

CHANGING TIMES - CHANGING TEACHERS

*EDUCATION IS THE STRONGEST LEVER FOR CHANGE IN POST-PANDEMIC INDIA
LAUNCHING NEEV'S TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTE FOR 21ST CENTURY LEARNING.*

Why?

Learners today face great unknowns. More than 60% will face careers that don't exist, 80% of today's jobs will not exist, and COVID creates unmodellable gaps. Young learners need the capacity to get back and learn new things, relearn and apply, and come back again - Lifelong learning. Self-led, self-paced, intrinsically motivated and collaborative learning must replace the one-size-fits-all model and India needs teachers capable of this goal.

Our school system, not just in India, is a child of the industrial revolution, with all children doing the same thing at the same time and coming out with similar knowledge and thinking at the end. The world has changed and with it our learners and their motivation. And if lifelong learning is a skill, the needed habit is reading; reading that is multimodal, multi-lingual, multimedia and multidisciplinary. As our biggest manifestation of this hypothesis, check out Neev Litfest.

Empowering teachers for the new world of learning needs an understanding of the changing world, changing learners and in that context a changing India, and changing educational practices needed for learners to meet the great unknown.

A) Changing World of education:

The very basis of what knowledge is and how we absorb it is changing.

These changes are coming out of 3 forces:

- Brain research
- Digital revolution
- Globalisation

How the brain's structure and function dictates behaviour is beginning to become clear, creating a better understanding of desired interventions. A growing body of research shows that different learning styles come from brains that are wired differently, but also how effective teaching can rewire the fantastic, elastic brain, with its unlimited pathways that can be fired up and extended. Early research indicates growth of new nerve cells is possible beyond the first 8 years of life replacing past beliefs; new neuron generation intriguingly combines triggers of experiential learning and physical activity.

The digital revolution impacts how people access data, think and learn, what information they access, and what they learn. Information goes around the world in seconds. Newspapers are becoming irrelevant; textbooks are quickly outdated. In a world where Google knows everything content matters less than knowing how to use knowledge and how to make connections. This requires skills and the capacity to construct new learning, together with people, who could be in different locations.

Globalisation creates the need to balance local issues with global ones. The sustainability of the planet with a huge population, needs and understanding of interconnected global issues like global warming, poverty, environmental crises, terrorism, endemic / epidemic /pandemic infectious diseases, etc. that need people to share the planet, share humanity and share a rule book - we are connected by geopolitics, germs and globalisation. Meeting these issues needs strong roots and an understanding of identity and diversity, to impact voice and choice, so that learners are a part of the world, more than just a cog in the wheel, bringing unique values and thought process, to contribute uniquely. The world of knowledge is changing and old tools cannot meet the new challenges that matter most for the universe to survive, challenges that are interconnected and can only be solved by working together.

Education needs to be reimagined.

B) Changing Learners:

Children today are more capable, more powerful because of the world they can access. Kids can teach themselves pretty much anything today. And some do, though not all. In a world of digital distractions many are easily bored and disengage. Many kids have greater curiosity, but reducing grit, and need intrinsic motivation and a desire to learn.

Kids want to be respected to respect adults who care. They often understand much more than a didactic classroom can offer. The school system and outdated assessments of misunderstood skills and capability disillusion kids. Kids can access facts easily, but are looking for adults that care and inspire, that give authentic feedback at the right time, and recognise and build needed skills, they seek experiences that challenge them, make them collaborate, for social learning is true motivation. They seek deep engagement. They need to discover for themselves who they are, and use this self awareness or mirror to imagine their future, to make unique choices for this future.

The job of teachers is changing to being facilitators, to provoking learning, creating tasks that push the boundary, and then recognise skill gaps, and know that skills are the connective tissue for everything.

