



KPM Approach to Children
Atma Vidya Educational Foundation

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EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: THE KPM APPROACH TO CHILDREN

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There is a latent push in any man which is only a search for perfection. Rightly pursued, one finds this in one's awakening experience to one's real nature through the atmosphere between the real teacher and the taught. Education is only an attempt towards this. Atma Vidya Educational Foundation strives to perfect this aim.

SRI ADWAYANANDA (Sri K. Padmanabha Menon)

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Experiential Learning: KPM Approach to Children

Introduction

John Dewey, the American philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer, suggested that deep and meaningful learning come about not so much by the transmission of information from above (the teacher) and outside (a structured curriculum) as from the child's direct experience with life events. Proponents of experiential learning argue that is vitally important that education not be the teaching of mere dead facts, but that the skills and knowledge which students learn be integrated fully into their lives as citizens and human beings. For example, at the school that Dewey established in Chicago, USA, children learned much of their early chemistry, physics, and biology by investigating the natural processes that went into cooking breakfast—an activity they did in their classes. Dewey believed that:

"If we are to reach real peace in this world . . . we shall have to begin with the children." —Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)

Since education is not a means to living, but is identical with the operation of living a life that is fruitful and inherently significant, the only ultimate value that can be set up is just the process of living itself. And this is not an end to which studies and activities are subordinate means; it is the whole of which they are ingredients.

This naturally leads us to the starting point for all discussions on education. First, we must establish the purpose, aims and goals of education itself. This then provides the context to discuss experiential learning and the KPM Approach to Children.

Aim of Education: The National Curriculum Framework

The revised National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for India (NCERT, 2005) provides a good starting point for a discussion of educational aims. The NCF states that learning has become a burden and a stress for children, and that this “provides evidence of a deep distortion in educational aims and quality.” The NCF points towards the aims of education with five guiding principles for education:

"But if you ask what is the good of education in general, the answer is easy: that education makes good men, and that good men act nobly." — Plato, Greek philosopher (c. 428- c. 348)



1. Connecting knowledge to life outside the school
2. Ensuring that learning is shifted away from rote methods
3. Enriching the curriculum to provide for overall development of children rather than remaining textbook centric
4. Making examinations more flexible and integrated with classroom life
5. Nurturing an overriding identity informed by caring concerns within the democratic polity of the country.

The NCF recommends that schools relate the teaching of maths and science to children's everyday experiences, and that children enter the world of formal learning through the language of their home and environment. Schools should encourage teachers to enhance children's natural desire and strategies to learn, and recognize that activity is the heart of children's attempts to express, handle objects, explore their natural and social milieu, and to grow up healthy.

The NCF recognizes that personal, social and academic development are all important in a child's education. The beginning of the NCF has a quotation from Rabindranath Tagore's essay on "Civilization and Progress," in which the poet reminds us of "the child's generous joy in his play" and "the child's creative spirit." The NCF goes on to discuss the valid and uncontested basic aims of education:

The basic concerns of education – to enable children to make sense of life and develop their potential, to define and pursue a purpose and recognize the right of others to do the same – stand uncontested and valid even today... Education must be able to promote values which foster peace, humaneness and tolerance in a multi-cultural society (p. 2, National Curriculum Framework 2005).

Education should also empower individuals to choose peace as a way of life and enable them to become managers rather than passive spectators of conflict.

This echoes the sentiments of Mahatma Gandhi, who dreamt of an India in which every individual discovers and realizes his or her talents and potential by working with others towards restructuring the world, which continues to be characterized by conflicts and strife. *Nai Talim*



emphasized self-reliance and the dignity of the individual, which would form the basis of social relations characterized by non-violence within and across society.

The NCF also reminds us of the impact of the examination system on any educational system, and recommends reform of the examination system to resolve the growing problem of psychological pressure on children, especially in classes X and XII. This is undoubtedly a key point. A ‘child-unfriendly’ examination system can lead to emphasis on marks and rewards, to the detriment of the integrated personal, social and academic development of the child. As Dewey observed:

...the premium so often put in schools upon external "discipline," and upon marks and rewards, upon promotion and keeping back, are the obverse of the lack of attention given to life situations in which the meaning of facts, ideas, principles, and problems is vitally brought home (p. 235).

