



NEW AGE TEACHING TECHNIQUES

(INNOVATION CODE - SKM/18/04)

A student-centric education system is possible only when students take the lead of the teaching-learning process and teachers play the role of their guides and mentors. This means students need to be active participants, rather than merely absorbing information. That is why, there is a growing emphasis on experiential learning methods. Teachers are now introducing new-age techniques to integrate learning with students' day-to-day activities, and make education relevant and interesting for them. Such novel approaches by teachers are resulting in significant improvement in grade-appropriate learning levels, and are fostering an enquiry-led learning environment in the schools. The key to making these innovative methods work is the right approach and strategy to make syllabus topics simple and joyful for the students.

Names of the innovators

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Benefits of this innovation

- ◆Development of experiential, relevant and joyful pedagogy in the school.
- ◆Teachers and students work together to ensure effective teaching and learning.
- ◆Learning retention in students improves, along with their confidence level.
- ◆Teachers feel more involved and motivated.
- ◆Increase in student attendance and enrolment.

Impact areas

Improve learning outcomes and decrease learning gaps; Inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream; Creation of enquiry-led self-learning environment.

Summary

Innovative teaching techniques include a number of activities. These have been explained using specific examples, however the teacher can adapt and apply them to any syllabus topic with ease and in an interesting, participative manner. There is no special requirement of creating a TLM. By taking part in these activities, students are able to hone all-round skills, recapitulate and revise lessons effectively, and even apply knowledge in real life situations.

Activities for classroom

1. I Teach, I Learn

Introduction: Giving students intrinsic motivation to learn is a difficult task. However, sometimes children can inspire and lead each other better than their parents or teachers. Here is an effective strategy in which a senior and a junior grade is combined into one, and older students take up the responsibility of mentoring the younger ones. This way, each child find his or her own motivation to be more responsible and dedicated towards their education. On the one hand, junior grade students feel accountable to learn better



with encouragement and affection of their seniors. On the other hand, by teaching younger children, senior grade students realise that individual effort to learn is essential and themselves begin to work harder to achieve better marks.

Classroom Application: This approach can be used to improve learning of any syllabus topic. It is also effective for multigrade teaching, however the two grades attend their classes separately and then study together only during a fixed time of the day. It fosters a supportive learning environment in the school for all kinds of students — from academically weak to the bright ones.

Planning/Preparation: Based on the readiness of students, decide which two grades should be merged for this activity. For instance, if you feel grade VI students are sensitive and patient enough to work with grade II students, they can be brought together. However, in case most grade VI students are still struggling with the fundamental concepts taught in grade II, it may be more feasible to combine grade VI with grade I, or grade II with grade VII.

Implementation: Follow these steps for a fruitful integration of senior and junior students:

- ◆Generate excitement among senior grades by asking encouraging questions. Such as, would you like to be a teacher? Wouldn't it be great if you can help a younger/weak student do better at school?
- ◆Then explain to them the basic manners to deal with young children — not to scold or bully, lead with care and affection, be a mentor, always keep patience, change your teaching method if your

student is unable to learn, be assertive, and so on.

◆Mentally prepare the junior grades, again by asking encouraging questions. Such as, wouldn't it be great if you always had someone older to help you with your studies? Your senior Didi and Bhaiya would really like to teach you, would you give them a chance?

◆Fix goals and time. For instance, within one month, grade VI students are supposed to teach capital letters (A, B, C...) and small letters (a, b, c...) to grade II students.

◆Everyday, at a fixed time (lunch break, free period or any other free time for both classes) seniors and junior sit together in a class or playground. One older student forms a group with one or more younger students and teaches them.

◆While as a teacher you are observing this activity from a distance, it is important that you are also actively assessing the improvements in students on a day-to-day basis. It has been seen that this processes leads to drastic improvement in learning levels in the junior grades within one month, and the senior students begin showing keenness to learn their own syllabus topics.

◆It is also important that, at the end of the month, teacher interviews the older students to know their experiences from this activity, and what specific changes do they observe in themselves. For instance, do you feel that now you understand the purpose of learning? Why is it important to study? Which teaching/learning technique worked for you best?

2. Curiosity Box

Introduction: Children are naturally curious beings; eager to observe and understand the events happening in their daily lives—at school, home or community. However, many times, due to hesitation, children's curiosity is curbed when they are unable to ask questions, which can affect their self-learning ability. The Curiosity Box is a simple solution to encourage students to ask questions that are later answered by the teacher using interesting insights

and information.

Classroom Application: Students learn to apply information and knowledge to real life situations, as this box becomes the only place where they are encouraged to ask questions on any thing they observe or learn, be it an event, a subject, text or theory. As they get information about many aspects related to the subject topics also, it promotes their rational thinking skills.

