

SCHOOL

Unique Education Journal



IN THIS ISSUE

Why teachers must remain learners

Teaching may begin as a job or a calling, but it is meant to be a lifelong learning journey for teachers. Yet once the routine sets in, teachers are often the first to stop learning.

Friedrich Fröbel:

The man who invented childhood education

SUBSCRIBE TO SCHOOL UNIQUE JOURNAL OF EDUCATION

INSIDE EVERY ISSUE:

Editorials – Provocative essays tackling the real issues in Indian education.

News Digest – A curated mix of education research, policy updates, and innovative school stories.

Voices in Education – Fresh perspectives from educators, researchers, and change-makers.

Ideas & Reflections – Exploring the timeless ideas, and fresh perspectives about teaching, learning, and the purpose of schooling.

Tributes & Remembrances – Honouring the lives and legacies of great teachers and educationists.

Resources for Schools – Practical ideas to strengthen teaching and school management.

WHY SUBSCRIBE?

Because School is more than a magazine — it is a forum for conversation, reflection, and reform. Whether you are a headmaster or teacher every page gives you something to think about, discuss, and put into practice.

Annual Subscription: Rs 840 (12 issues)
Perfect for school libraries, teachers' common rooms, and education leaders.

Download sample copy OR Subscribe online at www.SchoolReformer.com/subscribe

Rs 840
12 Issues



Download sample copy



Scan me

CONTENTS



EDITORIAL

Why teachers must remain learners ...5
Learning time: a simple reform schools can implement

LETTERS TO EDITOR

EDUCATION NEWS DIGEST

'Canada is not what you think': Indian student's viral reality check challenges the study-abroad dream ...8

Foreign universities are coming to India: Golden opportunity or imported inequality?...8

Karnataka's government schools lose 17 lakh students: Can new reforms win parents back?...9

Kerala joins PM Shri, but real reform needs system-wide focus on competence...10

Tamil Nadu plans ITI training inside government schools: A big push for vocational education...10

Maharashtra announces 'zero tolerance' policy on tobacco and drugs near schools...10

A.P. to adopt global teaching practices; continuous learning monitoring to replace exam-only evaluation...11

J&k faces deepening school crisis: More low-enrolment schools, rising dropouts, and widening gaps...1

Punjab sees sharp enrolment dip in 17 districts; Govt puts underperforming schools and teachers under scrutiny...12

Haryana schools to finally get principals after years of vacancies: 221 teachers promoted...12

Assam makes state history & geography mandatory — A model other states should follow..13

Odisha schools face severe delays: 3.5 lakh students go without uniforms and books as Famagra Funds remain unused...13

VOICES IN EDUCATION

Aruna K Srikanth ...14
What it means to be a passionate teacher

Nirban Roy...15
Storytelling that strengthens learning and relationships

Rezuan Chowdhury...16
Creative ways for student assessment

Sireesha Prasad...17
Excess burden of school curriculum

Veena Keni...18
How we learn to handle changes

Yashvi Parwani Vaswani...19
Teaching Gen Z

IDEAS & REFLECTIONS

Friedrich Fröbel:
The man who invented childhood education20

Tech Tools
How teachers can use AI and discussion platforms thoughtfully...22





SCHOOL REFORMER

NEW IDEAS. BETTER SCHOOLS

What is School Reformer?

School Reformer is an independent online platform that brings teachers, school leaders, and education experts together to share ideas and spark innovation.

We host online meetings where educators exchange practical strategies and fresh solutions. Our goal is simple: inspire creativity in classrooms and build a nationwide network of change makers in education.

Have an idea that could make a difference?

Become a Guest Speaker and share your insights with educators across India. Your talk will be recorded and shared on YouTube to reach thousands more.

Get Invited to Speak

Register on website

WWW.SCHOOLREFORMER.COM

SCHOOL

*Unique Journal of Education***Established 1965**

January 2026 Issue

Founder & Chairman

V. Isvarmurti

Managing Editor

Kartik Isvarmurti

Business & Operations

Shanmuga Priya

9945218904

Editorial Coordinator

Praveena Kothakota

praveena@schoolreformer.com

Editorial Associate

Jamuna Ramasarma

Operations Support

Rajani Jain

Website

www.schoolreformer.com

Phone & WhatsApp

+91 9620-320-320

Email

admin@schoolreformer.com

Published by

Vadamalai Media (P) Ltd.

Registered Office

Pichanur, Coimbatore-641105

Editorial & Marketing Office

C-2/286, 2-C Cross, 4th Main,

Domlur 2nd Stage, 3rd Phase,

Bangalore - 560 071, INDIA.

wwTel: 9620320320

Printed, Published & Edited by Mrs.

Shenbi on behalf of

Vadamalai Media Private Limited from

C-2/286, 4th Main, 2-C Cross, BDA

Layout, Domlur II Stage, III Phase,

Bangalore - 560 071 and Printed at

Print-O-Graph, No.124, Sultanpet,

Bangalore.

* Copyright-Vadamalai Media (P) Ltd.

Why teachers must remain learners

Learning time: a simple reform schools can implement

People come into teaching for many reasons. For most, it is a job that pays the bills. For some, it offers stability. For a few, it is a calling. Yet teaching is different from most other professions in one important way: at its heart, it is meant to be a career where learning itself is central.

Ironically, once the job begins, learning is often the first thing to disappear.

What initially attracts many people to teaching is the joy of ideas — reading, thinking, explaining, and discovering alongside students. But over time, teaching becomes a task. Syllabi must be completed. Portions must be covered. Administrative work grows steadily. Meetings, records, inspections, and compliance slowly consume the working day. The original intellectual spark that drew people to teaching is quietly extinguished.

One simple reform schools can make is to deliberately keep that spark alive.

Every school should formally create learning time within a teacher's weekly schedule. This time should be clearly protected and explicitly meant for learning — reading a serious book, taking a short online course, exploring a new subject, or engaging with ideas beyond one's immediate classroom needs. It should not be used for lesson planning or administrative tasks. It should exist for one reason alone: intellectual renewal.

This suggestion is not born out of criticism of teachers, but out of respect for the profession. Teaching is one of the few careers where society quietly assumes that learning ends once a degree is earned and a job is secured. In almost every other profession — medicine, engineering, law, research — continuous learning is expected and valued. Yet even in those fields, learning is often narrow and utilitarian.

Teaching, paradoxically, is lucky. It allows for genuine lifelong learning across disciplines — literature, science, philosophy, technology, history, psychology. Few professions offer such freedom. Schools should recognise this strength instead of allowing it to wither.

Our education system has not helped. Degrees earned many years ago are often treated as permanent proof of competence. But knowledge ages quickly. What matters today is not what someone studied long ago, but whether they are still learning. Teaching is uniquely positioned to model lifelong learning — but only if schools create the conditions for it.

Learning time must therefore be institutional, not optional. Headmasters and principals play a crucial role here. Learning cannot depend solely on individual motivation. School leadership must signal clearly that learning is part of the job.

A practical model is possible. Schools can allocate two to three hours a week as learning time for teachers. This may require rethinking schedules, reducing low-value administrative work, or questioning routines that consume time without improving teaching. Surely, in a full working week, two or three hours can be found — especially if we are honest about how much time is currently lost to tasks that do not benefit students or teachers meaningfully.

At the end of each academic term, teachers should be invited to

EDITORIAL

share what they have done during their learning time. This could be a short presentation, a reflection, or a discussion with colleagues. The purpose is not evaluation, but visibility. Learning becomes part of the school's shared intellectual life.

Some will argue that teachers may waste this free time. This criticism is not entirely unfounded. Some will misuse it. But this is not a reason to abandon the idea. Over time, when teachers are asked to speak about what they have learned, it becomes evident who has engaged seriously and who has not. The motivated will shine. The disengaged will reveal themselves quietly, without policing or confrontation.

