that has perfected the art of copying. Students across the globe are acing it. With an expansive, permanently available repository at their fingertips, copying is a breeze. In online exams, students have the choice of copying from each other, from the internet and from other resource material.

Consequently, setting a question paper in these times has become more challenging than answering one. For most subjects, evaluation is a fundamentally problematic task anyway. When confronted with an answer, the evaluator has to convert the worth of the answer into a number. Even with a rubric at hand this is never straightforward. And it would be best to not talk about the reliability of these scores. Different evaluators at different times and

the same evaluator at a different time would rarely give the exact same marks to an answer. It is such a fragile scoring system on which entire careers are built. The pandemic has compounded the difficulty of evaluation.

Do I give more marks to an answer that is original but incomplete or even off-the-mark or to an answer that's more comprehensive but is copied?

The other day, it struck me that I keep telling students "write in your own words" and I wondered why I keep using this phrase all the time. In whose words will they write if not their own should have been the obvious comeback. But unfortunately, it is not. Students prefer to write in other people's words. With so much text at their fingertips, writing has become synonymous with browsing, selecting and pasting.

Rather than reprimand these young people for their unethical behaviour, we need to seize this moment and radically overhaul our education in the light of the internet. The internet is never going to go away. On the contrary, it will con-

tinue to grow not only in size but also in its intelligence. By continuing to teach students a huge range of subject matter and covering a lot of ground, we leave them with little or no time to grasp, internalise, reflect, probe and play with the ideas and concepts they learn. And, then, because their involvement in what they have learnt is so low, they don't feel confident to articulate or explain it in their own words. In any case, years of rote learning and reproduction have led to a lack of confidence while using language to articulate any complex idea.

We have to recognise that in this battle the internet is always going to win when it comes to quantity. We stand a chance if, and only if, we focus on quality. And that will mean a drastic reimagination of what and how much we teach. If we don't give our students the time and the tools to read, think, articulate, write and, instead, focus on how much content they know, then we will be failing our students as well as our society.

Dipti Kulkarni - The writer is assistant professor, NMIMS University, Mumbai
Source: [indianexpress.com](https://www.indianexpress.com)



Teaching up to class 5 in mother tongue, regional language

School principals have varied views

As per the new National Education Policy (NEP), the medium of instruction until at least class 5, but preferably till class 8 and beyond, will be the home language, mother tongue, local language and regional language.

While teaching students up to class 5 in the mother tongue or regional language will promote multilingualism, students may face difficulties in coping with the syllabus in upper classes where medium of instruction is English, according to many school principals.

As per the new National Education

Policy (NEP), the medium of instruction until at least class 5, but preferably till class 8 and beyond, will be the home language, mother tongue, local language and regional language.

"We first have to distinguish between language and literacy. Language is speaking and is natural for our brains. Literacy is reading and writing which is to be learnt by our brains," said Vishnu Karthik, Director, Heritage Schools. He said children's brains are designed to learn multiple languages and the more they are exposed to many languages, the more they can absorb them at an

early age. "Thus, teaching in only one language is not the best use of the critical learning windows nature has given for learning languages. Teaching only in English or only in the mother tongue is not a good practice. Rather a healthy mix of 2-3 languages is good for children in primary school," he said. As far as literacy (reading and writing) is concerned, Karthik said it is best to keep it simple by focusing on just two literacy languages. "For urban parents, English and one vernacular language should be good. A third literacy can be picked up post grade 5," he added.

Source: www.hindustantimes.com

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

NEED OF THE HOUR

The education sector was looking forward to a big allocation in this year's union Budget with the reopening and regular functioning of schools becoming a big area of concern impacting the lives of 320 million learners in India.

Lockdown has impacted the goal of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education as it resulted in children, especially from marginalised communities, having limited or absolutely no means for continuing their education.

Studies by various agencies indicate that the digital divide and inadequate reach of remote learning solutions has ultimately resulted in increased learning gaps and dropout rates, pushing children into labour, early marriages and so on.

Covid has also affected the holistic development and capacity of learning in children by creating a social and emotional impact on the children. Studies indicate that stress levels have increased, and children and their families have been finding it hard to cope with the current situations.

Preliminary findings from a recent study by ChildFund India, covering approximately 2,000 children from marginalised communities in the age group of 6-14, from 10 States suggest that around 73 per cent children were feeling sad and 8 per cent were feeling anxious because they were not able to meet friends and teachers, access or/and understand online learning sessions and missing active face-to-face teaching learning. Most of these respondents desperately wanted the schools to reopen soon but were worried and apprehensive about the availability of the adequate infrastructural facilities required to maintain the physical distancing norms and sanitation conditions.

Behavioural impact

In the same study, both parents and children reported major negative changes in the behaviour patterns of the children, ranging from increased aggression, to lack of concentration and irritability. Online learning has only exacerbated this stress in children.

In addition, trends like reverse migration during Covid, livelihood loss has impacted families from the marginalised sections, have increased dependency on government schools with decreased ability to pay school fees due and so on. Approximately 60 per cent of the parents interviewed said that they are looking up to the government for making special financial arrangements to address these concerns.

Also, the diverse socio-cultural fabric of our country, with its unique set of caste, class and gender discrimination issues, has further been negatively impacted during the pandemic, impacting equitable access to education. Experts worry that this might also affect the enrolment and retention rates in schools, when they eventually reopen.

In the preliminary findings of the ChildFund study, nearly 50 per cent teachers out of the 150 surveyed, reported being concerned that further delay in opening of schools might result into increase in dropout rates, child labour and learning gap. So special focus is needed on interventions that support the social and emotional learning (SEL) aspect in children along



with the special interventions to help children cope with their learning loss as well as the stress and anxiety that they have been experiencing. SEL is otherwise also important for a holistic development of children. SEL's importance has been neglected despite the fact that recent research in fields of education, neuroscience and learning, find that it aides children in continuing and succeeding in education. It also found a significant mention in the National Education Policy, 2020.

