

Due to Self Learning A School Without School Bag Became A Reality

Spick & Span convent has recently completed its 14 years. Following are the salient features based on the execution of some experiments in 'Spick & Span' Convent having 'Nursery to standard X'

- ▶ Students will not bring school bags.
- ▶ Compulsory English speaking in school premises.
- ▶ Stress on English Grammar, Vocabulary and Conversation.
- ▶ Meditation to improve concentration.
- ▶ Complete learning is done In school so no need of tutions
- ▶ Tremendous increase in scoring marks.
- ▶ Training for Karate, Dance, Computer etc.

When people noticed the advertisement comprising of the above salient features, on UCN channel, a volley of questions were asked. First question was - will you keep the bags in school ? Our reply was, no. we want only text books and blank papers. Hereafter students won't need note books, work books etc. Taken aback people asked, 'How will you teach then?' This query is answered in brief as below :

Since its inception 'Spick & Span' worked very hard for creating the firm foundation of English Language. We made the Kindergarten students ready with 500 words vocabulary and 500 conversational sentences. This made us possible to make English Conversation compulsory for all students from std. I to std. X This way the language is developed very well which is helpful for self learning.

In due course I learnt 'Vipassana' Meditation and I was amazed to see the benefits of Meditation. Immediately I introduced 'आनापान ध्यान' in school. Today we feel that the atmosphere is filled with divine serenity. When all the teachers and the students started

their daily school routine after 15 minutes of ‘अनापान’ Meditation undoubtedly a qualitative change was observed in their studies. This Meditaion keeps everyone away from all types of worries, tensions and helps to improve concentration.

Till last year we were following the prevalent teaching pattern. At the outset teacher used to read & explain a lesson and then the Question / Answers were given. For lower classes Q / A were written on the black board while Q / A were dictated to higher classes. Teacher used to see the performance of the students directly in unit tests. It is noticed that this method stunts the thinking ability of the students.

Disadvantages of the above method

After two months if the teacher does not observe the expected performance in the students, she is helpless. She can't go back and is unable to explain again from the very initial lesson because of the paucity of time.

We see 50% students score very less marks in the unit test as the Q / A are not written in thier work - books or written wrongly with misspelled words. The conclusion drawn [by the teachers] from the performance is that the students did not study at home and parents were under the impression that children were unable to understand the lessons. So they started sending their Kids to private coaching classes.

After the retrospection we found that when we read a lesson, first the comprehension is only 25% Repeated reading is needed to understand / comprehend the lesson well with its core meaning.

But now - a-days students are getting spoon feeding. So they are habituated with mugging the readymade Q / A without understanding a lesson as they don't read the text book. they are not well acquainted with the lessons thoroughly.

Moreover when the teacher explains a lessson in the class, only a few students are 100% attentive while some students are only

physically present in the class. Their mind keeps on wandering some where else. Such students are unable to understand and simply waste their time. Few students are very clumsy & naughty & least bothered about their studies, so it is futile explaining them. Some students are attentive in the class. To explain a lesson is not an easy task. Teacher has to put lot many efforts while teaching. She has to read various reference books, use many teaching aids, take the students to different places related to the subject, show several experiments by visiting the institutions like Nehru Science Centre, Raman Science Centre etc., arrange the seminars, conferences & different competitions such as elocution, project exhibition etc. For the study of language she has to make the students well acquainted with the subject catering the needs by writing an easy, dramatising a story etc. She has to provide the students with all possible and good resource material to survive in this competitive world. Only then one can expect a sturdy edifice.

When you sow a seed, you need to nurture it by loosening the soil, by watering it, by adding manure so as to grow it into a healthy sapling. You can keep it in the sunlight or shade as per the requirement but **it has to grow itself**. One can lead the horse to water but one can not make him drink. Similar is the case of education. Teacher can help the students by providing the atmosphere conducive for learning, she can help them to elicit their hidden talent but they have to study themselves.

When I started the school, I heard the parents, teachers and the society criticising the students who scored less marks. Is it really difficult to get nice percentage? I often used to say that, "I will change the duffer into the super."

Another thing is that, your child is there in the school for nearly 5 / 6 hours. Why should a student, who studies regularly for 5 / 6 hours in the school, fail? Why does he need to study at home ?

As and when I interacted with the parents, I earnestly suggested them not to send the children for tuition. But now-a-days

parents are under social influence. To join private coaching classes is a trend in the society and if you go out of the way, you have to face the criticism. It is very easy to go along with the stream but if at all you want a change, it needs a lot of patience, tenacity and resistance.

Self Study Pattern

Let us move on to the pattern of self-study recently introduced in 'Spick & Span' Convent.

