



RAMANUJAN COLLEGE  
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

## Ramanujan College: On a Glorious Path

### Success @ Teaching

**H**aving taught for over three decades in a Delhi University college, T K MISHRA offers six ethical strategies to strengthen teaching methods and enrich the learning experience of students

Gone are the days when education was a synonym for ethical enlightenment. Today, people seek specific solutions for career problems. The demand for tutors excelling in 'want-based' coaching now exceeds the demand for teachers. Just like medicine reduces pain for some time but does not cure it, cramming-based tutoring offers only short-term solutions to exam-oriented problems. The role of a teacher traditionally has been that of a 'guru,' who helps students acquire knowledge, competencies, values and life skills. For teaching to be successful, teachers need to confront the social landscape and view their work positively. Their work must satisfy both teachers and students, develop their potential and allow them to reach their objectives. When teachers view their work positively and are guided by 'ethics of care,' they get emotionally involved in the welfare of the students and are more conscientiously related to 'self' and 'society'; they cooperate more with students, and are likely to provide more learning outcomes. In the guru-shishya parampara, Indians conferred an almost divine stature on their teachers, where the respect and status of a teacher was of the highest standard. And this, at a time when teachers had no sophisticated reading and teaching materials, technological tools or fancy infrastructure. In contrast, teachers today have ready access to technology. Yet, why is the status and respect of the teacher in society eroding day by day? Many debate that our predecessors lived more ethically, maintaining a high degree of honesty, sincerity and transparency. We need to understand that respect is more important than wealth. With my 33 years of teaching experience in a Delhi University college, I have arrived at six ethical strategies that will help teachers achieve success in teaching:

- Emotions in focus through empathy • Trust-building through transparency • Heart at centre stage • Integrity through insightful inspiration • Character-building through cultural heritage • Spirituality through spiritual practice

#### Meaningful Teaching

Providing meaningful teaching in a stimulating and ethical environment is a major advantage in attracting and holding on to both competent teachers as well as students.

Psychology says success comes with coherence, consistency, balance and completeness, besides one being confident of one's raison d'être, reason for living. By this definition, a teacher's success in teaching is dependent on the coherence between the teacher in question and on the ethics he adopts while teaching, in his expectations, and in the values he conveys to students. It is also equally dependent on the ethical actions he performs on a daily basis. What today's student is lacking in the virtual world is not information or knowledge but life skills or wisdom.....

Trapped in worldly temptations, students now lack soft skills, emotions, feelings, passion, values, trustworthiness, and spirituality. Wisdom-based knowledge, on the other hand, can offer them soft skills and make a teacher successful in his profession uniting the innate Self with the teaching. Ethics provide a teacher a distinct competitive advantage. It helps him take on the role of an 'enlightened master'. Let us not confuse this with empowerment and enrichment, for, those who embrace enlightenment, have nothing to sell. They simply share their inner calling and understanding by way of experiential learning. Empowerment and enrichment may breed exclusion, but enlightenment is shared through friendship. When the goal is seeking enlightenment, not just the final stage, but the journey or the process of seeking itself becomes exciting and fulfilling.

[www.speakingtree.in/article/success-teaching](http://www.speakingtree.in/article/success-teaching)

### Skilling teachers in Indian universities

Developing the transformational skill should become a continuing process

The announcement of the implementation of the salary rates determined by the Seventh Pay Commission for university-level teachers is a welcome step.

However, in the face of exponential growth in technology and falling ranking levels of Indian universities, we need to develop the teacher's thinking skill that is growing at a linear rate. Gone are the days of world renown attained by universities such as Nalanda and Takshila since we have departed from the transformational role of education and the teacher's role as 'enlightened masters'. In order to regulate the technology and boost the rankings, we need our teachers to do exponential thinking. They need the skill to transcend formal learning and teaching methods that simply serve the purpose of worldly existence; in fact, they are now readily available in cyber space.....

