

# COMMUNICATION DOES IT

## COMMUNICATION IS TWO-WAY

Successful teachers are good communicators. Not only in the sense that they are able to explain the lessons well, but also because they can generally understand and respond to the underlying messages of a student's communications.

Again if one is to be really successful, one must also encourage interaction in the reverse direction—from students to us, so that we can harness their ideas, views and feelings, -since they take the consequences of what we do.

Such feedback from students is not always encouraged. Some teachers take all talk-back from students as inappropriate or disrespectful. But those who have been able to cross this barrier of defense, and listen to their students when they had something to say, claim that they have benefited much from the exercise.

**Mr. S.Singh** taught in a premier institution in Darjeeling. One day he received hints from certain students suggesting that they would like to share with him certain concerns of theirs. He allotted them sometime in class to do this. The class having been branded 'notorious' by many, Mr. Singh wasn't exactly comfortable. But he went through it and later was heard to exclaim, "I never thought that my students liked me for all those things they mentioned. But it encourages me to accept the negative parts of their feedback."

One feels more at ease perhaps, with feedback from one's authorities. But allowing students to tell us what they feel, often has salutary effects for the teacher, as well as a healthy feeling of relief for the student.

## Why does communication Matter?

**For a variety of reasons.**

First, a failure in communication usually costs. Explanation will have to be ultimately given. And the more delayed it is, the more explaining one will have to do. Timely communication can prevent ensuing disruption.

Second, everyone feels drawn into the activity of learning if there is a chance to interact with honest self-expression, questions etc., failing which some may switch off. Good communication also helps to focus one's efforts in the direction of efficient learning.

Thirdly, students often need teachers to tell them how they appear as groups and as individuals. A teacher who is known to be effective with this practice opines: "Our youngsters may never get such an honest feedback from any other source. Since teenagers are usually in a search for self-understanding, a teacher's well-timed and well-put observations can serve to satisfy this quest", she says.

Finally, no one has monopoly of wisdom. A teacher simply cannot afford to waste the ideas and inventiveness of the students. After all a teacher is also a learner.

**Br.Sahayadas, from Yercaud in T. Nadu has sent us this one liner,  
"A good teacher, not only lives by teaching, but also teaches by living."**

### **DO NOT TURN THEM OUT!**

Sr. Stephan is in charge of a school for poor children in a town in U.P. She writes: "Considering their background and home situation these little children are really very good. The credit goes to the teachers. They know the background of every child, and are very sympathetic and understanding."

She continues, "This is the first school I have come across where teachers are not calculating the number of students in class. I have shown reluctance in taking new admissions when I saw the classrooms already full, but the teachers asked me to take them especially if they looked poor. They say 'Let's give every poor child a chance to be literate.' We have no monetary or material help to give, but acceptance and love we give in plenty."

Faced with vast numbers, a teacher can rest assured that caring interludes need not occur daily. Love has sights, sounds and smells that last far beyond mental timeframes.

### **HELP THEM CHANGE THEMSELVES**

Our job as teachers is not to change our students, but to help them change themselves. Mr. Bennat Sebastian, a teacher in the North Eastern town of Kohima has this to share with us. "I initially found my students a little undisciplined, misbehaving. The reason wasn't hard to find. The pressure on them 'to perform' came totally from the outside, 'external' one should say. It was not difficult to see that if this "need-to-do-well: could be generated from within the student himself, things could take a positive, decisive turn."

"To begin with I let the students fix a target for themselves under no pressure at all (of course moderating it a bit in some cases). The result was nothing short of a miracle. Major improvement in every sphere from discipline to attentiveness. Well, nothing changes oneself-  
"The force from within."