The “deep distortion in educational aims and quality” that NCF identifies, therefore, requires us to carefully consider the aims of education itself. Education needs to value and honour the fundamental dignity of each individual child. It needs to address the integrated personal, social and academic development of the child. It needs to give meaning and be meaningful for each child, and help him/her develop a sense of purpose in life, and contribute to the overall welfare of society. This is the aim of the KPM Approach to Children.

"If you want to change the world, you have to start with education."
— Sri Adwayananda
(Sri K. Padmanabha Menon)

Experiential Learning: **The KPM Approach to Children**

The KPM Approach to Children is based on the following paragraph written by its founder, Sri K. Padmanabha Menon:

There is a latent push in any man which is only a search for perfection. Rightly pursued, one finds this in one’s awakening experience to one’s real nature through the atmosphere between the real teacher and the taught. Education is only an attempt towards this. Atma Vidya Educational Foundation strives to perfect this aim.

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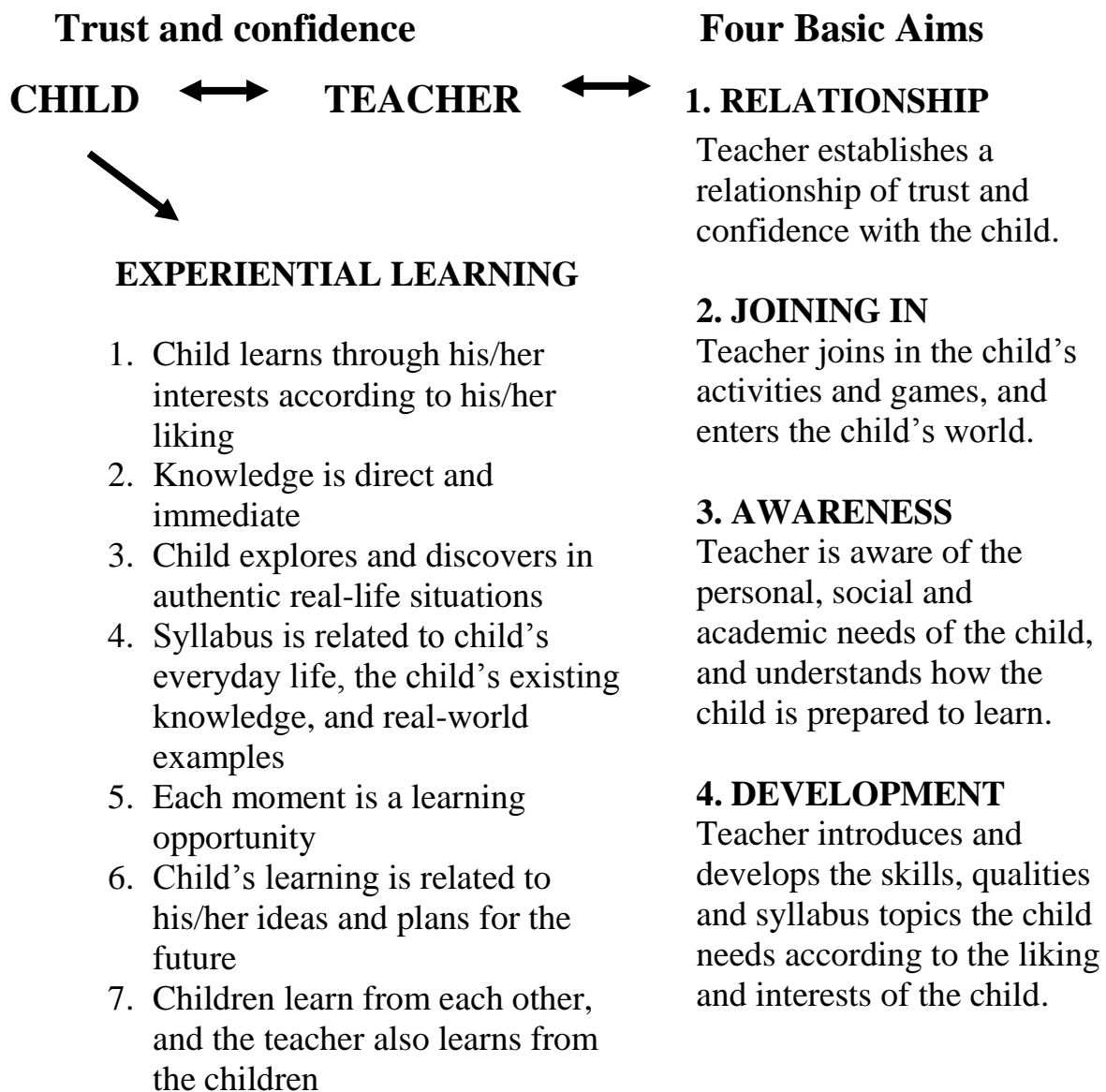


Inspired by this paragraph, the KPM Approach to Children is based on the relationship between the teacher and the child. What makes this different from other educational methods and approaches is that the child is valued unconditionally by the adult.