This, in fact, is one of the strengths of the approach. Learning time becomes a natural way to identify teachers who are curious, committed, and intellectually alive. These are precisely the teachers the system should encourage, recognise, and promote. Career progression and rewards should take into account not just years of service, but the quality of engagement with learning.

Another criticism is workload. Teachers already

work hard. This is true. But that is precisely why learning must be built into the job rather than added on top of it. When learning is pushed into evenings or weekends, it becomes a burden. When it is recognised as part of professional work, it becomes renewal.

If this reform is taken seriously, the impact is profound. Teachers grow in confidence and clarity. Staffroom conversations deepen. Classrooms become more thoughtful spaces. Students sense that their teachers are alive to ideas. Parents notice the difference. The school's academic culture strengthens quietly, without slogans or superficial reforms.

Headmasters and principals have more influence than they often realise. By creating learning time, protecting it, valuing it publicly, and linking it to professional growth, they can transform the intellectual life of their schools.

Learning should not end with the teaching job. A school that understands this truth does more than deliver education — it preserves the very spirit of learning itself.

LETTERS TO EDITOR

A CHILD'S MANNERS ARE THE HEADMASTER'S LEGACY

Sir,

I read your recent editorial with great interest, but I believe the discussion on manners must begin at home, not in the headmaster's office. Schools today are already stretched to their limits — handling academic pressure, competitive board exams, administrative work, and an ever-expanding syllabus. Expecting them to single-handedly shape the character and social behaviour of every child is simply unrealistic.

Courtesy, respect, cleanliness, patience — these are habits children absorb long before they enter school. If a child grows up hearing adults shout at domestic workers, argue on the street, jump queues, or insult people online, no amount of school instruction can erase those impressions. The first lessons in manners are taught at the dinner table, in the neighbourhood, in public spaces, and increasingly on social media. These early influences are far more powerful than an occasional workshop or classroom reminder.

Teachers, too, are human. Many struggle just to complete the curriculum within tight deadlines. With large class sizes and administrative tasks, even maintaining discipline is challenging. To add the role of "society's moral reformer" onto the school system is unfair and impractical.

If we want well-mannered citizens, the responsibility must be shared by parents, families, community leaders, and society at large. Schools can support this effort, but they cannot compensate for the absence of good examples at home. Manners grow from culture — and culture cannot be created by the school alone.

Asha Menon, Mumbai

Sir,

While your editorial raises an important point about the decline of everyday courtesy, I disagree with the idea that headmasters must bear primary responsibility for the manners of an entire generation. This expectation places an unrealistic burden on schools and oversimplifies a complex social issue.

Children today grow up in a world where they are shaped more by YouTube, Instagram, gaming

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

We wish to clarify that the article by Ms. Nita Kar on page 14 of our December 2025 issue carried an incorrect affiliation. Ms. Kar has since clarified that she is no longer associated with the organisation mentioned. We regret the error and thank our readers for their understanding.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

We value your voice!

Our editorials aim to spark discussion on the future of school education — and your perspective matters.

Share your thoughts, feedback, or new ideas with us at: editor@schoolreformer.com You can also connect with us via WhatsApp at +91 9620 320 320

Join the conversation. Be part of the change

platforms, politicians, celebrities, and peers than by teachers or school heads. A child who spends four hours a day on a smartphone is influenced far more by online behaviour — often aggressive, rude, or sensational — than by the quiet dignity of a headmaster seen briefly in assembly.

Moreover, many schools already struggle with overcrowded classrooms, administrative pressure, syllabus demands, and parental expectations focused almost entirely on marks. In such a system, insisting that the headmaster alone must mould each child's character ignores the reality that manners are formed by families, neighbourhoods, and broader culture. Of course schools play a role. But we should not turn them into

the sole moral custodians of society. Parents must lead by example. Communities must reinforce values. Media must behave responsibly. A polite, respectful citizen is the result of a whole ecosystem — not the success or failure of one headmaster.

Your concerns are valid, but the solution requires shared responsibility, not singular blame.

Meera Thomas, Bengaluru

Sir,
Your editorial on the headmaster's role in shaping a child's manners is both timely and absolutely correct. As someone who has worked in school administration for over two decades, I can say with certainty that the tone of a school is set at the top. Children learn more

from the behaviour of adults than from textbooks or moral science lessons.

Today we see brilliant young people who can code, calculate, and compete — yet speak rudely to support staff, litter without thought, or show indifference to others' time. These are failures not of intelligence but of early training. And the school is the only place where all children, regardless of family background, spend fifteen uninterrupted years under adult supervision.

Good manners cannot be outsourced to families alone. Many parents are themselves under pressure, or unaware, or too busy. It is the headmaster who must create a culture where politeness, punctuality, and respect are practiced daily by teachers and quietly absorbed by students.

India will build smart classrooms and AI labs, but without courtesy and character, these achievements will ring hollow. You are absolutely right: a well-mannered young person is the finest outcome a school can deliver. I hope every school leader reads this editorial and reflects on the legacy they are leaving behind.

R. Suryanarayanan, Coimbatore





'CANADA IS NOT WHAT YOU THINK': INDIAN STUDENT'S VIRAL REALITY CHECK CHALLENGES THE STUDY-ABROAD DREAM

A recent Reddit post by an Indian student in Canada has gone viral for giving what he calls a “harsh reality check” to thousands of young Indians dreaming of studying abroad. The student, who says he regrets his move, outlines three interconnected challenges faced by many international students: poor-quality colleges, financial pressure, and emotional isolation.

He claims that a large number of Indian students unknowingly enrol in private or lower-tier colleges that function more like businesses than academic institutions. These colleges charge extremely high tuition fees—often ₹10–20 lakh per year—yet offer outdated content, minimum academic support, and degrees that employers do not value. Without the “Canadian experience” many employers demand, students often cannot secure professional jobs. Instead, they turn to survival jobs like delivery driving, warehouse shifts, or retail, simply to afford rent and groceries.

The post also describes severe financial stress, worsened by Canada’s rising cost of living. Many students work long hours at minimum-wage jobs, sometimes under exploitative employers who pay illegal wages. The student notes that the work–study balance becomes nearly impossible, leaving no time for rest or growth.

Beyond academics and money, the student emphasises the mental health toll. Without India’s strong family networks, festivals, or close-knit

communities, students may feel lonely and disconnected. Even though Canadians are polite, he says deeper friendships are rare, and many students suffer in silence.

Finally, he argues that opportunities in India are growing, and the belief that success lies only in the West is outdated. His message urges students to research carefully and make an informed decision rather than be driven by glamour or peer pressure.

The post generated thousands of reactions—some agreeing with the harsh realities, others arguing that success abroad depends on planning and realistic expectations.

FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES ARE COMING TO INDIA: GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY OR IMPORTED INEQUALITY?

Over the next few years, India will see a wave of foreign universities opening campuses on its soil. The latest to join the list is the University of New South Wales (UNSW), Sydney, ranked 20th in the QS World University Rankings 2026, which plans to open a Bangalore campus by 2026 offering degrees in business, media, computer science, data science and cyber security. Australian and British universities such as Deakin, Wollongong, Liverpool, Lancaster, York, Aberdeen, Southampton, Western Sydney University and others are setting up in GIFT City (Gujarat), Bengaluru, Mumbai, Gurugram, Navi Mumbai and Greater Noida.

This push is backed by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and UGC regulations that allow top 500 global universities to operate inde-

pendently in India, with full academic and administrative autonomy. They can set their own fees, curricula and admission rules, and are not required to follow reservation policies. The official promise: “world-class education at lower cost, closer to home”, and new research hubs in areas like AI, disaster resilience, smart farming, biodiversity and sustainability.

