



**EDUCATION EMPOWERS US TO WRITE OUR OWN DESTINY.**

## INTRODUCTION

Since my childhood, there has always been a seeking to know 'the truth' about God and human existence. I always felt if I would know the ultimate truth I will be able to design my life well. I expected my school to answer my questions. Who is God? Where does he live? Why is he called supreme father? What's his role in my life? What does he expect from me? My questions remained unanswered. Neither the school nor the society seemed too interested to answer my questions. Was that because these questions were futile or was it because they didn't have the answers themselves? I read few scriptures myself, became a disciple to a guru and then left all.

Later I started meditating, got into volunteer work. Over the years few questions got answers and few more arose. In spite of an extremely adorable, loving family and amazing friends, I started living a rather lonely life. There was a rather sinking feeling, a disappointment within myself. I was still searching a complete, enriching way to live. Demands at my personal front seemed like they were clashing with my soul need. This feeling of deficiency was denigrating but I didn't know what to do about it. I was just noticing that I have stopped doing creative work. Even without a formal training, I used to make cards, design home interior and furniture, used to help people with decorations and grooming earlier. I was just losing interest in everything. I wished to contribute to the society big way but didn't have enough strength to do it on my own.

During this turbulent time, I happened to attend orientation program of IAAT. I went for my niece who wished to explore her future in education sector. Being a parent of a student at THS Rohini, I always get overwhelmed with the aura of the school. That day too, something inside me stirred when I entered the school. Then I entered a room to attend the orientation. There was a lady in beige coloured clothes draped in a thin shawl standing near the flowers, barefoot in cold month. I felt hooked; my inner state of mind took a shift. I realised, all of a sudden, I am feeling peppy. I got to know she is Smriti. One voice in me uttered, "This is where you belong. Let's learn under her guidance." while the other voice said, "Be patient." That session rekindled my childhood dream to become a teacher. Family stood in support. Still little sceptical about the appropriateness of this course for me, at the age of 45, I appeared for the 'rounds of selection'. My interaction with IAAT faculty made me reassure myself to take the step. I am glad I took that step...

# DEEKSHA MITTRA

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## OBJECTIVE

Seeking a position as a Primary Teacher (PRT) at the Heritage School, Rohini.

## PROFILE

Skilled, enthusiastic educator with a holistic perspective in learning and teaching. I hold a strong passion for education and an unwavering commitment to create a positive learning environment where all children feel safe, physically as well as emotionally. My faith in positive values guides children to find their inner teacher. My powers of cooperation and adjustment always make me generate fruitful results.

### ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION

NAME OF COURSE	YEAR	UNIVERSITY/INSTITUTE
Post Graduate Diploma in Learning and Teaching	pursuing	I Am A Teacher
Pursuing PhD in 'Improving attention span in children through meditation'	pursuing	Yoga-Samskrutham University, Florida, the USA
Level 3 in Integrated Clinical Hypnotherapy	2015-16	California Hypnosis Institute India (EKAA)
Masters of Sciences in Values Education and Spirituality	2012	Annamalai University
Bachelors of Arts	2000	Delhi University

### PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

DESIGNATION	WORK PROFILE	INSTITUTION	YEAR
Resident Teacher	Co-teaching and taking independent all subject-classes for Class V.	The Heritage School, Rohini	2017-18
Life skill expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Nurturing innate values through weekly sessions.</li></ul>	Brahmakumaris World Spiritual University	2011-present

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted 3 hour workshop for nearly 300 students from various schools.</li> <li>• Facilitated workshops at Bal Bharti Public School, Modern Public School, Central School under “<b>Touch the Light</b>” program.</li> </ul>		<p>2013</p> <p>2011-12</p>
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#### OTHER WORK EXPERIENCE