FIGURE 1:

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING: KPM APPROACH TO CHILDREN

(Interactive teaching, with teachers and children learning from one another)





The KPM educator believes that the way in which we approach a child will determine the sense of value that the child develops for himself. A child will learn to treat others the way he himself is treated. If we do not value and acknowledge a young child's way of seeing things, his feelings and his interests, then he may not develop a sense of self-worth. If, on the other hand, we do truly acknowledge and value the young child's perspective on the world, his feelings and his interests, then he can and will develop a sense of self-worth. This acknowledgement and value given to the individual child is also at the very heart of the KPM Approach to Children, an approach to children that has been practised for the past nineteen years at Sri Atmananda Memorial School, a non-sectarian school in Malakkara, Kerala. It is submitted that here, in the model school for the KPM Approach to Children, there is proof of how it is possible to help children develop a deep sense of self-worth and confidence, value others and the environment around them, and develop personally, socially and academically in an integrated manner. So, how is this done?

The KPM Approach to Children: Four Basic Aims

KPM educators follow the Four Basic Aims of a KPM teacher (see Figure 1) which are as follows:

"The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled." - Plutarch

1. Teachers get to know the children and develop a relationship of trust. ('Relationship')
2. Teachers wholeheartedly join in the children's (playground or classroom) activities. ('Joining in')
3. Teachers develop an awareness of the skills, qualities and syllabus topics the children need. ('Awareness')
4. Teachers introduce and develop the skills, qualities and syllabus topics the children need according to the liking and interests of the children. ('Development')

The first basic aim of establishing a relationship of trust and confidence between teacher and child forms the basis of all teaching. Successful application of the KPM Approach to Children allows each child to learn through his/her experiences and interests according to his/her liking. Knowledge is direct and immediate, and the child explores and discovers in authentic real-life situations. The syllabus is related to the child's



everyday life, the child's existing knowledge, and real-world examples. Each moment is regarded as a learning opportunity. The learning process is also related to his/her ideas and plans for the future. Children learn from each other, and the teachers also learn from the children. The way KPM Educators apply each basic aim is discussed below.

Teacher-Child Relationship: The First Basic Aim

The KPM Approach to Children begins when the teacher establishes a relationship of trust and confidence with the child (the first basic aim). Much of the teacher's time and attention is focused on establishing this relationship. Teachers encourage and talk to the children, find out what they like and do not like, take

“My teachers and friends always rejoiced in my success and consoled me when I was in my sorrows. All the teachers and staff members were very loving and cordial. I used to share with them more than what I shared with my own parents.”

Graduate of Sri Atmananda
Memorial School (2005)

the children's thoughts and feelings seriously, put the children's needs and interests first, and make every contact with every child a nurturing experience. In effect, teachers value the children unconditionally. Valuing the child without limitation means responding to a child in such a way that the child believes that you accept the validity of his or her way of seeing things. Through this, the child develops trust and confidence in the teacher. This basic trust is not founded on "You should listen to me; I know what is good for you" but on "I hear what you are saying; I know and understand you." It is the willingness of the adult to adjust to the child's way of seeing things that enables the child to develop a strong sense of trust in the teacher. For some children, a level of trust and confidence can be built in minutes, while for others it may take days or even months. An effective teacher can quickly bring a child into his or her own "rhythms," conveying trust and confidence to frame the interaction. Gladwell (2000) calls this "transactional synchrony."

Accepting the child's own viewpoint requires a willingness on the part of the teacher to adjust to the child's perspective. It requires a willingness to understand and appreciate the impact and power of a teacher over the child's development. Haim Ginott, author, teacher and psychologist, correctly observed:



I've come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. My personal approach creates a climate. My daily mood makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be the tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humour. Hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or de-humanized.

