IN Focus

TEACHER ENRICHMENT & EMPOWERMENT

As the Indian education landscape continues to evolve, with the introduction of new pedagogies, technologies, and assessment frameworks, the role of teachers has become increasingly dynamic. In this rapidly changing context, *Continuous Professional Development (CPD)* for teachers assumes paramount importance. **CPD** is no longer a luxury, but a necessity for teachers - in order to stay abreast of the latest developments, to update their skills, and to adapt to the changing needs of their students. With the emphasis on competency-based learning, teacher empowerment, and student-centric education, *Teacher Training and Enrichment* enable teachers to refine their practice, innovate their instructional strategies, and foster a culture of lifelong learning within their classrooms and beyond. In addition to academics, teachers may consider *upskilling in these additional areas* to meet the requirements of a technology-based digital world:

1. Digital Literacy
2. Technology Integration
3. Communication Skills
4. Collaboration Tools
5. Data Analysis & Interpretation
6. Online Safety and Security
7. Content Creation.
8. Virtual Learning Environment
9. Accessibility and Inclusion
10. Emotional Intelligence
11. Time Management.
12. Professional Development
13. Digital Citizenship & SDG
14. Mental Health Awarenes
15. Cultural Competence

Enrichment in these areas help teachers to stay updated, relevant and effective in their roles.

> **"** *Teaching kids to count is fine, but teaching them what counts is best.* – Bob Talbert

WONDER WORD

PEDAGOGY: Pedagogy is the *method, practice and study* of effective teaching. In order to be effective, instructors must have both subject-based knowledge and pedagogic knowledge and skills (*Barkley & Major*).

TRAINING: The process of *bringing a person to an agreed standard of proficiency* by practice and instruction.

ENRICHMENT: Those having already mastered a basic curriculum, undergo enrichment classes *for additional challenges, newness, more in-depth exploration, and personalized learning* experiences.

EMPOWERMENT: Practices that *motivate teachers, boost their confidence, and enable them to do what they think is right and meaningful*. It can also involve teachers in school decision-making processes, and having them take action based on those decisions.

CPD: or *Continuous Professional Development* (CPD) is the term used to describe the *learning activities educators periodically engage in to develop and enhance their abilities* to become conscious and proactive, rather than passive, reactive professionals.

BOOT CAMP: A *short, intensive, and rigorous course* of training.

"Everyone who remembers his own education remembers teachers,
not methods and techniques.
The teacher is the heart of the educational system."
– Sidney Hook

QED Talk

NEP 2020's focus on
EMPOWERING & ELEVATING THE EDUCATORS

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Recipient of National Teachers Award 1999, Pride of India Award, Inspiring Educators Award and Acharya Siromani Award. Has over 50 years of diverse work experience - 30 years as Principal of Schools with CBSE, Cambridge, and IBO curriculums; Consultant with NGO Adhyayan Foundation; Sr Trainer for Pearson, CBSE, CIE, Image Consultants, I Create.

■ **What, in your opinion, are the biggest challenges faced by teachers today -** *Teaching? Class Management? Assessment? Administrative Work? Remaining updated?*

We have all grown up with (*and often cited*) the famous lines "*Teaching is the noblest of all professions since it moulds all other professions!*" Sadly today, Teaching is *not* an attractive career option for many, even for individuals who are passionate about education, as teachers do not get the due respect or commenusrate pay that this career deserves. Teachers spend HOURS of their time even after the teaching day is over, working on lesson plans, grading, gathering materials & preparing for the next day's lessons (which in its itself is challenging - and then they bounce back and forth, dealing with varied subjects across varied age-groups) - nothing short of a miracle every day X 365 days! Also, there aren't too many career advancement opportunities unless a teacher decides to go into administration. So, to answer your question, I can summarise these challenges :

- **Professional development:** Teachers' ignorance, inability, and self-complacency towards professional development or career growth opportunities.
- **Lack of resources**: Teachers face a shortage of resources – financial, material, people, and time for classroom innovations and development.
- **Student, Parent, Community, and School expectations**: the expectations have been multidimensional with very little support.
- **Administrative work**: Teachers face time-consuming administrative work.
- **Teacher status:** Teachers' professional and social status in India is considered low and puts a question mark on self-worth which is also seen in the form of compensation offered to them. This leads to a lack of motivation and complacency.
- **Commercialization of education**: Education becoming a money-making endeavour – schools cut costs on resources, facilities, salaries, etc. Tuition culture has also become rampant and has its repercussions.
- **Work-life balance**: Teachers may struggle to balance their work and personal lives.