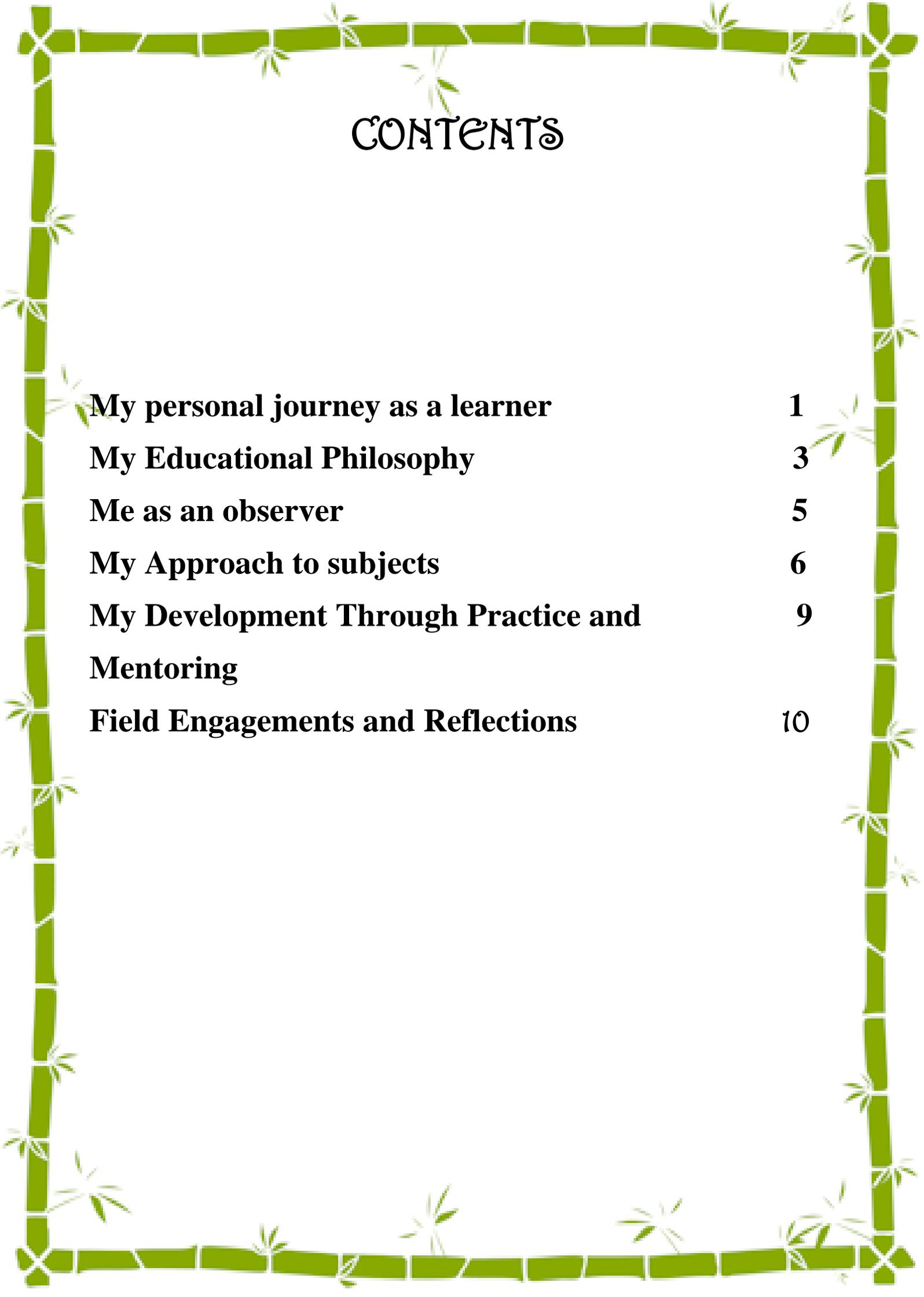
DESIGNATION	WORK PROFILE	INSTITUTION	YEAR
Grooming Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted grooming sessions for people from all walks of life.</li> <li>• Make up assignments for various national and international magazines like Femina, In Touch with Fashion etc.</li> </ul>	Keune Academy, Holland (Delhi Branch)	2010
Grooming Expert	Carried out several workshops on personal grooming for various professionals like Air-hostess, MNC employees, teachers etc.	Freelancer	2000-2010
Grooming Expert	Facilitated several beauty segments for various TV channels like Star Plus, Sahara TV, Delhi Doordarshan.	Freelancer	2001-2003
Makeup Trainer	Lead a workshop for 250 beauticians at Chandigarh with Seabuck Skincare Company.	Freelancer	2000

## **SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

- Critical thinking
- Creativity
- Adaptability
- Learning Agility

## **OTHER INTERESTS**

- Meditation
- Reading
- Performing Arts (Dancing and Acting)



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# MY PERSONAL JOURNEY

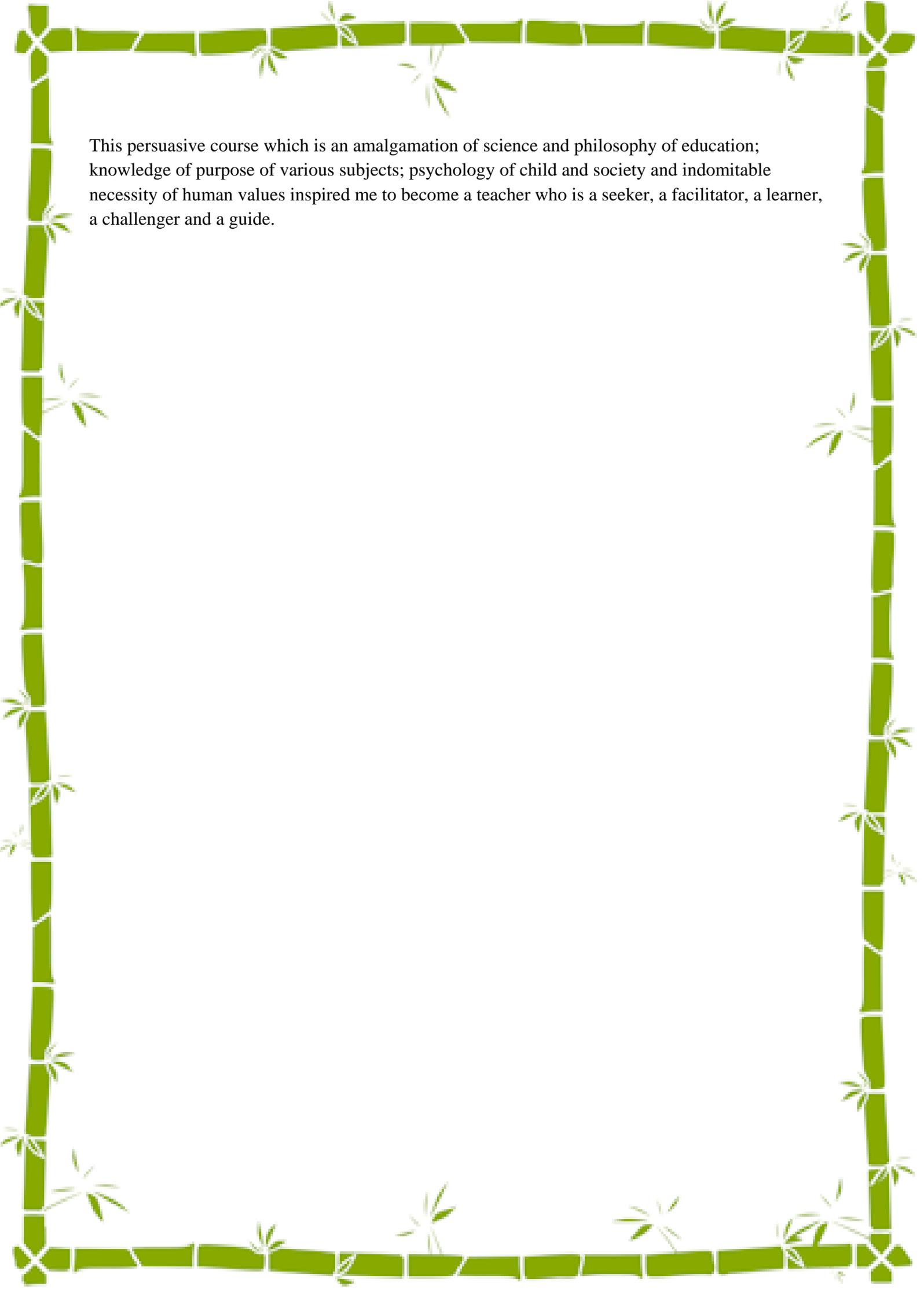
My journey of self-empowerment in the year 2017 started with a trip to Junga. It brought into me consciousness of different parts of my being. Experiences at Junga made me reflect more, on myself and the courage within me. By stretching the boundaries of my physical comfort, somewhere the boundaries that I had set for my internal self also expanded. I have discovered the courage in myself to face the unknown challenges ahead in life. I learnt: by assuming and rejecting what the inner voice is telling me repeatedly, I might be stopping myself from having a lifetime experience. Reflection after every activity made me realise that so many feelings in us go unnoticed while they are leaving their mark, sometimes so deep that they affect our major decisions in life later. I learnt it's important to enjoy the moments of thrill and address or at least acknowledge the moments of sadness and insecurity.