Planning/Preparation: Decorate any cardboard box from outside with colourful paper and write 'curiosity box' on it. Students may also participate in the decoration work.

Implementation:

◆Hang the post box in the classroom and explain to students that they can now post their questions related to their academic and co-scholastic activities, both.

◆Based on the students' interest areas, the teacher plans a way to answer questions systematically. He/she can reply by opening the slips on-the-spot in the class, or segregate them topic-wise beforehand, or ask another student to organise the slips.

◆Every week on a fixed day, the teacher opens the Curiosity Box and answers the questions, verbally or using a TLM, as required. Some examples are:

- After planting various types of saplings in the school garden, students were asked to submit



their queries about environment and trees in the Curiosity Box. Later, the teacher answered their questions by explaining various environmental and scientific phenomena.

- Having observed the farmers, some student asked how water from a solar pump gets to its tank through the motor pump? The teacher answered that the solar plate absorbs sunlight and converts solar energy into electrical energy. This electrical energy is then converted into mechanical energy. Using this, the motor starts running automatically and the water reaches the tank.

- Other examples include a range of learning opportunities in and around the school, like sources of water, types of housing, traffic congestion, post office, bank, police station, and so on.

Note: Ask students to write their question on the slip, fold it, and then write the topic on top of the slip. Later on, this later helps in sorting the slips topic-wise and the teacher can answer queries related to similar topics at one time easily.

3. Cycle of Events

Introduction: Just as a baby is able to learn the critical skills of walking, talking and eating, simply by observing others, older school-going children are also driven by a natural tendency to learn by perceiving people and situations around them. However, as they grow up, they also become keen to not just follow others blindly but to first understand the action of others and then decide whether to follow or not. This



inherent interest of children in understanding their surroundings is the reason why this 'Cycle of Events' activity is a popular one. Students are instructed to carefully observe events with a specific objective, and then present the information in different ways based on their understanding. Such discussions help them view syllabus topics in context of real life situations, gain insight into their community and environment, as well as promote inquiry-led learning environment in the school.

Classroom Application: Teachers can choose to conduct this activity on a regular basis to hone students' speaking and writing skills, and topic-based research and data analysis skills. Any general knowledge or subject topic can be observed in real life situations through this activity. Students also gain self confidence by participating in this observation and presentation work.

Planning/Preparation: To inspire students, first start reading a relevant newspaper article for the children during morning assembly, or in the classroom, while pointing out the key observation and opinions expressed by the writer in that article.

Implementation: You can start this activity with students on a regular basis, by dividing it into two steps:

◆ **Observation & Documentation** — Ask students to observe the daily happenings in their community/ neighbourhood. They are required to record their observations in a notebook, along with their opinions on the subject, similar to a real news articles published in newspapers. This can be done in various ways:

- Students become reporters and editors, and collect news on a daily basis similar to a news



agency. Reporters collect news and submit it to the editor.

- Students form a group to go on a field trip, to observe and record events related to a specific syllabus topic. For example, affect of weather on farming, local occupations and types of vehicles and their purposes.

- They individually observe and record the happenings on their way to school and back home for one week. For younger children, a simpler way is to record all the activities they do in a day.

- They form a team with one or more students, decide a particular topic of interest to observe and record together for a week.

◆**Presentation** — Students compile their observations into articles, news bulletin (as a simple list of event headlines), or scripted dialogue between two students, and then present to the teacher and other students in several ways, including:

- **Children's Newspaper.** Students prepare a weekly/monthly news paper*, and present it in class. For instance, one teacher named her class' news paper as Adampool Chronicle, which students presented at morning assembly.

- **News bulletin presentation in class.** The teacher gives 5 minutes to one student every day, after morning assembly, to present the news they have been collecting during the whole week.

- **A news article.** Just as the teacher reads a news article in morning assembly (see above in the planning/preparation phase), every day one student/a pair/group is asked to readout their local news items.

- **Role play.** Two students enact a conversation, either as news reporters on TV, or two

***Children's Newspaper**

This is a popular zero-investment innovation published in the previous editions of the innovations handbook. Similar to a regular newspaper, Children's Newspaper also showcases the achievements, problems and school incidents. Students collect news of the day's activities. To achieve this, students need to be present in the school along with being alert. A lot of problems faced by the school are highlighted. Teachers understand various issues faced by students in areas such as sports, scouts-related, milk, fruit, books, dress, teacher's presence and teaching-related problems and try to address them. By reading other newspapers, if students include two to three national, state and local news in their papers, their knowledge of current affairs also increases. Printing essays, stories, poems, pictures, cartoons, etc., in the monthly or the annual edition, definitely improves the personality of the student. They must be encouraged from time-to-time to do take part in these activities.

friends discussing the news, or as two characters from an incident.

