

Best Practices and Innovation in Education

NECESSITY: THE MOTHER OF INVENTION

“Education is fundamental for full human potential, developing an equitable and just society and promoting national development”. - NEP 2020

Education plays a significant role in preparing future generation for sustainable life on the planet and become instrumental in creating a society that is safe, progressive, nurturing, just and peaceful. The function of education is, to teach one to think critically. Experiences and learning in the formative years lay the foundation of an individual’s character. As the child of today will be the citizen of tomorrow, it is the moral responsibility of teachers, parents and educators to provide the stimulating opportunities and experiences to instil the desired values. It seems that the global expansion and fast-growing technology was not enough for broadening the horizons of young minds, there came this pandemic in 2020 which challenged the entire mankind- the way of living, the way of thinking and the way of problem solving. The journey of humans included the challenges of saving their loved ones, facing the financial insecurities, and above all moving towards unknown. People learnt the value of time, kindness, humanity and brotherhood. During these unprecedented times, the most affected was the student community as they were finding their elders stressed, news channels bombarded with news which was not good for mind and soul. They were insecure as they were neither stepping out of houses nor meeting their friends and family. They were clueless, helpless and not sharing their stress and fears. This was the time when educationists and educational institutions took up the battle with grace and valour. Schools and teachers played an important role of not only imparting education but also bringing smile on their faces as well as on the faces of their families. This was the beginning of online mode of education which was an attempt to bridge much expected learning gaps. This brought with itself all new challenges and solutions and hence it can also be called a renaissance in the field of education.

Integrated Approach



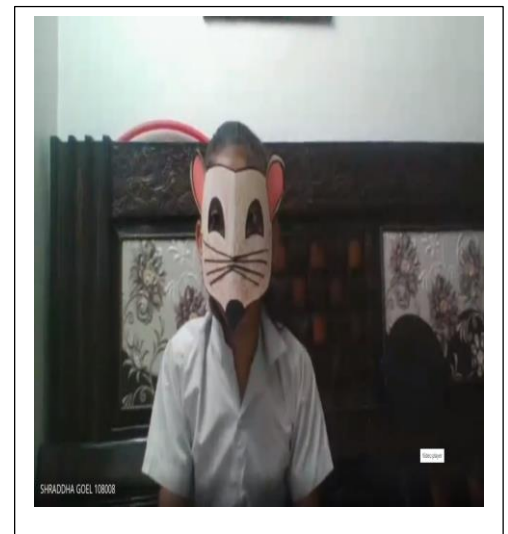
THANK YOU CARDS FOR PLANTS

To make online classes more effective, meaningful and interesting an integrated approach was applied in the classrooms. To make the topics relevant and capture the attention of the learners in their foundational years, their creativity was nurtured by integrating the content with music, dance, physical education or art and craft. This stimulated the creative thinking of the students and the lessons were learnt in a joyful manner. For example: An integrated project on theme Plants was taken up for the students of Grade 2. The chapter Plants and their uses was not read from the text book rather a song was taught in the class by music teacher: पेड़ प्यारे प्यारे पेड़.....Children learnt the song and were asked to collect a few leaves of different shape and size from their own balconies or garden. They were further guided to paste the leaves on a pastel sheet in an order of the size (biggest to smallest and smallest to biggest). They learnt the concept of seriation, gradation and classification in a joyful way. They were then given the concept of ascending and descending order of given numbers. Most

of the students were able to arrange the given numbers in ascending and descending order after this activity. Language was nurtured by assigning a task of dressing up as a tree and send a message for your friends. The activity was a feast for the eyes and ears as they dressed up as a tree in different ways with the material available at home and poured their heart out. "I feel happy when you water me". "I give shade, fruits and medicine to you, and you give me water and air to breathe. Such were the responses of the children when they personified as trees. They were taught Vrikshasan which brought agility to their bodies and filled them with happiness. Their creativity was further enhanced by providing them with an opportunity to create a Thank you Card for the trees. They tried to express their gratitude by self-composed jingles for the trees and plants. The relevant stories were also picked from Story weavers as a part of Reading Mission and the same were read in the online classes. This one project covered all the subjects and enhanced the creativity of the students, brought music and movement in the class along with Performing Art and Creative Art. Children learnt to nurture, share and care and become sensitive towards our environment also.

