

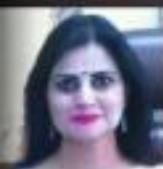
# THE PROGRESSIVE School

QUARTERLY MAGAZINE FOR SCHOOL OWNERS, MANAGEMENT, LEADERS, ADMINISTRATORS & PRINCIPALS



## TOWARDS A MEANINGFUL LEARNING IN SCHOOLS...

Anitta Acharya  
Vice Principal, Blue Bird Public School,  
Gurugram



## MAKING CHILDREN 'FUTURE READY'

Nikita Tussar Mann  
Principal, International Wing,  
Apeejay School, MohDA



## MAKING LEARNING EASY AND ENJOYABLE!

Pinky Banih  
Academic Director, Divyansu Diga School,  
Rohtak, Haryana



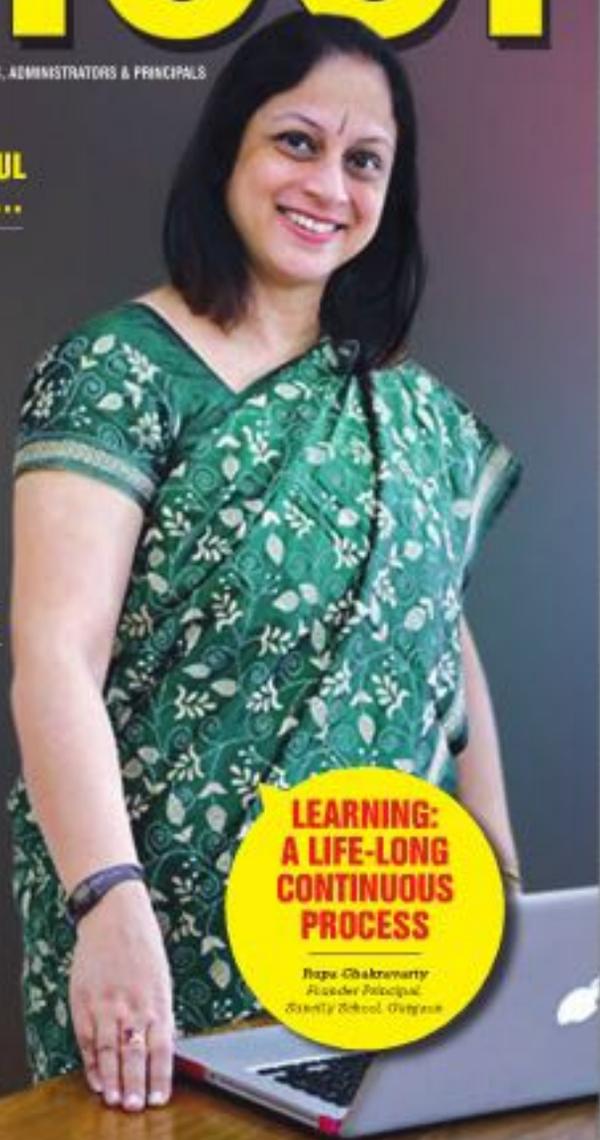
## HAPPY TO LEARN!

Sneha Shafiq Hussain  
Special Educator



## NURTURING RIGHT LEARNING ATTITUDE

Pooja Sharma  
Principal, Sapar Public School, Bhopal



**LEARNING:  
A LIFE-LONG  
CONTINUOUS  
PROCESS**

Rupa Chakraverty  
Reader Principal,  
Savitri School, Gurgaon

# LEARNING: A LIFE-LONG CONTINUOUS PROCESS

Rupa Chakravarty

Founder Principal, Sirecity School, Gurgaon

Education is not a preparation for life, it is life itself. Learning is never-ending and we can learn from every aspect of what we observe around us. True educationists know that life is the biggest teacher.

**S**chools must amalgamate formal and informal learning to provide a holistic learning experience and transversal education is the answer to it. Here, Rupa Chakravarty, Founder Principal, Sirecity School, Gurgaon, shares her views on learning beyond classrooms.

