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Enhancing Student Learning through Teacher Effectiveness

- A WHITE PAPER

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Overview

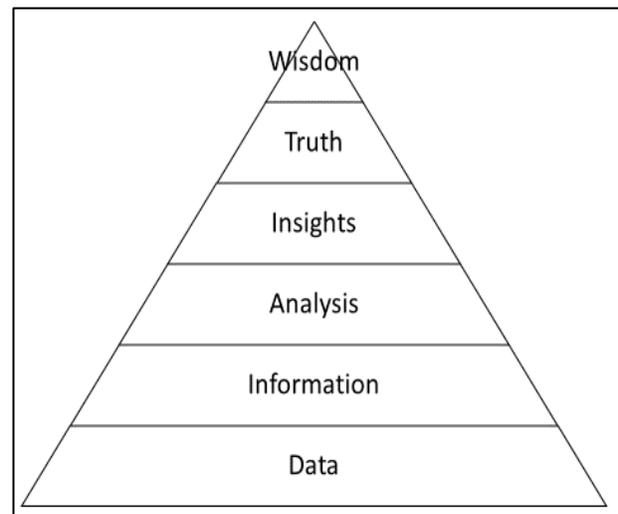
Perhaps one of the biggest influencers responsible for educating youth who in turn become the leaders of the next generation, are their teachers and early life influencers. A student will become significantly more interested in understanding and learning a particular subject if the teacher is really invested in teaching the subject matter. We all remember that one teacher in our lives who made us want to learn more, or said that they believed in us, or made us want to just show up in class.

The mode of teaching in India has always been a one-way information-loaded lecture method with little interaction amongst the teachers and students. The student 'learns' passively and has little or no choice in what is learnt. To top that, the tyranny of board exams and the pressure to complete syllabi leave no time to allow any reflection on learning and application.

There is a need to shift to a 'learner-based model' of education where the student is an active participant in the learning process. Students should be encouraged to critically analyse existing theories and concepts instead of learning them by rote. This will not only give clearer understanding of the material but will also prompt a deeper examination of the subject at hand. From this process sprout new ideas for research and further theoretical investigation.

Today, teaching is limited to the sharing of data and information, with a periodic check thrown in to assess the inculcation of that data to the student's memory. But the Pyramid of Learning appended alongside describes that true learning happens when the information gives way to analysis and individual evaluation, that gives way to insights and opinions, and further on to truth and wisdom. The teacher has a big role to play in students inculcating the learning right through till the top of this pyramid.

To create a generation of independent and informed decision-makers, the education system needs to inculcate self-confidence and critical thinking skills in students. The young generation must develop a passion for learning and the ability to learn well.



Teacher as subject matter expert. This competency measures a teacher's command over the subject she is teaching, knowledge and application of teaching strategies, use of different teaching methods focused on student learning, and thorough knowledge of assessment and evaluation procedures to enable fair evaluation of learning. It requires moving beyond the syllabus and providing students with the skills necessary for making it in the world outside of school – the world of work. It is heartening to find that more schools are adopting newer methods of teaching. More teachers are embracing the use of visual aids like PowerPoint and YouTube videos in their lessons. In addition, the use of computers and Information Technology is on the rise which is essential in today's day and age. The practice of using more modern techniques of teaching does not come naturally to teachers. For them to be open to this, let alone learn how to use them, requires an attitude change. Schools are investing in training programmes to train the teachers on the proper use of these methods. Some teachers, however, still have faith in and would prefer older ways of teaching. There is a need for a paradigm shift towards more modern techniques, though.

“Teaching Teachers to Teach” – Professional Career Development for Teachers

A 2015 UNESCO report titled *Teachers and Education Quality: Monitoring Global Needs* draws interesting conclusions.

- Social and political stability, combined with sufficient resources and a commitment to equity for all children, serve as the foundations to reach the ultimate goal of good learning outcomes.
- Countries improve their chances for success by attaining certain thresholds in educational coverage, quality and efficiency.
- Teachers, like other skilled workers, benefit from on-the-job training, commonly referred to as continuing professional development.
- New approaches are needed to resolve existing and imminent gaps in the quantity and quality of teachers. It is clear that qualifications alone do not make an effective teacher.

The professional development needs of teachers vary from person to person and from school to school. To focus on professional development of teachers just as we do for other professions, one needs a robust framework for teacher development.

Distinguished Educators Enhancement Practices (DEEP) Program

The Torchbearers Distinguished Educators Enhancement Practices (DEEP) Program has been developed to provide sustained teacher development through an ongoing series of interventions.