[www.thehindu.com/opinion/open-page/skilling-teachers-in-indian-universities/article19897434.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/opinion/open-page/skilling-teachers-in-indian-universities/article19897434.ece)

### Developing emotional intelligence in teachers a major challenge

Developing emotional intelligence for differentiating correct from incorrect, proper from improper, relevant and beneficial from irrelevant information and using it for education in these times of increasing use of information technology is one of the biggest challenges in the field of education. The Centre for Ethics and Values, Delhi University, director Tushar Kanti Mishra said this during a month-long induction training programme organised for the higher education faculty from various colleges at HNB Garhwal Central University. This induction training programme is being organised under the Government of India's Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission for Teachers and Teaching by the Faculty Development Centre of the university.

Mishra stressed that the flood of information through excessive use of information technology has severely affected the capacity for thinking, comprehending and differentiating in the teachers and students. The teachers and students are getting stuck in the trap of better marks and grades. As a result, the education system is preparing students for employment but it is not developing them into citizens who are sensitive, with high human values, cultural values and leadership qualities. Increasing materialistic expectations and decreasing sense to differentiate has led to emergence of disappointment, frustration, depression and indulgence in anti-social activities as a major problem, he said.

Addressing the gathering, the Faculty Development Centre director professor Indu Pandey Khanduri reiterated that developing emotional intelligence along with intelligence among the teachers is a major challenge for meeting the basic aims of education and developing quality human resource.

[www.dailypioneer.com/2018/state-editions/developing-emotional-intelligence-in-teachers-a-major-challenge.html](http://www.dailypioneer.com/2018/state-editions/developing-emotional-intelligence-in-teachers-a-major-challenge.html)

### Happiness @Teaching: Role Of Ethics

**H**appiness, they say is infectious. Last weekend, students and staff at Delhi University's Ramanujan College exhibited large doses of happiness as they debated the topic: 'Happiness@ Teaching: Role Of Ethics'. That teachers must be focused on their subjects is obvious, but it is when they are also focused on the art and craft of teaching — with ethical commitment to their role and responsibility — that they become real teachers. The two-day workshop by the college's School of Happiness, with the Teaching Learning Centre, was held "to promote long-term happiness and well-being of both teachers and the taught," said principal SP Aggarwal.

The gathering was impressive — and learned. Five VCs graced the occasion, besides spiritual leaders, motivational coaches and ever-curious students — and over the two days they interacted, gave the audience much to think about. Social scientist, psychologist and Fulbright Fellow Girishwar Misra, now vice chancellor of Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya in Wardha, Maharashtra, lamented that current learning systems ignored the needs of body, mind and soul. "Our natural tendency now leans towards hedonism, pleasure seeking, whereas the need of the hour is to develop viveka, for only then can we discriminate between right and wrong." He quoted a Stanford University study that pointed out that it is only by flooding the mind with positive emotions that the mind works best.

Annpurna Nautiyal, VC at HNB Garhwal University, quoted The Book Of Joy penned by the Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu with Douglas Abrams. Happiness, she said was a result of external factors at the workplace, material possessions and relationships, whereas true joy came from compassion, practising selfless love and helping others. "A good teacher manifests such qualities in abundance, she pointed out. "Teaching mechanically and without emotions is what makes our education system burdensome and devoid of joy and happiness," she said.

But it was left to Ramanujan College's principal SP Aggarwal to outline tips for promoting work-life balance for both teachers and students. If we set our minds, there is no reason why we can't learn happiness, he explained. 'Happiness' is now a course at Harvard, Yale and Coursera. Ramanujan College offers a three-month certificate course on 'Science of Happiness and its Implementations' that offers students practical tips for nurturing their own happiness. He gave the audience tips that he called 'happiness pointers': Adjust your attitude, learn something new, interact with emotional intelligence, focus on what you have, express gratitude and give back. Finally, don't forget to spend time in exercising and in a hobby.