C) Changing India:

The beauty and uniqueness of our history, culture, global contribution and economic opportunity are the potential of India. Historian Ram Guha said, "At independence, we created the most powerful democracy, on the infertile soil of the world's most hierarchical society". Our country made a tryst with destiny, which failed. Many governments after that have failed us. But we live in interesting times. The reason India and Pakistan born on the same night have very different destinies is, 3 million people win an election somewhere in every round. India is a powerful democracy with a rising demographic dividend, and only one way to go. The potential of India is huge. Brexit, Trump and the new fascism, in the face of declining growth are moving the opportunities away from the advanced countries - US, UK - India crossed UK's GDP in 2019, to become the 5th largest economy with global heft and a place at the negotiating table. But India has a long way to grow the GDP per capita where it ranks 148th, or in the 25th percentile. COVID has demonstrated that the short term solution where a rising middle class could buy its way to the front of the line, is not a lasting solution. The migrant crisis, the lack of health care infrastructure and scarce resources, the absence of structured solutions for learning continuity and one-size-fits-all simplistic solutions at the lowest common denominator, in a crisis affect everyone, though not everyone's loss is equal. Indian companies lead in many segments globally, but many Indians will not ride in the car that they clean, can't tread the newspapers they deliver, or send their children to schools that they build.

The challenges are in India, but so are the opportunities. Creating a country that's not just democratic but where everyone really has independence needs changing India, changing the image of India in the world, and changing the contribution that Indians make globally. This is only possible through education.

D) Changing Education needs:

Education has 3 core purposes - connecting with the self, connecting with the world around, and building knowledge. This is not new in the world - Piaget, Maria Montessori, Aristotle, or in India - Tagore, Gandhi, Vivekananda, Krishnamurthy - all spoke of the same values in education a while ago. We stand in the long shadows cast by these scholars and pedagogists and still we as a society have failed to deliver this education.

Many current academicians, scholars and pedagogists, including Tony Wagner, Guy Claxton, Yuval Noah Harari, and many others, have spoken of the transitions needed in education:

From Consumption to creating more
From being risk averse to becoming risk-taking
From being specialists to being transdisciplinary
From extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation
From celebrating individual achievement to valuing teamwork

And many frameworks exist to think of the skills learners need - the 4C framework, etc. The changes that are needed in education to meet all this include:

Education must move beyond either/or

Schools are often forced to make false choices; either academics or creativity, Either science or humanities, Either thinking or discipline. This binary thinking of either/or is not a choice that parents and students want to, need to, or should have to make. Good education is beyond either/or - it is both /and; Both Scores and Thinking, Both Math and arts, Both Discipline and Freedom, Both global outlook and identity, both service and excellence. Leading Universities and Organizations value students who think at the intersection of humanities and science, discipline and creativity; learners who are interdisciplinary, and know how to connect bodies of knowledge and facts to solve problems creatively.

Education must be holistic and relevant

A 21st century education must have balanced choices, understanding the world around beyond textbooks - learning from the world, about the world and through the world. It must recognise different learning styles and many kinds of smart. This needs bringing the world into the classroom and many different learning opportunities, defining literacy to not just mean reading & writing, but also physical literacy, artistic literacy, mathematical literacy, digital literacy, scientific literacy, historical literacy, etc. and according to all forms equal importance, creating concurrency of learning across these areas.

Education must nurture decision-making and fairplay:

Education's purpose should be learning for living not just learning for earning. Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED), through sensitivity to one's own and others' needs, encouraging choices & understanding trade-offs; difficult to create quickly can only be a taught process over a long period - 15 formative years! Environments that encourage fairness grow children with a strong emotional core, appreciating rights and getting the most out of them. Making choices on the academic front - setting the pace for their own learning and choosing to learn in specific ways, instills accountability. Making choices and living with the outcome regularly, leads to stronger decision-making capabilities and responsibility in the long run.

Education must integrate known best practise programmes/ teaching strategies:

Progressive global research in all areas of learning has resulted in many high qualities, enriching, exciting and challenging teaching programmes in numeracy, literacy, sciences and other fields. Assessments for, of and as learning need thoughtful integration and much work on this has been done globally to ensure objective qualitative and quantitative monitoring and reporting. The use of technology for teaching and for learning exists around the world, with available guidance on the right way and place for integration. There is also the right use of time and space to optimise learning through learning cycles, learning environment planning, flexible timetabling for self directed learning and so much else. Using existing knowledge coupled with teacher training substantially raises learning standards (taking curriculum quality, planning and tools off the table) while simplifying the teaching/learning process. Fixing the what of the programme leaves teachers free to think and focus on the how - how every child can best achieve the impact of desired learning.