The approach to teacher development as embodied by the DEEP Program is

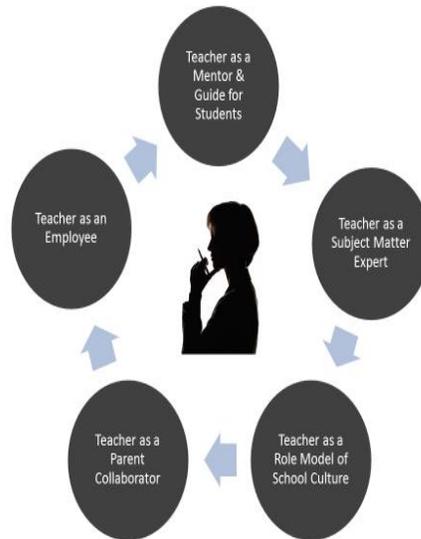
- ... Goal-oriented and relevance-oriented
- ... Practical and pertaining to current realities
- ... Built on elements of self-direction into learning experiences
- ... Allows participants to bring own life experiences and knowledge to the learning program

(based on the four principles of Adult Learning, Michael Knowles, 1980)

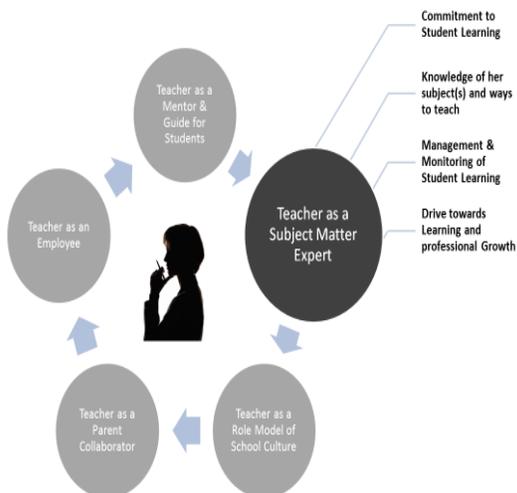
The methodology used to impart learning derives from Peter Senge's seminal work *The Fifth Discipline: Art and Practice of Learning Organizations*, where the programs are designed to inculcate personal awareness, mastery, developing a shared vision and learning in teams. This significant practice adopted largely in corporate organizations has been customized in the context of schools as organizations, coupled with research on the theories and practices of Adult and Lifelong Learning including the works of Michael Knowles and Peter Jarvis. The Torchbearers DEEP Program has been further customized to the context of Indian schools so as to be able to address the issues of teachers as lifelong learners in an Indian context.

The foundation of the DEEP Program is to create a sync with a national standard set of practices as envisioned through the National Curriculum Framework of Teacher Education (NCFTE) and build on it further to implement practical steps in line with each school's vision and ethos.

The DEEP Program focuses on five core competencies that define a proficient teacher. These competencies focus on the various aspects of a teacher's influence on a student's decision making processes and eventual performance.



Teacher as a Subject Matter Expert: Core Beliefs and Behavioural Indicators



Of the five competencies, Subject-Matter Expertise plays a significant role in student learning, since it encompasses the teacher's influence on the student through everyday interaction and learning. Teacher as a Subject Matter Expert is displayed through 4 core beliefs about a teacher's willingness and drive, viz the teacher's commitment to enabling student learning, the teacher's knowledge of her subject and ways and methods to teach it, managing and monitoring of student progress, and the teacher's innate drive for learning and professional growth.

The DEEP Model encompasses 12 behavioural indicators that relate to measuring skills, abilities and commitments required for accomplished teaching.

Core Belief 1. Teachers are committed to enabling student learning.

- 1.1 **Basic understanding of students.** The teacher recognizes individual differences and knows the backgrounds, abilities and interests of her students, and uses this information to differentiate her approach to instruction.
- 1.2 **Applying learning theory.** The teacher displays knowledge and understanding of how students learn.
- 1.3 **Maintaining conducive classroom climate.** The teacher creates a respectful and inclusive classroom climate that facilitates equitable learning and develops positive attitude towards learning.

Core Belief 2. Teachers know their subject(s) and the various ways and methods to teach these subjects.

- 2.1 **Knowledge of her subject(s).** The teacher demonstrates an understanding of how knowledge and skills in her subject domain are created, organized and disseminated, and linked to other disciplines to enable holistic learning.
- 2.2 **Pedagogical Content Knowledge.** The teacher creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful to students and ensure mastery over the content.
- 2.3 **Goal-focused Planning.** The teacher plans instruction rich in higher order thinking to meet clearly identified learning goals and objectives.

