

TIMES they are a-changing and so are schools. Bookish knowledge is gradually taking a backseat, with the emphasis shifting to activity-based methods of disseminating education to provide children that extra edge in a fiercely competitive world.

Ahmedabad, like any other growing city, has been targeted by almost all the companies working in the field of education.

Officials from the Apple Interactive Learning System were recently in Ahmedabad to introduce computers to schools so that students can learn in a

completely new format. Says Pinky Chavrovik, Director of Apple's iLearn project, "We intend to teach students to incorporate computers in their day-to-day learning process. They will be able to use 3D graphics and use the computer for computers and complex mathematical

problems. We may begin with one or two schools and offer everything from introductory to training at a nominal fee. This will be open to other schools and students but at a later date."

Similar attempts are being made by Schoolnet which is in the process of launching academic disc-based learning in schools. It is also approaching schools for holding tests that will enable students to

assess their strengths and weaknesses in English, Mathematics and Science. The students will be giving exams and getting a certificate from the Cambridge International Examinations based on their performance.

Then there are special help programmes being run by Delhi Public School together with Nalanda Institute aimed at first identifying and then helping students with Learning Disabilities (LD). One target group are students who have a learning disability and are not aware of it. Teachers and parents are involved in this so that special attention can be given to students with disabilities. Such children will also have the option of going to the Open School system. Says Margy Shroff, Dyrect, DPS,

Deek O'Brien was in the city in July to introduce his Derek O'Brien KG (Knowledge Orients) School Advantage. The school advantage aims at enhancing those skills of students which are generally not looked after by the school teacher. These include communication, self-protection skills, memory skills and general knowledge. After the lessons, it is done via presentations that are videotaped so that their mistakes can be pointed out to them. A special tape with Derek's comments on how to improve it, is shown to them.

According to school management, 174 students and their parents have responded well to KG. "We have received a tremendous response and all the three plans, we are already full," says Gopa

Ghosh, principal of Rachana School in Shalibagh which has introduced the KG school advantage.

According to Ghosh, the trend is more towards overall development rather than bookish knowledge. "In this competitive world, it is as important for a student to be aware of things around him, be creative, be perfect in his speech and communication to get good marks. Apart from studies, our parents want their children to be good at everything and be good for everything," he explains.

Siddiq, Principal, Executive Director of Ahmedabad International School, speaks.

"Usually schools fail to teach special skills which are just as important for students. Things like creativity, communication

skills, personality building are not the areas that schools normally deal with. However, the fact remains that they are important," she says.

The AIS, which is located in Vatapur, is one of the implementing schools of the International Baccalaureate programme which is called IBO PV, for primary students.

The particular teaching technique developed by the International Baccalaureate Organisation (IB), an international organisation based in Australia, focuses on specially designed activity-based programmes to develop general knowledge, communication and presentation skills, confidence and personality building skills etc. The State board syllabus will be taught through this method.

Students are being taught everything from computers to communication skills to equip them for competition

Bookish knowledge takes backseat as schools learn new lessons

Bottomline