To make teaching a more enjoyable career, **give teachers the respect and pay what they deserve, build more planning time into a teacher's schedule** instead of **taking away from their planning time with additional meetings and extra responsibilities,** and **develop career advancement opportunities for teachers** so that would like to stay teaching but want to grow in their careers. For me, teaching remained a great career that is *about the kids, the parents, the teachers, and the community*. They are awesome and every child, family, and teacher matters! If and when I was able to make a difference, to help them make a positive change, that was highly rewarding! With my experience of 50 years now, for me - this career is very meaningful and rewarding.

■ *You work at the grassroots levels in Arunachal Pradesh & Tripura. How does the teacher training at these levels compare with metro schools? Are there adequate trainers to effectively cater to their needs?*

The basic challenges of professional development or training are the same i.e. teachers get training at the whims and fancies of the leadership without any impact. Their needs or gaps are not identified and relevant training and successive handholding are missing. I have met the leadership of some famous schools in the metro cities who claim to give 100 hours of training to teachers and there is a good training budget allocated. But the teacher's approaches in classroom teaching and learning remain the same age-old. **Trainings mostly do not reach the classrooms as there is a lack of impact monitoring.** The same is true with government schools. The governments invest money to invite good trainers from all over and teachers invest time but the classrooms are mostly the same old mundane classrooms. The point I am making here for everyone is that for the effectiveness of training, we need to do proper need/gap

Teaching is more than imparting knowledge; it is inspiring change. Learning is more than absorbing facts; it is acquiring understanding.

– William Arthur Ward

analysis, find out which teacher wants to learn what, guide, facilitate with relevant training, motivate teachers to attend and take the learnings back to the classrooms. We need **a mechanism to check its implementation, the impact and support teachers when they are erring.** Also, some of the training has no meaning/value for them. The one-size shoe *does not* fit all!

■ **What measures have the B Ed and Teacher Training colleges taken to align with the NEP & NCF recommendations?**

NEP and NCF recommendations have recently been floored, it will take a while for them to be effectively implemented in Teacher Training institutions. If the NEP 2020 proposals and vision are to be truly & effectively implemented, then there is much work at hand - it is not something that a set number of random training hours per year can accomplish. It is a **journey and process that also requires revamoing the syllabus and approach** to education. I am sure it is in progress.

■ **With the mandate for every teacher to compulsorily clock 50 hrs of CPD , how is the post training monitoring to assess implementation in the classrooms being done? Please suggest guidelines for schools for meaningful monitoring of the same.**

The 50-hour mandate for professional development instituted by CBSE is interesting. Also, International boards insist teachers acquire relevant training or refresh their learning every two years. I have used some frameworks to evaluate teacher competencies in their domains of work, with the process of teachers becoming better, moving from level 1 to level 2 to level 3.

The responsibility lies with the Boards that have made it mandatory, System leaders, school leaders, and the teachers. **A good way to ensure this is to set up a SOP at all levels.** The affiliating boards do ask the schools for teacher training compliance documents every year (I know of CBSE, IBO, etc.). As education is a state subject, the State Government Departments have also initiated some mechanisms to collect and analyse data i.e. VSK (Vidya Samiksha Kendra – which is a technology-enabled system that monitors student learning progress in real-time, tracks progress, identifies areas where improvement is needed and empowers teachers and administrators to take necessary actions). This is in progress in many states.

> Teachers have three loves: love of learning, love of learners, and the love of bringing the first two loves together.

School leaders may invest 80% of their time as pedagogical leaders; facilitate training, oversee the implementation with validation through classroom observations, talk to stakeholders, seek evidences of implementation, and look at documents (Lesson Plans, Assessment reports, Student profiles, etc.) **They must identify learning needs/gaps that can help them design their Professional Development strategies and set expectations.** Here are some valid questions we should be asking:

- Do teachers know about the weaknesses that they would like to overcome?
- Do most of the teachers have complacency set in themselves?
- Do the teachers know what else should they know in this ever-changing, advancing education space?
- Do they have enough exposure to the advancements in education?
- Do they have the time and financial luxury for their professional development?

Teachers must have extrinsic and intrinsic motivation to enhance their competencies and also be supported (financially and timewise).

