22 June, 2020
10 am IST

The Scindia School

Webinar Report

Topic : Pedagogy and Motivation

Speaker : Mr. Arun Kapur, Director,
Pallavan Learning Systems
Member Board of Governors, The Scindia School

The Scindia School, Fort, Gwalior organized a webinar titled 'Pedagogy and Motivation: Are We Ready for the Future?' on the 22nd June, 2020 from 10 - 11.30 a.m. The Speaker of the session was eminent educationist, Shri Arun Kapur, Director, Pallavan Learning Systems; Director, The Royal Academy, Bhutan. The Principal of The Scindia School, Dr. Madhav Deo Saraswat hosted the webinar and Mr. Parash Moni Dutta, Faculty (English Language) acted as the Curator.

The objective of the webinar was to look into how pedagogy has been influenced in the present scenario and how we, as educators, could engage in motivating each other in developing pedagogic interventions that would help our learners to learn for life.

The Webinar started with Dr. Saraswat welcoming Honorable Speaker of the session, Shri Arun Kapur. While addressing the gathering, Dr. Saraswat expressed that as a reservoir of knowledge and experience, Shri Arun Kapur has been a guiding force for many children and adults alike, including Dr. Saraswat himself.

Opening Remarks: *Shri Arun Kapur*

Mr Kapur addressed the gathering by reflecting upon his journey in The Doon School, where he had met Dr. Saraswat for the first time. Mr Kapur established that he would be locating the conversations of the session to The Scindia School to make it contextual for the listeners. He further reflected that we were left with a sudden void as soon as our children left the school to safely reach their homes in the wake of this pandemic. Had there been no virus, the scenario would have been completely different and we would probably not have been seeing each other behind screens.

Significant themes that emerged from the webinar:

- **The Scindia School's Astachal:** The Scindia School's Astachal has been a unique phenomenon that sets the school apart in the league. Scindians all over the world consider the happiest schooling memories to be that of the Astachal. Hence, the school must use technology and the present time frame to continue enabling its students & Old Boys to reach out to Astachal to continue to nurture that spiritual and emotional bond.

- **<u>Learning, Schooling, and Education:</u>** Mr Kapur stated that we need to look at successful schooling differently from the way it is largely looked at right now. The process of schooling is all about growing from a child to an adult and we must help children actualize their potential during this process. For that to happen, we, as teachers, must evolve first. Learning is a process and learning via content based curriculum would not prove to be substantial in the long run. Content will change and become obsolete, hence, more than **what** to learn, we must focus on **how** and **why** to learn.

- **<u>Watermark:</u>** When one picks up a skill and makes it a process, enhances the skill with time and internalizes it to the maximum potential, it becomes a Watermark. For instance, the aspects of why to learn and how to learn could be imparted as skills to be undertaken to master, converting these into Watermarks. Hence, when the output of education would evolve with time, the essential Watermarks would not run out of validity and will ensure learning for the child, irrespective of the context. Thus, a Water Mark is to stay with us forever.

- **<u>Idea of Change and need for learning communities:</u>** The COVID-19 situation has brought crisis situations to various sectors. For instance, we have lost our labor to work in paddy fields and factories and we are helpless. It is noteworthy that the forceful use of pesticides and fertilizers has ruined the rice growing processes of places like Punjab and Dehradun. Because we were so output-oriented in our approach, we do not know how to overcome this crisis. Similarly our myopic view of education driven essentially by an "output-oriented" mindset compelled us to feed our children forcefully and hence as a consequence, it has distorted the authenticity in education. Scindia has been ranked no 1 in the country because the perception is that it acts as a fertile ground for teachers to grow, thereby enabling learners' growth. Thus, even with technology, The Scindia School must focus to preserve its Indian-ness and authentic flavor, therefore, showing the world that nurturing is the key. If we do not nurture classic values, processes, and skills, we would not take much time to lose out on education. We must thus create ample opportunities by creating and enhancing learning communities and transform the process of learning by nurturing and empowering children.