After returning to Delhi, MPL sessions one after the other raised few questions and answered a few others. Many of the sessions resonated immensely with my belief system thus dissolving my self-doubts, strengthening my faith in values which I am practising and still wish to refine further. Readings on rewards versus good values, hungers, default settings and many more were very insightful. Learnings during MPL sessions strengthened my conviction that there is no need of feeling to compete to excel in life; empathy is the most powerful tool; love is the biggest healer. What I apprehended was that the trust of IAAT faculty in certain values, remarkably influenced my confidence to practise them.

Sessions empowered me to believe in my own personal experiences and perception of reality. Gradually, I was getting liberated from my fears. My ability to see things as they are, without being judgemental, got groomed exceptionally to the extent that it may sound strange but my lack of self confidence in certain aspects of my life, at times made me sound or behave over confidently. But, now a balance was getting achieved. Residents were encouraged stimulated to introspect, self-reflect and contemplate. All this brought a balance in me which is invigorating for me.

It evokes admiration in me that attention has been paid to many minute details which might appear insignificant to many. The result is that same seemingly non-essential details became the reason for life transformation. Suggestion by IAAT faculty to sit with a new person every day was one such detail. Every time sitting like that made me feel I am reading a new novel with a distinct protagonist. It brought the group closer. Whether it were small group discussions or big group discussions, I got the opportunity to look at same situation with different perspectives. It was like I am taking one dip to take out one pearl but I come out with a treasure because of what others were offering. It helped me to augment my awareness. I felt how easily we can expand our consciousness just by listening to others with an open mind and open heart.

Over the months, I was not only developing as a person but also as a learner. My mentors encouraged me to question more, explore further and research intensely. I was mesmerized by the way faculty made us take ownership of our learning which was by giving full liberty. My knowledge was going beyond the classroom and seeping into my life generating concrete results.



This persuasive course which is an amalgamation of science and philosophy of education; knowledge of purpose of various subjects; psychology of child and society and indomitable necessity of human values inspired me to become a teacher who is a seeker, a facilitator, a learner, a challenger and a guide.

# MY EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

*The little girl had the making of the poet in her who, being bold to be sure of her meaning before she spoke, said, "How can I know what I think till I see what I say?"*

*The Art of Thought*

I have always tried to understand ancient wisdom wearing my glasses of science. How a saint reveals what is there in other's mind, intrigued me. What makes a chess player choose a move which has option of 72,084 positions just after two moves a piece? Even if the game of chess starts with something simple, one can see how complex it gets with every move. Is it the only knowledge about the game, the training or is it something more that makes one win? What is that something? Then what about the complexity of choices of life? Are we really aware of all the possibilities life offers us with every breath? I thought, I read, I heard that there is something more. Our choices in life are not just the result of logical reasons of intellect but intuition plays a significant role. I could never get a satisfactory answer for the questions- What is intuition? How does it get developed? Is it just a matter of chance that few people get some strong gut feeling which many a time compels them to make a decision going against their rational understanding of the intellect.

A line by J. Krishnamurthy, "Intelligence highly awakened is intuition, which is the only true guide in life." just fixed all the pieces of jigsaw puzzle in my mind. My understanding of values education and spiritual sciences started making all the more sense. This is not just once which happened during this course. Several times I got to hear or read something which just took me beyond time and space and I was just mused in that moment admiring the complete beauty of that thought, trying to get immersed in its true meaning and letting it get absorbed to the core of my existence so that it resonates with me completely.

