

THE FOUNDATION POST

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Future-Ready Schools

What will it take to build schools that stand the test of time

Adaptive Learning

Identifying and nurturing individual talent

Interview

Gopal Karunakaran, CEO,
Shiv Nadar School

Snapshots

Updates from Shiv
Nadar Foundation

SHIV NADAR FOUNDATION

EDUCATION FOR LIFE



LETTER FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK



What is your favorite memory from school? The recess shenanigans? Dance classes? Your English teacher? The Chemistry lab experiments? Many of us look back at school as the best days of our lives – when worries were less and fun was always on top of the mind. But do we also remember the lessons taught to us?

We live in a hyper-competitive world, where yesterday's ideas are fast losing relevance. Children need to cope with the pressures of digital media, constantly sift through an overload of information and garner skills and experience at a young age to get into the best colleges, and then, dynamic careers. Their lessons are not confined to Science, Mathematics or English, but crossover to learning innovation, logic and communication. Learning has taken on a whole new meaning and schools need to be geared up for this new normal.

Our schools need to become future-ready; ready for an ever-changing, rapidly evolving future where children will take on new roles. These new roles will demand new qualities – creative thinking, adaptability, high emotional quotient and dynamic communication skills, amongst others. To do this, schools need to equip students with the right tools and techniques. Above all, schools must instill in students a sound approach to learning, so our children not only remember the lessons from the past, but keep evolving these for the future.

Novel teaching methods are the need of the hour. Learning can no longer be confined to a classroom, but needs to be made more relevant and responsive to the needs of the times. In this edition of the Foundation Post, we explore the various facets of how schools can become ready for the future and empower students to succeed in an unpredictable world.

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EDUCATION FOR LIFE – BUILDING FUTURE-READY SCHOOLS TODAY

Every child is unique. We are all born with innate skills and aptitude and if nurtured, these become our biggest strengths and differentiators in life. Research shows that a child's formative years are most crucial for nurturing her innate talent. The time spent in school, thus, becomes important to identify and hone these talents, to enable students to shine in their lives and careers.

If one considers the career landscape today, many new options exist which were nowhere near the horizon till a few years back. Jobs are evolving, alternative career avenues are raising their heads and businesses are changing the existing paradigm with each passing day. Our students are poised to enter a world where they face career and lifestyle choices vastly different from the previous generations.

It is imperative, then, that the schools identify new skills and prepare students to be ready for this kind of future. How can the schools do that?

Make Learning Contextual

Learning cannot stay confined within the pages of the text book. It needs to be made relevant, and real. Students need to be challenged to think out-of-the-box and this can be done by relating their academic themes to real world issues, while building greater exposure of the world. For example, while studying 'water', students can be taken outside to study actual water-bodies, and be sensitized to issues such as pollution etc.

Make Learning Experiential

Students learn better by doing. In case of project-based learning, students are encouraged to explore academic themes by constructing projects which are inter-disciplinary in nature. Arts can be combined with science, theatre with language to create learning experiences which have greater impact. Mathematics can be understood through dance patterns, anatomy can be explored by making sculptures – all are experiences which stay etched in a child's mind for posterity.



Technology 2.0

We know technology is the way forward and digital learning has been a buzzword for a long time. Future-ready schools don't just use regular digital platforms as teaching aids, but also leverage these to create a personalized learning experience for students. Such an approach would offer students the tools to track progress, targeted support to tackle weak areas, opportunities to connect and interact with mentors outside school, enhanced research capabilities and more.

Power up the Grey Cells

Any subject can become exciting and invigorating with the right approach. As long as the brain is challenged to think creatively, it continues learning. This is why many schools today use an approach that puts students in problem-solving situations. Rather than feeding them the answers, this approach incites kids to think out of the box to reach conclusions on their own merit. Such as, holding court sessions in class where children have to build arguments for opposing sides.

“Value” Proposition

If we want to cultivate conscientious adults, they must grow up on the right values and beliefs. This is an often overlooked but critical part of schooling. We spend a considerable portion of our most impressionable years in school. Hence, we pick up many of our habits and core ideologies here. Schools must ensure that children are being provided the right environment to develop a sound moral compass. Such an environment should bring alive values like integrity, respect and compassion, openness and transparency, amongst others.

These are just some of the techniques schools can apply to be future ready. Schools where learning is fun and engaging will produce adults that are life-long learners and are ready to blossom in a dynamic future.

To sum it up, a future-ready school is one with an environment where students can flourish to the best of their potential, where the act of learning takes on a whole new meaning. It is where one is ingrained with curiosity, creativity and a hunger to learn, and where every child is provided the opportunity to grow and shine, in ways that are best suited to their individuality.