READ TO SUCCEED

FOR TEACHERS

The Connected Educator

- by Sheryl Nussbaum-Beach, Lani Ritter Hall

Connected learning communities are a three-pronged approach to effective professional development using the local (*professional learning community*), contextual (*personal learning networ*k), and global (*community of practice*) environments. Create a connected learning community through social media and rediscover the power of being a learner first. After uncovering the theories and research behind the significance of learning through collaboration with other educators, the authors show you how to take advantage of technology to improve your own learning and ultimately the learning of your students. This book is a MUST HAVE!
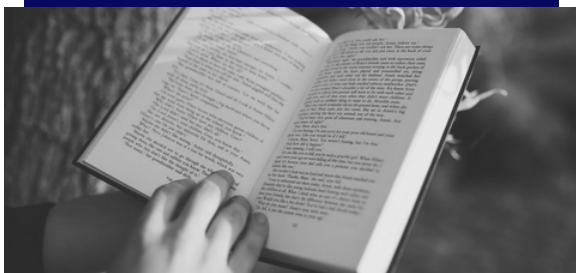
FOR STUDENTS

Make it Stick: *The Science of Successful Learning*

- by Peter C. Brown & Others

Drawing on cognitive psychology and other fields, ***Make It Stick*** offers techniques for becoming more productive learners and cautions against study habits and practice routines that are counterproductive. The book speaks to students, teachers, trainers, athletes and all those interested in lifelong learning and self-improvement. Good teaching, should be creatively tailored to the different learning styles of students and should use strategies that make learning easier. The authors offer concrete techniques for becoming more productive learners.

■ *In the corporate sector, a professional's additional certifications, diplomas and qualification (across core competency – leadership – technology etc) are crucial complements to their accrued experience for upward mobility.*

With teachers, that ONE B Ed and CTET, at the onset of their careers seem to be last word! Shouldn't teachers also undergo some sort of formal technical appraisal of their eligibility / 'fitness' level for the depth & competence of new knowledge, new TL practices in an ever-changing and dynamically evolving education space?

In my experience, the *school institutions have regular affiliation checks* – CBSE, IBO, CIAIE and the affiliation is taken away if requirements are not met.

Can we think in the same way for teachers?

A **teacher appraisal is a must for the development** of the school learning environment. A school is as good as its teachers. So the schools internally may write expectations the school has for teachers. The process starts with **designing the teacher competency framework**, **educate the teachers about the expectations**, and **periodically evaluate with evidences**, and then **continuously guide / support for improvement,** excellence is to be **recognized and rewarded**, and mediocrity is to be given a time-bound chance to improve, otherwise reprimanded or removed - after all, so many children's learning is at stake!

The teacher Competency Domains with the Standards and their descriptors may be set as under:

Domain 1 : Curriculum and Planning – Subject Knowledge, Scheme of Work, Documentation and Reflection.

Domain 2 : Classroom Instructions – Student Engagement, Classroom Environment, Behaviour Management, Differentiation,

Domain 3 : Assessment - Assessing and Monitoring Progress, Reporting and feedback

Domain 4 : Community Engagement - Relationship with Student Families, Mobilising Community Resources.

Domain 5 : Professional Practice – Professional Knowledge and Growth, Professional Learning Communities.

Evaluate teachers based on it, do a gap analysis, set time-bound achievement targets, celebrate success, question failure, and appropriate actions. There are external HR agencies for 360 degrees quality appraisals of schools that design, execute, create reports, and suggest action plans and support professional development.

■ *'Lifelong Learning' appears to be a MUST HAVE mindset for the Future. What might it look like for Teachers and Educators – other than TL related courses, what OTHER ESSENTIAL SKILLS should Educators in Schools ideally upskill themselves with?*

To become a **superlative teacher**, please **work on the following attributes**: *Communication- verbal/nonverbal / written, Leadership, Patience, Adaptability, Critical thinking, Time management, Conflict resolution, Organization, Creativity, Teamwork, Classroom management, Computer literacy, Collaboration, Active listening, Confidence, Cultural competence, Emotional intelligence, Imagination and intuitiveness, Problem-solving, Multitasking, Prioritising, Enthusiasm, Empathy, Commitment, Passion, Continuous learning, Sense of humour* .....and the list keeps evolving as the times keep changing.