Overall, one can say that social impact of the pandemic on equal and equitable education needs special mitigation strategies and interventions. These might include making arrangements of reopening schools at the earliest and interventions like specially designed modules on SEL for teachers as well as children, bridge classes for overcoming the learning gaps and a massive boost in infrastructural support to government schools. Hence many were expecting an increase in the allocation for education in the Budget and even announcement of a special Covid rehabilitation package for getting schools ready for instilling faith in the parents and children that the schools can handle Covid related measures.

However, the Budget disappointed the education sector when it slashed its allocations. Since the Kothari commission report in 1986 there has been a need and demand of spending at least 6 per cent of GDP on education, last year it was somewhere around 3.5 per cent.

In this year's Budget it has come down to as low as 0.42 per cent, out of which spending on school education is a mere 0.25 per cent. Also, around 97 per cent of these allocations are coming from the education cess, so the actual amount from the gross allocation is even lower. The Budget has also reduced allocations for the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan that is major intervention catering to the school education from ₹38,751 crore in the last Budget to ₹31,050 crore this year.

With the worry of increased drop out of children from marginalised communities, the expectation was for announcement of schemes and programmes. Also the budget for National scheme for incentive to girl child for secondary education has been reduced from ₹110 crore to just ₹1 crore. With 2020 being the year of pandemic and also the year of release of NEP 2020, the children of this nation would really have appreciated if the government opened its purse a bit more for that much needed healing touch on their pandemic induced miseries.

Aekta Chanda -The writer is Senior Specialist - Education, ChildFund India

Source: www.thehindubusinessline.com

Challenges for teachers which never existed before

Teachers today have to stay ahead of the curve to provide world-class education amid the Covid-19 situation across the globe. Here are a few challenges for teachers which never existed before.

Education in the 21st century is more dynamic than ever. New breakthroughs in technology and the emergence of fresh approaches in pedagogy are perpetually transforming teaching. Along with these changes come new challenges for teachers in schools and colleges.

Perhaps at no other time were these challenges more apparent than during the disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Schools across the country competed to provide the best digital educational environment and the responsibility of online teaching fell squarely on the shoulders of teachers who were caught unawares by the sudden shift in the mode of transacting the curriculum.

The online teaching process is fraught with challenges that leave teachers overworked since it demands practical and refined digital skills. Low and irregular student attendance, lack of attention by students, apprehension for technology (especially among older teachers), poor internet connectivity, and, in most cases, the added pressure of household chores, have made online teaching a daunting task for many teachers.

Challenges faced by teachers

The task is challenging for all levels of teachers, from pre-primary to senior school ones. Apart from preparing engaging digital lesson plans, a lot of effort goes into gathering and preparing the items and props, for the primary teachers. Senior school teachers have a huge number of papers and assignments to mark, which can be very time consuming. They also have to work overtime to brainstorm ideas and plans for their online classes.

Looking beyond the coronavirus pandemic, the challenges teachers face today can be broadly classified into three categories:

Challenges posed by technology

New technologies are making eLearning and blended learning the new normal in education. But it has been observed that teachers take more time in teaching online than face to face.

In the online mode, teachers do not find proper methods of providing feedback to all students.

Teachers have concerns over the laboratory activities since virtual labs are not accessible to all students and not many lab activities can be conducted through virtual medium.

In the virtual mode, teachers often feel less connected to students and find it difficult to establish a good rapport with them.

While formative assessments are being done, online summative assessments are still posing a huge challenge. Authentic assessments are not happening online. Teachers have to keep



themselves up to speed with latest digital tools that can be used in education.

Challenges posed by pedagogical advances

New pedagogical innovations are changing the way teachers teach in today's classrooms. The education has become more student-centric and many lessons are customized rather than being generic to address specific gaps in student learning.

Teachers have to keep themselves apprised of the new assessment tools to better evaluate students' academic progress.

A teacher's role is transforming from a knowledge provider to a knowledge facilitator and counsellor because of the abundant information that's easily available online.

The nature of today's learners is a far cry from those of a decade ago. Students today have a different attention span and are not interested in classroom chalk-talk or learning by rote. They are becoming needs-based learners. Teachers have to meet their rising expectations by making lessons interesting and engaging.

Challenges posed by National Education Policy

National Education Policy 2020 is going to permanently change the face of Indian education. Teachers have to reform their methods and align them with the new 5+3+3+4 curriculum structure.

Under the provisions of NEP, all educators, regardless of their position, will have to take at least 50 hours of Continuous Professional Development workshop every year.

NEP removes hard distinctions between the streams of arts, sciences and humanities, thereby necessitating a broader approach and qualifications on the part of teachers.

Overcoming the Challenges

All these challenges highlight the importance of teacher training in today's world. With proper training, teachers can be empowered intellectually, digitally, and emotionally to answer the ever-increasing demands of pedagogy. Well-trained teachers can multi-task and improve different aspects of their practice, such as teaching, student assessment, and curriculum designing, while simultaneously up-skilling and re-skilling themselves to meet the higher standards of education in the 21st century. The student expectations are huge. So, teachers can't afford to be complacent. They have to stay ahead of the curve to provide world-class education and break new barriers as well.

This article is written by Sushma Raturi, Member Secretary - Academic Council, Saamarthya Teachers Training Academy of Research, Ghaziabad.

Source: www.indiatoday.in



Students turn teachers for under privileged children during COVID times

Three students are running the school for those children, who do not have much money nor any other system to pursue studies in these corona times. They have turned teachers for underprivileged kids in COVID.