At the same time, the global context is shifting. Over 1.8 million Indian students study abroad, but visa rules in the US, UK, Canada and Australia are tightening, costs are rising, and housing crises are worsening. For Western universities facing falling revenues and political pressure to cut immigration, India offers something ideal: a large English-speaking youth population that can pay for foreign degrees without crossing borders. In other words, higher education is being “exported” to India.

Critics warn this may deepen inequality in Indian higher education. Foreign campuses will likely charge far more than public universities and mostly cater to the urban, affluent minority, just as many top private universities already do. Meanwhile, India’s public universities struggle with budget cuts, growing political control and shrinking autonomy. There are fears that foreign campuses could pull away the best students, faculty and philanthropic funding, leaving the public system weaker.

Scholars also question whether this is genuine “internationalisation” or simply commercial franchising. True academic internationalisation, they argue, should mean two-way exchange: shared research, student mobility in both directions, and intellectual reciprocity—not just foreign brands selling degrees in India. There are additional concerns about academic freedom: if Indian public universities operate under tight ideological and bureaucratic control, can foreign campuses really enjoy full autonomy on Indian soil?

Supporters counter that foreign universities could raise quality standards, bring in better research culture, and offer spaces where merit, not ideology, drives hiring and curriculum. They may also create opportunities for young Indian scholars who are currently shut out of public university jobs.

For Indian schools, teachers and students, this emerging landscape raises important questions: Will foreign campuses widen access to good education, or create a sharper two-tier system?

Will they strengthen Indian universities through collaboration, or quietly replace them in prestige and resources?

And most importantly, how can India ensure that

global partnerships serve equity and educational justice, not just market demand?

This is the debate your students will inherit—and perhaps someday shape.

KARNATAKA'S GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS LOSE 17 LAKH STUDENTS: CAN NEW REFORMS WIN PARENTS BACK?

Karnataka is witnessing a major shift in schooling preferences, with 17 lakh fewer students enrolling in government schools over the past 15 years. The drop mirrors a wider trend seen across India—growing parental demand for English-medium education, rising popularity of private and central-board schools, and migration-driven population changes. Today, more than 4,000 government primary schools in the state operate with fewer than 10 students, though none have been permanently shut; schools with zero enrolment are temporarily suspended but kept available for future use.

In response, the state has launched an ambitious reform package to rebuild confidence in public education. Bilingual (Kannada-English) teaching has expanded rapidly, with 9,522 schools offering bilingual classes from Grades 1 to 5, and pre-primary sections introduced in over 2,600 schools. Massive investments in infrastructure—computer labs, smart classrooms, science labs, vocational training—aim to make government schools more competitive. Over ₹838 crore has been allocated under Samagra Shikshana for facility upgrades. To address teacher shortages, Karnataka is recruiting 10,000+ teachers across districts while also deploying 40,000+ guest teachers to ensure continuity.

The Karnataka experience highlights a national challenge: government schools must strengthen English-medium options, infrastructure, and teaching quality to regain the trust of Indian parents.



SCHOOL REFORMER
NEW IDEAS. BETTER SCHOOLS

EDUCATION NEWS DIGEST

KERALA JOINS PM SHRI, BUT REAL REFORM NEEDS SYSTEM-WIDE FOCUS ON COMPETENCE

Kerala, long celebrated for its strong education indicators, has signed an MoU to implement the PM SHRI (Pradhan Mantri Schools for Rising India) scheme. PM SHRI aims to create model schools aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020—emphasising foundational literacy, experiential learning, technology-enabled classrooms, and outcome-based monitoring. While this will upgrade select government schools, education experts argue that Kerala needs system-wide reforms that reach all schools, not just a privileged few.

Despite near-universal enrolment and good infrastructure, Kerala's learning outcomes have declined over the last decade, especially in basic arithmetic among Classes 5 and 8. Data also show that more than half of secondary students now rely on private coaching, signalling that schools—government and private—are not developing sufficient conceptual competence.

A crucial but less understood reality is that private schooling in Kerala is not elitist. Many private unaided schools are low-fee budget schools serving low-income families, with monthly fees as low as ₹400–₹3,500. However, these schools operate under one of India's most rigid regulatory systems, the Kerala Education Rules (KER), which prescribe even details like window size, furniture dimensions, and playground requirements. Such “checklist compliance” often diverts resources away from pedagogy and teacher training.

Over 808 schools remain unrecognised simply because they lack infrastructure like playgrounds—gaps that could be resolved through shared facilities, CSR partnerships, or collaborations with nearby schools.

Experts recommend shifting from infrastructure-heavy regulation to outcome-based governance, focused on teacher development, mentoring, instructional coaching, and continuous

monitoring of learning progress. Kerala's PM SHRI participation is a positive step, but true reform requires ensuring that every school—government, aided, and unaided—has the support to improve learning outcomes, not just the model schools.

TAMIL NADU PLANS ITI TRAINING INSIDE GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS: A BIG PUSH FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

Tamil Nadu is exploring a major reform to strengthen vocational education by introducing Industrial Training Institute (ITI)-style training directly inside government high and higher secondary schools. The state education department is working with the labour and skill development departments to design a pilot programme that would offer industry-relevant skills to school students alongside their regular curriculum.

The initiative aims to address a growing concern: many students complete schooling without practical skills that connect them to employment. By bringing vocational training into schools, Tamil Nadu hopes to provide students—especially those from rural and low-income backgrounds—early exposure to trades, hands-on learning, and clearer pathways to jobs or further technical education.

Under the proposed model, ITIs may adopt nearby schools and offer training in areas such as electrical work, welding, plumbing, electronics, automotive servicing, tailoring, and basic computer operations. Students in Classes 9 to 12 would be able to choose vocational modules that suit their interests.

Officials say that integrating ITI programmes with schools can reduce dropout rates, improve employability, and align with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which calls for vocational exposure for at least 50% of learners by 2025. The state is currently mapping infrastructure, trainers, and curriculum requirements before rolling out the pilot across selected districts.

If successful, Tamil Nadu could become a national example in bridging schooling with skills, making vocational education a mainstream and respected option for students.

MAHARASHTRA ANNOUNCES 'ZERO TOLERANCE' POLICY ON TOBACCO AND DRUGS NEAR SCHOOLS

The Maharashtra government has introduced a strict “zero tolerance” policy against the sale of tobacco, gutkha, pan masala, and narcotic substances near school and college campuses. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis made the announce-



ment in the state legislature, stressing that the safety and wellbeing of students is a top priority. The government has already begun registering criminal cases against individuals selling banned substances in or around educational institutions. To strengthen enforcement, Maharashtra is preparing to amend the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) so that habitual suppliers and distributors of illegal substances—including gutkha, charas, and ganja—can be booked under the tougher law. Currently, MCOCA requires a threat or act of physical harm; the proposed amendment will allow action even when offenders repeatedly supply banned items without direct violence.

The seriousness of the issue is reflected in the number of cases filed across districts such as Navi Mumbai, Ahmednagar, Nashik, Solapur, Nagpur, and Yavatmal. Many offenders have been booked under sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Food Safety and Standards Act.

The state plans to increase surveillance, conduct targeted raids, and dismantle local supply networks. The message is clear: schools must remain safe, drug-free zones, and any attempt to expose children to harmful substances will be met with strong legal action.

A.P. TO ADOPT GLOBAL TEACHING PRACTICES; CONTINUOUS LEARNING MONITORING TO REPLACE EXAM-ONLY EVALUATION

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu has announced a major overhaul of government school education, stating that the State will soon adopt global teaching methods practised in developed countries such as the U.K. Teams of officials have already begun visiting international education systems to study best practices that can be adapted to A.P.'s context.

Speaking at a Mega Parent-Teacher Meeting in Parvatipuram-Manyam district, the Chief Minister said the reforms will be implemented over the next three years under the Andhra School of Education initiative. A key shift will be moving from exam-driven assessment to continuous monitoring of student performance, ensuring timely guidance instead of waiting for annual exam results.

