

Innovative School Programs and School Teaching Professionals

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ABSTRACT - In 21st Century, the important life skill required in all fields to attain success is Creative Thinking. The work life of future generations may be a total contrast to what we are doing now. The huge responsibility of grooming the students to think out of the box lies in the hands of educators. This paper deals with the innovative school programs and the role of teaching professionals in creating an interesting learning space for students and training them on how to think and do smart work rather than what to think. School Teachers can be trained to effectively co-ordinate the innovative school programs such as Home Period, Reward Chart, Kid of the Week, Phonics Reading, Class Library, Special Assemblies, Celebrate Special Days, Home Visit, Kids Theatre, Clay Modelling, Yoga, Gardening, Honesty Shop, Self-Earning program and Creative Assessment methods.

KEYWORDS: Educators, Students, Teaching Professionals, Learning Space, Innovative School Programs.

I. INTRODUCTION

One area where it is critical to possess a healthy body and mind in today's scenario is education. This study deals with the innovative school programs and the role of teaching professionals in creating an interesting learning space for students. Creative teaching can vary from school to school but teachers play a major role in mentoring the children and making the innovative programs successful. Teacher's duty does not end with teaching the subject. Teachers act as a counsellor, mentor, facilitator, leader, coach, expert advisor, organizer, observer, listener and also a lifelong student.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Good literature sources were obtainable on how to introduce creativity in classroom. Starko brings out the relationship between the research on creativity and model of everyday classroom activities. Beghetto and Kaufmann edited few useful papers based on the theories and ideas written by many popular creativity researchers. Daniel Rodríguez summarised a free period in school is one when there is no academic activity, but only free time which means one can do his/her homework, or any other pre-determined activities by their teacher. Being listened by someone near and dear is relaxing and not being considered or listened to can lead to sorrow, pain and feeling of rejection (Richards, 1999; Dasgupta and Richards, 1997, et.al). Heather Wolpert-Gawron (2015), reported that class library is the opening into learner's personality, and it replicates the importance of reading ability inside the classroom. Stuht revealed that teachers are trying to reinforce the communication between the student's family and institution by making an official visit to their student's

homes. Studies have shown that home visits inspire children to academically perform better and reduces their misbehaviours as parents are also involved. Wolf, S. A., Hill, L., & Ballentine, D. (2000) concluded that the absence of actual understanding and learning the after-school activity of students frequently kindles the teachers to create a rapport with parents and involves them in discussion.

Liz Wimmer emphasised that school gardens are inspirational places that extend student learning. Gardening at school provides opportunities to inculcate healthy eating habits. Saidel stated that children will be excited that the vegetables they eat have come from their garden and their dear friends have helped them to grow it. Jane Rosen exclaimed, yoga has great impact on students' learning, interaction between the students and teachers, emotional climate of classroom, teachers job satisfaction, and also the health and well-being of both. A study by Erika Panichelli states that regular yoga schedule can improve flexibility and increase core strength by reducing the stress levels of teachers. Pearson and LKM co-researched about the process of assessment in schools and the report revealed that one fifth of teachers are unaware of the rubrics for assessing their students. There are alternate ways of evaluating students' progress and enhancing knowledge.

SCOPE

Inferences from earlier studies have shown how many roles a teacher plays in and out of her classroom. However, very few studies examined the role of teachers in innovative teaching programs. This study will create awareness among the educators to employ new teaching methods. We aim to achieve and understand the various innovative programs

carried out by a private school and the role of the teacher in successful completion of such programs.

III. INNOVATIVE PROGRAMS

HOME PERIOD – Teacher as a Psychologist

First period of everyday will be the Home Period which will be about 15-20 mins. The students interact with their class teacher about their previous evening and small things which no one has time to listen in this fast-moving world. The teacher may add her views to the discussion. This builds a perfect rapport and helps them to get ready for the routine. The teacher must be trained to understand child psychology, address small problems among them and counsel them to learn from their experience. Individual talents can also be exhibited during this time. Home Period can also happen outside the classroom such as in the playground or under a tree. During this Home Period the teacher must be a good listener as the hectic schedule of parents refrain them from listening to their children.