Core Belief 3. Teachers manage and monitor Student Learning Progress.

- 3.1 **Managing Classroom Routines and Expectations.** The teacher establishes an efficient and organized learning environment that involves and engages all students, maximizes learning time, and enhances student learning in various individual and group settings.
- 3.2 **Student Engagement.** The teacher communicates and encourages student participation in the learning process.
- 3.3 **Assessment of Student Progress.** The teacher employs multiple methods to regularly measure student growth and progress, and uses this information to provide feedback to students as well as adjust instructional methodologies.

Core Belief 4. Teachers have an innate drive towards Self-Learning and professional Growth.

- 4.1 **Reflective Practice.** The teacher analyses sources of information and evidence as she continually reflects on professional practice, using information about student needs to make decisions about adjustments in practice and goal setting.
- 4.2 **Professional Collaboration.** The teacher contributes to school effectiveness and building a learning climate in the school by collaborating with others on activities that support school improvement and student learning.
- 4.3 **Continued Professional Growth.** The teacher focuses on professional learning opportunities as well as informal feedback and reflection to accomplish her professional growth.

DEEP Performance Levels

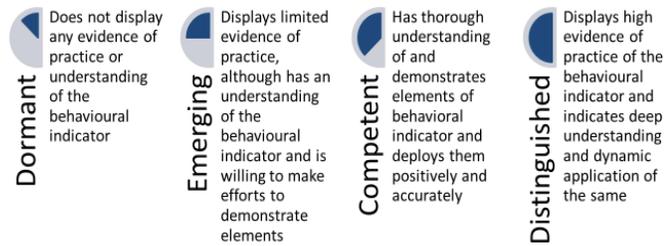
The DEEP Model identifies a continuum of practice for each behavioural indicator and includes four levels of performance.

Dormant describes actions and behaviours displayed by the teacher that are not in line with the expected behavioural indicators, and are inappropriate for the student's learning, subject, or learning environment. It reflects lack of understanding of students, subject and pedagogy.

Emerging describes teaching that reflects a small repertoire of strategies and instructional behaviours. Often, new teachers or beginners will display practices that indicate this level of performance, as they expand their skills and knowledge of teaching and/or the school.

Competent describes proficient display of expected behaviours, using a diverse set of strategies implemented to reach all students.

Distinguished describes a teacher's behaviours and actions that consistently reach beyond the expectations of effective practice. This indicates an exceptional performance that many teachers reach occasionally or in some elements of their practice, but only a few teachers demonstrate consistently over time.



Behavioural Standards measured by the DEEP Rubric are displayed in Annexure 1

How is Teacher Observation and Feedback done using the DEEP Rubric?

The rubric brings together an objective base on classroom and professional practices that affect children's learning. Although student achievement is not evaluated by the rubrics, it's reasonable to assume that in a well-run school (positive climate, professional working conditions, aligned curriculum etc.) the more Competent and Distinguished ratings a teacher has, the better students will do.

The rubric aims to provide a shared definition of the work teachers do with students and colleagues. The process used to gather the information is multi-observer (to rule out subjectivity) and multi-event (to arrive at an objective evaluation of the teacher's behavioural indicators).

Observation and Feedback Process

Our proposed process includes:

- ... A self-assessment through a situation judgment test
- ... Classroom observation by a panel of experts that includes the supervisor (either the principal or a senior teacher appointed by the principal to supervise the development process of the teacher), an external expert (an experienced educationist), a senior teacher or principal from a sister school (one who understands the school context, yet is a degree removed so as to be objective), and a Coach/Counselor from The Potter's Earth (to bring in the process expertise, and acts as the Development Guide to help the teacher identify her learning goals)
- ... Any student or parent survey data as the school may choose to deploy additionally (e.g. a 360-degree feedback survey by students and parents, or a peer review survey)

At the end of the data-gathering process, each teacher has a one-on-one coaching session with the Development Guide (Potter's Earth counselor) who will help her understand her feedback and create a learning goal sheet.

The initial process that starts with observation and feedback and culminates with each teacher identifying a Learning Goal for herself, takes 3 months. Following this, each teacher along with her supervisor (and external development guide, if agreed with the school) follows a periodic progress review on her learning goal and performance on the elements of the DEEP Rubric.

