



To perceive or not to



"Because one believes in oneself, one doesn't try to convince others. Because one is content with oneself, one doesn't need others' approval. Because one accepts oneself, the whole world accepts him or her" - Lao Tzu

How do we help our children to become less anxious in today's world? To have confidence in themselves and use all experiences coming their way to become stronger and sharper. To develop different ways to look at a situation, to interpret the various outcomes and how they can or will affect them. We need to help them to develop the power of perception, which will empower them.

I will share a story here which I had read long ago and have been using it in my classrooms to help students understand themselves and the world differently.

The wealthy man

Author unknown

I heard a story about a father, a very wealthy man, who decided to send his son off to understand and appreciate how fortunate he was. So he decided to send him to what the father considered to be a poor family out in the countryside. When the son returned three days later, the father said, "Well son, did you see how poor people can live?" "Yes father, I did," said the son. "Tell me what you saw?" said the father. "Well, I saw that we have expensive lamps imported from Europe, and they have stars. I saw that we have one dog, and they have four dogs. I saw that we have a swimming pool in our garden, and they have a creek that never ends. Thank you, father for showing me how poor we are."

Before sharing the son's perception, I would ask the children to guess what his experience would be like. We would make a list of them and then compare with the story. The story never failed to amaze the children with the unexpected perception of poverty.

The next step of the exercise would be for the children to remember any incident of their lives and see if there was a possibility of having different perceptions of it and to write down at least two stories from them. This worked well when allowed to work in a group with more scope for discussions.

What goes into building perceptions? What are the factors or influences which help us to come to any understanding? Self-concept, values, experience, beliefs, education, preconceived notions, present circumstances and culture, all these influence us to become who we are and how we perceive a certain situation.

Right from interacting within peer group in schools, participating in various school programmes to being at home with siblings and friends; our children are thrown into experiences which can empower them if they are able to understand them in all possible ways and then take the one best suited for their growth.

Typically one has to keep in mind how gender based thoughts work and help the children to distinguish between them.

There are exercises and lessons on perception building which are being conducted in classrooms. Edward De Bono exercises in lateral thinking are very helpful to delay judgement before gaining a better perspective.

I believe if we adults can allow new experiences to come into our children's lives, give them the tools to analyse them and how they react to them and use them to strengthen their further life; it would be our best gift to them.

About the author - Ranjini Mitra

Ranjini is an experienced Maths teacher and researcher. She has pioneered award winning educational programs and has played a key role in educational development. Her experience in Transcendental Meditation and work as a Reiki practitioner helps her to create a safe and conductive classroom for children. Ranjini will be conducting Author In courses on Maths and Innate Intelligences.

Ofsted to put 'more emphasis' on leadership to avoid punishing toughest schools



"If we did, it would not be fair and it would not be objective, and we would end up lowering expectations for disadvantaged children for whom underperformance is not and never should be predestined," she said.

"No one should be penalised for working in a challenging school"

She said that, instead, Ofsted recognised what it takes for a leadership and management team to turn

Chief inspector Amanda Spielman challenges the 'myth' that schools in poor areas are disadvantaged in inspections. Ofsted will place more emphasis on its judgements about the leadership and management of schools in a bid to ensure that no one is penalised for working in those with challenging intakes.

Chief inspector Amanda Spielman, addressing the Learning to Shape Birmingham conference this afternoon, tackled the "myth" that schools in more deprived areas are disadvantaged when they are inspected.

She said that Ofsted does recognise the challenges facing schools in areas of high disadvantage, even though people told her it did not feel like it.

Ms Spielman said she had seen first-hand the challenges of turning around schools with deep problems, but insisted that this did not mean that Ofsted could "lower the bar" on its overall judgements for these schools.

around such schools. She told the conference that, among schools in the "good" category, those with the toughest intakes are twice as likely to be rated "outstanding" for leadership and management than those with more advantaged intakes.

She said: "We will be putting more emphasis on this particular judgement than we have done in the past to make it absolutely clear that no head, no manager, no teacher, no teaching assistant, anyone in a school, should be penalised for working in a challenging school.

"I hope that governors, MATs [multi academy trusts], local authorities, school commissioners, who all make important decisions on the back of our judgements, will do the same."

Ms Spielman added: "We, like everybody else, truly want to encourage ambitious, talented people to work in the toughest schools."



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www.authorinme.com
info@authorinme.com
01494 265002

