



Virtual Learning: Here's how you can find your center during Covid-19

Some key pointers have been discussed below about how you can find your center through Virtual learning.



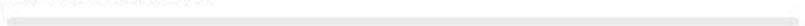
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"Children learn more from what you are than what you teach."

- W.E.B. DuBois

It always begins with you

We have heard this time and again that children grow up to be the adults they experience around them. This is not only true for skills and behaviours they develop but also for certain deeper faculties of the mind such as the ability to pay attention, building resilience, discernment and so on.

In times of a pandemic when there is a sense of uncertainty and everyone is operating from a space of anxiety and fear, it is even more critical that we as parents and educators intentionally take time out to center ourselves and find out tools, methods and practices to consciously tune inwards each day.



Whenever we are confronted with fear, our brain is wired to respond through freeze, fight or flight and as a result we lose connection with some of the critical executive functions of our brain such as problem solving, self-regulation, working memory, focus and so on. Now imagine it at home and in school our children are constantly sensing fear, anxiety and unrest in the adults; they will imbibe the same and will not be able to access some of these critical thinking skills that actually help them in learning. In such a situation, instead of repeatedly asking them to focus, it will be extremely useful to pause and spend time centering ourselves so that we invest in preparing ourselves as a resource for them to learn from.

Norms and expectations

Apart from being a role model, we need to be collaborators and collectively create norms and expectations around how we want to be as learners and as a class community. Taking a few days at the beginning of the school year to create a class constitution or norms and agreements with your students will go a long way in helping them understand what to expect in their learning space.

These can be social as well as academic agreements. Formulating these norms along with students gives them a sense of ownership and they tend to stick to it more. You will be surprised by the ideas they will contribute towards these norms.

Keep revisiting these norms before you begin your day/ lesson and you will see a difference in the level of focus of your students.

Be responsive, Be intentional, Be planned

In my experience, there are three states of being that have proved to be extremely useful for any educator across the globe: being responsive, being intentional, and being planned.

This is even more relevant and powerful in the context of virtual learning. When we are not in the physical presence of our students, we need to invest even more in our relationship.



This means that instead of giving priority to our goals and agenda, we need to be responsive and read the room to understand how our children are feeling today, what their state of mind is, what are they curious about and respond to their needs and curiosities.

Need to be sure for what we are learning

Along with this, we need to be extremely intentional and sure of what kind of learning we want our children to get in this new virtual space.

We need to examine what is relevant and meaningful to learn this year and why? We need to then translate this into learning experiences that best suit a virtual platform and give more autonomy and voice to our students so that they can steer the direction of their learning.

Conclusion

Lastly, I can never advocate enough for the need for planning. Especially in the context of virtual learning, with students joining us from their homes, we do not always have control over the environment they are in. What we do have in our hands is the quality of engagement.

To ensure that our children get the most engrossing experiences in their virtual classes, our planning has to be done mindfully while attempting to differentiate as much as possible to cater to every child.

A well-crafted plan will not only ensure a better learning experience and resources for each child but also help us as educators to prepare ourselves mentally before we enter our virtual class.

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