In the world of Artificial Intelligence, we must also recognize the potential of Augmented Intelligence. If we let machines do mundane jobs, then we can push ourselves into a higher space of mental stimulation. Thus, augmenting intelligence can happen with learning communities, which consist of people with best interest of the child at heart and which brings out "the best me possible" for the child.

- **<u>Unforeseen Challenges:</u>** The problem is not change, but our inability to deal with change. Instead of blaming the pandemic for this mess, we must transform our processes to be able to deal with change better. Since the definition of success will change with passing time, we must focus on processes, which will stay, thus breaking silos and making learning holistic and collaborative. Collaboration between subject teachers and between communities is the key. Thus, the unforeseen is basically an opportunity for us to realize these goals.

- **<u>Zero Academic Year:</u>** A zero academic year will not necessarily be a zero education/ learning year and schools like Scindia must change the narrative. For the community, learning and education will not necessarily stop even if there is a zero academic year. It would only be an issue for Class XII as they graduate, and this could also be dealt with a variety of ways. For example, there have been conversations about sending the final year students of medical colleges for internships, especially at a time, when there is a scarcity of doctors in hospitals. The idea is that these doctors would get an opportunity to put their education to practice and would be better candidates to appear for their final exams after they bring the extensive learning back from the real workplace.

- **<u>Motivation:</u>** Motivation is an important aspect of leadership. Yet it is not only confined to Principals, Board Members or Housemasters, but it is for anyone who has the essential skill to lead (here effective leadership can be considered as a Watermark). Motivation is creating opportunities for people so that they bring out the best in themselves and embrace the passion for learning. Once motivated, we would all be able to pass the energy on.

- **Emotional Quotient and Relationships:** *Shri Arun Kapur's* book, *Leading Out* talks about five areas of development - cerebral, physical, social, emotional, and spiritual, and all these are equally important. These must be integrated with each other and the 'Special Needs' factor is also to be considered at all levels. We must realize that we all seek special needs in various ways and what we all look for is learning to take place through different modes. And it all reduces down to the concept of "who" learns "how". Thus, learning how to learn with peer support from teachers, parents, siblings etc. is vital.

  Trust and healthy relationships are of significance. The present crisis has shown that we are fragile and it is an opportunity for us to reflect on our fragility. A sudden break caused us to fling forward and experience the whiplash effect but we must also realize that the idea of schooling is not to conquer nature but to establish harmony and mutual existence with nature.

- **Enable learners to participate in learning:** As teachers, we must plan and prepare for our tasks, and apply this scaffolding to children. Scaffolding is necessary to transform ourselves and thus be passed on to children. It is crucial for us to become the enablers of their learning, and find ingredients for them to grow.

- **Using technology for creativity:** Creative pedagogy must consider learning by observing as important, like the *Guru-Shishya parampara* of Indian classical music. Students must hear / watch the teacher play. Technology gives us the freedom of transforming our teaching - learning process like no other platform. For example, the teacher and students can play a *Raaga* as per the timing and it thus gives an opportunity to transcend time and space. This way the child also understands the effect of time and space on creative endeavors. Thus, children must join in the process of creating: listening to each other and realizing the collective notion of learning.

Closing Remarks: *Shri Arun Kapur*

On being asked about his outlook vis-à-vis life, Mr Kapur said that he enjoys being happy and is open to learning, sharing and meeting people.

Shri Arun Kapur closed the session by reflecting upon his wonderful visits to The Scindia School and stated that he was fascinated to see the dynamic cohort of adults that populate

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the Fort. He once again stressed upon the notions of augmented learning, creating opportunities as adults, and actualizing the potential of the teachers and children alike; and of course, being constructive contributory citizens to the process of education. With the note of starting digital Astachal meetings, Mr Kapur extended his best wishes to the gathering.

Thank You