Outcome of the Rubric mapping process

Progress review meetings work best if the teacher, supervisor and development guide fill out the rubrics beforehand, discuss only the areas where they disagree, and talk about those areas based on the teacher's actual performance. Some supervisors sugar-coat criticism and give inflated scores to keep the peace and avoid hurt feelings. This does not help teachers improve. The best thing a supervisor can do for an underperforming teacher is to visit frequently, give candid, evidence-based feedback, listen to the teacher's concerns, and organize robust follow-up support.

	TEACHER AS A MENTOR			TEACHER AS A PARENT COLLABORATOR			TEACHER AS A ROLE MODEL			TEACHER AS AN EMPLOYEE		
	Diverse Needs	Support	Student Wellbeing	Parents-Teacher Collaboration	Commitment	Trust Building	Resonance with Culture	Caring environment	School's goals and policies	Administrative tasks	Peer Relations	Sharing Knowledge
P1	●	▲	●	●	●	▼	●	▲	▲	●	▼	▼
P2	▲	●	●	▼	●	▲	▲	●	▼	●	●	▲
P3	▼	●	▲	●	▲	●	▲	▲	●	▲	▼	●
P4	●	●	▲	▲	●	▲	▼	●	▲	▲	●	▲
P5	▲	▼	●	▲	▲	●	▼	▲	●	▲	▼	●
P6	▲	▲	▼	●	●	▲	▼	●	●	▼	●	▲
P7	●	●	▲	▼	▼	▲	▼	▲	●	●	▼	▲
P8	▲	●	●	▼	●	▲	▲	●	▼	●	●	▲
P9	●	●	▲	▲	●	▲	▼	●	▲	▲	●	▲
P10	▲	●	●	▼	●	▲	▲	●	▼	●	●	▲

When an entire staff is scored honestly using the rubrics, it's possible to create a color-coded spreadsheet that can serve as a (confidential) road-map for schoolwide professional development (sample figure alongside).

Sustainable Teacher Development: How can development efforts be sustained throughout the school year?

To track progress on learning goals and other elements of the DEEP rubric, supervisors (and development guides, if needed) make frequent, short, unannounced classroom visits (at least ten per teacher per year); have a face-to-face coaching conversation after each one (ideally in the teacher's classroom when students aren't there); and regularly observe teachers in team meetings and other settings. The rubric should not be used as a checklist during classroom visits or in post-observation conferences – its comprehensive scope and evaluative tone are likely to hamper thoughtful observation and effective coaching. Rather, the rubric should guide teachers' work and supervisors' observations throughout the year and serve as a memory prompt and structuring protocol when it's time to evaluate the year's work.

The rubrics should be used formally at three points:

- As school opens: teachers self-assess, meet with their supervisor and development guide, and set 2-3 learning goals;
- At mid-year: teacher, supervisor and development guide meet and compare ratings page by page, discuss any differences, assess progress on the teacher's goals, and identify areas for growth; and
- At the end of the year: teacher and supervisor repeat this process and reach closure on the year's ratings.

What are the Behavioural standards measured by the DEEP Rubric?

The DEEP Rubric guides the self-assessment, goal-setting, evidence collection, feedback from peer and expert observers, standard-level ratings of teacher performance and recommendations for professional learning and growth. It provides the school objective selection of growth and learning interventions like facilitating communities of practice, acting and mentors and coaches, or participating in school growth and development projects.

Annexure 1 below is a sample of the DEEP Rubric for the four core beliefs along with their behavioural indicators and performance levels.

Annexure 1: DEEP Program Rubric

Core Belief 1: Teachers are committed to enabling Student Learning					
Behavioural Indicator	What it means	Dormant	Emerging	Competent	Distinguished
Understanding of Students	<i>Teacher recognizes individual differences and knows the backgrounds, abilities and interests of her students, and uses this information to differentiate her approach to students and instruction</i>	Primarily provides whole group instruction with no differentiation	Aware of individual student needs but tends to teach as whole group with few differentiated opportunities for students	Differentiates instruction for group of students or some individuals based on background, readiness and interests.	Differentiates instruction for individual or group of students based on background, readiness and interests.
Applying Learning Theory	<i>Teacher demonstrates an understanding of how students develop and learn</i>	Rarely or never supports multiple ways for students to input information or retrieve information and expects all students to demonstrate understanding in a single context	Supports multiple ways for students to input information, retrieve information and demonstrate understanding	Consistently supports multiple ways for students to input information, retrieve information and demonstrate understanding	Consistently supports multiple ways for students to input information and retrieve information on the basis of knowledge of student strengths
Maintaining Conducive Classroom Climate	<i>Teacher creates a respectful environment that provides opportunities for equitable participation and supports students in developing positive attitude towards learning</i>	Provides no opportunities or encouragement to support student participation. Does not display respect for students, develop non-cognitive competencies such as self-confidence or sense of personal responsibility in students	Encourages some students to participate and provides some opportunities for them to do so. Treats students with respect, and inconsistently develops non-cognitive abilities	Encourages multiple students to participate and provides multiple opportunities for them to do so. Treats students respectfully and encourages mutual respect. Consistently develops non-cognitive competencies in students	Encourages all students to participate and persevere in challenging situations. Treats students respectfully and encourages mutual respect. Role models and encourages development of non-cognitive competencies