Philosophies shared during this course put forth the whole significance of living so that we can understand what right education is. After this understanding only, the true purpose of education can be met, which is to create human beings who are well integrated therefore intelligent thus capable of not just earning but of enjoying the beauty of life in its true sense. As Sri Aurobindo said, "Teaching is not a technique, but a way of life." Mother's guidance of fivefold education- physical, vital, mental, psychic, spiritual; illuminated my mind to be sure of the kind of education I would like a child to have. Experiences during IAAT course has made me believe completely that there has to be a deep understanding of the inner map of the learner. Emphasis must be given on the mechanics of thinking, understanding the different layers of mind and the metaphysical aspect without denying the importance of acquisition of knowledge of the physical world.

With complete focus on outer knowledge, lot of research is being done, which is getting implemented and is generating credible results. Learnings during this course made my faith in the importance of understanding of the inner dimension all the more stronger. It's not just the relevant context but a physically and emotionally safe classroom environment is equally essential for a

child to learn. This is only possible when attention is being paid to the inner environment of the teacher as well as the children. An education system which has amalgamated values in the study of every subject is the need of the hour, along with self reflection so that values learnt can be practised too. Only self awareness through meditation can help a child to be mindful enough to approach and deal with any challenging situation and enjoy life as a whole.

My journey with IAAT faculty, filled me with gratitude for all those educationists, psychologists and teachers who have worked and are still burning midnight lamps to make learning enjoyable for children. Awareness of various approaches like experiential learning, peer interaction, introspective and retrospective activities etc which are designed by experts to engage the mind of the child inspired me to strengthen my resources. Learning and teaching modules made me realise the importance of the purpose of teaching a subject. It brought to my notice how important is it for a teacher to ask herself, “Why the child should know what I am intending to teach?” “What experience am I going to create in class to make my lesson engaging for children?”

Importance of positive reinforcement; role of teacher and learner; notions of leader, teaching, learning and knowledge- this all helped me to become more conscious about the value of the noble profession of teaching. We were made to look at Learning and Teaching through various lenses- psychological, philosophical and sociological. Each lens helped me to get more clarity about the role I would like to play in the education system. Objectivism, interpretivism and pragmatism helped to understand how knowledge is constructed. Piaget contributed in my understanding of source of knowledge. Importance of learning with peers was expressed by Vygotsky. Jerome Bruner emphasized that humans are born with innate ability to learn. According to him, learning happens through organization and categorisation of experiences. Carl Roger’s list of prerequisites of facilitators resonated so much with my vision of myself as an educator- a person who is authentic, values a child, trusts the intentions of each child, is non-judgemental and empathetic.

Thus, in long run, there developed consensus of different understandings in my mind which is kind of preparation of ‘stone soup’ - a significant result of consolidation of best of the suggestions by committed experts. Today I truly believe in an educational philosophy which does not suggest the right path to its children but will embrace them the way they are and scaffold them to discover their path of glory.

**Artefacts:**

- [My vision of myself as an educator](#)
- [No Detention Policy](#)

# ME AS AN OBSERVER

Observation is an incredibly valuable tool for a teacher. It not only helps a teacher to know and understand a child but also aids her to develop effective strategies for better learning of the child about himself and the subjects. This clarity was brought to me during the session on observation. I got to know that observation is collecting information using one or more senses without making judgements. Earlier, for me observation was simultaneously accompanied with my inferences. I used to be naturally inclined to interpret what I see. I used to look for patterns and make connections with my past experiences and knowledge. Now I understand that I need to keep a check on my emotional state while making an observation and should be aware that it doesn't influence my ability to observe.

Careful observation suspends thinking. I have learnt that patience and attentiveness are prerequisites to good observation. Use of 'value words' is completely barred during observation. Observation is a very effective tool which helps in meeting the developmental needs of children especially of the young learners. A young child is too small to share his feelings and needs at times. Therefore noting how a child is behaving, reacting to new situations and is interacting with others can help me to improve my classroom environment to meet the needs of young learner. Observation helps to understand the strengths and weaknesses of individual child in a better way. I can later reflect on my observations and plan to improve a child's behaviour and facilitate his learning.

Observation helps to plan differentiated instruction, relationship between teacher and student is at the core of differentiation which gets developed by the observations followed by critical analysis done by the teacher. Observation will guide me to understand the readiness, interests and learning profile of the child. This will make me plan effectively. It would be my observation skills which will help me to sense whether my plan is meeting the needs of the children or not for example, listening to children when they are in middle of discussion on the task, noticing their work when children are working in their notebooks. Thus, patient approach of observation will help me to utilize the understanding of multiple intelligences and differentiated instructions. This will empower me to deliver the content effectively according to the needs. An effective observation followed by reflection not only will help to form a stronger relationship with the child but will also enable me to gauge the progress of various skills which may include cognitive, physical, emotional, social and language skills. Properly recorded observations make identifying of issues like learning disabilities, very quick. Data on hand makes it easier to have discussions with parents and also to provide them with guidance.

My experience in past few months has given me this insight that if patience helps one to observe effectively, then effective observation in turn amplifies one's patience.

## **Artefacts:**

[Classroom norms and practices](#)

[Student Profile](#)

# MY APPROACH TO SUBJECTS

**For language:** Language abilities are needed to meet natural human urge to connect and to express. The purpose of language is to enable one to think, feel and react to things. Language also helps in learning of other subject areas. Thus we may say language plays a central role for emotional, social and cognitive development of a child. Language acts as a subtle but a very powerful force in shaping the child's perception of the world around him. This is because the nature of language is about either feelings or opinions.