Students are now being grouped into three learning levels—Stream, Mountain, and Sky—allowing teachers to offer targeted support and help every child achieve academic excellence. Naidu also assured that all government schools will soon have an adequate number of teachers.

HRD Minister Nara Lokesh announced plans for



a Student Innovators Partnership Summit, which will allow students to interact with entrepreneurs and showcase their ideas. He also shared details of the upcoming Kalalaku Rekkalu (“Wings to Dreams”) scheme, which will fund deserving students to study abroad.

The Chief Minister commended the district administration for the ‘Mustabu’ programme, which promotes student hygiene and discipline—factors he believes are linked to better academic performance. Naidu also joined students for lunch, reinforcing the government’s commitment to strengthening government schools.

J&K FACES DEEPENING SCHOOL CRISIS: MORE LOW-ENROLMENT SCHOOLS, RISING DROPOUTS, AND WIDENING GAPS

New data presented in the Rajya Sabha reveals a growing structural crisis in Jammu and Kashmir’s government school system. Despite a large consolidation drive that reduced the number of government schools from 23,173 in 2021–22 to 18,785 in 2022–23, the number of schools with fewer than ten students has continued to rise each year. J&K had 798 such schools in 2022–23, 869 in 2023–24, and 997 in 2024–25.

Surprisingly, teacher deployment in these under-utilised schools has also increased—from 1,692 to 1,778 teachers—indicating that teacher rationalisation has not kept pace with enrolment decline. Many districts have schools with zero enrolment, including Udhampur (27), Rajouri (19), Doda (18), Kishtwar (18), Kathua (12), Jammu (10), and Shopian (10). Several of these areas have large SC, ST, and minority populations, raising concerns about equity and access.

The most alarming trend is the sharp rise in secondary-level dropout rates. While dropout levels improved at the primary and upper-primary stages, the secondary dropout rate climbed from

EDUCATION NEWS DIGEST

5.96% in 2021–22 to 13.4% in 2023–24, before stabilising at a still-high 12.9% in 2024–25. Experts warn that this growing dropout burden will further inflate the number of low-enrolment schools, especially in rural and hilly districts where access remains difficult.

Although the Ministry of Education confirmed school closures and mergers nationally, detailed state-wise data was not disclosed in Parliament. With nearly one thousand under-utilised schools, rising dropouts, and widening gaps between school availability, enrolment, and teacher deployment, J&K's public education system is entering a phase that requires urgent, systemic intervention.

PUNJAB SEES SHARP ENROLMENT DIP IN 17 DISTRICTS; GOVT PUTS UNDERPERFORMING SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS UNDER SCRUTINY

Punjab's government school system is facing a serious enrolment crisis at the primary level. According to data presented at a state-level review meeting, 17 out of 23 districts recorded a decline in enrolment in Classes LKG–5 within a single year (2024–25 to 2025–26). Districts with the steepest drops include Faridkot, Bathinda, Sangrur, Mansa, Ferozepur, Muktsar, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Fazilka, Patiala, Pathankot, and SBS Nagar. Even in the home districts of the Chief Minister (Sangrur) and the Education Minister (Ropar), enrolment fell noticeably.

Only six districts—Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Hoshiarpur, Fatehgarh Sahib, and SAS Nagar (Mohali)—showed growth and were commended for their performance.

In response, the Department of Elementary Education has instructed District Education Officers to prepare lists of head teachers and teaching staff from the worst-performing schools, raising concerns among teachers. Officials argue that teachers must explain year-on-year drops, while teachers' unions strongly oppose the move.

The Elementary Teachers' Union (ETU) said the decline is caused not by teacher negligence but by systemic problems, including heavy non-teaching duties such as election work, clerical tasks, and administrative reporting—leaving little time for actual teaching. They also point to the ongoing cleanup of “ghost admissions,” as Aadhaar-linked verification has removed long-absent or non-existent students from rolls, making the decline appear sharper.

Since 2021–22, seven districts have shown consistent multi-year enrolment drops, raising deeper questions about parental confidence, migration to



private schools, and resource allocation.

Teachers warn they will protest if they are made scapegoats without the government addressing the root issues. Punjab now faces a critical challenge: restoring trust in public schools while ensuring that teachers are supported, not blamed.

HARYANA SCHOOLS TO FINALLY GET PRINCIPALS AFTER YEARS OF VACANCIES: 221 TEACHERS PROMOTED

After years of delays and administrative gaps, Haryana's government schools are finally set to get regular principals. The state has promoted 221 teachers—218 Post Graduate Teachers (PGTs) and 3 headmasters—to the post of Principal. This marks an important step for hundreds of schools that have been functioning without a full-time head for years.

Promotion orders were issued on November 26, bringing relief to schools where senior lecturers or in-charge officials have been managing both teaching and administrative responsibilities. Districts with the highest number of promotions include Rohtak (26), Hisar (19), Bhiwani (17), Gurugram (16) and several others with 8–12 promotions each.

The Education Department has now begun the process of posting principals in 349 schools currently without regular heads. Districts needing the most principals include Jhajjar (40), Rewari (32), Sonapat (29), Faridabad (25) and Bhiwani (24). Teachers were required to submit their posting preferences online through the MIS por-

tal, after which temporary placements will begin. Permanent postings will follow through the general transfer drive.

Teacher associations have welcomed the move, noting that schools without principals often struggle with financial approvals, planning, academic supervision and communication with higher authorities. With new principals finally joining, teachers say they will be able to focus more on classroom teaching rather than administrative overload.

The long-pending promotions are expected to significantly strengthen school administration, leadership and academic outcomes across Haryana.

ASSAM MAKES STATE HISTORY & GEOGRAPHY MANDATORY – A MODEL OTHER STATES SHOULD FOLLOW

Assam has introduced a major curriculum reform by making state-specific History and Geography compulsory for all students in Classes 6 to 8. Announced by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the move follows recommendations from the Biplob Kumar Sharma Committee and requires students to clear a 50-mark exam in each subject. The goal is to ensure that every child grows up with a clear understanding of Assam's heritage, culture, landscape, and identity, strengthening civic awareness and local pride. These subjects will now be taught uniformly across all government and private elementary schools.

This decision also highlights an important national conversation: schools across India should teach the history, geography, and culture of their own states, not just national narratives. Local knowledge helps students connect schooling to their surroundings, understand regional diversity, and appreciate the communities they belong to.

Assam's initiative could become a model for other states seeking to deepen students' sense of place and identity.

ODISHA SCHOOLS FACE SEVERE DELAYS: 3.5 LAKH STUDENTS GO WITHOUT UNIFORMS AND BOOKS AS SAMAGRA FUNDS REMAIN UNUSED

A major financial and administrative lapse has hit government schools in Odisha, where 3.5 lakh students have not received uniforms or textbooks even a year after the academic session began. This comes despite the fact that nearly 50% of Samagra Shiksha funds remain unspent, according to recent audits and media reports.

Samagra Shiksha—India's flagship school education scheme—provides money for essential items such as books, uniforms, special-needs support, and school improvement. However, Odisha has failed to utilise a significant portion of these funds across multiple heads, leading to stalled procurement and delayed distribution.

The worst affected are children from economically weaker families, especially those in remote districts, who depend entirely on government support for basic schooling needs. Delays have also impacted Children With Special Needs (CWSN), who have been left without assistive devices and learning materials.

Audit findings suggest systemic issues: poor planning, slow fund release, weak monitoring, and inefficiencies in the state's education administration. The result is falling enrolment, rising dropouts, and widening learning gaps—contradicting the goals of NEP 2020.

The Odisha case highlights a national concern: education budgets mean little unless funds are actually spent on time. States must strengthen planning and accountability so that students are not denied essentials that directly affect attendance, dignity, and learning.