Director of Tibet House, Ven Geshe Dorji Damdul gave the role of a teacher a spiritual twist. Like the guru, a teacher's role is to establish a connection of love with students with lively teachings. "Let the teacher transform his students, never humiliate them and make them receptive to what he wants to teach," he said. "The source of happiness is within and is a balance of what's inside and outside, so never blame external factors for your unhappiness. They are never in your hands," he said. Ramanujan's Centre for Ethics and Values director, TK Mishra, an associate professor in the college, urged teachers to "turn towards good thoughts, good people and good deeds to help them be reflective and to be aware of their strengths, emotions, ethicality and teaching style, for teaching is not just a job — it is a science, an art that requires emotional labour and ethical practice." He cited his own experience with his daily practice of yoga and meditation: "Willpower, the force which helps us continue with difficult tasks, is actually rooted in good, positive thoughts."

[www.speakingtree.in/article/happiness-teaching-role-of-ethics](http://www.speakingtree.in/article/happiness-teaching-role-of-ethics)

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## The joys of doing things religiously

**B**eing religious, besides meaning 'having to do with religion', can also mean 'acting as if something is a religion'. If as teacher I have never missed a class of my students for quite some time, then I am religious about it. So too whether it is working-out at a gym, teaching or studying.

To understand how we embrace the joys of doing things religiously, we require rigorous self-reflection. It demands that we summon our own wisdom and get aligned to the soul so that we can make well-intentioned and conscientious decisions. Not doing things religiously not only diminishes the individual's ability to be happy but also the capacity for creativity, care and compassion. By doing things religiously we get aligned to the soul and experience grace. Also we are assured of feelings of plenteousness, glory and joy.

In the absence of teaching religiously, for example, teachers are not only deprived of real joy but also are unable to unravel the mysterious connection between parenting norms, modern-day education systems, the influence of social media and the onslaught of a consumerist culture that eventually leaves the individual student confused, stranded and isolated. Devoid of joy, teachers lose the intent and wherewithal to place the individual student at the centre-stage of educational practice. They can talk about fostering empathy, ethicality, pro-social behaviour and environmental responsibility, but the corporate nature of modern culture forces them to maintain status quo and only truly concentrate on upward social mobility as the goal of education.

Being religious about timeliness means being punctual and to believe that efficiency can be improved only by realising the importance of doing things on time. Showing up on time indicates the teacher's respect for time and care for students and vice versa. Timeliness is also about making right decisions at the right time and place.

Intuition is a powerful tool that not only provides innate sense of morality and empathy but also acts like a guiding light. If religion is a culture of faith developed by intuitiveness, being religious about doing something refers to creating a culture of trust and devotion by bringing intuition in the process of doing. Being intuitive goes far beyond religious faith. It is based upon a culture of eternal, secular and universal acceptance. If religious people strive to discover some truths, people who do things religiously live the same truth.

If the teacher is not enhancing students' abilities to live a good life, be peaceful and become a happy member of the community; neither education nor the teacher is fulfilling duties meaningfully. What makes a mother, for example, happy is the fact that her struggles and sacrifices are not meaningless.

Whether in public, professional or private life, everyone wants to prove effective. To be effective one needs to do things religiously. When a job is done effectively, there is alignment between thought and action.

For want of religiosity, students feel boxed in, having to accept a lot of things that they wouldn't have, otherwise. Desirous of seeking joy, teachers need to take care of students like saplings in a storm. A teacher's duty is not to contaminate their naturalness, but to act religiously as their torch bearer focussing on timeliness, intuitiveness, meaningfulness and effectiveness.

<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/toi-edit-page/the-joys-of-doing-things-religiously/>



# THE SPEAKING TREE

## Classroom Ethics

**C**an teaching ethics and values in classrooms help tackle problems like corruption and religious conflict? S P AGGARWAL, principal, professors TK MISHRA and VIBHASH KUMAR of Ramanujan College, talk about disseminating ethics in classrooms, in a discussion moderated by SONAL SRIVASTAVA

Is it possible to teach ethics in a classroom setting?

SPA: Initially, we had several problems regarding students, faculty and management of this institution. We had to do something in order to harmonise these groups. Since we were an evening college, students were not so serious about studies. Some were even a little destructive; they use to break furniture and bathroom fittings! In 2009, we came to believe that we should have a centre for ethics that can guide students on different issues related to ethics. We trained students in batches of 10 on ethics and values. We also educated teachers and nonteaching staff on ethics and values. We invited people from different organisations such as Brahma Kumaris to talk to students. The outcome of all this was the growing good relationship between students, teachers and management. Incidentally, the breaking of furniture has gone down substantially.