REWARD CHART – Teacher as an Analyser

Discipline is one of the alarming issues among students and there are many ways through which discipline can be reinforced. Rewards or motivation can be one method to achieve discipline in class. The Reward chart with names of all students of that class will be put up in all classes. Reward chart topic will be changed every 21 days. For example, 'Completion of work on time', 'Friendly and Sociable', 'Regularity in submission of Homework', 'Respect for teachers and support staff' etc. Stars will be given to those who follow the rules as per the topic. Students who get more number of stars at the end of 21 days will be rewarded in the assembly. Teachers must be trained to assess and judge the child's behaviour throughout the 21 days. Putting up the Reward Chart in the classroom brown board reminds students about the area they need to improve upon. If there are no stars for 21 days in a row, teachers must first counsel the students, communicate it to his/her parents and meet them in person along with the principal for further disciplinary actions.

KID OF THE WEEK – Teacher as a Trainer

Every Monday, the class chooses one student as the "Kid of the Week" for that week keeping in mind that each child should be valued. There will a small green board at the backside of every classroom and all the students and the class teacher writes the positives about the kid of the week for that entire week. Appreciation received from fellow students and their dear class teacher will be a great motivating factor for children. The teacher must ensure that every child gets an opportunity to be the kid of the week within the academic year. The teacher must be informed about this program during recruitment and trained during the orientation. This activity must happen regularly without any break to appreciate the uniqueness in every child.

CLASS LIBRARY – Teacher as a Mentor

Reading is a fundamental skill which can be acquired by every child during time. Without this skill the child will be lost, for it is one of the basic requirements for future learning. To motivate and enhance the reading skills in young children, excluding the regular library, students along with their class teacher come forward and create their class library. Every student will be informed to get two to three books from his/her personal collection. These books which they bring from their home are then listed down and kept on the space provided for class library. Now every class will have its own library of about 50–60 books. Children can access this class library during breaks or whenever they finish their assigned work ahead of the given time. He/she is free to pick up any book from class library and can start reading. Children show more interest in reading these books because they are the personal favourites of their dear friends. This initial reason kindles the interest to go through the book which gradually becomes a habit.

CLAY MODELLING – Teacher as an Entertainer

Clay Modelling has been proved to improve the fine motor skills among young children. Free play with raw clay begins with giving shapes to clay dough according to their creativity. Students gradually learn to make terracotta jewellery, utensils, showpieces etc out of clay. This activity gives a different dimension to their imagination and originality. Studies have proved that Clay Work is therapeutic - where they feel relaxed and calm while handling wet clay. Teachers must be trained to handle children and motivate them to learn along with clay activities. Teachers must identify children with learning disability and special needs and give them these clay classes everyday to improve their motor-coordination. All these clay works will be preserved throughout the year and displayed on the exhibition day for the parents to have a look.

HONESTY SHOP – Teacher as a Counsellor

A novel initiative called "Honesty Shop" should be practiced in all schools. This is an unmanned shop where regular articles like pencils, erasers, crayons, etc. and eatables are sold. Students can buy from the shop which is kept open during the snacks & lunch break. The students can deposit cash in the money box kept at the shop after checking the price list of the items they want to pick up. The accounts will be tallied every day.

The honest store is aimed at promoting the quality of honesty among children. Rather than preaching morals to students, teachers must realise that the students would inculcate integrity much better by themselves through this initiative. The role of a teacher here is to counsel the children to be honest and check if they stick on to it

throughout. The students who go out the way must be guided properly and made to learn from their mistake.

STRETCH TO EARN – Teacher as a Motivator

STE is a program which motivates self-earning as a part of school activity held once a year. This program teaches the value of money and the fact that a lot of hard work is needed to earn some. They will now think twice before demanding an expensive toy or item, as they know the value of hard-earned money. Children must be motivated to do the household help along with their parents. It can be gardening, sorting vegetables, cleaning cupboards, folding clothes, helping in cooking, setting up the bed etc. Teachers must hand over a list of jobs that students can do and according to the work small amount of money can be handed over to them by their parents. The list given by the teacher can be kept as the reference where children can do similar other jobs apart from the list and can be paid as per their parents wish.

The money earned by the children through this program can be carefully handed over to their respective class teachers. The collected amount will be given for any good cause such as education of deserving children etc. A sample schedule of rates given to children and parents.