DIFFERENT STROKES - IDENTIFYING AND NURTURING TALENT AT SHIV NADAR SCHOOL



Every child is unique, in his or her thoughts, interests and abilities. One may love to dance, another may be natural at communication, while still another may be a genius at Mathematics. This discovery and blossoming of individual latent skills and aptitudes needs to be facilitated by a school.

Schools must deliberately create an environment infused with the joy of learning and thirst for improvement, alongside a constant exploration of the inherent skills and talents of a child. More than ever before, the approach to learning needs to be holistic, but what does it take to build and sustain such an approach?

From Attitude to Aptitude

Do you remember spending innumerable hours memorising, revising and then forgetting all your syllabus, right on the exam table? We've all had those times! Learning doesn't merely require the right books, but also the right mind-set. A healthy mind-set is extremely important in facilitating comprehension and retention, as well as engagement with the subject matter. A mind that is curious, stimulated, alert and willing is more likely to learn and absorb.

At Shiv Nadar School, learning is a mix of inquiry and project-based approach. Students are encouraged to ask questions and are engaged in many hands-on projects which cement textbook learning in their flexible, curious minds. A special initiative, called the Funkaar Week, in fact, is built on the concept of project-based and experiential learning, wherein curriculum objectives are achieved outside the classroom – by mixing mathematics with sports, or social science with home science, and sometimes, even science with dance!

In addition, a dedicated arts and sports programme, called 'Aha! Time' is run in the school, the objective of which is "kindling a fire of self-identified passion in the hearts of students". Within the framework of this programme, students indulge in activities that encourage investigation, stimulation, expression, experience, and even relaxation. It is a time for the child to rejuvenate and really fall in love with learning; and somewhere at the meeting point of learning and exploring, discover one's own passion.

Guidance and Mentorship

Once you know your passion and understand your abilities, how do you convert this into a lifelong pursuit of happiness? As one progresses to higher grades, it becomes necessary to match one's aptitude with the right career avenues. An efficient Career Guidance Centre, hence, becomes important. The role of this centre is not limited to providing career counselling, rather it must evolve with the dynamically evolving times. Students, at the very outset, need to be given information and exposure of future academic and career avenues, so they may choose their subjects wisely. Real world exposure can be brought to school by bringing in experts, or by taking students outside for industry walks/workshops and internships.

As students experience their fields of aspiration, some rose-tinted perspectives go away, and some solid ambitions raise their heads – only this time, in a more informed way!



Enabling Skillset

It is imperative that a child who steps out of the school must be able to navigate the challenges that we spoke about. For that, he must be adept at creative and critical thinking, at being able to work collaboratively, at being able to communicate effectively, and at being able to empathise with the larger community.

Engagement with diverse issues and multi-domain experts is an important tool to achieve the said objective. For example, when exposed to panel discussions like “The Dialogue” at Shiv Nadar School, students are able to develop a holistic view and comment on national, political and economic issues very ably. A robust sports curriculum is also a must have. It helps instil mental agility and spontaneity, other than ensuring the physical well-being of a child.

Children should step out into the world, armed with confidence in their own abilities and their unique capabilities. Schools must therefore constantly strive towards grooming them not just with learning but for learning, as a quest for life.

GOPAL KARUNAKARAN, CEO, SHIV NADAR SCHOOL SHARES HIS PERSPECTIVE ON MAKING SCHOOLS FUTURE READY

1. Shiv Nadar School's approach to education is "Education for Life". What does it mean and how do you implement it?

Education for Life means preparing young adults for real life situations. Apart from the ability to succeed academically and do well in examinations, children must have the necessary skill set to live happily in the world. This encompasses the ability to communicate effectively, collaborate with other people and be capable of identifying and solving problems. It also means nurturing students who are both socially and emotionally adept.



2. Shiv Nadar School pays special attention to individual talent in students. How important is it to create such an environment for children in school and how can one do this?

As is understood, we are a child-centric system of education. What this implies is that we realize that each child is unique and comes with inherent abilities of his or her own. Our task is first, to identify this innate skill/talent/aptitude in a child, and then to build programmes which nurture that talent. For us, it is not a nature versus nurture situation, rather, we try to blend these two strains to help students develop into confident, skilled, responsible and conscientious denizens of the world of tomorrow.