**TPS:** There is a long-standing view that only a limited quantity of learning is obtained through formal institutions of learning and informal learning plays a significant role in the empowerment of the individual. This view has been further strengthened by cognitive psychologists. How do you think schools can cope with this



situation by synergizing formal and informal learning modes?

**Rupa:** Education is not a preparation for life, it is life itself. Learning is ever encompassing of every aspect of what we observe around us. Learning though is categorised into formal and informal but true educationists know that life is the teacher. Like for our ancestors, they learnt from nature; from the mistakes made by them while out hunting and from the food found in the wilderness that they ate and later with the coming of civilization in the crops that they grew; the speech they developed and so on.

Formal learning is in fact, just tabulation of the observation of life's findings, factual demonstrations, experiences that informal learning around us provides to make learning easier but it is not meant to substitute but only complement informal learning because true learning is all informal.

To put into black and white, the concept of formal and informal learning all classroom, structured learning is formal learning and learning through life's experiences are informal learning.

Schools must amalgamate formal and informal learning to provide a holistic learning experience and transversal education is the answer to it.

So what is transversal learning? Experiential learning gives past two dimensions of learning—knowledge and experience (application) but Transversal learning provides knowledge, experience (application) and a third dimension—skills for employability.

Only if we implement Transversal learning will the true ethos and spirit of education be truly learnt.

**TPS:** Can you suggest a few informal instruments of learning provided by schools that help in this process of empowerment of the individual and how do they play a scaffolding role in learning?

**Rupa:** Learning is everywhere. What we need to take cognizance of is that every interaction we have with a child should be a step to internalise another learning.

To help empower students, we must enhance their thinking skills, their power of observation and their critical and creative thinking skills. When a child runs in the corridor, teachers in almost all schools usually say—'Bump! or Don't run'.

To develop their critical thinking skill, we should give them open ended questions like in a situation where they are running, we should ask, 'Are you supposed to be running in the corridor? What will happen if you run?'

The power of observation is another informal instrument of learning.

To organize games like treasure hunt, find the class, memory game, find the difference, can play a scaffolding role infusing informal learning with a formal one.

**TPS:** With a high thrust on competitive learning, most schools appear to have neglected or marginalized such vital requirements and appear to be promoting rote learning preparing the students for a rat race. In this context what do you think are the future challenges and how do you think schools can cope with them?

**Rupa:** With increase in our country's population, competitiveness cannot be ignored. It is going to be there for a while



**Rupa Chakravarty** is the founder Principal of Sirecity World School and a teacher of English, having experience of teaching CBSE and Cambridge - A levels and IGCSE. She has trained as the IB Coordinator at Montezuma-Arizona, USA and for Handling of Admissions in Worcester, USA. She is trained for 'Leadership strategies' at IIM, Ahmedabad. She has been an observer on behalf of CBSE numerous times for various examinations and programmes including SCQA. She has been the master trainer for most of the trainings imparted by CBSE - GCSE, PA, Mentoring and mentoring SCQA, listening and speaking skills (ASL) and so on.

She is an ideator with the CBSE international curriculum and she has been training Principals and teachers abroad for three years on behalf of CBSE to implement the CBSE international curriculum in CBSE schools abroad, for which the pilot project is presently being implemented in a few schools including SIRECITY. She is on the 'Gee committee' of reforming being implemented by CBSE. She has also won various awards for her work. Her ultimate aim is to work towards being and creating 'Able and noble' human beings.

but a time will come when the numbers will start depleting but that will be beyond the next few centuries so how do we build a this intolerable, inane fat face. **TEACH CONCEPTS not CONTENT!**

Think — If the action of force happens first or the book containing the description of force? First is the concept, then is the content. If we see force being applied by a mother pushing a perambulator or an iron-monger hammering a block of iron, it will take a fraction of a second to understand FORCE. Even plucking of a deer can be used to explain FORCE. This will help a child's curiosity and sustain it. We need to remember that *psycho-social learning* is all based on curiosity. The greater the curiosity, better the learning. So teachers arouse CURIOSITY in a child first before teaching them and this will remove the rote learning.