Education must meet the guidance of NEP2020

The growing demand for schools over the last few decades has made Indian education system mechanical; all we talk about is the IIT's, and the coaching culture that encourages. This culture pervades all school years and tutoring is an accepted routine in school life. COVID has only exacerbated this corruption as evident in the growth of online tutoring companies. Schools are not ed-tech, and ed-tech is not school. The low level equilibrium of our education system that makes room for all this has to change, with schools questioning their purpose.

The new National Education Policy (NEP2020) recognizes the importance of learning that is developmentally appropriate, skills focused, and multidisciplinary. It recognizes the need for foundational literacy and numeracy, along with exploration and relationships in the first 6 years of formal education. From Grade 3 and beyond, the policy provides guidance that is logical, implementable, research based and age appropriate. The skill building and multidisciplinary approach for the upper primary grades and middle school, lays the path, for a high school programme based on vast subject choices. The emphasis is on 21st century skills like critical thinking, inquiry, analysis, collaboration, communication, problem solving but it also removes walls between arts and sciences, integrating scientific and mathematical thinking with humanities, to create education that is multidisciplinary, working towards 'how to think' instead of 'what to think', building what our PM in his address called 'bacchon ki Neev' (the foundation for children). In conception NEP is a fantastic step forward, especially the focus on EY and primary education. What children lose there they never catch up on. But the vast resources it needs for implementation, and the time the teacher training change will take to make an impact is a challenge we all need to work together to meet.

E) Reinventing teaching for Post COVID 21st century education:

What does teaching have to do to nurture thinking? What does it need to do to develop values? And what kind of work do children need to be doing? How to provoke learning rather than deliver content, create inquiry, and room for reflection? How to create an environment for children to bring forth and develop their values, recognise and respect identity and diversity? How to bring the world into the classroom? How to grow self-directed learners with life-long learning skills? The complexity to meet this changing world and changing India needs to go into planning of lessons so that the teaching is clean and simple. The teachers need to move from delivering content to being planners, assessors, thought provokers, observers and questioners of learning.

Teacher training in India is either fragmented, with low set up standards for short duration or outdated and with inadequate content & practices for longer duration. Both kinds of courses are needed, but today both produce teaching candidates with little technical understanding of teaching - work that begins once a new teacher hits the workplace, and through a high stress couple of years, often at the cost of the learners. There is a dearth of trainers that understand high quality teaching practice and have the ability to effect a change in trainee teachers. There are low entry and exit standards, besides low pay scales, making teaching a residual and secondary career at large. There is an ambient effect of this on people choosing to enter teaching to build it as a respected professional career. The problems are compounded by an increasing demand for the thin talent pool within and outside education. The global market is now taking our best teachers away, pricing them out of the reach of all but a few elite schools. While all this applies to the teaching quality at large, its impact on the younger years is extreme.

We need a movement like 'Teach now', 'Teach-first' and 'Teach for America' that take high potential young teaching candidates, and nurture them into a teaching force for a changing India, and also attract mid-career professionals seeking to create impact through education into the space. Over time we need to build the image of teaching to the importance it deserves. We need teachers that read, that write well, who think deeply about their own profession and development, for you cannot see or grow in learners what you don't have.

What is our purpose?

- Create consensus around the criticality of the teaching profession through advocacy, support and visibility
- Personalise teacher learning, develop the identity and nurture dreams of teachers.
- Offer courses based on the needs of today's learners and teachers
- Bring global best practices in early years, primary, middle and high school teaching to all teachers at an affordable price
- Create credit based, certified programmes from recognised Indian and Global universities, with multiple on and off ramps
- Network globally with inspiring trainers and teachers
- Recognise teaching excellence
- Create a lighthouse of excellence in education in a changing India

We believe great teachers make great schools and our Training Institute is venturing into empowering great teachers.

What?

Teacher training in India needs an uplift to fulfill the very sizable requirement for quality teachers. Neev will offer Early years, Primary and Secondary years educators the opportunity to empower themselves and dive deep into effective teaching and learning practices that will give them the confidence and capacity to step into any classroom. Opening up new avenues and opportunities for educators to extend their understanding, build on teaching practices and prepare for a future classroom is our endeavor and passion now and in the future.