Schedule of Rates

S.No	Task	Rate
1	Folding Clothes	5
2	Watering Plants	5
3	Peeling Boiled Potatoes	5
4	Washing Vegetables	5
5	Sorting Vegetables	10
6	Arranging Book Shelf	5
7	Arranging Shoe Stand	5
8	Arranging the Living Room/Hall	10
9	Putting Cover on Pillow/Cushion	5
10	Arranging Magazines/Newspapers	5
11	Polishing Shoes	5
12	Setting Bed	5
13	Filling Up Bottles	5
14	Dusting Furniture	5
15	Wiping Vessels	5
16	Serving the Guests	5
17	Helping in Shopping	5
18	Four/Two-Wheeler Wash	10

GARDENING – Teacher as a Facilitator

Every school should teach gardening as it is the backbone of our country. Each class along with the class teacher will have to plough, sow, water and harvest the yield from the space allotted to them. Teachers can give their inputs on terrace garden and indoor vegetation. Teachers play the role of facilitator to wipe off the inhibitions and let the children to enjoy their visit to the garden every week. Once the value of food and the difficulty behind cultivating it is

experienced by children, wastage of food will be minimised, and they will enjoy eating nutritious food.

YOGA – Teacher as a Coach

Studies have proved that Yoga improves focus, destresses the mind, increases concentration, improves listening skill, and helps follow directions that form the base for academic part. Meditation and asanas help the children to keep both their mind and body fresh. Exercises help them to stay fit and healthy. Teachers will have to look at educating both the mind and soul of the child in his/her class. Yoga is the only way through which the teacher can control the mind of the child. Yoga is important for teachers as well to destress their mind and relax their body. The healthy mind and body will help the teachers to concentrate better in their work. Both students and teachers work with great pressure to produce the expected results. Yoga is one common thing which connects them, make them love each other and the work they do.

CREATIVE ASSESSMENT METHODS – Teacher as an Observer

The use of creative assessment methods removes the fear of exam and grades among children. When new methods of assessment are introduced to measure the learning outcomes, students will continuously improve and excel. Teachers can use group discussions, debate, quiz, small group work, Project work, Power point presentations, one-minute test, oral drill and pen-paper test.

ASSEMBLIES AND SPECIAL DAYS – Teacher as an Organizer

Teachers play a major role in organising events for special days. Local and national festivals, sports day, annual day, teacher's day, children's day, etc will be celebrated in every school. Apart from these few innovative ideas can be implemented to learn through celebrations.

Nursery children will be more attracted to see, feel, experience and they learn from that. Cartoon characters day, Fruit salad day, Vegetable day, Transport Day, show and tell day etc can be celebrated.

Primary and secondary children can have Hand wash day, Save water day, National sports day etc. Role reversal day can be celebrated where the teachers will become students and the students will get into the shoes of the teachers and handle classes.

Teachers must also organise a daily assembly where school prayer, school song, thought for the day, thirukkural and its meaning, birthday celebrations, values for life etc must be emphasised.

PHONICS READING – Teacher as an Expert

Reading is a basic skill and early reading among kindergarten children can be promoted by phonics training. Teachers will have to learn the sounds of each English

alphabet and teach the ways to blend the sounds. High frequency words which appear 75% in sentences should be reinforced frequently. Diphthongs and vowel diagraphs should be explained. These special trainings will improve the reading skills of the teachers and their pronunciations and spoken English.

HOME VISIT – Teacher as a Philosopher

Home visit is an opportunity for teachers to explain the vision of school and explain to parents about what kind of support they expect from the family. This communication also helps them to find the areas where the child is lacking guidance and the reason for behavioural tantrums. The teachers visit every student's house for about half an hour during the beginning of the academic year. The bond formed and the understanding about the child's background plays a major role. Grandparents and all other family members are requested to be a part of this program and give their inputs. The main aim of home visit is to learn the home environment and people living with the child. It is the first step taken to unite the parents and the educators to work hand in hand for the development of the child.

IV. CONCLUSION

School teaching professionals play a major role in adopting new innovative special programs. Educators need to employ new creative ideas to keep the children going on the feet. The extra effort taken by the teachers to make these programs successful will be rewarded by the improved outcomes of the students.

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