Does religion have a role in teaching ethics to students?

SPA: We involve each and every religion; only teachings are taken into account. We try to communicate with students that more than practising ritualistic religion, having the right value system is more important.

TKM: We deal with youngsters from two dimensions: one is the existential dimension and the other is the emotional dimension. The first is economic and the second is noneconomic. Technology is growing at an exponential rate and the way we think is growing at a linear rate. Then how can one think at an exponential rate in order to control technology and not become a slave of it? On the other hand, we find that students are surrounded by falsehood and a defeatist mindset. They need to unearth spiritual power from within.

Anyone can access knowledge; however, if you want to make a difference, it has to come from within. Our purpose is to make students concentrate inward. Unless you overcome problems that you are facing, you cannot move ahead and develop self-respect and self-esteem.

Would separating religion and spirituality help avoid conflict?

SPA: Our main object is that students should benefit from talks on spirituality and religion. Values of love and compassion are extremely important. Ego and anger arise due to lack of self-respect, and lack of depth in thinking.

TKM: Many institutions today are not clear about what kind of ethics and values are to be shared with youngsters. For instance, what is the difference between 'Lord' and 'God'? We call avatars as Lord Krishna, Lord Rama; these are incarnations of God. But God is Creator of the entire universe; He is an infinite force. Even Christ was not God; he was the son of God. Spirituality can be taught in classrooms, but has nothing to do with religion. VK: Ethics are certain principles that we follow universally, irrespective of religion. For instance, what happens when a student from a weak economic background, participates in extracurricular activities, but does not finish his assignments and cheats in the exams? The dilemma that a teacher faces is: should he give marks or should he fail the student? Should the grading system be standardised or should it be relative? Would punishment take students on a path of virtue? Could punishment reinforce learning? There needs to be a code of ethics for teachers as well. What should be the code of behaviour for a teacher when he enters the classroom? Values should be followed by teachers first. A teacher should be disciplined and ethical in his conduct.

Can universal ethics be classified and defined?

TKM: Our everyday dealings should depict transparency, honesty, integrity and spirituality. Ethics are voluntarily acceptable laws that are eternal and universal. Ethics in New York City is similar to ethics in a small village in India.

Morality can be subjective, but ethics is universal. Before teaching students, teachers have to be absolutely clear about ethics, morality and values. Preachers are often successful in indoctrinating something undesirable in students. For example, the terrorist outfit, IS, has been doing so. If preachers give wrong advice to students, teachers can overturn that by motivating them in a constructive way. Millennials are amenable, but before approaching them, you have to be clear yourself. If you have understood something correctly, then you will be able to answer their queries. But if you have a poor grasp of the concept, then, they can figure out that you don't know. Students are a good source of knowledge; sometimes, it's difficult for teachers to draw them out.

VK: If the teacher has not prepared well for the class, the students can tell. The teacher needs to be knowledgeable, prompt and ready for the class and his work is to make each and every student comfortable in his class.

Is there a connection between ethics and belief?

TKM: A religious person can be unethical and a nonbeliever can be ethical. Doing things the right way is a habit. Ethics has a relationship with your conscience; conscience is the guide. You can attain any designation including that of the prime minister, but to become a complete human being, you have to have ethics.

VK: Ethics is based on certain premises and arguments. Premises are relative to situations; hence the concept of the 'everyday ethicist'. An ethicist decides something on the basis of whether it feels right or not. Ethics is not pure science. There is no single answer to a question; it can be answered by people in many ways. Whether something is right or wrong has to be investigated. We deliberate on different facts and discuss in a group, according to the prevalent trends in society. Our consciousness is our guide. We say a person is at a lower level of consciousness when he feels anger, ego or pride. If you extend your horizon of thinking, you will move out of hatred and anger.

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