3. Has classroom learning become less relevant? How are schools adapting to this changing scenario?

I wouldn't say classroom teaching is irrelevant. In fact, with the enormous explosion of facts and knowledge around us, teaching is more relevant than ever to give context to all the data staring us in the face. It is true, however, that traditional teaching methodologies need to undergo radical changes to adapt to the pace of progression of the world. Teachers need to be up-to-date with latest pieces of information. Classrooms need to become more interactive. Students need to be tested with projects which have application in the real world. And along with instilling soft skills in students, innovation and experimentation need to become buzzwords in the class.

4. What has been your biggest lesson in life?

My biggest lesson in life is a quote from one of the greatest Field Marshals of the Prussian army, Helmuth von Moltke, which says, 'No plan survives contact.' What it means is no matter how well you plan for anything, be prepared for it to go haywire when things actually happen. This is my learning from the military days, but it is true in every aspect of life. Once you have internalized these wise words, you will be prepared for the unexpected, for the difficult situations in life. It doesn't mean you don't plan, but that you plan in so much detail, the surprises do not upset you. You plan for contingencies as well and are prepared to face failures and not be disheartened by difficulties because there is still a mission to accomplish.

Hurun Philanthropy List 2016 features Shiv Nadar as the “Most Generous Indian” of the year

The prestigious Hurun India Philanthropy List 2016 featured Shiv Nadar as the “Most Generous Indian” for his contribution towards the cause of education in the country. The list, published by Hurun Research Institute, China identifies the most generous individuals in India based on their monetary contribution towards philanthropic activities.



Roshni Nadar Malhotra Conferred With Lewis Institute 2017 Community Changemaker Award by Babson College

Roshni Nadar Malhotra, Executive Director and CEO of HCL Corporation and Trustee, Shiv Nadar Foundation was felicitated with the "Lewis Institute 2017 Community Changemaker" award at the 3rd Babson Connect: Worldwide (BCW) Summit in Bangkok, Thailand from March 23-25. The award recognizes and celebrates an individual who has set something in motion in order to create a positive change and employs the Babson methodology of Entrepreneurial Thought & Action®. Roshni received the award for her focus on leveraging the power of entrepreneurship as a positive force for social change.

Accepting the award Roshni Nadar Malhotra said, *"The work we do at the Shiv Nadar Foundation is driven by our conviction to drive meaningful transformation by harnessing the power of inclusive education. However, when it is recognized by a reputed institution like Babson, it is a validation that we are working in the right direction. I am heartened and honoured to receive this award and encouraged to work even harder to realize the Shiv Nadar Foundation's vision of nation building through transformational leadership."*



Shiv Nadar University hosted E-QUAL's 4th student conference

The flagship EU-India Project E-QUAL's 4th student conference on "Refining Higher Education: Assembly Lines of Students" kicked off at Shiv Nadar University on 9th March 2017. The two-day long student-managed conference was part of the reputed EU-funded Project E-QUAL (Enhancing Quality, Access, and Governance of Undergraduate Education in India) that has brought together six universities including Ambedkar University, Jadavpur University, Central University of Hyderabad, King's College London, University of Bologna, and Shiv Nadar University; along with British Council India. A number of students from different institutions including King's College London, University of Bologna, Jadavpur University, Delhi University, JNU, TISS, IIT Bombay and Central University of Hyderabad presented their papers at the conference.



VidyaGyan students shine

Milan Verma received the prestigious Governor's silver medal at the annual presentation of awards to the best cadets and NCC Group of Uttar Pradesh National Cadet Corps (NCC).

The Central Ground Water Board, Ministry of Water Resources, recently held a painting competition. Annu Patel from VidyaGyan stood first in the state level competition among 1440 schools and received cash award of INR 6500/-. She represented the state of Uttar Pradesh at the Nationals.



SHIV NADAR FOUNDATION

- ▶ Shiv Nadar Foundation was established in 1994 by Shiv Nadar, Founder, HCL – a US\$ 7 billion leading global enterprise
- ▶ The Foundation is committed to the creation of a more equitable, merit-based society by empowering individuals through transformational education
- ▶ The Foundation pursues the philosophy of ‘Creative Philanthropy’, which envisages creation of institutions that continue to impact future generations for many centuries to come
- ▶ Total number of students and alumni – 21,000
- ▶ Investment till March’16 – Rs. 37,000 Mn (US\$ 550 Mn)

K-12 EDUCATION



2009

Leadership Academy for meritorious rural underprivileged children



2012

Chain of urban K-12 schools to create lifelong learners

HIGHER EDUCATION



1996

Ranked amongst India's top engineering colleges



2011

Student-centric, multi-disciplinary & research-oriented university

MASS INTERVENTION



2012

Technology-based educational intervention envisioning the eradication of illiteracy



2010

Building awareness and propagating modern and contemporary Indian art

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