Patience, practice, an ability to stand back rather than impose things on the child, and understanding how the child is prepared to learn are necessary to establish trust between teacher and child. Ultimately, the child needs to feel that the teacher is there to make him/her happy and has the child's best interests at heart. When this conviction is there, the child will naturally trust and confide in the teacher. Nothing can be more important until this relationship is established and the child is ready to plunge into an environment of richly textured learning opportunities to discover directly, at her or his current level of understanding, the same knowledge base the teacher has acquired.

When the child is valued in this way starting from an early age, he develops a deep sense of self-worth and value. This provides the foundation for learning in school and in his later life. This is why so much importance is given to it at Sri Atmananda Memorial School. Children with a sense of self-worth will be contributing citizens of tomorrow. They will naturally develop compassion and tolerance for others.

Since trust and confidence define the teacher-child relationship, the child has no fear or anxiety about exploring the unknown and, most important to the discovery and learning process, no fear of failure. The child, being synchronized with the teacher, holds the belief that shortcomings stemming from the exploration and discovery process can neither damage the relationship nor his or her own view of self. Indeed, the result of the child's activity may be inadequate by external standards, and so recognized by teacher and learner alike. But, because of the trust and confidence instilled by the relationship, setbacks do not become translated into humiliation or fear of failure, or attributed to personal qualities. Regardless of outcome, the child is always ready to continue the exploration and to discover again. Or to put it another way, when setbacks in the exploration process inevitably occur, the KPM child doesn't fall, he bounces. It is at this stage of learning that the child comes



to understand that the process of learning is more important than its outcome.

This leads us on to the second basic aim for the KPM educator, joining in the child's activities.

Joining in the Child's Activities: The Second Basic Aim

A KPM teacher wholeheartedly joins in the children's (playground or classroom) activities (the second basic aim). This involves the teacher becoming a part of the

"Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand."
Confucius (circa 450 B.C.)

child's world and being able to recognize his/her moods, interests and cognitive style with the result that the children begins to rely on and seek out the help of the teacher. This joining in the child's activities is vital, since it allows KPM educators to educate the child from first-hand experience, from an active engagement with learning conveyed through conversation, demonstration, investigation, problem-solving, and physical activities that promote the discovery of interconnections while encouraging the learner's imagination and self-expression. Learning arises from self-initiated activity. The role of the teacher is to awaken, invigorate, and support rather than to force the child's faculties upon prescribed courses of thought. It is to heighten the child's awareness of self and environment and to awaken the production and exercise of integrative thought rather than to load the memory with discrete facts. The teacher does not pour subject matter into the learner, but develops the abilities already in the learner, and in the process helps the child develop his or her own ideas.

Experiential education requires the teacher to enter the child's world—to feel the learner's mind, where it is going, and where it wants to take the teacher. Motivated by his or her own interests and driven by self-initiated activities, the child discovers the dimensions of an interconnected experience—and in so doing moves from an educational landscape that is flat to one that is multi-storied.

When a teacher wholeheartedly joins in the child's activities, the physical movements of the teacher and child are in tune with each other's words, providing a sort of physical and conversational harmony. Even before the



KPM teacher attempts to create a dialogue with the child in words, he or she forges a transactional bond with the child in which their movements and emotions are in harmony. This makes the KPM "encounter" different to strictly conversational encounters witnessed in the traditional classroom. When the KPM child and teacher talk, they don't just fall into harmony—they engage in empathy. They imitate each other as a way of expressing support and caring. They are emotionally contagious. They imbue one another with their own curiosity. It is not just a matter of the teacher being interested in what the child is doing, but that the teacher is happily reliving that interest for himself or herself and passing on that spirit of happiness to the child.

By joining in the child's activities, the KPM educator is able to create a situation or context where the child can practice and nurture new understandings, and draw attention to the context in which a child's questions have arisen, rather than what the child knows or does not know. It is easier for the child to remember and appreciate something if it is tied to a context and then practiced and discussed with other children. Most traditional classrooms do not function as cohesive groups or allow for teacher-child dialogue nearly enough during the day to have children practice and communicate what they have learned to others, not just to be "told" about it by the teacher or text. The contrast with the traditional paradigm of education that is characterized as teaching by imposition from above (the teacher) and from outside (the curriculum), and that requires the child to enter the teacher's world, is readily apparent (Figure 2):

Figure 2: Traditional Paradigm of Education

(Teaching what you have been taught)



In conclusion, the KPM educator who wholeheartedly joins in the child's activities provides the opportunity for experiential learning to take place. The KPM teacher also needs to develop an awareness of personal, social and academic needs of the child, the third basic aim.