At a time when an outbreak of coronavirus has forced the school students to stay at home and continue their studies online, children of labourers and daily wage workers have no choice but to skip their studies as they can merely afford a smartphone or 24 hours Internet connectivity. Keeping this in mind some Delhi Samaritans, who themselves are students, have started teaching these children. "Yamuna Khadar Pathshala" runs under a flyover at the banks of river Yamuna in Delhi's Mayur Vihar, Phase-1. Around 250 students from the nearby slums every day come here to continue their studies offline.

This 'under the flyover' school is being run by six teachers who are also students. One of these teachers is Panna Lal, a 12th pass and has done a one-year

computer course while another one is Devender, a law student.

The third teacher is Deepak Chaudhary, who is doing M.A. and has done a two-year computer diploma. Fourth is Rupam, a B.A. student, fifth is Mukesh, a Class 12th pass and holds a one-year computer diploma, and the last one is Dev Pal who manages all the activities in this school.

These people are running the school for those children, who do not have much money nor any other system to pursue studies in these corona times. The parents of these children are daily wage wagers, labourers or rickshaw pullers, etc. who toil hard every day to meet their basic requirements.

Panna Lal told IANS, "I have been teaching children since a year ago. There are some problems here due to which children are unable to study properly, and their parents also cannot afford smartphones."

Dev Pal, who manages everything in the "Yamuna Khadar Pathshala", told IANS: "We were planning to start this

school in March last year but could not implement the idea due to enforcement of the lockdown. Then we decided to start online classes but this idea could also not work in absence of electricity and smartphones."

"After some time we began physically teaching students from Nursery to Class 10. We have a total of six teachers to teach these students," said Dev Pal. He further said: "We never pressurise children for a fee. They give us some money as per their convenience."

"All the teachers who teach here are students themselves. We have requested many to help us meet the basic requirements. Thereafter, we also urged people to at least send a teacher here for our help if they cannot give money, but no one helped," said Dev Pal.

According to Dev Pal, the teachers here have also faced similar adversities in their lives. They aim to make these children succeed in life. However, they also have to earn a livelihood.

Source: www.timesnownews.com

NEP aims at India in making a global knowledge superpower

The National Education Policy is based on equity, quality and accessibility and is aimed at making India a global knowledge superpower, Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' said. The policy focuses on paving the way for transformational reforms in school and higher education systems to achieve this end, he added. Mr Pokhriyal made the remarks while addressing an international conference digitally at Lovely Professional University (LPU).

A varsity release said the occasion was a one-day long virtual 'conference on International Higher Education Opportunities in the Post- COVID World' organized by LPU. The Minister graced the event as chief guest.

The conference was attended by 12 senior academicians of the ranks of pro-vice-chancellors, vice-rectors, directors among others from various top universities from countries like the USA, UK, Canada, Australia and Cyprus as panellists, the release said. In his address, the minister said, "I am very happy that LPU has organized this dialogue with the senior policymakers of the world and has been doing so much work in



the internationalization of education. "In fact, internationalization is a very important element in the growth and development of a university and its contribution to the country. I can see LPU as one of the foremost universities which have embraced internationalization in letter and spirit," Mr

Pokhriyal added. Touching upon the NEP, Mr Pokhriyal said, "India has updated its New Education Policy for 33 crore Indian students, studying in 1,000 universities and 45,000 colleges, Their aspiration is reflected in this NEP. This policy has been made in consultation with all the stakeholders including students, teachers, scientists and NGOs. It is the biggest innovation, where participation is from everyone."

Mr Pokhriyal further said, "Today internationalisation is a very big thing and the NEP has made it possible for the universities from across the world to open campuses in India. I invite you all to set up campuses in India, and work on more joint research projects with Indian universities." He said the conference comes at an opportune time, especially so, when the international borders are closed.

Read full article @ <https://bit.ly/3xtzm7K>

Source: www.ndtv.com

Non profits can play role in future of education

Typically, we perceive the sole actors of the education equation to be teachers and students, whether the students are children in elementary schools or young people in high school and college. These students go to school to acquire knowledge and develop social skills all in the name of getting a job. For decades, education systems played a role in preparing us for a defined and known set of jobs. The social environment was a physical one where people learned together in a real space.

The pandemic has shifted our social environment to a virtual space where people spend more time than ever before using their electronic devices and

Unfortunately, the education system as a whole has not yet adopted or developed a new mainstream program that's more aligned with the future of work, where the dominance of exponential technologies and social platforms will likely be the main feature. For those who are not yet familiar with the exponential technologies universe, I will give some examples for a general perspective.

These technologies — such as artificial intelligence, robotics, drones, 3D printing, virtual reality, nanotechnology and more — are rapidly increasing their efficiency and impact in our businesses and lives.

The question now is: What does the future of education look like? A more pressing question: What can we do as

build scenarios and road maps for such a future of education without diving deeply into the practical way to implement one of them. The OECD published a report, “Back to the Future of Education: Four OECD Scenarios for Schooling,” to examine a couple of scenarios of this future.

The World Economic Forum included this topic in the Davos Agenda for January 2021 and published an article in this context that explains the urgency of reshaping the future of education. Education futurist leader Sir Ken Robinson has explained the main issues of the current public education system, with millions of people around the world having viewed his TedX conferences.

Another education futurist is Dr. Jennifer M. Gidley, who “aims to raise awareness about new thinking that will be required in the future, especially in regards to youth education and sustainable urban development.”

We in the nonprofit sector should be challenging the fact that research and initiatives to build a new education system, or revise elements of the system itself, seem unprepared to go live without a concrete plan of implementation. Without a process of iteration to define a real plan for the next decade, how can we expect to change the future of education for young people?