Aruna K Srikanth

What it means to be a passionate teacher

Aruna K. Srikanth, Resource Person, Next Education, Hyderabad, Telangana, describes a passionate teacher as someone who nurtures curiosity and celebrate each child's progress, no matter how small. Their classrooms are supportive spaces where students feel confident to try, fail, and grow. Through their dedication, they help children develop both academically and personally.

The teaching profession is just like a whirlpool where teachers are attracted either by choice or by chance. But the teachers who stay, not just for salary or comfort, remain because they are passionate. So, when we say being a passionate teacher, we mean a teacher who is not joining the teaching industry for a comfort zone: limited school timings, multiple holidays, and an easy balance of work and home. Should we join the teaching field for that? Definitely not.

A passionate teacher is one who inspires hearts. The role of a mother is played by the passionate teacher. The way a mother encourages her children, usually one or two at home, we do it for hundreds. Not only inspiring but also empowering them. We get them ready not only academically but also worldly wise; we prepare them for the world. How? By being passionate. The word itself shows how intensely articulate we should be in our heart, body, and soul we should be to get children interested in us.

It is not a place where we are called and go to work simply for the sake of a salary. It is not just a profession; it is a calling that comes from within. Not every qualified person with a B.Ed. or M.Ed. can be a teacher. It has to come from within. Simply reading out what is written on the board or in the book is not help-



ful for a child. How that material is transmitted in the form of blood is necessary. That is a calling. We should be enthusiastic about teaching—more so about learning. As students, what we learned was just 25 per cent. But once we started teaching, we must have seen that the more we learn practically, the more efficiently and effectively we teach our children.

So, where is our investment? Not in awards, rewards, merits, or accolades given by the management, but in the student's success. When one child comes and says, "Teacher, it is because of you I am here," that itself shows we are successful. How can we do that? By build-

ing strong relationships with students. It is not like giving chocolates or gifts and expecting obedience. Definitely not. We continuously seek to improve our subject knowledge. Automatically, children start getting attracted to us because we have subject mastery, and in a very loving, empathetic manner, we reach out to the child. This builds a strong relationship that, in turn, makes the child successful.

Create an engaging and dynamic classroom environment. A teacher should not rely only on one-sided talk. Sometimes, for recordings, it may be required, but truly effective teaching happens in an interactive session—when the teacher asks, children answer, children ask, and the teacher answers. Such engagement creates enthusiasm because children feel, "Here is a teacher who listens to us." As seen in the NEP guidelines, communication skills begin with listening. The more the teacher listens to students, the more children become interested in sharing things in class. So how do we build that relationship? By getting connected to the child.

It is definitely a two-sided interaction. The table on this side is the teacher's, and the table on that side is the students'. But the table is only a physical object. It is not a segregation of two sides. Only when the teacher comes out of that zone, steps away from the table, and meets children halfway, do children also come to meet the teacher halfway. That is when we build strong relationships.

Read the full length article on [SchoolReformer.com](https://www.schoolreformer.com) Blog

Aruna K Srikanth
M: 9290014511
E: Arunasrikanth35@gmail.com

Nirban Roy

Storytelling that strengthens learning and relationships

Nirban Roy, English Teacher, PP Memorial Academy, Howrah, West Bengal, Howrah, West Bengal, and a fiction writer, describes how children respond deeply to stories because they feel real and relatable. When teachers use storytelling, lessons become clearer and more enjoyable.

This method helps students stay focused and interested. It also creates a meaningful bond between teacher and learner.

Storytelling is the most impactful method of teaching as well as creating a bond with the students. We have to make use of this method to create a better rapport with them. This also has a great importance in education and to make studies effective. I am also a fiction writer, and this helps me to teach better and interact with them better also. Kolkata is a city where people have the habit of reading books, buying, sitting, and discussing them most of the time. My stories have been published in many of the prestigious Bengali publishing houses like ABP Group and Patrabharati.

I strongly believe in storytelling as an integral part of education and a powerful teaching tool. We are in an age of social media where students can get everything at their fingertips by means of visuals, short videos, and updates at regular intervals. This has resulted in reduced attention span. The research studies show that Dopamine receptors, which are the brain's pleasure system triggered to get instant contentment. In such a scenario, teaching using a chalkboard will not create or leave any impact on the students. It is an emotional connection that is very much needed for such a bonding, and it is possible through storytelling.



As students of education, when we do our B.Ed., we are taught about dopamine and its effect on the minds of students. It is a chemical that stimulates the brain's pleasure feelings. We also know that the media, with its short videos, reels, and other details, gives an instant stimulation to the brains of the students. What we do in classrooms by teaching may be a tad boring when compared to games like PUBG, and we can focus on the importance of storytelling here. We, teachers, can implement storytelling in our classes to attract the students' attention; failing which, they will move away from what we teach. I feel I need to use my teaching as a tool to create curiosity in the students, trigger imagination, and then discuss the sub-

ject. To achieve this, we need to make them emotionally involved. We have a poem titled Doctor's Journal Entry for August 6, 1945, which explains the horrors of the Hiroshima bombing. If I read the poem simply, many of the students will lose interest in the first few minutes. They do not have any idea of the horror. They do not know where Hiroshima is or why we need to study the history of Japan or the bomb that affected the nation. So, by such a dull method of teaching, the students will lose their interest and will be distracted by something else. I usually start the class about Japan by asking them, "Do you watch Anime?" Many of them agree. When I continue to talk about Pokémon, Shin Chan, Maruto, and Studio Ghibli, they get excited. They start understanding that the teacher is talking about something that they are aware of and can relate to. When I ask them further if they know about Origami or sushi, and the other Japanese names they are familiar with, more of them come forward and raise their hands. After this, I start talking about Japanese concepts like Wabi Sabi, ikigai, and finding beauty in imperfection. Now, they are getting more interested in Japan. Then I turn to the emotional aspect and tell them the story of Hachiko, the dog who kept waiting for its master, who never came back. It is a story of loss, loyalty, and love, which makes them get involved emotionally in Japan. It is after all these, I start reading the poem, explaining the terrible things that happened due to the bombing in Hiroshima.

Read the full length article on [SchoolReformer.com](https://www.schoolreformer.com) Blog

Nirban Roy
M: 9836423513
E: roynirban10@gmail.com

Rezuan Chowdhury

Creative ways for student assessment

Rezuan Chowdhury, Head of Primary and PYP Coordinator, Smart Innovations School, Dhaka, Bangladesh, explains how assessment is more than measuring performance; it is a tool to support learning. It provides students with feedback that helps them reflect and improve. Teachers also gain valuable insights that guide their teaching strategies. When approached positively, assessment strengthens learning for everyone involved.



I have a wide range of experience of having worked in many schools during my 15 years in the education sector. 5 of my articles have been published across the world. The four objectives of assessments include understanding the concept of assessment as a tool for learning and growth within the IB PYP syllabus and finding out various strategies so that the assessments are interesting and purposeful, and let us know the students' understanding. There are different types of assessments – formative, summative, and the roles of assessments have a great role in the students' learning process. Design assessment helps in improving critical thinking, inquiry and concept-based understanding. These are the main objectives of the assessments.