Awareness of the Child Needs: The Third Basic Aim

The “distortion of educational aims” noted in the National Curriculum Framework emphasizes how important it is for each educational institution to clearly set out its educational aims and goals. At Sri Atmananda Memorial School, each KPM educator is aware of the skills, qualities and syllabus topics (‘Child Needs’) that the school aims to develop in each of its students. These are set out in Table 1.

Self-confidence and self-belief, to believe in oneself, one’s talents and abilities, are very important to all. If we have an enthusiasm for learning, we benefit both ourselves and our wider community. The abilities to practically apply what we learn to real life situations, and to solve problems and take decisions are also important. Learning to value and work with others makes life easier for all of us, helping us to get along with our fellow citizens, to be sensitive to those around us and our broader environment, and to live harmoniously within the cultural pluralism of our society. An effective society requires its members to be self-motivated and have “the understanding and intellectual integrity to sift truth from falsehood, facts from propaganda and to reject the dangerous appeal of fanaticism and prejudice” (Secondary Education Commission, 1952). It is helpful for us to have these qualities as adults. Employers today are also looking for these qualities. These ideas and concepts are compatible with the spirit behind the National Curriculum Framework discussed earlier.

<u>Table 1: Child Needs</u>		
<u>Child Needs</u> (Skills, Qualities and Syllabus Topics for Each Child)		
<u>Personal</u>	<u>Social</u>	<u>Academic</u>
Self-confidence Self-motivation Decision-making Problem-solving Ability to value others Enthusiasm for learning Self-expression Commitment and perseverance Concentration	Participating Adjusting with others Working well in a team and cooperating Leadership skills Communicating Accountability	Cognitive Strategies: Comprehending Applying learning Researching Formulating Seeing ahead Interpreting Comparing Analysing Observing Planning



Imagination and creativity Gross motor skills Fine motor skills Physical safety		Organising Integrating Inferring Studying English Speaking, Reading and Writing Knowledge of the syllabus (academic subjects)
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KPM teachers carefully observe the children, and develop an awareness of the skills, qualities and syllabus topics that each child needs to develop. They develop an awareness of how to talk to and approach the children according to their present individual personal, social and academic development. KPM teachers also know when to go into negative behaviour and modify it to the positive, and when to address problems. Most importantly, KPM teachers learn to understand how each child is prepared to learn, what will appeal to him/her and what s/he is interested in.

Introduce and Develop the Child Needs according to the Liking and Interests of the Children: The Fourth Basic Aim

How does a KPM educator carry out the fourth basic aim to introduce and develop the child needs according to the liking and interests of the children? When a young child feels secure and valued by the teacher, his interests – whatever these may be – are freely and naturally

"First, there were the fulfilled days at the L.P. and U.P. where we learned through play, where I played "chase," "hide and seek," "lock and key," etc., with my teachers and friends. Then came the high school days that were just as fun and amusing, where I experienced even more wonder and grew into closer relationships with my teachers and friends."

Graduate of Sri Atmananda Memorial School (2004)

expressed. If a teacher follows and broadens these interests, and introduces the child needs (including the syllabus) through them, the child will naturally learn and develop academically. If a child's main interest is dinosaurs, for example, there are many ways to introduce the basic skills of reading and writing and other subjects such as history, geography and elementary science, through the study of dinosaurs. When the child sees how what he encounters relates to him and his interests, then any subject is potentially interesting to him. KPM educators are trained to broaden and expand the interests of the child through planned



and spontaneous activities based on the child's interests. Learning in this way develops a deep love of learning in the child. Moreover, since there is no separation between knowledge and experience for the child, he automatically applies what he learns to life's experiences. Anybody can make a game of learning, but when it is the child's own interests and games with his liking, the learning remains with him.

An opening for an experiential learning activity might begin with a young learner on a tricycle earnestly asking the teacher a question such as, "Why is it hard to go uphill?" The teacher in turn might counter with the question, "Why do you think it is so hard?" A glib or shallow response would be probed in favour of one that recognized a deep and spontaneous challenge to the learner. The answer should not come from some previously heard dialogue, remembered explanation, or abstraction, but directly from a contemplative struggle to answer the question on one's own. To promote a resolution the teacher, acting as resource, might have the child demonstrate the struggle of going uphill so as to frame the question with a personal experience. Next the teacher might explore with the child what features of the terrain make bike-riding easier or harder, and make the connection to walking upstairs and walking downstairs, lifting something up and setting something down, so that the child begins to see the question she poses is broader and more universal. At this point, noting the momentum of the interaction, other children might gather around.