In this method we insist the student to read the paragraph thoroughly. Then we ask different questions based on that paragraph. It is observed that students can answer very well to different questions. This proves that they have grasped that para. Teacher asks questions to each and every student separately. If anyone is unable to learn the answer, other students help him. In this way 8 / 10 Q / A are ready in a day. A class test is conducted in the last period for Q / A as well as spellings, we require 3 to 4 days to finish the lesson. Several tests are conducted & then we proceed further for the next lesson. When the test for next lesson is conducted we include 2 / 3 questions of previous lesson in that day's test. After completion of 2nd lesson, test is conducted on both the lessons. In this way 3 / 4 successive tests per subject per lesson are conducted.

Learning is made compulsory in this self study pattern. and it is noticed that the students are engrossed in learning.

Benefits of Self Study

1) While learning from the text book the students have neat, legible and flawless script, so they learn it quickly with comprehension.

Initially teacher used to dictate the answers and students used to jot them down but obviously with unlimited spelling mistakes and illegible writing as they were unable to keep pace with the teacher. Even though such answers were checked by the teachers, the possibility of few mistakes even after checking was there as the

teacher had to check many note books. The students required much time to learn them & that too without comprehension. In such case, how can we expect them to score good marks in the tests?

2) Now there is no tension as we make the students tick the answer in the text book itself. The problem of illegible writing, spelling mistakes, countless errors is solved and the students started learning the answers with speed and comprehension. This created a competition among the students for reproducing the answers quickly in one stroke as the teacher is involved in taking it by heart. Practice for repeated reading is automatically done and it developed the mastery over the reading skill.

3) Tests are given with more zeal and enthusiasm to score good marks.

4) In the beginning student use to remain absent for no reason but with this method absentees has reduced a lot.

5) Certainly the students have become steady & studious.

6) Scoring good marks has become a joyous experience for the students.

Sometimes there are a few answers which can't be taken as exactly given in the text book. You have to jot down the main points and elaborate them further. But it was seen that with each others help students tried to elaborate the answers well with comprehension. In the test, they could reproduce those answers well in the most concise & precise manner. It was not possible without comprehension. Thus they learnt the synthesis of answers.

Then the students are trained for different types of answers as per the change in questions; eg. similarities, differences, give reasons etc. Sometimes the teacher arranges the competitions for framing different question for the same answer. In this way students become adept in framing questions. This drill is very important from various aspects. Students can answer without flinching if you twist the questions. Then both objective and

descriptive tests are conducted several times on the same lesson. Having experienced this, none can doubt the students comprehension.

Everyone knows that students are scared of only two subjects 1) English & 2) Maths.

But we can say with pride that the students of 'Spick & Span' are never afraid of English, as the firm foundation of English is laid in the beginning, to which we can attribute the success of self learning.

Now About Maths :

If you open the text book, you see the information given along with the solved examples before every exercise. If a student reads that information and does self study with concentration, he / she is able to solve the problems. one by one the students came forward & solve the problems on black board. Other students are attentive at that time & if he / she commits mistake, they immediately point it out. Teacher too is watchful all the time. In this way they solve each & every example on black board & the same home work is allotted that day. Everyday nearly 4 exercise are solved by the students at home. Parents have to take care that a child does not copy & transcribe the solutions from any digest. They have to cooperate by being vigilant.

Now the students bring only tiffin, water bottles, Compass boxes H.W., pages in the school. Text books, Files & blank pages are kept in the school.

For a teacher its an easy job to solve a problem on the blackboard but to make a student solve it with confidence developed through repeated reading with few hints from teacher. Certainly we can say with pride that the teachers of Spick & Span have successfully adopted and implemented this pattern of self-learning. Teachers have done a great job of kindling a flame of self conscience & confidence in the students and made the students self independent.

Then the question that arise is -If self learning method is implementd, is there a need of teacher? Can we run a school without teachers? Of course not ! In fact the responsibility of the teacher increases in self learning pattern. She has to assist them using various ways in solving different problems as per the capacity of the student. Can we deny the role of a gardener as a catalyst, in growing of plants? Likewise the teachers are indispensable for the school, rather they are the integral part of the school.

Achievements of Self Study pattern

- ❖ The students who use to join the tuition of Maths & Science in 8th & 9th standards got nearly cent-percent marks without tuition.
- ❖ Few students were overwhelmed after scoring cent-percent marks.
- ❖ Exam fear totally disappeared & students have become ready for tests anytime, anywhere for any subject.
- ❖ Students enhanced the good reading skills as reading text books is must.
- ❖ The parents accept that their children are very happy now - a - days & are thankful for it.
- ❖ Now students have spare time which they can utilize for cultivating their favorite hobbies like drawing, painting, dance, music etc.
- ❖ If we desire over all development of children, there is no remedy other than Self Study. They will become expert in using this technique in every field & won't need any personality development class. They won't be after the classes.
- ❖ Students of 'Spick & Span' are confident of scoring good marks & will hold their heads high as no one will humiliate them as duffers.
- ❖ 'Spick and Span' aims at creating a versatile, spotless character based on the firm foundation of spiritual and ethical values.