Core Belief 2: Teachers have knowledge of Subject(s) and teaching methodologies

Behavioural Indicator	What it means	Dormant	Emerging	Competent	Distinguished
Knowledge of subjects	<i>Teacher demonstrates an understanding of how knowledge and skills in her subject domain are created, organized and linked to those of other disciplines as appropriate</i>	Rarely addresses central organizing concepts or factual information, does not include basic teaching practices or encourage alternative perspectives	Sometimes addresses central organizing concepts or factual information, often includes basic teaching practices. Encourages alternative perspectives but does not encourage analytical thinking about the content	Addresses all central organizing concepts or factual information, consistently includes basic teaching practices. Encourages alternative perspectives and encourages analytical thinking about the content	Clearly and consistently addresses all central organizing concepts or factual information, Encourages multiple alternative perspectives questioning prevailing beliefs and assumptions, and supports students in deepening their analysis of the content
Pedagogical Content Knowledge	<i>Teacher creates learning experiences that make the discipline accessible and meaningful for learners to ensure mastery of the content</i>	Is unaware of common misconceptions and does not plan to address them. Relies on known curricular material and is resistant to adoption of new material or teaching methods	Aware of common misconceptions and sometimes plans to address them. Adopts curricular material mandated or shared by other faculty members but does not independently seek out new material or teaching methods	Aware of common misconceptions and has plans to address them. Expands knowledge of curricular material, resources and new teaching methodologies to engage students	Aware of common misconceptions and has plans to address them. Expands knowledge of curricular material, resources and new teaching methodologies to engage students, and contributes to the development of new material and sharing with colleagues
Goal Focused Planning	<i>Teacher plans instruction rich in higher order thinking to meet clearly identified goals and objectives for student learning</i>	Lesson plans are incomplete or lacks planning based goals and learning objectives for students	Develops instructional plans that sometimes include lesson plans based on goals and learning objectives for students	Develops instructional plans that consistently include lesson plans based on goals and learning objectives for students, provides a variety of learning tasks and contains appropriate standards-based learning goals	Develops instructional plans that provide multiple opportunities for higher order thinking, lesson plans based on goals and learning objectives for students, provides a variety of learning tasks and contains appropriate standards-based learning goals