The teacher then might pose the idea of an experiment that would require the children to lift objects of different weights and let them fall to the ground, noting that larger objects are harder to lift than smaller ones, heavier objects fall faster than lighter objects. The teacher might tell the children the popular story of how Newton conceived the idea of gravity after watching an apple fall from a tree and have a child re-enact that experience. The point of the child's re-enactment would be to have the child pose the larger question: Why do things fall, what pulls them down? The teacher may read an entry on gravity and Newton's contribution to it from an encyclopaedia. The teacher-child dialogue might continue over time, probing more deeply the child's understanding and never missing an opportunity to extend it to new principles and people; for example, the physical similarity between gravity and the "pull" of a magnet, or Galileo's seemingly paradoxical observation that, under special conditions, objects of different weight fall at the same speed.



The KPM educator would draw comfort from the NCF's recommendation that the teaching of maths and science should be embedded in the child's experience and everyday experiences. The KPM educator would also emphasize with Dewey's belief in the need for children to learn through experience, as he explains an effective way of teaching science to the children:

The utilization of ordinary experience to secure an advance into scientific material and method, while keeping the latter connected with familiar human interests, is easier to-day than it ever was before. ...gasoline engine, automobile, telegraph and telephone, the electric motor ...Pupils at an early age are practically acquainted with these things. ...household pursuits, the maintenance of health, the sights seen upon the streets, embody scientific achievements and stimulate interest in the connected scientific principles. The obvious pedagogical starting point of scientific instruction is not to teach things labelled science, but to utilize the familiar occupations and appliances to direct observation and experiment, until pupils have arrived at a knowledge of some fundamental principles by understanding them in their familiar practical workings (at p. 287).

Introducing the syllabus through the child's interests requires the educator to use opportunities that arise to broaden and expand an interest to introduce the curriculum. If a child's main interest is cars, for example, there are many ways to introduce the basic skills of reading and writing and other subjects such as geography, maths and elementary science through the interest in cars. Such ways might include, for example, reading books on cars from the library, making a book on the different makes of car, discussing the geographical location of the different car manufacturers or Formula One racing car tracks, discussing the history of cars, how the engine of a car works and so on. This allows learning to take place naturally and at the same time it is a fun and enriching experience for the child.

The child acquires knowledge directly, and through this direct experience, the child's sense of acuity becomes awakened and learning happens with teacher as a resource. Children are innately curious and the amount a child learns simply by becoming engaged can be enormous. When a KPM child is fully engaged, the child goes deep into himself, unselfconsciously immersing in the experience, and because of the trust and confidence inspired by the teacher-child relationship, lets go of everything else. This provides the context for the child to expand and



broaden his or her understanding using the teacher as a resource. Since the child's exploration and discovery occur within authentic life events, the learning and knowledge is not achieved in textbook-size bits and pieces but as integrated wholes found in the context of experience. It is a world of ideas without the boundaries that so often capture our attention on the surface (such as a subject-divided curriculum) without ever deepening our view of the larger picture from which the ideas originate (Why were such divisions created; do they exist in the real world?).

Introducing and developing the child needs according to the liking and interests of the child also involves presenting social, cultural and subject-matter challenges to learners at their current level of understanding. It is a cardinal precept of the KPM Approach to Children that all instruction begins with the experience learners already have. The experience and the capacities that already have been developed provide the starting point for all further learning. KPM teachers are aware of potentialities within students' previous experiences for leading them into new fields, and to use this knowledge to select and arrange the conditions that influence their present experience. The KPM educator cannot start with knowledge already organized and teach it in bits and pieces. Organizing facts and ideas is an ever-present educational process for the child.

Successful implementation of the fourth basic aim of the KPM educator allows the orderly expansion and organization of subject matter through the growth of experience. In other words, it provides the continuity whereby subject matter is integrated, wrapped around other topics, and built upon, not fused with other knowledge. Knowledge accumulates like an onion grows – in thin layers, each layer indistinguishable from that below, or what was learned before. Thus, the child does not acquire knowledge as much as he or she is enveloped by it, even at times overcome by it, penetrating downward to the many layers below. This means that the learner's past and future have to be taken into account at every stage of the educational process. Nothing is completely itself without connections to other things. Knowledge unfolds as a seamless coat.