When we utter the word “assessment”, the first thought that comes to our mind may be reporting, tools like anecdotal records, rubrics, and checklists to understand the learning level of students and their views. As per an educationist, “Assessment is not about marking”. In the current scenario of education, we are not keen on marking. We think that performance is all about understanding the learning level of the students. We have to take action according to their learning level so that they can move to the next level. So, assessment is meant to help us understand the learning levels of the students and not about marking. In the case of PYP, the assessment is a process to gather and analyse information so that students can improve their learning and information skills. The different types of assessment include ongoing knowledge assessment. We get to know what the students already know about the lesson and concept. Next is the summative assessment is the combination of units. Next is the formative subject, which is for any subject. The purpose of the assessment is to understand what the student has learnt and can do. This is the first teaching strategy. Differentiated learning comes in when the classroom is full of diverse learners with various learning capacities. No two students are the same. The different types of learning include auditory, visual, and kin-

aesthetic etc. We have to classify the assessments based on their level of understanding, their ability, and their interest. When we teach the concept of division, we should know how far they know about division, and we make them write a few sentences on division, their learning, and in which category of division they are in, and the various types of division should be shared. Students should be able to set goals for the future, next term's exams, or the next unit. The students have to set goals for all subjects as needed at the end of the academic year. For effective assessment, it should be authentic, transparent, and should be student-centred. It is the duty of the teachers to give feedback after the assessment is done to the students. It should be a continuous assessment and not a surprise test alone. The teachers should note down the negative aspects of the performances. They should give special personal attention to the students who are not able to understand the lessons. We should sit with them, explain the concepts till they feel confident about them. There can be other strategies, such as a thinking routine. Developing student accountability

The students should think about the self, peer assessment, and the rubric, and they should do a self-assessment. When they are doing projects in teams, they should assess the performance of their classmates who are working along with them, prepare, and present the projects in the classroom.

Read the full length article on [SchoolReformer.com](https://www.schoolreformer.com) Blog

Rezuan Chowdhury
M: +0088 1319495278
E: rchowdhury@martin-innovationsschool.com

Sireesha Prasad

Excess burden of school curriculum

Sireesha Prasad, Founder of MITRAM EduServ, Hyderabad, Telangana, observes that in recent years, school curricula have become noticeably heavier and more demanding. Students are expected to absorb vast amounts of information within limited timeframes. This trend has sparked debates about the purpose and value of such extensive content.

As an educator, I have always been fascinated by the fact that when education is meaningful, joyful, and kindles the child's curiosity, it happens very effectively. But students, teachers, and parents often feel that the education system is overburdened of late. It is always questionable if such a burden is needed, and if the students should be put to such hardships. Education is not just about how much they are taught but about what they are tuned into. Swami Vivekananda says that education is the manifestation of perfection already in man. This goes to the point that education is meant to bring out the strength of a student and to further develop in the areas of his interest. The student should never be loaded with content. Plutarch also says that the mind is not a vessel to be filled but a fire to be kindled. In today's education world, under the name of education, we are only stuffing the brain with data, but we never allow them to understand or think.

Today's education teaches us only to uncover less and to kill the curiosity to learn. We are in a constant race to be the first. This is the primary reason for the burnout of both teachers and students, and it also adds to the pressure on parents. The curriculum in the present day is adding a burden to the students under the guise of learning. We often hear the word 'syllabus completion' in most schools. As a result, students start their day



with anxiety about how much they should cover rather than with curiosity to understand things. The parents are also helpless. When the students are forced to learn more, they become anxious, overwhelmed, and lose the purpose of learning.

We need to understand all about the curriculum, why it is introduced, and its purpose. Curriculum was created with the main intent of not to stress the children. The earlier Indian educational system basically focused on holistic development as it was experiential, focused on realities, and personalised. In Gurukuls, the students were taught basic skills and learnt life skills based on their interests. They learnt thoroughly what was purposefully needed for their life and were made self-sustained. But with more colonial education and globali-

sation, we started introducing a standardised curriculum, which does not suit everybody, as their strengths are different. They should be helped to use their strength to come up and not put him under immense pressure. This type of curriculum is meant to create rule followers rather than thinkers or creators. Today, we observe that children are very restless as they have too many subjects to cover and are not allowed to focus on one subject. They just brush through all subjects to get marks, which is a pressure put on them by educators, parents and the system. In our over-enthusiasm and zeal to be on par globally, we have added more subjects and topics. Of course, these subjects and issues are needed for the students to get ready to face the world. Without removing anything deemed unwanted, we have opted to add more. This has resulted in piling up of topics and adding to the pressure, and we have not given a thought to whether these are necessary for the students.

Many students have been introduced to the Abacus and Vedic math to improve logical thinking, mathematical ability, and mental ability. Also, they are conducting regular math classes. All three are meant to teach the students to do calculations perfectly and faster. Then what is the need for introducing one more subject that makes the students and teachers restless and tense? It would be better if all three were merged into one subject to make learning easy for the students and reduce the burden too.

Read the full length article on SchoolReformer.com Blog

Sireesha Prasad

M: 8186002121

E: sirigannavarapu1993@gmail.com

Veena Keni

How we learn to handle changes

Veena Keni, Education Administrator, Mumbai, Maharashtra, describes how the adaptability quotient, or AQ, measures a person's ability to adjust to change quickly and effectively. In an ever-changing world, being adaptable is crucial for achieving success and maintaining well-being.

Understanding your AQ provides insight into how you manage uncertainty and challenges. Developing adaptability can improve decision-making, creativity, and overall performance.

Adaptability quotient is defined as a measure of the ability of an individual or organisation to adapt to changes, learn from failures, and exist in certain situations. Simply put, an adaptability quotient is an individual's ability to respond to changes. Our lives over the past few years have undergone drastic changes, especially since COVID and the advent of Artificial Intelligence and its progression in recent times.

We, the educators, work with various types of children in different classrooms and in a variety of schools. We have adapted to the changes in the education scenario numerous times, haven't we? In my opinion, teachers and parents have the highest adaptability quotient, though they may not be very much conscious of it. We, teachers, have a higher adaptability quotient as we can easily accept new situations, challenges, and understand students' ever-changing needs. We can learn technologies, understand curricula, and teach according to varied learning styles.

There are some key components of the adaptability quotient for us, educators. We are self-aware, emotionally intelligent, resilient, open to change, good communicators and evolve with changing times. We learn with



each new batch of students, the requirements of the curriculum and our Schools. We also learn to manage time effectively to suit our needs as well as those of everyone around us. We, educators, are also good at problem-solving as we are lifelong learners.

There is a story about eagles which goes to say that these birds undergo a total change after a certain age. When they become old, the feathers start falling off, and their talons, as well as their beak, grow too weak to hunt for prey. They pluck their own feathers, break their own talons and beak, although it is a very painful process, but it is a necessary change. They patiently wait for the feathers, talons and beak to regrow. Though people say it is a myth, there is every possibility that it is all true, as the eagles do have the ability to regrow their talons

and beaks. They do not wait for old age to take over; they adapt and welcome the transformation. Similarly, we can undergo profound transformations to emerge stronger and more resilient.

Technically speaking, 'Adaptability' may be considered as one of the core competencies of 'Emotional Intelligence'. The ability to succeed and achieve goals under various circumstances certainly is a skill, and sometimes a question arises as to 'Whether Adaptability is a soft skill or a technical skill.'

It is a soft skill as it is a non-technical skill and a personal skill developed through interactions and experiences. We have all adapted to going to school, then college when we were young and from there we went on to become professionals and went to offices and industries. While some are fast, some are slow, and yet we all adapt. If we think we can adapt to situations, we will. No one can teach us to develop adaptability. It is based on how one interacts with others and manages to handle various situations. It is a powerful skill. We learn from our day-to-day lives. We can think of the future, assess opportunities lying ahead of us, and experiment with situations and people to stay afloat with changing circumstances. We can talk positively and thus motivate ourselves. If we are adaptable people, we will stay strong, never grumble, and will not chase fame. We are willing to give credit wherever needed, and we have strong personal values to keep us going in our lives.

Read the full length article on [SchoolReformer.com](https://www.schoolreformer.com) Blog

Veena Keni

E: veenakenii0110@gmail.com

Yashvi Parwani Vaswani

Teaching Gen Z

Yashvi Parwani Vaswani, English Language Teacher, Lancers Convent School, New Delhi, talks about innovative teaching methods for Gen Z children, who are today's students surrounded by technology from a very young age.