My journey at IAAT has brought me in consent with Chomsky's theory that a child 'constructs' language. Thus as a language teacher my role becomes to provide enough age appropriate experiences that too, in varied interesting and engaging ways where the child gets enough opportunities to listen, speak, read and write the language. Function of language at primary development should be limited to the development of interaction of child with other children and adults around him. Reading and writing should be discouraged in the beginning stage of learning of language. Storytelling, playing games where language may be appropriately involved, recitation of rhymes etc. can be interesting ways to begin with a language. Trips and excursions, role playing, picture reading etc can further help child to build up his vocabulary.

Gradually, reading can be used as a powerful medium to have command on the language. It not only helps the child to have an emotional bond with language by providing him pleasure, but also helps child in the improvement of pronunciation, spellings and building up of vocabulary. As a teacher I would like to maintain a reading corner in my classroom and encourage children and parents to build up one at home. Story reading can encourage child to develop his ability for creative self expression. I would like to give enough opportunities to children in my class to interact with their peers to share certain experiences, feelings or to talk about their visits with parents during early years. In later years of learning of language, children can be encouraged to share their own opinions and get into discussions and debates about current issues, movies etc or about their view on a book. This would be my rule to create emotionally safe environment where the child may freely express his opinion about any book, movie, incident or a social issue which he comes across in his environment.

Worksheets with beautiful illustrations, use of graphic designer will generate love for writing on paper. Relevant classroom boards can be developed creatively making good use of space and pictures. Opportunities can be provided on the display board, to interact and work with the display. Children can be encouraged to develop boards themselves.

While the nature of verbal language is either about feelings or opinions, mathematics aims at discovery. One of its important function is to familiarise child with a mode of thought which helps him in drawing right conclusions and inferences.

## **Artefacts:**

- [Application of strategies for deeper understanding of content area reading](#)
- [Unit Plan \(Class II\): Theme- Fun with Poetry](#)

## For mathematics:

### 1. Playful framework for learning:

#### Piaget's Cognitive Development Theory

- **Sensory Motor stage:** Right from infancy, introducing the child to shapes and colours, patterns etc helps acquaint the child with the basic understanding of geometry and patterns that goes a long way in helping the child form abstract understanding of the world around him/her.
- **Pre Operational Stage:** Since the child can now recognise symbols, is familiar with words and can express verbally, the cues should all be used to make the child understand numbers, operations, structuration etc through stories. The child should be presented with more action patterns. For example, the introduction of addition with one clap each increasing with each child standing next in the circle. Routine situations can be organised and also, another way can be by counting, categorising shapes as tools for structuring play. Organized Games and play could involve use of symbols to encourage children to pay attention to mathematics.
- **Concrete Operational Stage:** The introduction of patterns in numbers, number lines and mentally stimulating quizzes can be given. Similarly, now that the child can recognize conservation of mass, weight and numbers, introduction to volume and mass can be made through class activities, etc.
- **Formal Operational Stage:** The child can now test hypothesis, make abstract notions and test them. So the ground should be laid open for the child to test various techniques to come to a certain conclusion, providing each child with ample time to do so. This could involve the child to be given problem solving, customised life problems that include mathematics and for them to devise a technique to develop their own unique solutions so the child's mind is stimulated.

### 2. Modelling behavior

#### Bandura's Social Learning Theory:

Albert Bandura pays a major emphasis to the importance of learning through social observation of "model figures". An important part of a child's learning of reasoning and analysing could be accomplished by teachers "thinking out loud" while trying to solve a problem. Such model behaviours help the child build his own understanding of the concepts. There have been many psychologists and educationists that build the learning of a child through active teacher participation.

### 3. Peer learning

**Vygotsky's model of social learning** suggests the importance of Scaffolding, using which techniques and able dialogues amongst the peers, a child may learn to solve simple as well as complex mechanical and mathematical problems on and off paper.

Group activities to come to a solution, enable the child to observe amongst his peer (model) the behaviours and active thinking approaches, that help the child build his own understanding of the subject matter positively.