Humour In the Classroom

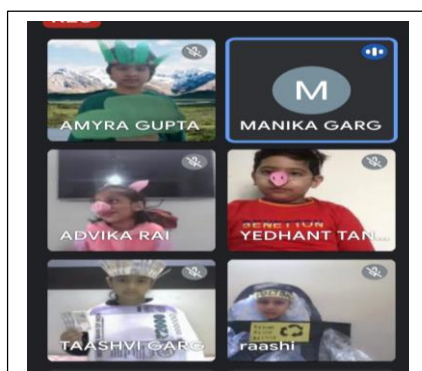
Humour is brought to the classroom to brighten up the mood of the learners and make learning fun. Such activities are instrumental in enhancing the communication skills in a joyful manner, bringing smile to the faces of learners along with acquisition of 21 century skills. Activities like Tongue Twisters brought lot of fun and humour to the classroom along with enhancing the speaking skills. It was a pleasure to witness the students trying different tongue twisters...Some succeeded, some kept trying beyond the classes as well. This occupied them in constructive and interesting activity throughout the day. This also brought the families together as parents were also trying the tongue twisters with the children. Critical thinking was enhanced by activities like Twist A Tale and Old tale New Ending which provided the learners with an opportunity to think beyond the books and interpret the given situations. Interesting twist to the common tales came up in the class and took the conversations to a different tangent altogether. Problem solving skills were also nurtured when children tried to provide solution to the problems of the story's characters. Witty conversations were part of collaborative activities conducted during the online classes. These playful yet illuminating activities made everyone giggle and learn at the same time. The students participated with utmost zeal and enthusiasm, which sufficed the motive of "Learning with Fun." The activities also taught the children to laugh together and not to laugh at each other. Humour brought in the classrooms faded the gloom of the otherwise stressed environment



TALE WITH A TWIST

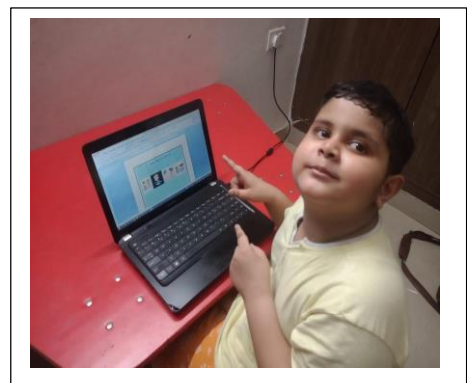
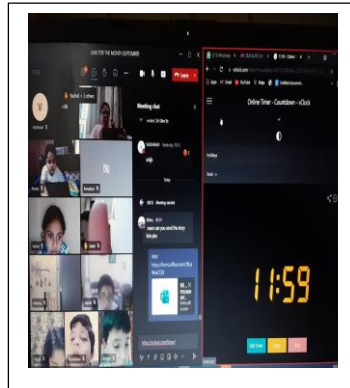
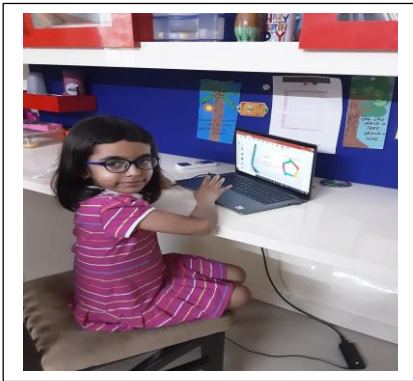