I do believe that nonprofit organizations can not only help but can take more innovative initiatives at a practical level to invite the public sector to upgrade the way of thinking and teaching for children. 2020 was a year that brutally showed us the need for flexibility and adaptability, but I do not see our education system developing these capacities.

NGOs are essential actors in our societies that support people for a better life and future. Nonprofits that operate in the education space can play a major role in this shift and can propose new solutions that can help set students up for success in the future of work.

Source: www.forbes.com



applications to socialize. This virtual space requires another definition of rules, standards and policies for the social environment where our perception can be ambiguous for certain reasons. While schools continue to prepare young people for traditional jobs, there is a good chance many of these positions will change or even become obsolete in 10 years. Exponential technologies are helping us in many ways, but at the same time, they are shaping a new future of work with jobs not yet defined or imagined today.

nonprofit leaders to make a positive impact on this? Being an assistant professor in artificial intelligence, and at the same time an executive AI advisor for the private sector, often invites me to think deeply about the future of work and, by consequence, the future of education.

As a mom, mentor and coach, I'm worried our education system might not be prepared to shift rapidly enough to teach our children the needs of this future of work. Different non-governmental organizations are working to

ARE STUDENTS READY FOR POST-PANDEMIC REALITY?



The article “Top U.S. Companies: These Are the Skills Students Need in a Post-Pandemic World” (March 2, 2021) highlights the essential skills managers expect from today’s K-12 students and how schools can provide students with those skills. The Council for Aid to Education, the nonprofit assessment developer I lead, agrees that fact-based knowledge alone is no longer sufficient for college and career success.

Our data show that approximately 60 percent of students entering college are not proficient in the essential skills of critical thinking, problem-solving, and written communication—even though these skills are predictive of positive college and career outcomes. Since these skills are seldom explicitly taught in college curricula or in the workplace,

most students have little opportunity to improve their proficiency and achieve their full potential.

The opportunity to improve students’ essential skills lies in identification and action, and secondary education must play a role. By assessing students’ essential skills early in their academic journeys, educators can use the results to provide targeted developmental support. Identifying and supporting students who may be at risk due to insufficient proficiency upon entry to higher education should also be a component to improving student success.

Measuring these essential skills can best be accomplished by using authen-

tic, valid, and reliable assessments that allow educators to understand if their students are ready for their next step. Assessments with years of comparative data that educators can readily use to help students identify their strengths and areas for improvement are fundamental to developing the critical thinkers, problem-solvers, and communicators who can be successful in the future. Cultivating students’ essential skills now will go far in boosting future outcomes for students, parents, institutions, and the overall economy.

Bob Yayac
CEO & President
Council for Aid to Education
New York, N.Y.
Source: www.edweek.org



STUDENT RAISES RS 19 LAKH FOR 77-YEAR-OLD FORMER TEACHER WHO WAS LIVING OUT OF HIS CAR

Teachers form the base using which a student can achieve all the desires for and earn a happy living. Therefore, if a teacher is in need, a student can always offer a helping hand. This is what has happened in the United States where a 21-year-old man gave a cheque of USD 27,000 (Rs 19 lakhs) to his former teacher. His gesture has won the hearts of many and at the same time has also taught people to be kind and helpful to others.

Steven Nava, a former student of a 77-year-old substitute teacher named Jose Villarruel — who is also known as Mr V — gifted him a cheque of USD 27,000 after he saw his teacher living in a car (1997 Ford Thunderbird LX) amid the COVID-19 crisis in the US. Steven started an online campaign by creating a GoFundMe page to raise the amount. He even posted videos on TikTok to advertise his campaign.

According to the information available, Jose was a very popular teacher among his students. However, he had

to resign from his job when the coronavirus pandemic started spreading, as majority of the schools had to switch to remote learning.

Jose informed during an interview with Fox 11 Los Angeles that he resigned from his school in May, after which he managed to complete all the paperwork and agreements to get his pension. He received his cheque after that but unfortunately, the amount was not enough as he had many debts to pay.

When Nava saw his former teacher, he offered him USD 300 and after that, he set up a GoFundMe page. Praising the efforts and social media, Nava said the power of social media is so big now and should be used for the good and not bad.

Nava also tweeted about the same on his Twitter account and wrote that he always noticed this older man staying out in his car constantly at a parking lot near his house, even when the weather was bad.

Source: www.news18.com

Sheryl Sandberg's shout-out to Gujarat schools amid the coronavirus pandemic. Facebook's number two executive Sheryl Sandberg took to the social media platform this morning to thank "all the teachers, education officials and others" who are working to disseminate vital information during the ongoing global coronavirus pandemic. Educators in Gujarat sharing informative videos and infographics found a special mention in Ms Sandberg's post as she informed her followers that Facebook has been working with the state's Department of Education to plan a live session to "help them keep people informed."

"I want to take a moment to say thank you to all the teachers, education officials and others who are doing everything they can to keep their kids and their communities informed during the COVID-19 outbreak," wrote Ms Sandberg, 50, in a post that was shared on Facebook and Facebook-owned Instagram.

She went on to give the example of Gujarat, where more than 1 lakh educators from across thousands of schools are using 'Workplace by Facebook' - an online team collaboration tool - to share the latest advice, news and preventive measures amid the COVID-19 outbreak.

Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg applauds Gujarat schools



"In the state of Gujarat in India, there are more than 100,000 educators across thousands of schools using Workplace from Facebook to share videos, infographics and news in real time - everything from the latest government advice to videos like the one in the picture, showing how to encourage children to wash their hands," wrote the Facebook COO, sharing a screenshot from a September 2019 video filmed at Amargadh Primary School which shows students the correct technique to wash hands. The video was shared on 'Workplace by Facebook' in March to reiterate the importance of washing hands to contain the spread of coronavirus.

