

AUGUST NEWSLETTER

EXPLORE. EXPERIMENT. EXCEL.



FOREWORD FROM THE FOUNDERS

Preethi Vickram

Tapas now nurtures young minds from pre-nursery to 5th grade. Embracing this diverse range of ages and learning styles, our core team embraced the challenge with a profound calling. This academic year commenced with a commitment to build not just an institution, but a nurturing village for our learners. The synergy of parents, educators, and students converged during the parent orientation, affirming that Tapas extends beyond the classroom – it envelops families.

These past months have reaffirmed that Tapas is a tapestry of all the stakeholders. The inclusion of fresh team members has injected varied perspectives, enriching this learning tapestry. As a united force, we stand on the precipice of a promising year. This shared journey with our extended family assures us that the unwritten chapters will be the most remarkable yet. This unity, this shared purpose, encapsulates the spirit of Tapas in its entirety.

PREETHI
VICKRAM

A Fun way of learning

As we embark in our new beginning of educational journey in Tapas as Early years as a project-based learning school, this is a crucial and exciting stage for the age group of 2 to 4 years and 4 to 6 years old learners. At this age.i.e. 2 to 4 years children are naturally curious and eager to explore the world around them. Hence its essential emphasis on playful exploration and discovery as learning experiences. So, the settling period was set for 2 weeks with fun based activities but our little learners are so awesome that they settled in one week. They were curious learners in asking questions about everything around them. Each one of the little learners is unique; it's joyful to be with them.

In our first project there was a session about vegetables where our class had lots of fun with hands-on sensory activities as they were exposed to real vegetables. Learners could touch, feel, and smell them, which was a wonderful experience to them as well as me. It goes like this.....

Once upon a sunny morning, in a cozy corner of a Tapas early years classroom, a vibrant vegetable shop came to life. The classroom was abuzz with excitement as a group of curious 2 to 4 years old transformed into an enthusiastic shopkeeper and eager customers. The "Vegetable shop" was set up with 2 chowkis turned into a makeshift display stand, proudly showcasing a colorful array of vegetables. The young shopkeeper chosen among themselves had gleaming eyes with pride as he arranged the vegetables on the stand with help.

As the shop opened, the first bubbly customer Jhansi waddled up to the shop counter. She looked at the collection of vegetables with wide-eyed wonder, her fingers pointing at each item. The shopkeeper Erish beamed and asked "hello ma'am, how can I help you?"

Jhansi's face scrunched up in concentration as she tried to remember what her facilitator taught her, then she said with her voice filled with innocence that, "I want, green cucumber and 1 orange carrot."

Erish's face lit up with recognition. He picked up with a big smile on his face the vegetables as described by Jhansi and placed them in a brown paper cover. Jhansi asked the cost for the vegetables to which Erish said 2 rupee please. Jhansi handed 2 blank small papers to shopkeeper Erish and Erish said "thankyou shopping here come back soon."

WELCOME TO THE SCHOOL LITTLE ONES, AND VERY LITTLE ONES

WITH LOVE,

K. Navya Rao

WELCOME TO THE SCHOOL LITTLE ONES, AND VERY LITTLE ONES

In the middle of the activity, a small hiccup occurred when a little dispute arose over who would get the last cucumber. As facilitator I seized the opportunity to guide the learners through the conflict resolution process, teaching them about sharing, taking turns, and compromising: all valuable life skills wrapped in a vegetables themed package.

The project-based learning was not just about playing shopkeeper and customers; it was a holistic experience. The little learners learned colours from the vibrant vegetables, counting (till 10) as they exchanged paper as money, and even a bit of botany from their shopkeeper interaction.

WITH LOVE,

K. Navya Rao

And as our 1st block came to an end, the shop closed its door for the day. The young shopkeeper carefully packed away the remaining vegetables and young eager customers having purchased their heart's desired vegetables, their hearts brimming with newfound knowledge and a sense of accomplishment. The vegetable shop might have been made up of chowkis, blank paper as money and vegetables, but the memories created and the lessons learned were as real and valuable as any harvest. And so, the little learners continued their journey of learning through play, growing not only in size but also in their understanding of the world around them, one imaginative adventure at a time.



Embarking on the Exciting Journey: The First Day of Early years.





Embarking on the exciting journey

BY Afrah

The morning sun peeked through the windows as families gathered outside the school gate, brightly coloured backpacks hung from small shoulders, and tiny hands waved a Hi!

Nervousness and excitement mixed with a hint of apprehension as parents offered reassuring smiles. The facilitators, warm and enthusiastic, welcomed each child with a friendly greeting, helping to ease any lingering butterflies. This momentous occasion marked the beginning of the children's formal education at Tapas and set the stage for years of learning, growth, and discovery.

Inside the classroom, the walls were adorned with posters and colourful artwork, which created an inviting environment for the younger ones. As the day unfolded, learners began to engage in activities that were designed to foster social interaction, creativity, and foundational learning. Our day began with sharing stories during circle time by introducing ourselves. Then we explored various art supplies, by drawing and colouring fishes and painting an ocean, as we celebrated World Ocean Day.