Neev's teacher training institute intends to meet the need of teachers across socio-economic strata - from elite urban schools who can afford choices to government schools and rural learning centers where teacher training suffers from poverty of access and motivation. We plan to launch programmes in a phased way, starting with short-burst, skills focused courses and lecture series to more intense longer duration courses.

Reimagining excellence in a changing India starts with education reform. Education is an endeavor of profound optimism because it believes that the world and people can change. Educators need ability beyond content knowledge - understanding how children learn, planning for impactful teaching, assessing for continuous growth, building self-esteem and relationships, and using technology as a lever. We aspire to nurture the capability of educators through multiple training models through long degrees, short burst training modules, and inspiring lectures.

Who?

Co-founders

Kavita Gupta Sabharwal

Founder & Managing Trustee, Neev Schools



Kavita's professional experience till 2002 was largely in corporate strategy and finance functions she headed for one of India's largest publicly listed firms, Lupin Pharmaceuticals. She switched to education after frustrations with pre-school education for her own children - starting Neev in 2005 with a vision to avoid the extremes (overly academic/overly unstructured) and strike the right balance for overall early childhood development. This vision then moved to starting a grade school which works with the programmes of the international Baccalaureate. Besides the teacher training institute, Kavita also aims to start a community school for under-privileged children bringing Neev's education to impact children across socio-economic strata.

With a Master's Degree in Biotechnology from Mumbai University, she completed part of the MBA programme at Harvard Business School before returning to restructure the family business.

An avid reader, who believes in the power of books to change lives, Kavita is also cofounder of the Neev Literature Festival that aims to grow and recognise the impact of children's literature in India, through multiple initiatives, including the Neev Book Award.

Priti Anand

Director, Neev Early Years



Priti comes from a family where many have been in the field of education. She started her career as a teacher when she was 20 years old after completing her BEd from Delhi University's Lady Irwin College. After 5 years of teaching she travelled and lived abroad in Ireland and US for a few years, finally settling in Bangalore in 2001.

She has been with Neev since Neev started in 2005 and is committed to the mission and vision of Neev and works towards putting Neev on the global map for bringing the best global practices in Early years keeping it contextual to our country.

Kavita and Priti will continue to build the vision of Neev in their existing leadership roles, while providing the vision for the teacher training institute, which will have its own full time leadership team.

Teacher Training Institute Leadership team:

The first step for the success of the institute is building a strong team that leads the change. The team will consist of educators par excellence with a desire to make an impact in the changing world of education, exhibiting leadership capabilities. This core team will initially constitute of 4 people to start up:

Director - NTTI

- To define the strategic purpose of the Training Institute, plan and execute through a capable, committed, high-integrity team and a growing network of trainers across the country and world.
- An able administrator with a desire to lead a high performing team.
- A Teacher Mentor who understands different teaching strategies and learning styles.

Professional Training Lead-Early Years/Primary Education

- To guide trainers and teachers on implementing their learning of pedagogy and knowledge in the classroom, executing courses themselves and through others. An individual, who understands, assimilates, translates and creates the modules for knowledge; teaching and learning strategies.
- Must be active teachers or trainers currently demonstrating deep and progressive teaching practice in the Early Years and Primary Years age group, with a hands-on approach.
- An individual, who understands, assimilates, translates and creates the modules for knowledge; teaching and learning strategies for the Early and Primary classroom practices.

Professional Training Lead-Middle and Senior School: STEM & Humanities ([2 Positions Open](#))

- To guide trainers and teachers on implementing their learning of pedagogy and knowledge in the classroom, executing courses themselves and through others. An individual, who understands, assimilates, translates and creates the modules for knowledge in their areas of expertise; teaching and learning strategies.
- Must be active teachers or trainers currently demonstrating deep and progressive teaching practise in the Middle and High school age group, with a hands-on approach.
- An individual, who understands, assimilates translates and creates the modules for knowledge; teaching and learning strategies for the middle and high school classroom practices.