"We are also working with their Department of Education to plan a live session to help them keep people informed," Ms Sandberg added.

In her post, she also gave a shout-out to Istituto Quarto Sasuolo Ovest in Italy and a group facilitating online learning in Thailand.

Since being shared online, her post has collected over 700 'likes' on Instagram, along with a ton of comments.

The coronavirus pandemic has infected more than 167,000 people worldwide. The number of coronavirus cases in India is 137, said the health ministry on Tuesday. Three persons have died.

Source:

50% say Universities should require vaccine – survey



A recent report from higher education think tank QS has revealed that half of international students think that universities should "require students to have had the vaccine before the student can travel to the country of their chosen institution".

Based on responses from 2,513 current and prospective international students from 153 countries, a further 23% did not support the measure and 27% were unsure, while around 65% of international students were open to taking a coronavirus vaccine compared to 10% that would not. Of those 10%, almost four out of 10 would however agree to have the vaccine if their university required them to have it before going overseas.

"As countries across the world look to ramp up their vaccination programs and reopen their economies, it is vital for universities to consider the approach that they want to take regarding the vaccination of their students," said QS marketing director Paul Raybould. "Whilst some international students believe that vaccination should be a requirement in order to travel to study, others are more sceptical and so it is more important than ever that institutions provide clear, effective, data-led decision making and communications."

One US institution, Rutgers University, announced in March that it would require all students to be vaccinated before arriving on campus for the fall 2021 semester. Northeastern has revealed similar plans, saying that it will help international students "who cannot get vaccinated before arriving on campus in the fall navigate vaccination as needed".

In Europe, all teaching staff and students at the University of Gibraltar have been offered the Covid-19 vaccine, which "means that we have been able to return to on-campus learning and to continue to offer a consistent, excellent student experience", according to the institution's vice chancellor, Catherine Bachleda. The QS report also offered new insight to international students' attitudes towards online teaching. Almost one in five respondents said they preferred online teaching over in-person, with a further 23% indicating they had no preference. However, 63% of students had attended virtual lectures at night.

"In a recent survey of higher education professionals conducted by QS, we found that 55% had introduced flexible timetables to allow students who were studying remotely to attend lectures at a reasonable hour," the report noted. "However, given that the majority of international students still have to attend lectures at night time, it is clear this is an issue which needs further action from universities."

Source: thepienews.com



Covid: In UK, teachers reject catchup options of extended school day and shorter holidays

The overwhelming majority of teachers – 98% – are opposed to an extended school day and shorter holidays as a means of helping children’s learning recovery after the pandemic, according to a major union poll, which also revealed a lack of enthusiasm for the government’s tutoring scheme.

The wide-ranging survey of 10,000 members of the National Education Union (NEU) highlighted the devastating impact of poverty on disadvantaged children, exposed by the pandemic, with teachers describing panic in families struggling without free school meal vouchers, and having to support families evicted during the Covid crisis.

The survey, conducted between 2 and 10 March, involved 10,696 union members in schools and colleges in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, including classroom teachers, support staff and headteachers..

The government has said it was considering all options to help pupils catch up on learning lost during the pandemic, including longer school days and shorter holidays, as well as subsidised one-to-one and small-group tuition for disadvantaged pupils.

NEU members, asked a series of questions about the best way to achieve education recovery, called instead for flexibility in the curriculum (82%), as well as more opportunities for sport and exercise (68%) and an increase in creative and practical learning (66%).

Just 21% agreed that tuition, under the government’s controversial national tutoring programme, was important and

just one in 10 agreed that “a strong focus on delivering all of the existing curriculum” was the best way forward.

The survey concluded that school staff supported working with students “in a way that is nimble and unconstrained by curriculum diktat, with active and creative elements forming a strong part of that approach”.

Asked, through multiple choice questions, what interventions the government should be making, 85% said teacher workload should be kept at an acceptable level and 80% called for a focus on the social and emotional wellbeing and mental health needs of students.

Almost seven in 10 (68%) said the government should urgently tackle child poverty as the best way to support pupils after lockdown. Members’ comments showed that school staff have at times been a lifeline for poor families struggling during the pandemic.

“I called home during the first lockdown and spoke to an older sibling who was panicking because the free school meals vouchers email hadn’t arrived,” said one NEU member. “It was the evening before a bank holiday weekend and there was no food in the house. I will never forget the panic in that girl’s voice. No school child should have to worry about where their next meal is coming from.”

Another said: “We have had pupils and their families move in to hostels during the pandemic when they were evicted. They were rehoused – but literally were given a house. No furniture, ovens, fridge, washing machine, no carpets. Nothing. We rallied as a school and fur-

nished two homes.”

“In 20 years teaching I have never seen the situation so bad,” said another.

The survey, published on the first day of the NEU’s annual conference, which is a virtual event this year because of Covid restrictions, showed 69% of respondents were enjoying new ways of working with technology during lockdowns, 57% said online parents’ evenings were a good innovation, and nearly half (49%) welcomed the greater public recognition of the needs of disadvantaged pupils.

Mary Bousted, NEU joint general secretary, said: “If the government is serious about building back better, then they should take on board these views. Education professionals have been on the frontline, either virtual or physical, throughout the last 12 months and it is their insights on what has worked best that should be taken forward.”

The shadow education secretary, Kate Green, said the government’s “chaotic” response to the pandemic had exposed inequalities that had been holding children back during a decade of failed Conservative governments.

“Labour, parents and teachers are calling on the government to prioritise delivering a world class education for every child, with valued staff supporting them to recover learning and delivering activities that promote wellbeing, rather than half-baked ideas about the length of the school day or term dates.”

A government spokesperson said: “We have already invested £1.7bn in ambitious catch-up plans, with the majority of this targeted towards those most in need, while giving schools the flexibility of funding to use as they believe best to support their pupils.

