

Management skills are key to be well-adjusted indiv

FOCUS Schools need to foster a growth mindset, and explicitly teach self-management skills in order to create a productive community

Anuradha Rai

Letters@hindustantimes.com

Every society needs to foster its youth as they are the torch bearers for the next generation. However, if we reflect on what is happening in today's fast paced and competitive world, we find that our youngsters are an extremely stressed lot. What is causing this stress and how do we prepare our students so that they are able to confidently negotiate and lead fulfilling lives?

An informal survey revealed some very useful insights into an adolescent's world. Comparisons with friends, how well prepared they are, parental expectations, peer pressure, need for approval, Pressure of social media with a need to stay connected and not be left behind, lack of sleep are some issues that came up.

Is there some way that we can rethink our upbringing and parenting? Do schools have a role to

play? Can we prepare our youngsters so that the whole Test taking experience becomes a stress-free experience? Let us look at the role of each stake-holders.

ROLE OF SCHOOL AND THE TEACHERS

Even though the traditional schools based on the assembly line industrial model have served us well through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is no longer relevant today. The changed demands of the times where employers are looking for well-rounded individuals, there is dire need to transform the school system.

By establishing a set of wide consistencies, schools need to create a productive learning community. Schools need to foster a growth mindset, and explicitly teach self-management skills. Rather than focus on the teaching content, the focus has to be on the process and on teaching how to learn.

In order for our students to become good at test taking, we need to adequately equip them with study skills right from the early stage. To illustrate, a long answer requires global understanding whereas an objective type test requires attention to detail. Therefore, training stu-

dents to recognize the strategies as per the text is important.

In addition to that, teaching students to locate, organize and retain information should be an integral part of the curriculum. Teaching students the techniques of mindfulness, helping build self-esteem, identify signs of early anxiety and reaching out to such students are other ways in which the teachers can help. Apart from that, aligning instructional objectives with test objectives, creating a rubric for assessing sample responses, providing students with a blueprint of marking scheme, giving test practice and ensuring a stress free positive environment will go a long way in supporting students.

Apart from that, data collected on student's performance, school discipline and guidance department can be used to adjust instruction to students who need assistance. Similarly, strategies like differentiating instruction can be designed to plug the gaps once they are identified through the evidence provided by the data.

WHAT STUDENTS SHOULD DO

While preparing for exams, one needs to balance and manage



Teaching students the techniques of mindfulness and helping build self-esteem must be taught early on

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

time well. Creating a plan by breaking the entire syllabus into smaller chunks that need to be accomplished on a daily basis and following up on the schedule, creating lists, taking and making notes, prioritizing, having a fixed bed time and getting enough rest, limiting distractions by setting self-imposed limits, rewarding yourself and most importantly having a proper place to study are some suggestions to help one study.

In addition to that ensuring

meaningful encoding of material to be learned through organizing and elaborating information so that meaningful connections are made helps. Over learning and usage of memory devices like mnemonics, acronyms, acrostics and rehearsal are techniques that can be used when connections cannot be easily made. Using the SQ3R strategy: Survey and Summarize, Question, Read, Recite and Review is a widely recommended strategy. Understanding what is

expected in the test and what kind of questions will be asked and how to study and address each type of question is very important. For this, taking a few sample tests before each exam will definitely help.

While taking an exam one point to remember is to manage time well. As far as being able to complete a paper in time is concerned, typically questions have word limits so one must try to stick to those. In case you get stuck on a question do not waste

time go on to other question and come back to it later.

If feeling anxious, taking a few deep breaths and using positive affirmations makes one feel better. Also, some of us need to have a scribe either because of a physical constraint or because of a limitation which would affect our test performance adversely and not reflect our actual abilities. Each one of us is unique and just accepting this and making use of all available resources is a sensible choice.

**CREATING A PLAN BY
BREAKING THE ENTIRE
SYLLABUS INTO
SMALLER CHUNKS TO BE
REVISED DAILY**