Good luck Teachers and Leaders! *******

REVISITING & REFRESHING

balancing them with New Training
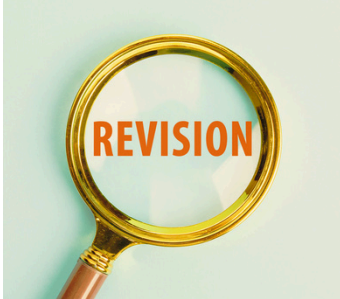
To read the previous September issues commemorating **Teachers Day**, please visit:
https://www.qedrak.com/newsletter/

In today's fast-paced, rapidly evolving education landscape, teachers are under pressure to continuously update their skills and knowledge to remain relevant. This emphasis on professional development is crucial, as it enables educators to stay abreast of the latest methodologies, technologies, and research in their field. However, amidst the flurry of new initiatives and innovative approaches, it's equally important to recognize the value of revisiting and refreshing timeless teaching-learning practices.

On one hand, ongoing training and professional development are essential for teachers to stay updated on the latest best practices, pedagogical techniques, and subject-matter expertise. With the ever-changing curriculum, technological advancements, and shifting societal needs, teachers must continually update their skills to effectively engage students and deliver high-quality instruction. Moreover, professional development opportunities provide teachers with the chance to share ideas, collaborate with peers, and build a sense of community and support.

On the other hand, revisiting and refreshing age-old teaching-learning practices can be a more effective way to achieve teacher empowerment. These timeless practices, such as - active listening, constructive feedback, and project-based learning, have stood the test of time because they are grounded in sound pedagogical principles. By revisiting these fundamental approaches, teachers can refocus on what truly matters – building strong relationships with students, fostering a love of learning, and promoting critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

In fact, many of the most effective teaching practices are those that emphasize simplicity, flexibility, and creativity. By stripping away unnecessary complexity and focusing on what works best for students, teachers can create a more sustainable and enjoyable teaching experience. Moreover, revisiting traditional practices can help teachers reconnect with their own passion for learning and teaching, which is often lost in the midst of new initiatives and jargon. Furthermore, embracing timeless teaching practices can also help teachers resist the pressure to constantly reinvent themselves. In today's education landscape, where new initiatives and fads emerge frequently, teachers may feel overwhelmed by the need to constantly adapt and change. By focusing on what works best for students rather than following the latest trends, teachers can build confidence in their own abilities and develop a sense of stability and continuity.

In conclusion, while ongoing training and professional development are essential for teacher empowerment, it's equally important to recognize the value of revisiting and refreshing age-old teaching-learning practices. By striking a balance between update and refreshment, teachers can ensure that they remain effective educators who are both knowledgeable about new methodologies and committed to timeless teaching principles. By embracing this balance, teachers can empower themselves to provide high-quality education that fosters student success and promotes lifelong learning. ***

Terms we should know:

Enquiry-based Learning (EBL) - A teaching method that encourages students to actively engage with a topic by asking questions and being curious.

Learning intentions - A term used to describe learning objectives or learning aims, but with a greater emphasis on the process of learning.

Retrieval practice - A method of helping students retain new knowledge by retrieving it from memory. This can be done through frequent quizzes.

Scaffolding - A term used to describe the support teachers may offer to students, often in the context of research on teaching and learning.

Flipped classroom - A teaching method that reverses the traditional approach by assigning teacher-created videos for homework before class.

Engage ability - A skill that involves finding engaging resources for students, such as keeping up with new learning technologies and apps.

Backward design - A technique where instructors design courses by first focusing on the learning objectives they want students to achieve.

Continuous assessment - A set of practices that enhance learning, and which many teachers already use as part of their daily teaching.

Growth mindset - the belief that one can develop one's talents, habits, and potential through effort and learning.

Inference - the process of drawing conclusions or making inter-pretations based on available information, evidence, or data.

Mainstreaming - In the context of education, it signifies INCLUSION and is the practice of placing students with *special education needs* in a general education classroom during specific time periods, based on their skills.

NEWSPAPER-BASED LEARNING & effective strategies

Newspapers have long been a valuable resource for students in the classroom, offering a unique window into the world beyond the school walls. Despite the rise of digital media, newspapers remain a vital resource for students in the classroom. By incorporating newspapers into their curriculum, teachers can provide students with a tangible and hands-on experience that complements online learning. *Newspaper-based Learning* or *NBL, offers a unique way to engage students with real-world issues, encourage critical thinking and analysis, and develop essential skills such as reading comprehension, vocabulary, and writing*. Moreover, newspapers can serve as a bridge between the classroom and the community, providing students with a connection to local and global issues that can spark meaningful discussions and debates. By embracing newspapers as a valuable resource, educators can create a more well-rounded and engaging learning experience that prepares students for success in an increasingly complex world.