Core Belief 3: Teachers manage and monitor student learning progress

Behavioural Indicator	What it means	Dormant	Emerging	Competent	Distinguished
Managing classroom routines and expectations	<i>Teacher establishes an organized and efficient learning environment that involves and engages all students, maximizes learning time, and enhances student learning in a variety of individual and group settings</i>	Uses limited classroom techniques, infrequent small group activities and suffers disruptions that lead to loss in learning time. Does not set classroom norms, rules and routines. Does not alter physical and social organization structure in line with student needs	Shows basic use of classroom management techniques. Disruptions sometimes lead to loss in learning time. Has some classroom norms, rules and routines, but inconsistent. Sometimes alters physical and social organization structure in line with student needs	Uses a variety of classroom management techniques. Some students can work independently without disruptions leading to loss in learning time. Has well established classroom norms, rules and routines. Frequently alters physical and social organization structure in line with student needs	Shows exceptional use of classroom management techniques. All students can work independently and disruptions are rare and managed quickly. Classroom norms, rules and routines maximize the learning effectiveness. Sometimes allows students to alter physical and social structures to meet their needs
Ensuring student engagement	<i>Teacher encourages and clearly communicates expectations for student involvement in learning process, which results in a high level of student engagement</i>	Does not communicate any expectations. Presents content in a way that does not encourage participation or dialogue. Does not employ group learning opportunities	Communicate her expectations for class participation. Sometimes uses strategies to motivate student participation. Creates authentic tasks to relate to students' own contexts, uses some degree of group learning opportunities	Uses multiple methods to communicate her expectations for class participation. Regularly uses strategies to motivate student participation. Creates authentic tasks to relate to students' own contexts, uses a variety of group learning opportunities	Uses multiple methods to communicate her expectations for class participation. Regularly uses strategies to motivate student participation and capture interest. Creates wide range of authentic tasks to relate to students' own contexts, uses a variety of group learning opportunities
Assessing student progress	<i>Teacher employs multiple methods to regularly measure student growth and progress and uses this information to provide feedback and adjust instructional decision making</i>	Rarely monitors individual and class learning. Rarely checks for understanding and gets little data to check and address misunderstandings. Assessments are not standard based, aligned to curriculum or adapted to student needs	Infrequently monitors individual and class learning. Sometimes checks for understanding and gets some data to check and address misunderstandings. Some assessments are standard based, but teacher does not use them to alter instruction	Periodically monitors individual and class learning. Regularly checks for understanding and monitors data to check and address misunderstandings. Assessments are standard based, and used to alter instructional strategy	Constantly monitors individual and class learning and uses variety of assessment methods including peer and self-assessments. Regularly checks for nature of understanding and monitors progress towards academic goals. Assessments are standard based, and provide feedback to students, and used to alter instructional strategy

Core Belief 4: Teachers have an innate drive towards self learning and professional growth

Behavioural Indicator	What it means	Dormant	Emerging	Competent	Distinguished
Reflective Practice	<i>Teacher analyses sources of evidence as she continually reflects on professional practice, using information about student needs to make decisions about adjustments in practices and goals for professional growth</i>	Does not set goals, or creates them without analyzing evidence, or develops standalone goals	Uses little data to set goals and periodically reflect on practice	Systematically uses multiple sources of evidence to set goals and continually reflect on practice and its impact on student learning	Deeply analyzes and strategically selects multiple sources of evidence to set goals and continually reflect on practice and its impact on student learning
Professional Collaboration	<i>Teacher contributes to school effectiveness by collaborating with other professionals on activities that support school improvement and student learning</i>	Does not actively participate in collaborative activities	When invited or required to attend, participates actively in collaborative professional learning activities that contribute to school improvement and student learning	Engages positively in collaborative professional learning activities that contribute to school improvement and student learning	Engages positively in, and initiates, collaborative professional learning activities that contribute to school improvement and student learning. Assumes proactive and creative leadership roles within and outside her learning community
Continuous Professional Growth	<i>Teacher uses current research-based resources, ongoing feedback from others, and professional learning opportunities to accomplish professional growth</i>	Does not actively participate in professional learning opportunities, or does not use feedback to inform professional growth	Uses some available research-based resources or feedback from others, but does not seek out such resources on her own. Attempts to apply knowledge gained from professional learning opportunities to her practice, but impact on student learning is inconsistent	Accesses a variety of research-based resources, feedback from others and professional learning opportunities. Consistently applies knowledge gained from professional learning opportunities to her practice in ways that positively impact student learning	Seeks out a variety of research-based resources, feedback from others and designs and implements professional learning opportunities to support her growth. Consistently applies knowledge gained from professional learning opportunities to her practice in ways that positively impact student learning

About Us

The Potter's Earth is a developmental coaching organization that works on the mandate of enabling people to make informed, value-based career choices. Through an innovative coaching process and differentiated content and research, our team of coaches and psychologists works with students and professionals to help them find & follow careers in line with their unique strengths and passions. This first-of-its-kind solution brings the power of developmental coaching to the arena of career discovery for young minds.

In our efforts to help people's quest for informed career decision making and growth, we work with all aspects of the educational ecosystem spanning students, teachers and school leaders. Our developmental programs for teachers operates under the banner of 'Torchbearers', and encompasses various teacher evaluation, assessment and developmental interventions. We are supported in our efforts by a host of senior educationists, coaches and counselors who engage with us in various capacities to bring our efforts to fruition.

The Potter's Earth also partners with schools and colleges to offer students various career planning and career achievement solutions under the banner of 'DreamCoAch'. Using various psychological testing and developmental coaching methodologies, powered by a strong digital platform, we bring various well-researched and useful career aids to students at the touch of a screen. Students can sign up for a host of career aids including one-on-one discussions with career coaches, innovative exercises, games and activities and interactions with professionals from various fields, to help them navigate their career journey.

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