“We are working with parents, teachers and schools to develop a long-term plan to make sure all pupils have the chance to recover from the impact of the pandemic – and we have appointed Sir Kevin Collins as education recovery commissioner to specifically oversee these issues.”

Read more at: <https://bit.ly/3aF28bO>

Source: www.theguardian.com



Covid-19 changed education in America — permanently

It's been a school year like no other. Here's what we learned. There was a moment last spring when every parent and employer in America suddenly realized how deeply their lives and livelihoods depended on an institution too often in the background and taken for granted: the nation's schools.

With almost no notice, adults and children found themselves in the middle of a massive national experiment in new ways of teaching and learning, and new ways of dividing responsibilities between home, school and work.

A year later, it's clear that the Covid-19 pandemic has changed education in America in lasting ways, and glimpses of that transformed system are already emerging. School districts are developing permanent virtual options in the expectation that after the pandemic, some families will stick with remote learning — even for elementary school kids. Hundreds of colleges have, for the first time, admitted a freshman class without requiring SAT or ACT scores, potentially opening admissions to the most selective colleges to more low-income students. And thousands of educators across the country, from preschool to college, are finding new ways to spark their students' creativity, harness technology and provide the services they need to succeed.

The pandemic has unleashed a wave of innovation in education that has accelerated change and prompted blue-sky thinking throughout the system. What if more schools could enhance learning and nutrition by offering their students not just a free breakfast and lunch, but dinner and a snack? What if schools delivered books during the summer? What if high school art students had access to graphic design and architecture software?

It's not all upside, of course; the pandemic has been a tragedy for many students' educations. Stories of hungry children, of kids who have melted away from school, of community col-

lege students doing their work in fast food parking lots to pick up a Wi-Fi signal, have exposed how deeply inequity shapes the experiences and outcomes of America's students. The disproportionate weight of the pandemic on Black and brown and low-income students has ignited calls for a dramatic reinvestment. Millions of students have to be supported to catch up academically and process trauma, something that educators say will take several years.

Some students need to be tracked down and convinced to come back to school at all. Policymakers have to commit to long-term change beyond the Band-Aids applied over the past year to a crumbling system. Even the most obvious gain of the pandemic — millions more students with access to technology — will be fleeting in the absence of structural improvements.

The challenge, said Jaclyn Ballesteros, an early childhood educator at KIPP Northeast Elementary, a charter school in Denver, is "how can we keep breaking down these barriers of inequity through what we learned in the pandemic?"

This year, Ballesteros has been teaching 4-year-olds alternately online and in person, forcing her to come up with jerry-rigged solutions like making a scale out of a coat hanger and shoelaces to teach the difference between heavy and light. The experts are "going to want to get the data, they're going to want to get the research," she said. "But you talk to any teacher, you talk to any Guatemalan grandma who's had to take care of four kids while their mom and dad work — they know what they need."

The bottom line is that this past year has provided, well, an education for everyone connected to American schools and colleges — and that's pretty much everyone. Here are five of the biggest lessons we've learned, and what they might mean for the future of education in America.

Source: www.politico.com/

Students at Gowan Science Academy in Yuma, Arizona, could soon have an outdoor classroom where they can socially distance, work on messy projects and enjoy the sunshine.

The outdoor learning hub will be an asset for the public school's buddy program, where sixth graders work with kindergarteners on projects — a practice that could expand now that the school has the extra space.

In previous years, students have worked together to create alphabet books while “randomly sitting in the grass,” said principal Jamie Haines. With the outdoor classroom, they’ll have whiteboards, tables, Wi-Fi and electricity to work outside — while taking advantage of living in the “Sunniest City on Earth.”

The outdoor classroom, funded in part by a \$115,000 grant from A for Arizona, an education nonprofit that supports education reform and innovation around the state, was part of a larger \$1.5 million effort by the organization to support 25 schools, charter networks, and school districts as they try to keep students engaged and learning during the pandemic.

A for Arizona received the money for the grants from Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey’s Emergency Education Relief Fund, created using money the state received from the CARES Act, the \$2 trillion stimulus package Congress passed last March.

“With limited in-person options for many of our students over the last year, Gov. Ducey sought to use federal discretionary funds for investment in innovative options to better serve our students in need,” Ducey’s deputy chief of staff Gretchen Conger wrote in a statement emailed to The 74. “We were thrilled to partner with A for Arizona to identify these innovations and reward those educators who went out of their way to ensure that our most vulnerable children continued to learn during a pandemic.”

Gowan educators saw a steep decline in student engagement during the pandemic and hope the outdoor space



How Arizona is supporting innovative school programs during the pandemic

will boost learning, create more space for grade levels to work together and a place for students to work without their teachers worrying about ruining school carpets, Haines said.

“We want [the outdoor classroom] to be a happy place where people are learning, but they’re also learning those social skills that are really missing right now,” she said.

Because many in the area don’t have reliable transportation and there aren’t many community centers or parks nearby, Haines also wanted the classroom to be a resource for all residents.

with others, she said.

Here are some of the other schools benefiting from these grants:

Arizona Autism Charter School received a \$40,000 grant from the organization to help fund its new early learning center, where it opened two new kindergarten classrooms this year and extended the day from three to six hours for all its kindergarteners.

Diana Diaz-Harrison, the school’s founder and executive director, said full-day kindergarten is “really great for kids because we can give them extra doses of clinical services” such as

From an outdoor classroom to a STEM club

In addition to allowing community members to use the internet, the local parks department will be able to use the space for summer camps and other programs.