TONGUE TWISTERS



LANGUAGE ENHANCEMENT THROUGH HUMOROUS ACTIVITIES

Digital Tools



ENGROSSED IN DIGITAL TOOLS AND GAMES

Use of age-appropriate digital tools facilitated the learning and made online classes more constructive, meaningful and interesting. These tools were instrumental in providing print rich environment to the online classes and served as assessment tools as well. Use of whiteboard, for example, provided the teacher with an opportunity to write the relevant text, numbers and assess the children at the same time. The use of the tools like Padlet, GeoGebra, Google Earth quenched the thirst of curiosity amongst the children. For example, while discussion on Christmas and the gifts they want from Santa, link of Padlet was shared in the class where in each child was guided to write the name of the thing, they want from Santa along with clicking their pictures. The fun and excitement of typing their wish and seeing their own photograph on the screen filled each child with excitement and others overcame their inhibitions and participated. This was an indirect spell check as well which helped me as a teacher to assess which child needs practice in reading and writing simple words. Virtual tours to Taj Mahal, Red Fort and Art Museum was a feast to the eyes of the learners. These activities caught the attention of the learners and motivated them to explore more and ask more questions. These virtual tours were not only entertaining but educational as well. While visiting taj Mahal, the concept of measurement of distance was taught. They were guided how distance between two places is measured in Kms and the length of their room is measured in metres. During these times, when children are longing to visit their school, a virtual tour of the school in a fun way filled the children with excitement. They were excited to see the school lawn, swings, corridors, swimming pool and even the buses parked in the school.

Gamification

It is a known fact that toys and games are children's best friends. A good teacher can make these the best teaching tool as well. I introduced the reading experiences in my class by utilizing the Wheel of names which provided the children with an opportunity to read the names of their classmates. It was used to inculcate discipline in online class as the biggest challenge faced by us is that of indiscipline of unmuting and creating noise pollution in online class. The child whose name appeared after spinning was given the chance to answer the question and then his/her name was removed. This way each child got an opportunity to participate and no one felt neglected as they all got fair chance to participate and each child in the class was heard. Quizzex provided each child with an opportunity to participate and check their knowledge. It also provided the learners with healthy spirit of competition and overcome the challenges. I prepared a simple quiz on all the topics like dodging Tables, simple addition, Place Value, Opposites, Nouns and Adjectives to revise the topics. We played these quizzes at the end of each topic in the online classes. Even the students who were afraid of oral participation and revision tests participated in a joyful manner and were better prepared next time. They looked forward for the Quiz and polling time and demanded for more such fun games. Activities through GeoGebra also made learning fun for the learners. Various topics like Place Value, basic operations like subtraction and addition became simple and understandable through the visuals of the app.

Immediate Environment as the Best Resource

The biggest challenge in online classes was to teach without aids and resources which are available in our school and classroom. In such a situation, home was utilized as the biggest resource available. I utilized the kitchen of the children and the grocery they had at home to teach the topics like money, capacity and data handling. The children were guided to be ready with some packets like salt, sugar, oil bottles, shampoos etc (whatever was available with them). To make them understand the capacity, weight the packets were observed by each child and they shared their experiences like what is the weight of sugar and the cost written on the packet and so on. This facilitated hundred percent participation, real life awareness of the daily need objects and also the value of money and labour as they were also guided and provided time during the session to keep the things back at the right place. This provided movement during the class, they acquired the skill as well as knowledge of the daily life needs. For example: Children learnt the difference in half kg, one kg and 5 kg packets. They also learnt that liquids are measured in litres and solids in grams or kilograms. They also had first-hand experience of keeping one kilogram of potatoes and 1 kilogram of pulses in different packets. They visualized the packing of same weighing objects can be of different sizes.



USE OF REAL OBJECTS FOR CONCEPT OF MONEY AND MEASUREMENT

Conclusion

It has been rightly said that necessity is the mother of invention. The need to teach the children online and involve them in constructive learning experience motivated me as a teacher to overcome my fear of acquiring technical skills and apply them successfully in the classes. I feel that some topics have been better understood by my students and they indeed have created a bouquet of experiences and life long memories by participating in these activities. In my journey of teaching them, I have learnt and acquired new skills, techniques and evolved not only as a teacher but as a human being. This is the beauty of our profession: we learn, we grow, we unlearn and we relearn. I would like to conclude with the following words:

The tender saplings of today, nurtured with the correct manures under conducive environment will certainly bloom and spread their fragrance in the garden of tomorrow ; a garden we all dream of, a garden we all will take pride in.'

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