The above candidates must have a Masters Degree or Doctorate in Education or Education leadership from a leading Overseas or Indian university, with global exposure and at least 10-15 years of practice as an Educator, Mentor, and Trainer.

Where?

We aim to grow the Neev Teacher Training Institute at our 15 acre city center campus, in Yemalur. The campus houses Neev's IB school, Neev Litfest, world-class sports facilities, and teaching clusters for music, art and theater. Centrally located, close to the suburbs of Indiranagar and Koramangala, the campus is a verdant, flowing and inspiring learning space, the perfect environment for a teacher training institute. We aim to bring the training institute into the life of our school and teachers, and also to the Bangalore educator community - bringing workshops and lectures alive, giving teachers an opportunity to meet great trainers and likewise trainers to meet the new and inspiring Indian teacher. Neev aims for its campus to be at the crossroads of diverse discussions from History, Politics, Medicine, Sports, industry, Arts, etc. Our aim is to inspire a world of learners and teachers, and make Neev a melting pot of ideas that reimagine excellence in education for a changing India. The core of the teacher training institute will be a library for educators, just like the ones we curate for children today.

Why Neev?

“Neev started as a dream 15 years ago, when all the preschools and schools in India that I looked at for my own children treated creative education as an alternative – We aimed to create an environment that went beyond either/or – to both/and - both creativity and rigour, both academics and arts, both learning and fun. That was Neev Indira Nagar, with 15 teachers, 50 kids. Today the Neev team has more than 200 teachers, and around 1200 kids. We aim to remain a small school, because we want to be impactful in the life of each individual learner, and because our influence will exist through being a lighthouse of excellence in education for a changing India. Our impact beyond the Neev community is through our litfest, our teacher training institute and our community school.”

Kavita Gupta Sabharwal
Founder & Managing Trustee, Neev Trust

Neev Reimagines excellence in education in a changing India, around the mission of 'building knowledge, self-awareness and relationships with people and the environment to seek happy, healthy and impactful lives'. Neev's strengths lie in its vision, and its 15 years experience, building 5 preschools and one Academy campus in Bangalore, and employ over 200 teaching professionals in a continuously growing team meeting the developmental needs of nearly 1200 children. It is recognized for its excellence in the geographies in which it exists. This excellence is built on small learning environments focused on learning and development that is differentiated, relevant and integrated - surrounded by constant reviews. Neev does not franchise, and believes in continuous organic growth - as the only way to scale quality and a necessity to grow its professionals.

Neev is a culture, ecosystem, and community of learning and growth for children and adults. 21st century learners need skills of collaboration, creativity, critical thinking and communication, but for these to be impactful they need to reflect on identity and community. Learners must succeed academically and grow as humans. Educators must move beyond either/or. Neev does this for a small community but large scale change inspires our Teacher training institute.

Sustaining quality at Neev is built around strengthening Knowledge management - moving practices from a tacit, to an embedded to a codified level. Regular in-service training combined with inputs on-the-job happens around identified pillars of excellence in teaching practice. The training is held up by structural solutions of people and documentation. This process is constantly reviewed. The journey is long and intense, and finding time is challenging. But where we stand in education today necessitates this hard process of knowledge management to bring the best to our children.

We believe that the building of schools is not about school buildings. We are the only city center IB school because we believe removing commutes is essential in Urban India. Our 15 acre campus has state of the art labs, sports fields, libraries, arts, classrooms with technology, and also warm independent student spaces, cafeteria, and inspiring greenery. Our governing board has great leaders that nurture good governance through regular reviews and systems. We select our teachers carefully, people who have mastery over their subjects, but also care about raising caring, disciplined, motivated learners. Our curriculum and systems of curriculum planning, assessments, and decisions informed by data help us to keep track of everything all the time. Finally, we choose to remain a small school, because every child is an individual - and we love to be part of each unique journey.

Choosing Neev, is about moving beyond either/or, choosing global learning with identity, choosing relationships and intrinsic motivation. Neev is a 21st century learning environment that brings the world into the decisions our students make, while nurturing values and passions, and raising caring individuals that seek great impact in their life.

Join us, because we believe that in high quality teaching and learning - anything worth doing is worth overdoing!