#### 4. Nurturing values through story sums

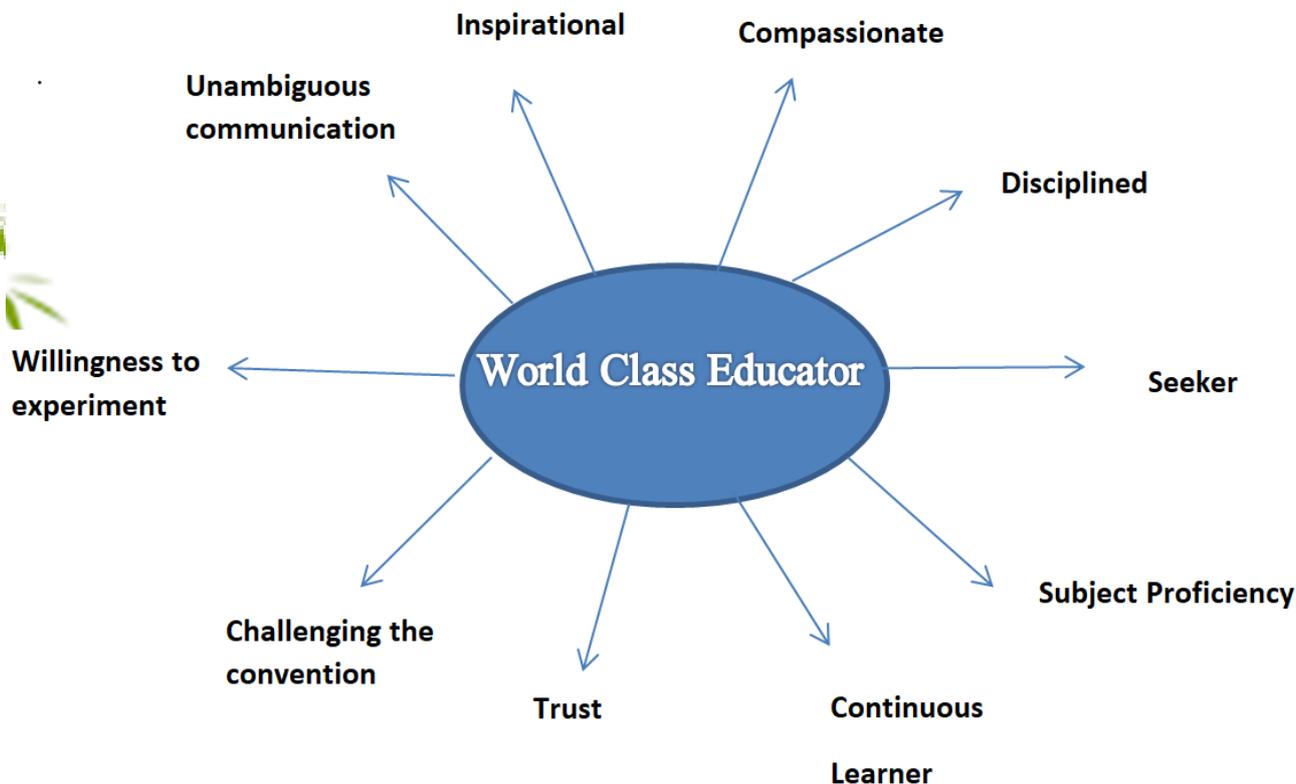
An individual's interaction with the society is highly governed by his perception, analysis, and logical understanding of the information he receives. Using story sums to help the child perceive, analyze and logically understand global crisis situation may help the child build a better and deeper reasoning of the world that can entail peace. This will also help the child reflect not just on the arithmetic or calculus the problem at hand requires, but also a holistic understanding of the core competencies and values needed to imbibe.

#### **Artefacts:**

- [Story sums](#)

## MY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH PRACTICE AND MENTORING

Before the beginning of classroom experience we were asked to represent our vision as a world class educator. My group had come up with several qualities which according to us, must be personified by a passionate teacher.



With the vision of becoming such a world class educator, I had entered the classroom to observe educator, children & the classroom environment. At the start, I had a rose tinted view of the teaching profession. My mentors intervened and really helped me to understand the taxing parts of the job by providing me with honest explanation and analysis of the various facets of the profession of teaching. Classroom management without raising my voice, keeping children thoroughly engaged so that there is no disruption of class norms, how to use board efficiently for teaching, brainstorming children with right questions were few of the initial challenges. Descriptive insightful feedback from mentors, my own critical evaluation of my own ways of teaching during classroom experience and consistent encouraging support of my mentors helped me to overcome these challenges. I think my calm, loveful and empathetic disposition helped me to form a bond of trust with the children in minimal time. Understanding of concepts from the perspective of children further helped me to execute lesson plans effectively.

All through these months, my approach of teaching got drastically transformed from preaching to facilitating. Earlier I believed that was the duty of a teacher to provide the child with all knowledge so that the child can imbibe that. Whereas, what I got to observe in the classroom was children learn better when they struggle to find their answers. Teacher's role is to be at the periphery and hold his direction whenever he goes astray. As a teacher, my role is to ask right

questions and enable children to find answers and help each other to learn through self reflection, sharing, discussing and debating.

Classroom experience helped me to collect information and reflect on my own classroom presence. From a distance, I could analyse my performance and could identify; what worked and what didn't. My involvement enabled me to examine the underlying beliefs that defined the way I worked. It helped me to become more self-aware by recalling, considering and evaluating my performance as a teacher I could make better decision for planning my lesson and behaviour more effectively. Insights about my own teaching because of mentor's observations really boosted my confidence not only to conduct class independently but also to play an effective role in strengthening an amiable and emotionally safe environment.

It's quite possible that without mentors I would have felt as if I am lost in the classroom, without a map. Mentors always gave me an honest and realistic overview of what being a teacher is really all about. My TE and CT helped me to comprehend how to understand the dispositions of children, how to know what they be learning and then to plan the ways in which each one, with differential learning, is able to learn best. It's only because of my TE, I could understand that self-reflection is directly proportional to the classroom effectiveness. I learnt self-reflection by a teacher helps her to develop more empathy thus leads to development of meaningful relationships with her children. Observing my mentor in class, helped me to imbibe various classroom management strategies. I learnt how transition should happen between two periods and how to plan the day to utilize the time most effectively.

Micro teaching sessions conducted by TE really helped to overcome the hesitation of facing the class. Importance of simple but unavoidable aspects like display inside and outside the classroom was brought into my notice by my mentors. Time to time, constructive feedbacks given by them really helped me to evaluate my ways of teaching. On one side, I had a collaborating teacher who was full of joy and always ready to lend a helping hand to the best of her abilities and on the other hand, I had a teacher educator who in spite of being so experienced and learned was extremely humble and always had an open mind and tremendous patience to listen to my doubts and perspectives. It was only because of such a consistent, dynamic and encouraging mentoring that I could evolve as a teacher whom the children started admiring and appreciating generously.