As a result, Gen Z prefers fast, clear, and interactive ways of learning. Teachers must therefore adapt their methods to suit this evolving learning style. With the right strategies, teaching Gen Z becomes both effective and enjoyable.

Gen Z students are born and brought up with gadgets and technology. They constantly engage with digital tools and often relate whatever they see to technology. Although teachers today are also tech-savvy, students are often far more immersed in technology than educators. This, however, makes classroom management difficult. Children feel that they know more than their teachers, as everything is available on the internet. But we, the educators, have the responsibility of guiding them in the right direction and getting them involved in the classroom activities. There are a few strategies that we can follow to achieve our motives.

Gen Z today are exposed to mobile phones all the time. Even from the age of three, they are familiar with YouTube, reels and other digital platforms. They are highly visual and interactive learners with strong creative thinking skills due to constant access to everything online. They can actually visualise everything, imagine, and are always interacting with technology. But what is the main issue? – Lack of communication. They struggle to express themselves in face-to-face situations and often feel anxious during real-life interactions. Their continuous exposure to short videos an-



dreels significantly reduces their attention span. The current-day teachers face this problem a lot, as the students are constantly looking for something that is very innovative. They can process information easily as they are involved in technology, providing them with great exposure and the content available on digital media. They have the advantage of independence, but also need guidance from the teachers. Gen Z students can process information quickly due to wide digital exposure, which gives them independence, but they still require proper guidance. They may commit errors, and it is the teacher's role to help them understand content critically rather than accepting everything they encounter online. Gen Z students are socially aware and informed about global issues, yet many are caught in a cycle of technological dependency

They are keen on asserting their opinions and authority. At the same time, they value collaboration and teamwork. They appreciate creativity in others and enjoy working in groups. Career choices have also evolved beyond traditional fields like medicine and engineering. Students now create opportunities through blogging, influencing, or starting small businesses—options that were not easily available earlier. This reflects their creativity and self-dependence when technology is used constructively.

Understanding Gen Z challenges One major challenge is their short attention span and constant search for novelty. Traditional teaching methods often fail to engage them. Teachers must therefore make deliberate efforts to capture their interest and sustain attention. Information should be presented in small, organised segments, as students can feel overwhelmed by excessive input. Excessive screen time has also reduced physical play and interpersonal interaction. This makes monitoring by teachers and parents essential.

Next come mental health issues. It is because there is no real-world interaction behind the screen. We will not know about the other person behind the screen, their mental health or experience. This does not apply to online classes. It is the parents, teachers, friends, or colleagues who can help them and guide them. When students struggle to express themselves verbally, it often signals deeper emotional challenges.

Read the full length article on [SchoolReformer.com](https://www.schoolreformer.com) Blog

Yashvi Parwani Vaswani
E: parwaniyashvi@gmail.com

Friedrich Fröbel: The man who invented childhood education

Modern schooling often begins with a simple assumption: that young children should sit, listen, and slowly absorb what adults choose to teach them. Friedrich Fröbel, the 19th-century German educator who founded the kindergarten movement, challenged this idea at its root.

He believed that childhood was not merely a preparation for real learning later, but a vital stage of human development with its own laws, rhythms, and needs.

Today, when play-based learning, early childhood education, and holistic development are widely discussed—sometimes passionately, sometimes superficially—it is worth returning to Fröbel himself. Who was he? What did he actually believe? And why do his ideas continue to shape classrooms across the world, nearly two centuries after he introduced the word *kindergarten* into the educational vocabulary?

WHO WAS FRIEDRICH FRÖBEL?

Friedrich Wilhelm August Fröbel was born in 1782 in the small village of Oberweißbach in Thuringia, Germany. His early childhood was not an easy one. His mother died when he was only nine months old, and his relationship with his stepmother was distant. Much of Fröbel's childhood was spent alone, observing nature—plants, stones, patterns, and the rhythms of the natural world. These early experiences profoundly shaped his later thinking.

Fröbel initially trained as a forester and worked briefly in architecture and mineralogy. His intellectual path changed when he encountered the ideas of Jo-



hann Heinrich Pestalozzi, the Swiss educational reformer who emphasised learning through activity rather than rote memorisation. Fröbel studied with Pestalozzi in Switzerland and later became convinced that education needed to begin far earlier than formal schooling allowed.

He spent much of his adult life teaching, experimenting, writing, and founding institutions. In 1837, at the age of 55, he opened what he first called an "Institute for the Education of Young Children." A few years later, he renamed it *Kindergarten*—literally, a "garden for children." Fröbel died in 1852, largely uncelebrated in his own country, but his ideas soon spread across Europe, Britain, and the United States.

WHAT IS FRIEDRICH FRÖBEL BEST KNOWN FOR IN EDUCATION?

Fröbel is best known as the

founder of the kindergarten movement and as the first educational thinker to systematically articulate the importance of early childhood education. While others had taught young children before him, Fröbel was the first to argue that the years before formal schooling were not merely preparatory, but foundational.

Three ideas define Fröbel's educational legacy:

1. Education should follow the child's natural development, not impose adult structures too early.
2. Play is the highest form of learning in early childhood.
3. Education should nurture the whole child—intellect, body, emotions, creativity, and moral sense.

These principles may sound familiar today, but in the early 19th century they were revolutionary. Schools at the time were rigid, authoritarian, and heavily focused on memorisation. Young children were often considered incapable of meaningful learning. Fröbel turned this assumption upside down.

WHAT IS A KINDERGARTEN, AND HOW DID FRÖBEL HELP CREATE IT?

The word *kindergarten* reflects Fröbel's core metaphor. Just as plants grow according to their own inner laws, children too develop naturally when provided with the right environment. The teacher, like a gardener, does not force growth but creates conditions in which growth can occur.

Fröbel's kindergarten was not a miniature version of school. It was a carefully structured environment designed to support:

- Free and guided play
- Singing, movement, and rhythm
- Storytelling and conversation

IDEAS & REFLECTIONS

- Hands-on exploration with simple materials
- Social interaction and cooperation

Children were encouraged to observe nature, care for plants, and participate in communal activities. Learning emerged from experience rather than instruction. Importantly, Fröbel saw kindergarten not as childcare, but as a serious educational institution—one that required trained teachers who understood child development. Although kindergartens were initially met with suspicion—some governments even banned them, fearing they promoted independent thinking—the idea spread rapidly. By the late 19th century, kindergartens had become part of mainstream education in many countries.

HOW DID FRÖBEL BELIEVE YOUNG CHILDREN LEARN BEST?

At the heart of Fröbel's philosophy was a simple but profound belief: children learn best through self-activity. He argued that learning is not something poured into a child from outside, but something that unfolds from within.

Fröbel believed that young children learn through:

- Play, which he called "the highest expression of human development in childhood"
- Movement, including gestures, games, and physical activity
- Sensory experience, involving touch, sight, sound, and spatial awareness
- Social interaction, especially cooperative play
- Connection to nature, which reflects underlying patterns of order and harmony

Unlike later educational theories that focused narrowly on cognitive skills, Fröbel's approach was deeply holistic. Intellec-

tual development, emotional growth, creativity, and moral awareness were inseparable. A child building with blocks was not just learning geometry, but developing concentration, imagination, patience, and a sense of order.

Importantly, Fröbel believed that premature academic instruction could be harmful. Teaching reading or arithmetic too early, he warned, might interfere with natural development if it replaced play and exploration.

WHAT SPECIAL TOYS OR ACTIVITIES DID FRÖBEL DESIGN FOR CHILDREN?

One of Fröbel's most enduring contributions was the creation of a set of educational materials known as Fröbel's Gifts and Occupations.

Fröbel's Gifts

The "gifts" were a sequence of simple objects designed to introduce children to fundamental forms and relationships. They included:

- Soft balls in different colours
- Wooden spheres, cubes, and cylinders
- Blocks divided into smaller geometric units
- Sticks, rings, and points

These materials were deliberately abstract. Fröbel believed that by manipulating simple forms, children could intuitively grasp ideas of shape, symmetry, proportion, and movement. The gifts were not toys in the modern sense; they were tools for discovery.