Five lessons from Einstein which may help to prevent rote-learning:

- Follow your curiosity
- Imagination is powerful
- Make mistakes
- Don't be repetitive
- Knowledge comes from experience

**TPS:** Many schools believe that provision of informal supports to learning for extended and impactful learning comes with a cost which parents cannot afford and hence find it convenient to marginalize them. Is there a scope for integrating such learning experiences with curricular architecture and how do you think this can be done?

**Rupa:** This is definitely not true. Provision for informal support for learning comes at a cost which parents cannot afford as a myth. To give a simple example, when students learn civilisations and delve into archaeological surveys learning about civilisation like Mohenjodaro and Harappan civilisation, we make the students do a treasure hunt wherein the teacher hides bits of pottery, ceramic pieces, glass bangles under the soil and ask students to excavate them through the game of 'treasure hunt'. This enables them to learn through a fun and interesting method. It enables them thereafter to understand



Rupa Chakraverty

how civilisation was discovered and created to gain an the knowledge of our heritage and past era. The world around us is a living example of what it is in a book. All we need to do is develop the students' observational power and this will help them learn more actively and acutely unlike rote learning. If I cannot learn the way you teach, then teach the way I learn.

**TPS:** "Learning Beyond" is fundamental to "Learning Always" and "Life long learning." It is development of a mindset and attitude to learning which is required for a vibrant knowledge society and a global learning environment. How can this idea be seeded in the young minds which would trigger them to be powerful 'self-learners'?

**Rupa:** Frankly learning beyond is not the younger generation's birth with. Our mind, being and ethnic way of teaching make that desire in 'learning beyond'. They know a lot more than we could have ever thought of at that age.

Learning environment should match competency for them to sustain their desire to learn. There should be a clearly understood vision that encapsulates how it will be achieved, here is where we can help them by building their vision.

Life long learning is the ongoing,

voluntary and self motivated pursuit of knowledge so education is not learning of facts but the training of the mind to think which will lead to 'Learning always'.

We now accept the fact that learning is a 'lifelong process' of keeping abreast of change and with a dynamic and vibrant methodology, we have created a learner. We can teach a student a lesson in a day but if you arouse his curiosity he will continue the learning process as long as he lives. Curiosity about life in all its aspects I think, is still the secret of great CREATIVE people.

**TPS in a world haunted by technology, most learners spend their time with the instruments of technology for further and extended learning. What are its advantages and shortfalls? How do you think this mindset can be changed to a positive and personalized interactive social learning culture?**

**Rupa:** Donald Norman rightly said, "I'm not a fan of technology. I am a fan of pedagogy — of understanding how people learn and the most effective learning methods. But technology enables some exciting changes."

We must remember technology is part of a tool. It promotes independent learning in students as the internet is a treasure trove of information. The information is also updated regularly as it's real time. The shortfall is how to analyse and synthesise the information.

Effective technology integration offers opportunities to be more actively involved in the learning experience.

We all know that technology will never replace great educators but technology in the hands of great educators can be transformational hence it is the teacher's vision that could lead to creating an exciting way to teach students and nurture their curiosity for curiosity sake, rote learning begins. Technology also encourages teachers to research and adopt innovative teaching methods like, technology has really helped in 'Flip classroom' teaching.

Technology is advancing at such a phenomenal rate that at times it is difficult for teachers to keep abreast with it but not so for students.

There is no denying that one of the shortfalls of technology is to access to negative and harmful information photographs etc. can result in trauma for a child. The child may in his innocence fall prey to cyber stalking.

We must retain them nurturing our children to our learning but they were born in another time. They are natives of this land called technology.

