

The Fun Learning Times

FUN LEARNERS' SCHOOL LLP

Nurturing Lifelong Learning

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Your Child as an Independent Learner

In the previous issue, three of the qualities of an independent learner: Inquiring Mind, Joy of Learning and Note-taking are discussed. This issue continues with the other two qualities that an independent learner possesses.

1. Self assessment

"Why are you so careless?"

If you are like most parents, this is the most common feedback you give your child when you go through the exam papers with them. You will be lamenting how many marks your child has lost from his carelessness.

How can you help your child to be more careful in his work? Nagging at him after the exams is of not much use, as you probably have discovered. It is more important to understand why they do not check their work, and to help them cultivate the habit of self-checking.

Why don't they check? Very likely, they don't know how to, and don't see how checking can make any difference. One child, in responding to his parent's comment that he did not check his work in the exams, said that he had already done his best and no further checking will help.

We should get the child to do self-checking before he hands up his work. I often get my students' full cooperation in doing this with composition writing by, first, telling them I only want to mark the best work they are capable of, and second, by giving them a checklist on what they are supposed to check for. Students are motivated to improve in their compositions if they know how to do it. It is also a more pleas-

ant and rewarding task than doing the dreaded corrections on their compositions.

We are often too quick to point out the child's mistake before giving him the chance to reflect and find out for himself. Good teachers will frequently get the child to analyse his wrong answers and indicate why he lost the mark, whether it is through carelessness, lack of understanding or poor time management. Being the one to discover his own mistakes, the child will be more conscious of his mistakes and will take greater care to avoid making the same careless mistakes the next time round.

What parents and teachers can do:

1. Guide your child on how to self-assess his daily work before he hands up for marking. Highlight to him the specific areas they need to look out for, eg use of units in Mathematics, checking the use of past tense in writing etc. At the start, the parent or teacher will need to be close by to coach the child before this habit becomes second nature to him.
2. When going through your child's exam papers, don't be too quick to comment on how he could have done better. Give him time to look through the paper and reflect on where and how he lost his marks.

2. Goal-setting

Having a vision or goals is one of the qualities of geniuses. Thomas Edison had the vision of lighting the world at night. With this vision, he was able to overcome thousands of failure before he invented the light bulb. Tony Buzan had the goal of teaching people *how* to learn, and it was this goal that led him to write over 100 books about the brain and learning in the

Primary & Secondary Classes

- ★ English
- ★ Chinese
- ★ Mathematics
- ★ Sciences

Who are our students?

PSLE Top 280, 276, 264

Pri 4, 5 & 6 GEP

(Top in class)

Sec 3 & 4 IP

From ACSP, RGPS, NYG, MGS, SJI, etc



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Cont'd — Your Child as an Independent Learner

last 30 years.

What parents and teachers can do:

1. Long-term goals

Discuss with your child his ambition and guide him on how to achieve his goals. Explain to him how education opens up opportunities. For example, if your child wants to be a performing artiste and do not think a degree is important, give the example of how Stephanie Sun, a graduate, has used her brains and singing talents to gain the fame she has today. If your child only likes English and doesn't think Science is important, share with him how Isaac Asimov, a professor, is a popular author of Science fiction books.

2. Short term goals

To achieve the long term goals, it is important to set small specific, measurable and achievable goals. Encourage your child to write down their targetted marks for each term and for PSLE/ O Levels. Get them to compare the actual marks with the targetted marks and work towards their targets. As each achieved target is met, the child's self-esteem and motivation are increased. "When your child develops a powerful goal that matters to him/ her, you may be amazed at the determination and tenacity that is unleashed."²

Our Teaching Philosophy

We strongly believe every student's potential can be maximised. At Fun Learners' School, our primary mission is to provide each



& every student the patience & attention they deserve. With holistic teaching methods & active spontaneity, we strive to breathe life into the textbooks by drawing relevance to the world we live in, thereby seeding & inspiring the love of learning in every young mind.

Conclusion

An independent learner possesses an inquiring mind to find out more, often driven by his love of learning. He possesses superior note-taking skills and is able to self-assess to produce work of high quality. All these are achieved when a child has goals to guide him to achieve his targets. An independent learner will also be a lifelong learner, bringing these traits with them well into adulthood.

All the suggested methods work best if parents and teachers "walk the talk". As parents and teachers, we must be the models for the child, showing the child how we are ourselves, independent learners.

By Mrs Tan Chew Ling

References

1. Buzan, Tony and Keene, Raymond. *Buzan's Book of Genius and How to Unleash your Own*", Britain: Random House, 1994
2. Sundardas D.A., *Awakening the Genius in Your Child*, Singapore: Raffles Editions