Occupations

The "occupations" were activities that involved transforming materials, such as:

- Paper folding
- Cutting and weaving
- Clay modelling
- Drawing and sewing

Through these activities, children expressed creativity while

developing fine motor skills and a sense of craftsmanship. Fröbel saw these activities as a bridge between play and later productive work.

Remarkably, many modern educational toys—from wooden blocks to construction kits—can trace their origins directly to Fröbel's ideas.

HOW DID FRÖBEL'S IDEAS INFLUENCE SCHOOLS AROUND THE WORLD?

Although Fröbel faced resistance in his lifetime, his ideas had an extraordinary global impact.

Europe and Britain

Fröbel's followers, many of them women, carried his ideas across Europe. In Britain, educators such as Emily Shirreff and the Fröbel Society promoted kindergarten education and teacher training. By the late 19th century, kindergartens were influencing infant schools throughout the country.

United States

In the United States, German immigrants introduced kindergartens in the mid-1800s. Figures such as Elizabeth Peabody and Susan Blow championed the movement, and by the early 20th century, kindergartens had become part of public education systems across many states.

American educational thinkers, including John Dewey, were influenced—directly or indirectly—by Fröbel's emphasis on learning through experience and activity.

INFLUENCE ON LATER EDUCATIONAL THINKERS

Fröbel's ideas laid the groundwork for many later approaches to education:

- Maria Montessori shared Fröbel's respect for the child's inner development, though she emphasised greater structure.

IDEAS & REFLECTIONS

– Rudolf Steiner, founder of Waldorf education, drew heavily on Fröbel's spiritual and holistic vision.

– Progressive education movements echoed Fröbel's belief in experiential learning and child-centred classrooms.

Even today, concepts such as play-based learning, learning through materials, and developmentally appropriate practice owe a deep debt to Fröbel.

WHY FRIEDRICH FRÖBEL STILL MATTERS TODAY

In contemporary education systems, early childhood education is often caught between two pressures: academic acceleration on one hand, and unstructured childcare on the other. Fröbel offers a third way—one that takes childhood seriously without rushing it.

His work reminds us that:

- Play is not the opposite of learning, but its foundation.
- Children are active meaning-makers, not empty vessels.
- Education is about forming human beings, not just producing measurable outcomes.

In a world increasingly dominated by screens, standardised testing, and performance metrics, Fröbel's vision of education as a "garden" may seem idealistic. Yet it is precisely this vision that continues to inspire educators who believe that the purpose of schooling is not merely to prepare children for exams, but to help them grow into thoughtful, creative, and humane adults.

Friedrich Fröbel did not simply invent kindergarten. He reshaped how the world understands childhood itself—and that may be his greatest legacy.

Prepared by the editorial team based on the internet and AI-assisted research.

Tech Tools

How teachers can use AI and discussion platforms thoughtfully



Technology in education often arrives with exaggerated promises. New tools are expected to transform classrooms overnight, reduce teacher workload magically, or replace deep thinking with automation. Most experienced teachers rightly view such claims with scepticism. Yet, when used thoughtfully, certain digital tools can genuinely support what good teachers already value: clarity of thought, meaningful discussion, and deeper engagement with ideas.

Two such tools worth careful attention are NotebookLM and Parlay. They serve very different purposes, but both are powerful when used as thinking aids rather than shortcuts.

NotebookLM: helping teachers think through content

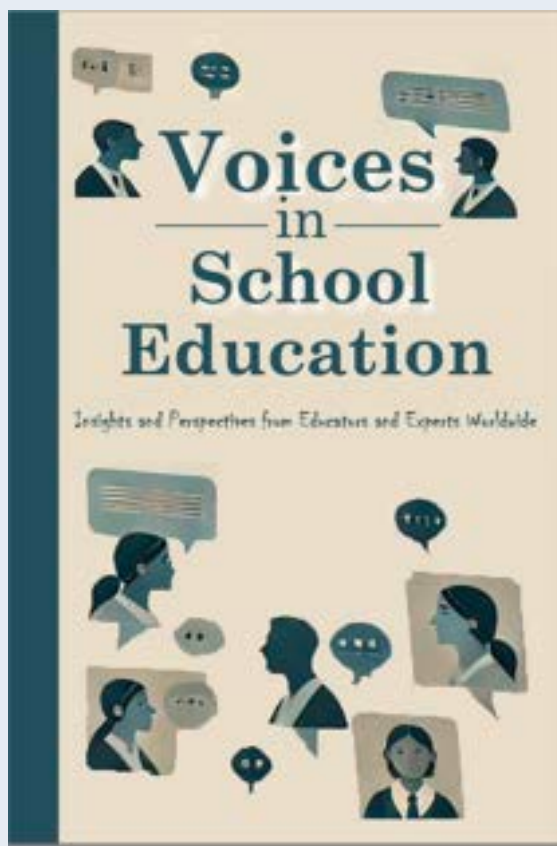
NotebookLM is an AI-powered research and organisation tool developed by Google. Unlike chatbots that generate answers based on general internet knowledge, NotebookLM works only with the material that the teacher provides. Users create a "notebook" by uploading sources such as PDFs, web articles, documents, or even transcripts of videos. The tool then helps the user analyse, summarise, and reorganise that specific content.

This distinction is crucial for teachers. NotebookLM does not replace reading or understanding; it supports it.

For a teacher handling large volumes of material — textbooks, reference readings, curriculum documents, policy circulars, or research articles — NotebookLM acts like an intelligent assistant that stays grounded in the chosen sources. Teachers can ask it to generate summaries, timelines, glossaries, tables of contents, or briefing notes based strictly on what has been uploaded.

In practical terms, this can be immensely useful. A history teacher preparing a new unit can upload several chapters, articles, and primary-source excerpts, then ask NotebookLM to create a chronological timeline or a concept map. A science teacher dealing with updated syllabus material can quickly generate a simplified overview to help plan lessons. A language teacher can extract key themes, vocabulary lists, or discussion prompts from multiple texts at once. One particularly valuable feature is the ability to create student-friendly resources. Teachers can ask NotebookLM to reframe complex material into simpler explanations, structured notes, or study guides — always grounded in the original content. This saves time while maintaining accuracy.

Read the full length article on [SchoolReformer.com Blog](https://www.schoolreformer.com/blog)



Get a copy for your school library
Download sample copy
Order Online

www.SchoolReformer.com/book

Download sample pages



Voices in School Education

A Must-Have Book for School Libraries

What do teachers really think about our education system?

Voices in School Education brings together the reflections of nearly 100 school teachers from across India, offering a rare and authentic glimpse into the world of classrooms, challenges, and change.

Through candid interviews, this collection reveals:

The real struggles and triumphs of teachers.

How educators are adapting to new technologies.

Insights on balancing exams with creativity and critical thinking.

The urgent need for education reform in India.

More than a book, this is a platform for teachers' voices—a celebration of their contributions and a call to action for rethinking how we educate the next generation.

Essential reading for educators, school leaders, policymakers, and anyone passionate about the future of learning.

Ideal for school and college libraries as a reference on Indian education.

"A must-read for anyone invested in the future of India's education system."



BRING GLOBAL EXPERTISE TO YOUR SCHOOL

School Reformer connects you with experienced educators – including school leaders and teachers from India and the UK – available as part-time or full-time consultants.

They can help you:

Upgrade teaching standards

Redesign curriculum and assessments

Strengthen leadership and management

Improve learning outcomes

With international best practices tailored to your needs, your school can take the next big step in quality education.

Register at www.SchoolReformer.com – part of School Reformer's School Improvement Services.

Partner with experts who can transform your school.