- **Essay.** Students write an essay, or draw photos on the chart paper, to present the information they have collected on a particular class lesson.

◆After the students' presentations, the teacher provides his/her opinion on the topic. For example: The students have related how two drunken men were quarrelling, and one fired at the other, injuring him seriously. The teacher then shares information on how alcohol addiction affects the individual, family and society.

4. Wrapper Learning

Introduction: Sometimes common items from a child's daily life can become an interesting source of learning. In this activity, a simple empty wrapper is made the source of much joy and knowledge for young children. Yes, packets of chocolates, chips, biscuits, toys, etc. can be used to introduce many syllabus topics and arouse their interest and curiosity. This technique is also helpful if the teacher and students face problem in communicating with each other due to difference in their language dialects. In such a scenario, product wrappers also serve as a good TLM for introducing children to new words, their meanings and pronunciation.

Classroom Application: This activity is instrumental





in introducing a new topic to children of all ages, and many syllabus topics can be covered (as shown in implementation steps below). It also improves their vocabulary, pronunciation, general knowledge, and expression abilities, as well as decision-making and thinking skills. For the implementation of this innovation, no additional TLM is required; only a cardboard box to store empty wrappers is enough.

Planning/Preparation: Ask students to collect empty wrappers of items used in their homes. The wrappers are cleaned and collected in a box in the classroom.

Implementation: The implementation of this activity is extremely simple:

- ◆ In the class, turn by turn each student takes out one wrapper from the box and reads aloud the name and other details of the item. If the student is unable to pronounce certain words correctly or makes an incorrect pronunciation, the teacher corrects him/her.

- ◆ Now ask the student to notice the expiry date, or the last date to use the item, explaining the significance of this date which will improve the general knowledge and awareness of the students. Maths functions such as calendar and date calculations can be explained.

- ◆ Moving to list of ingredients and any other instructions on the packet, other concepts are explained to students. For example, healthy eating habits, export and import of local/indigenous goods, agriculture, business, and even the harmful effects of plastic can be explained to students using wrappers.

Note: Using wrappers for more fun is also possible. For instance, one teacher provides these wrappers to students to cover their notebooks. Another teacher, whose students live in a far off village with barely any shops, brings sweets, chocolates and biscuits to the class. Children first enjoy eating these interesting goodies, and then learn from their wrappers.

5. Mathematical Benches

Introduction: A creative teacher is sensitive towards the learning needs of his/her students and tries to adapt the teaching methods to facilitate learning in way that children can relate to. Mathematics is one subject that can be at times abstract. Children find it difficult to visualise and understand many of its fundamental concepts. Through this technique of Mathematical Benches, the teacher uses students' chairs/benches/sitting mats as a TLM to help them internalise the important concepts.

Classroom Application: In primary and upper primary classes, this technique can be adapted to explain Mathematical concepts and functions, such as shapes, place value and face value, number line, ascending and descending order of numbers, addition, subtraction, and so on. Students find it very interesting



and instead of being hesitant towards Maths, they joyfully participate in the learning process.

Planning/Preparation: Based on the topic you want to teach, arrange the benches in different ways, as shown in the implementation steps below.

Implementation: Following are some examples of using the benches to teach specific topics. These can be adapted by teachers for any other Maths concepts and calculations:

◆ **Place Value** — Children sit in rows and columns as usual, but each bench in a row is given a place value. Ones, tens, hundreds, ...and so on is written on their benches. Students sit on a different bench each day and during attendance, announce their place value along with their names. Gradually they learn the relevance of place value and internalise the concept.

◆ **Ascending and descending order** — Divide the class into two groups. One sitting according to height in the descending order, the other sitting according to height in the ascending order.

◆ **Shapes** — Throughout the school hours, students seats are arranged to form shapes that they are learning. On day one, their benches are arranged as a triangle, on day two as a circle, on day three as a square, and so on.

◆ **Positive and Negative Numbers** — Students sit

in pairs, but not next to each other. Instead, they sit facing away from each other in the opposite direction. During attendance, they announce their roll number attached with a 'positive' or 'negative' value (E.g. Teacher calls out Chewang. Students replies 'Today I am plus 23' or 'Today I am minus 23'). Gradually they learn the relevance of place value and internalise the concept.

Note: If this technique is used regularly in every class, students gain a very strong understanding of the topic and are able to internalise the important Maths concepts and theories and never forget them again. ■