Mentorship provided me with moral which enabled me to envision myself growing up to be a competent practitioner who believes in scaffolding her children to develop their own learning. My emphasis would be on holistic and compassionate teaching. It's the classroom experience which reinforced my belief that collaboration amongst colleagues, parents and the community is the key to help the child bloom. Today I see myself emphasising upon cross disciplinary teaching. Mentoring ensured that my creative spirit enables me to continually adapt and evolve. With gratitude in my heart I affirm that it is because of my mentors that I developed confidence in my strengths and also courage to work on my weaknesses.

**Artefacts:**

[Feedback by TE, Ms Sameera Sood and CT, Ms. Ritu Sikka](#)

[Learning on the wall](#)

# FIELD ENGAGEMENT AND REFLECTIONS

## **MIRAMBIKA SCHOOL VISIT**

Amidst lot of greenery, Mirambika School is situated in the serene premises of Aurobindo Ashram. The tranquillity of the place touched me the moment I stepped out of the car. I felt that it is the kind of place I would like to spend most of the time of my day. Mirambika is a school without rigid walls in its classrooms. It actually made me think why do we have walls? Is it to avoid the outside noise or to stop children from getting distracted by the outside view or to avoid others from knowing what is going on in the classroom? All these concerns were taken care of at Mirambika by creating a beautiful learning space and by intrinsically motivating children to be disciplined and responsible for learning. The school's philosophy of education is based on fivefold principles by Mother. Curriculum is child centered rather than subject centered which meets child's emotional needs along with intellectual needs. Physical growth is also believed as an extension to develop all the faculties of child's personality. Meditation is practised not just to begin the day at school but is an integral part throughout the day.

Kamla didi brought our attention to the fact that as a teacher, we should ask, "Is what I am teaching important for the child at his age?" Her belief that, "The child should be intrinsically motivated to find an answer" really struck me. Children at Mirambika are encouraged to consult encyclopaedias, dictionaries and other research materials to look for answers. Teacher must assist only when she feels it's absolutely important. During one of the class observations, I was surprised by the relationship children shared with their teacher, Jayanti didi. There was so much comfort and no trace of fear at all. Water got spilled by one of the child, didi took an initiative to mop the floor which was then followed by one of the children. Children's movement in the classroom was as free as natural light and grease flowing in the classroom. Child's progress is evaluated against child's profile record. Descriptive and non-judgemental feedback is given to ensure child's enhancement. Self-evaluation is an intricate part of the routine of higher age group children. A teacher is a helper or a guide here. Child himself has to take ownership of his learning. A day spent at Mirambika brought me closer to my own feelings and understanding of my purpose of life. It quivered me inside to reconsider my approach of teaching. It instigated to find more- "How a mind works?" "How child can be motivated intrinsically?" One of the principle of the school is 'nothing can be taught'. Then, what role can I play as a teacher, as a mother to facilitate a child to take ownership of his learning? The visit at Mirambika has incited me enough to accelerate my research about functioning of mind.

## **JODO GYAN SCHOOL**

Similar enlightening experience was at Jodogyan School. It is a school where classes are run by community members who are trained under the empowered guidance of Usha Menon ma'am & Shah Ji. There are no books, teacher picks references closer to everyday life of a child. The school follows multi-grade education system to form classes. Because of different age group children in a group, certain values like adjustment, adaptation, care and share comes naturally.

There was no strict time table to be followed. If the kids were struggling with a question or were deeply engaged in a concept, the teacher has the discretion to continue doing the same. In one of the classes, teacher spent almost 15 minutes with a child asking him such questions so that the child reaches to the solution himself. The way science and math concepts are meticulously amalgamated, it is something which really appealed me. The focus was to master the concept in hand rather than trying to teach everything. Calm, composed and lively demeanour of passionate teachers can be absolutely given credit for creating a beautiful learning environment for the children of Shakurpur Basti.