While educators realise the importance of Newspapers, many struggle with knowing exactly **HOW to effectively implement** Newspaper based Learning. **Here are a few strategies that can be initiated in the primary years**:

1. Go for It! *Skill: Students effectively skim and scan for information.*
Have your students find each of the following in the newspaper. Instructions could be general or specific:
* *someone wearing glasses * map * television star * cartoon * puzzle * animal * athlete * the name of their city, state, or a monument * action words, adjectives, nouns starting with a particular letter/sound * story about another country * movie review * a particular ad, etc .*

2. Hunting Nouns ! *Skill: Students correctly identify the part of speech- NOUNs & their types (person, place, animal, thing).*
Have your students: * *Review the definition of a noun * Select a story from any page and find nouns * Underline people in red, places in blue, things in green and animals in brown * Make a list under separate types * Provide students with labels or sticky notes to write down nouns * Finally, ask them to create their own story using all the nouns.*

3. Secret Pal ! *Skill: Students draft writing that conveys a sense of completeness with words.*
Have your students:
* *Pretend they have a secret pal * Find the words from headlines to create a friendly message - Cut out the words and paste the message on a piece of paper * Send the message to the Secret Pal ; they can ALSO share their message with each other.*
Note: Stick to encouraging positive / gratitude / appreciative messages and not hurtful ones.

4. Comic Reflections ! *Skill: Students identify details and use the information to construct meaning and make inferences.*
Have your students: * * Look through the comic strips for a character akin to them * Make a list of common elements and differences * Create a comic strip featuring a character based on themselves * Organize a debate / role play where students must defend their character's actions * Promote gender sensitivity; have students defend characters of opposite genders.*

5. On Sale ! *Skill: Students use the writing process effectively for persuasion.*
Have your students: * *Identify an ad that catches their attention * Write a paragraph telling whether or not they think it's a good ad + What specifically caught their eye - the colors, the size of the ad, the images used, or the large fonts? What is the ad promoting? How clearly is the product/service described? What would they change about it to make it even better? Introduce vocab- USP * Create a new display ad to sell something.*

NBL is an essential tool for developing informed and engaged citizens. Integrating such recommended strategies (*there are many more*), into the regular school curriculum can enhance students' comprehension, vocabulary, and critical thinking skills, making them more effective and engaged learners. *******

JASUDBEN ML SCHOOL, Mumbai

TERM 1: Culmination of INTEGRATED CURRICULUM

GRADE 1

GRADE 2
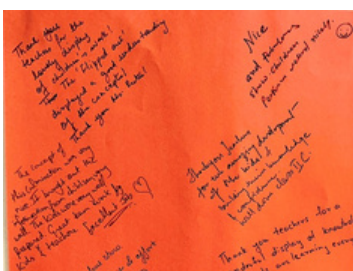
MAKING TRAINING & EFFICACY VISIBLE

Effective teacher training requires a paradigm shift from traditional, lecture-based approaches to more student-centred, participatory methods. One key strategy is to *make learning visible / showcasing* - through student participation and ownership of learning. This approach acknowledges that students are not just passive recipients of information, but *active learners who can take ownership of their learning process*.

Assessing the effect of teacher training programs is crucial for schools for ensuring that they are investing in initiatives that are effective in improving teacher quality, student outcomes, and overall educational performance. *Making Learning Visible or MLV* – vide student participation, teach a peer, performances, panel discussions, displays of tangible items - is crucial for measuring learning. **Trained teachers empower kids** to own their learning process by creating a more engaging, effective, supportive learning environment that fosters academic success, growth and lifelong learning.

RIB TICKLERS

Q: What do you call a teacher who forgot to take attendance?
A: *Absent-minded*.

Teacher: What did you do this weekend?
Student: I did some baking.
Teacher: Lovely, what did you bake?
Student: *Synonym rolls just like grammar used to make*!

Child: I think we need a new teacher.
Mom: Why's that?
Child: Our teacher doesn't know anything! *She keeps asking us for most of the answers*.

Student: Did you hear that aged Math teachers never die? *They just lose some of their functions*.

*The **October 2024** issue will focus on "**Gender Awareness & Sensitivity**". Please send your contributions of an effective classroom strategy / class humour / vocab word / a featured article / book titles, to - **team@qedrak.com***

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