The purpose of the grants was to fuel “solutions meeting the current challenges” with a “focus on students hit hardest and areas hit hardest by COVID-19 — and how do we get them an excellent education now and not years from now,” said Emily Anne Gullickson, founder and CEO of A for Arizona. Gullickson and the vetting committee that chose the grant winners were also looking for strong leaders who had clear plans to serve the kids most in need and who were willing to share what they learned

speech and occupational therapy and also helps parents who need full-time childcare. The school has offered in-person and remote options this year, with students quarantining and learning remotely as COVID-19 cases arise, but Diaz-Harrison stressed special education is possible during the pandemic.

“We want to be a model for what can be done for students at all levels if schools are willing to try, to just put in the effort and invest in all students, and by all students we mean neuro-diverse students that have learning differences,” she said. “They are definitely worth investing in.”

Read more at: <https://bit.ly/3ewQJff>
Source: www.the74million.org

Hong Kong schools fear censorship as Beijing crackdown reaches classrooms

Books deemed politically incorrect weeded out ahead of new curriculum that warns against subversion



Diana Wong had sent letters of encouragement decorated with animal stickers to each of her class of 11- and 12-year-olds to help them through the endless online classes during the pandemic.

But a new national security curriculum that will take effect in Hong Kong from August has made the primary school teacher rethink every word she writes or image she shows the class. Teachers were “worried that if a parent quotes us out of context or just distorts a message from a single screenshot of our class they capture”, their jobs, even their freedom, could hang in the balance, she said. “It feels like there is a noose over my head.”

Beijing imposed a sweeping national security law on Hong Kong last year after anti-government protests in 2019 that rocked the Chinese territory. The subsequent crackdown on the pro-democracy movement has crushed opposition, and many activists have been jailed or have fled overseas.

Now the government is extending that effort into schools with a curriculum that will force teachers to warn primary and secondary students against “foreign interference” and committing “subversion” as outlined in the national security law. All schools will receive a 48-volume box set of mainland-produced picture books called *My Home is in China*. The book includes entreaties to favour countries that are part of China’s Belt and Road Initiative to build infrastructure.

More than a dozen teachers, parents and school administrators in Hong Kong spoke anonymously for fear of retaliation by the government.

A national security education day yesterday promoted the new education agenda. Families could attend open days at police and prison guard training institutes to view anti-terrorism drills and partake in virtual reality experiences. National security puzzles have been organised for kindergarten pupils.

Educators warned the new curriculum could mean wholesale censorship and classrooms transformed. Principals have already ordered libraries to weed out books deemed politically incorrect. Teaching materials will be vetted.

Pro-Beijing politicians have campaigned against teachers they accused of opposing the government. Two educators have been struck off the register and are unlikely to teach again.

The city is home to 52 international schools, including the campuses of well-known British private schools such as Harrow and Malvern College. At a briefing in February, the city’s Education Bureau assured these schools’ staff they would be exempt from fully integrating the national security curriculum. But the schools will still have to tell their students about the law and ensure there are no violations on campus.

One US expatriate with teenagers said the provisions were “ominous” but thought the security law was necessary to “bring peace back to Hong Kong”. The changes made her grateful her kids had foreign passports. “As scary as it is, when the shit hits the fan, we can go.”

Beijing and local authorities view the Hong Kong education system as one of the culprits behind the 2019 anti-government protests, claiming youthful protesters were led astray in the classroom. Images of uniformed secondary school students forming human chains outside their schools to support the

frontline protesters alarmed Beijing.

After the protests, authorities targeted a subject called liberal studies, in which students were taught about current affairs, the legal system and in some cases the 1989 Tiananmen Square violent crackdown on student protesters. The massacre is not typically taught in mainland China. The course has been replaced by a programme called Citizenship and Social Development, which will focus on instilling civic values in line with Beijing’s agenda and will include study tours to the mainland.

Guidelines released by Hong Kong’s education authorities this year outlined how national security should be integrated into subjects from geography to biology. The government has produced videos, stickers and other materials featuring a cartoon owl to instruct young children on the national security law.

One primary school principal said they had asked librarians to check all books in the school that mentioned China in case one could be interpreted the wrong way. Secondary schools would now be wary of having books on Tiananmen, for example, she said.

A number of school leaders have asked whether the Education Bureau had a list of banned books but officials said it was up to teachers’ judgment, said the principal. “We decided to just strictly follow the textbooks in the future as they are all vetted by the bureau,” she said. “I’m pretty confused.”

A school administrator said the bureau had asked her to supply information on teachers’ criminal records and for a register of new staff. The government was trying to guarantee “nobody with any political ideas would ever enter a school campus”, she said.

At international schools, one board member had the impression the bureau was set to take a more “light touch” approach. The schools’ role in educating the children of bankers and executives was “too important” to the city’s role as a financial centre in the eyes of the authorities, the person added.

International schools were warned, however, to prevent “major incidents”, such as students chanting anti-government slogans, the board member said. Kevin Yeung, Hong Kong’s education secretary, has said schools that fail to report activities deemed to be against the security law could be investigated.

One parent of young children said they were not surprised education in a Chinese territory would be patriotic.

A Hong Kong-based mother of two teenagers said she had sent her children to boarding school in the UK, primarily because of the pandemic, but was also concerned that “without clarity . . . schools will err on the side of caution”.

Even before the new curriculum was introduced, some international schools had come under scrutiny. The American International School was attacked by a pro-Beijing newspaper in August for allegedly using a map of China that did not show Taiwan and the South China Sea as Chinese territory in a Mandarin language class. The school did not respond to a request for comment.

Read full article @ <https://on.ft.com/3aD15Jl>

Source: Financial Times



The school that rules Britain

A new memoir recalls life at Eton College – the school for the country's most powerful and privileged. John Self looks at how it has captured writers' imaginations for decades.