## COMMUNITY VISIT TO SDMC SCHOOL

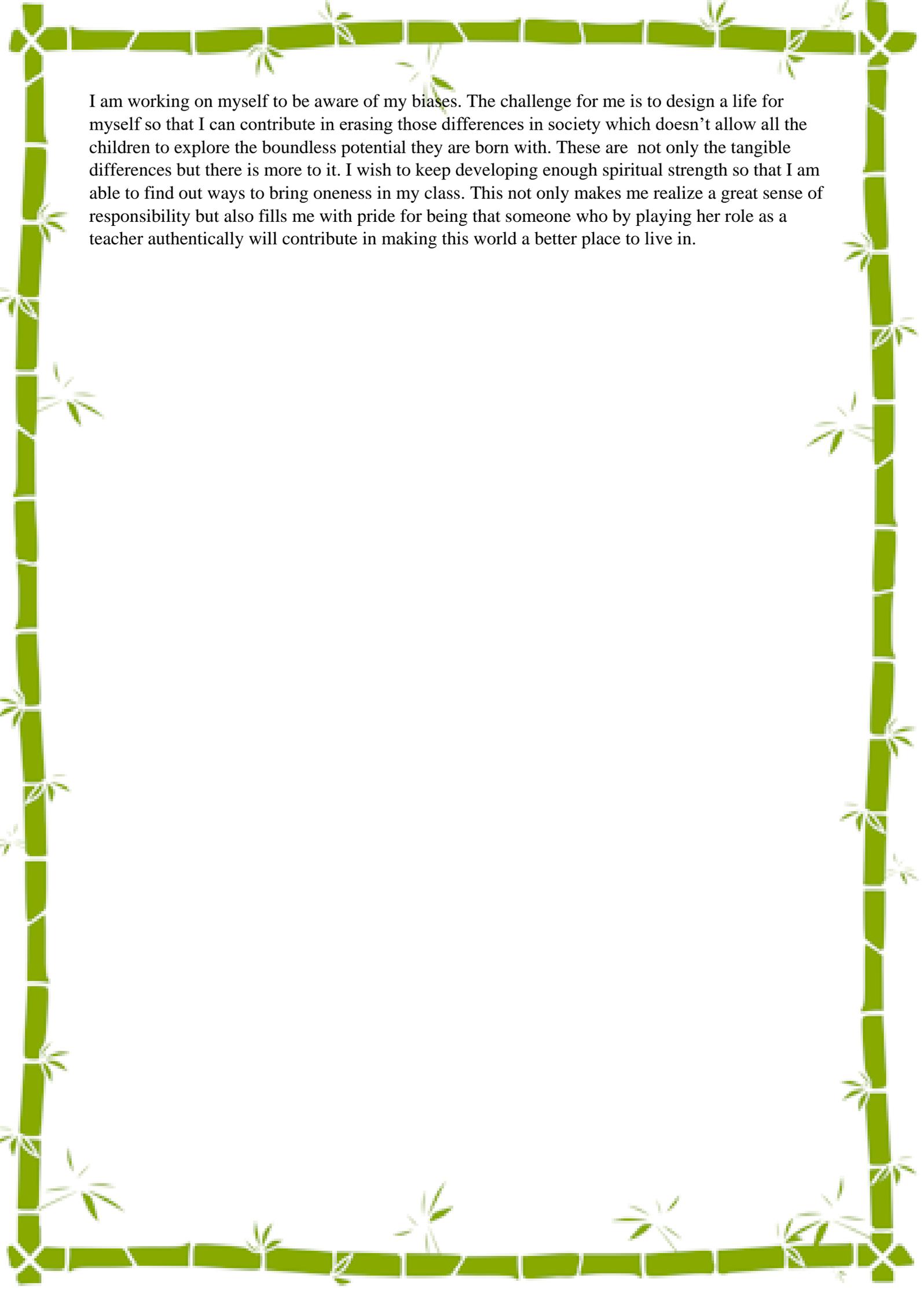
I aspire to be a choreographer, I can dance whole day long.” “I will be a doctor one day and treat the people of my community for free.” “I wish to serve my nation after becoming a policeman.” It was heartening to listen to such words. Above voices are of the children of Motilal Nehru Community which I visited with my friends , during SDMC-school-visit-days. Many of the owners of the houses over there have shifted to other places; so mostly tenants and a few owners from various states and varied religions and communities are staying there for as long as 25 years.

People of the community are very friendly. Very frequently, smiles got exchanged between us and them as we were walking in the tight lanes of Motilal Nehru Community. Whomsoever we talked with, was sharing his life story very openly. Common problems faced by the residents are of water supply and bad drainage system. Most saddening for me was to get to know about the use of drugs by children as young as nine and ten years old. Amidst all the challenging situations, it was overwhelming to see people’s gratitude towards God and children’s dreams for a bright future.

One family with whom I interacted is living in the community for more than 20 years, have their own house. The lady of the house is very simple but has a very progressive attitude.. One daughter has completed her graduation and is pursuing M.A. after marriage. She aspires to be a teacher. It’s heartening to know that her in laws are supporting her education. When the younger daughter told me that she dreams to be a choreographer, it arose a feeling of concern in me. Having worked in media, I have heard infinite number of cases where girls from humble backgrounds were misguided and got into trouble. I tried to suggest them to be careful of fake agencies and frauds. I really wish that lack of awareness of the concerned field doesn’t come in the way of fulfillment of her dreams.

Before visiting the community, I was wondering if many of the children from underprivileged background go to school just to avail benefit of food and money provided by the government. But what I got to see a liberal and enlightened attitude of most of the parents towards education and dreams of children with no vertical limit. I got to meet children who spend most of their day either studying sincerely on their own or by taking up tuitions. It was enthralling to see that they are crystal clear of their goals and are ready to invest just as much hard work required so that they can serve their community by solving its problems. Such mature, sensible and sincere words coming from children as young as ten years old glistened my eyes. They know the ground realities. They know that change is very much needed and they are sure that education can make it possible! Their spirit somewhere rekindled the hope in me for my country’s better future whose state at times saddens me to the core.

As an educator, I truly believe that I am a second mother to 36 children of my class and that’s a huge responsibility. Children in a class come from varied socio-economic backgrounds and varied values are absorbed in them because of several factors. In my class, I have to build up a bridge amongst them so that the diversity adds color to their lives and creates another musical note of bliss which adds zing to their lives. I understand that it often requires confronting very painful situations. In class if on one end there are children with very well educated parents and siblings to guide them, on the other hand, there are children of completely illiterate parents. Most of the children are coming from families who visit somewhere in India or abroad every year ,while there are few others (EWS) who don’t even get to visit their native village for so many years. This is where the real challenge for me lies that how effectively I adopt and utilize responsive pedagogies in the class so that I can cater to the need of children with diverse support systems at home. I really wish to make all my children in class feel valued and want that each child holds a high academic standard.



I am working on myself to be aware of my biases. The challenge for me is to design a life for myself so that I can contribute in erasing those differences in society which doesn't allow all the children to explore the boundless potential they are born with. These are not only the tangible differences but there is more to it. I wish to keep developing enough spiritual strength so that I am able to find out ways to bring oneness in my class. This not only makes me realize a great sense of responsibility but also fills me with pride for being that someone who by playing her role as a teacher authentically will contribute in making this world a better place to live in.