When the children learn through direct experience, and in a fluid, dynamic and flexible environment, learning often takes place not only through using the teacher as a resource, but also through the other children. The KPM educator knows that learners sometimes communicate



"sense" to other learners better than do teachers because learners share a common history. The conversation must be conducted on the child's terms, not the teacher's. A child who has struggled to grasp a concept generally communicates it better, after having learned it, than one who has had no trouble learning it, or the teacher who has long forgotten his or her own struggles with it. Some learners have the talent of translating messages from the teacher into something that other learners can understand. In the open and flowing context of the KPM learning environment, new ideas move easily from one child to another and from one small group to the entire group, making learning a social experience that is always subject to further conversation and refinement. Ideas often arise as a collaborative enterprise to which many learners have an opportunity to contribute, and to which all can feel a sense of responsibility.

The fourth basic aim also requires the KPM educator to carefully guide the child in positive directions, so the child develops the skills and qualities s/he needs. However, in attempting to provide such guidance scolding the young child, humiliating her or forcing her to do something will not be productive. The consequence of such scolding or forcing will be to make the child feel that her feelings and opinions are of no consequence. If repeated on a regular basis, the negative feelings of the child will become part of her character, and the child is likely to develop a low sense of self-worth with all the adverse consequences that follow from this. Moreover, it may not always prevent the child from going in negative directions on a lasting basis. The child, of course, needs to feel valued and receive guidance at the same time.

In the KPM Approach to Children, although the teacher does have a sense of what is good for the child, guidance always starts from the acknowledgement, recognition, and valuing of that individual child, starting from wherever he is. This is a key point. If the guidance does not start from valuing the child and from where the child is, then the child will feel the teacher is there not to help but to criticize. If, on the other hand, the child feels valued by the teacher, and trust and confidence is there, then it is possible for the teacher to help and guide children in positive directions, and the child will be receptive to such guidance.

For example, in a conflict situation between children, the KPM educator's concern will be both for the aggressor and the hurt child. The feelings of



the hurt child, which are fear and pain, need to be acknowledged. The teacher needs to help the child to be happy again, without resentment. The teacher also needs to look to the feelings of the aggressor, which may be anger, revenge or frustration. Punishing the aggressor without helping him will only cement the negative feelings to the character of the child. The aggressor's feelings must be acknowledged and soothed. If the aggressor is rejected at this point, he will learn that he is a failure and no one cares about the hurt/pain he is trying to express. This is the starting point of violence against others. When these feelings are regularly understood from a young age, the inner desire for them is removed. At the same time, the teacher needs to encourage the child in the right direction, and help him see that he can achieve his aims without hurting others. But the starting point is the value given to the individual child, since this helps to provide the child with a strong sense of self-worth and makes the child open to the guidance of the teacher.

This support and positive guidance from the KPM educator allow the child to cast aside the baggage of insecurity, prejudice, and anger and grow into whole adults while following their own, individual way of learning. Children develop tolerance and the ability to value others and work well with others.

KPM Approach to Children: Conclusion

The four basic aims for KPM educators turn education from something that is forced upon the child into something that is fun and enriching, and transforms the educational process. Play and learning are seamlessly integrated. The child develops a deep love and enthusiasm for learning that

“We believe that the prayers and blessings of our parents and teachers carry us forward to work with honesty, dedication and devotion for the betterment of all living creatures and our planet.”

Graduate of Sri Atmananda
Memorial School (2005)

become part of the child's character and stay with him. The experience of Sri Atmananda Memorial School is that children educated in the KPM Approach to Children generally do well in standardized examination tests and go on to perform well in their higher studies at university. Most importantly, this shows that we can help children to do well in their academic studies and at the same time value the children and develop



qualities such as the ability to work with and value others, tolerance and compassion.

The teacher-child relationship of trust and confidence is the first basic aim for KPM educators; it is difficult to imagine meaningful experiential learning without it. This relationship must be present for experiential learning to occur. The primary goal of the teacher is to inspire trust and confidence. The child is unconditionally valued and so learns that regardless of any outcome the trust and confidence she places in the teacher-child relationship will remain unchanged. The educator, aware of the child needs, joins in the child's activities and enters the child's world. The child pursues personally relevant goals, using the teacher as a resource, so that learning is direct and immediate. This all emphasizes the importance of experiential learning, and the need for close understanding between students and teachers.



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