A few miles down the road from Heathrow, Europe's busiest airport, lies Britain's most famous school. Eton College, a boys' boarding school in the town of Windsor on the western edge of London, has captured the British imagination in films, books and TV for decades. Why should this be?

Is it because Eton is the crucible for generations of political leaders, with 20 of Britain's 55 prime ministers educated there, including the first, Robert Walpole, and the latest, Boris Johnson? This alone gives it a level of fame that is self-perpetuating. Or is it the school's long history (it was founded almost 600 years ago), the price of an education there (£42,500 or \$58,000 a year), its traditions or even its uniform, for which top hats were worn as recently as the 1960s and tail-coats still are?

These elements encourage mythologising and a sense of the school as a world apart, a fictional fantasy of high education passed down generations of families whose wealth, as old Etonian writer James Wood put it, "stretched so far back, the origin of their prosperity was invisible." Does the reality match the stories told – and the books written – about the school that rules Britain?

Well, not everyone who attended Eton fits the mould. This month sees the publication of *One of Them: An Eton College Memoir* by writer, podcaster and musician Musa Okwonga. When he attended Eton from 1993 to 1998, Okwonga was one of only a handful of black boys at the school. The book is his contribution to an "exploration of race and class" in Britain, on the grounds that "to understand where we are going as a society, we need to understand how we got here."

I thought, this is the kind of education that takes you anywhere – Musa Okwonga

A striking fact in *One of Them* is that Okwonga was not sent to Eton by a family hungry to give him a leg up: instead, he urged his mother to send him after seeing it on a TV documentary and visiting on a school trip. "I was aware," he tells BBC Culture, "of what education gets you, wherever you go, even if you leave a country." His family were middle-class refugees from Uganda and "I thought, this is the kind of edu-

cation that takes you anywhere." Also: he shares his birthday (11 October) with the school's founding date. "It was meant to be!" he says.

Okwonga brought an Etonian level of ambition with him: his memoir shows how he took his costly education seriously, calculating that it was costing his mother £20 (\$27.50) a day for him to be there. "I basically ran or joined every single society I could," he says. "And my day was just full of bullet points, a checklist of things I had to do that day to earn it." One startling feature of this work ethic was that he only went home twice in his five years at Eton, despite living "closer to home than anyone else at school."

The determination Okwonga showed is a quality we see in the old boys who have climbed the greasy pole of politics: "No one here ever tells us out loud that Etonians are natural leaders," he writes. "That's what the architecture is for." We associate Eton with wealth, so it's the rich and famous alumni who get our attention. But the stories that add flavour to the facts are often from fiction; though given the literary world's scepticism of material success (failure is more interesting), a novelist's portrayal of Eton boys can be unflattering – or worse.

'Villains and fools'

Take that amiable idiot Bertie Wooster, whose status as an old Etonian is classic PG Wodehouse: affectionate rather than cutting. Bertie attended Eton with fellow fops Marmaduke "Chuffy" Chuffnell and G D'Arcy Cheesewright, though even in Wodehouse-world the school had its standards. Asked in *Right Ho, Jeeves* whether he was at school with Tuppy Glossop, ineffectual denizen of the Drones Club, Bertie replied, "Good heavens, no. We wouldn't have a fellow like that at Eton."

A more directly villainous old boy is Peter Pan's arch-nemesis Captain Hook (who, incidentally, went from Eton to Balliol College, Oxford, a path followed by Boris Johnson). His education is revealed late in JM Barrie's play when Hook jumps toward death-by-crocodile, murmuring "Floreat Etona" ("May Eton flourish"), the school motto. Hook was, according to a Provost at the school in 1927, "a great Etonian but not a good one", and in a speech given at Eton that year, Barrie wryly noted that "perhaps it was just that at Oxford he fell among bad companions – Harrovians."

Read more @ <https://bbc.in/3gI2NwE>

Source: www.bbc.com/

Why do you want kids to code?

Wrong answers

Use variables

Write loops

Use if... then... statements

Debug an error

Use Boolean logic

Learn hexadecimal

Learn syntax

Use technology

Right answers

Explore ideas

Collaborate with others

Make thinking concrete

Visualize a process

Learn how to design

Solve a problem

Create something exciting

Control technology

Coding is a tool, not a learning outcome.

Created by @cashjim

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Upcoming Meetings

Chiluka Pusphalata

Sampurna Montfort College, Bengaluru on
"Value of education in today's generation"

Meeting Time: May 6, 2021 11:00 am

Chiluka Pusphalata is Ph D in women empowerment, department of hindi. She has 15 years of experience in teaching ...

[Read more](#)

Chandrakala Mishra

Principal, Abhay International School, Mumbai, on
"Being a Principal, the challenges I faced"

Meeting Time: May 7, 2021 12:00 pm

Chandrakala Mishra is working as a Principal in Abhay International School as a school head. She has more than 20 years of experience in the field of education in a variety of posts i.e. as teacher trainer, mentor, coordinator and ...

[Read more](#)

Sunil Patel

Pre School Specialist, Pune, on
"Innovations in the Pre-school industry and new ways of teaching kids"

Meeting Time: May 10, 2021 11:00 am

Sunil Patel is a finance and a marketing professional with over 10+ years in the Preschool segment. Sunil Patel is closely involved in content visualisation, content creation and content marketing for the Preschool industry. He is currently heading an organisation ...

[Read more](#)

Jiya Madhwani

Worked as an English facilitator with IB and ICSE organisations, on
"Make Something Happen - Children's program; Edu Saathi - The Teachers' Collaborative Corner - for women empowerment"

Meeting Time: May 15, 2021 10:00 am

Jiya Madhwani is an ambitious and a self-reliant person who aims to bring forth changes in the current environment, working towards bringing upliftment in the society by building up her two online platforms- Make Something Happen (Children's Program) and Edu ...

[Read more](#)