

# Rethinking our approach to

# SCHOOL ACADEMICS

## Dr Shivananda talks about effective teaching and learning strategies

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In February 2024, the British Council organised the “Schools Now!” conference in Cape Town, South Africa. As the sole educator from Bangladesh to present a paper at the conference, Dr Shivananda CS, principal of DPS STS school, presented his paper titled “Demystifying Teacher Effectiveness”.

Campus sat down with Dr Shivananda to learn more about the paper and his expert insight on recent educational trends.

“The country has ambitious plans for the education sector,” said Dr Shivananda. “The Education Ministry has made many reforms and is bringing in a modular-based education system where children learn credit-based skills and refining assessment by moving away from traditional rote learning to a skill-based and capability-based education system. I am specifically happy about the module on physical and mental health, which is most important.”

“This is good to know because modern society and work culture demand people with communication, critical thinking, adaptability, and creative skills,” he added.

Dr Shivananda said that he is happy with the education ministry for reforming assessment methods to continuous evaluation. However, he also pointed out that if teachers are not properly trained, these reforms will not be effective.

“Similar efforts were made in 2009 in India,” he said. “The government wanted to bring in a continuous and comprehensive evaluation. But they had to roll it back after eight years because teachers were not fully ready and fully trained.”

“In the last four years, my team and I developed rubrics to assess whether or not learning is happening in a class,” Dr Shivananda continued. “My research analyses the use of such rubrics to assess the effectiveness of teachers and also finds out the effect of training such teachers.”

Dr Shivananda wants to recognise the merits of children as the younger generation is more open-minded and open to learning, and the education policies should help them



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develop this trait.

“The best way to prepare them is to allow them to be quick learners, quick adaptors, and open to change with various case studies, various modes of learning and also allow change to take over,” Dr Shivananda said. “Many parents say that schools should not focus on co-curricular activities, they should focus more on academics. This is where they miss the point that if your child is not a good communicator and critical thinker, he or she may not survive. So, the government, parents, and schools should be open-minded and allow change.”

“I’m happy that most young people are open to change

and understand the importance of communication,” he added. “However, they should also be away from influences which do not determine their true nature, and which focus on short-term results. I see that they are easily influenced to make decisions and though they assume that they are free from all such influences and completely independent, they are not.”

In his concluding remarks, Dr Shivananda said, “I would ask you to be proud of yourself and be you. Don’t be influenced by others. You should be your own, and think and act as per your personal preferences, not by that of others.”



## 3 things all teachers should know

### ENCOURAGE STUDYING AS A HABIT

If a student spends at least 15-20 minutes going over what they have learned for the day, that brief time can make an enormous difference down the road in terms of retaining what is taught inside classrooms. Not only that, when exam seasons arrive, students are prepared to sit down and study for longer stretches because they already have an idea of what they are studying.

### USE ACTIVE LEARNING PROCESSES TO TEACH

Learning is a process that can benefit greatly from different inputs. If a student is reading something out loud, highlighting the important bits, and especially writing them down, they will fare much better than the student who is simply reading out the notes. Using more sensory inputs for learning increases retention.

### HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE

Students need to know that they can come to their teacher for help if they are having a hard time with their subject matter, which requires a certain amount of friendliness from the teacher’s side.