Finally, we played with puzzles, blocks, and materials. Through all these activities the classroom became a playground of education. Amidst the laughter and chatter, friendships began to blossom. Shy smiles turned into conversations as new bonds formed over shared interests and experiences.

As the time was up, marking the end of the first day, little ones emerged from the classroom with stories to share. Their eyes shined with newfound confidence, and their smiles shined with a sense of accomplishment. The school year had just begun, and the adventure had only started. The first day of kindergarten is just the beginning of a journey that will shape their young minds, foster friendships, and build the foundation for a lifelong love of learning.

THE TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE: AN ANECDOTAL PERSPECTIVE

BY

Swati

I wanted to share an anecdote that took place during a recent maths class, as it beautifully illustrates the profound impact of kindness and acceptance on our students' lives.

In the midst of our lesson, a student made a seemingly innocent comment, asserting that boys should not/ cannot wear nail polish. The instinct was to dismiss the statement, but we knew that there was an opportunity to create a teaching moment – a chance to challenge stereotypes and foster a deeper understanding among our students. Pausing our maths class, we asked the student to elaborate on their statement, encouraging an open dialogue among the class. What followed was a genuine conversation about societal norms and the freedom to express oneself without fear of judgement.

A student, let's call him Kedar, raised his hand and shared a personal story. He revealed that there is nothing wrong with boys adopting girlish things. He said that his dad always “helps” his mom with housework. Both the facilitators exchanged knowing glances of helplessness. These children are so young and yet, have such deep rooted ideas about gender roles and stereotypes. The only thing we could say was that your dad was not “helping” but doing work that is all our responsibility.

Another learner, who was getting very uncomfortable now, said - “ People can't change their teams like this. They can either be in the boy team or in the girl team”. The facilitator ended the class by saying - “Yes, there are just two teams. The ones who are kind and the ones who are unkind. And we need to choose which one we belong to”.

This anecdote, while seemingly small in the grand scheme of things, highlights the importance of challenging societal norms and cultivating an atmosphere of kindness within our school community.

As educators, it is our responsibility to create an environment where students can thrive and feel safe to express themselves. I urge parents to continue these conversations at home, fostering a space where children can openly discuss their interests and personal style without fear of judgement.

Formation of clubs





Formation of Clubs

BY Reetu

A team without a leader is like a ship on a voyage, but without a captain.

School clubs and student councils are one of the most powerful platforms where students evolve and grow as leaders.

At Tapas, we have 3 Clubs - the Kitchen Garden, the Green Warriors and the Media Club.

Kitchen garden decides the menu for the entire school and will eventually plant their own vegetables and fruits.

Green warriors take care of the plants, do waste segregation and work on how we can make the school more sustainable and resourceful.

Media Club is responsible for news, entertainment and creating newsletters for their peers.

These clubs give children an opportunity to be a teammate and a leader. Having been a president of a club myself, I have learnt so much through clubs. Leadership pushes you to achieve goals with obstacles and complicated relationships. It made me realise the kind of leader I am. It's a process to know yourself, which is another added benefit of being a leader.

My goal for these learners is for them to have an idea of what kind of a leader they would like to have in their team and then be that kind of a leader themselves. Someone that they look up to, they can become that someone.

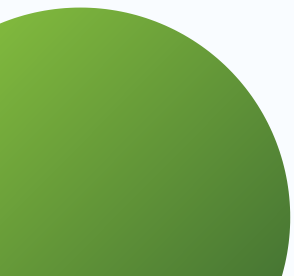
However, leadership isn't by luck or generational. It is something that you earn. It becomes essential that learners understand it more as a responsibility rather than a position higher than others. They need to work hard for a month, to prove they are worthy of becoming a leader.

Post one month, we will conduct elections democratically, elect new leaders by voting.

Afterall, Leaders are not born, they are made.



Tapas at Shankaraa Foundation





Tapas at Shankaraa Foundation

BY Mahua

Kids Explored the World of Invertebrates and Vertebrates through a Confidence-Boosting Skit Under the Open Sky.

Learning can be an enjoyable and memorable experience when combined with creativity and fun. It proved to be a boon, we had to stretch ourselves from the four walls to the open air at Shankara. Coincidentally, both Kingfishers and Eagles were learning the same topic and we got the idea of staging a skit about invertebrates and vertebrates as a reinforcement process. Eagles took the lead in writing down a skit on a fight between the two groups and directing as well. The skit and distribution of characters were the evidence of their alert and thoughtful learning of the concept. All the groups were beautifully weaved into the skit in an interesting and humorous manner.

This unique learning opportunity not only allowed them to explore the fascinating world of animals but also nurtured their confidence as they performed in the midst of nature without any adult intervention. The garden provided a picturesque backdrop for the kids to showcase their creativity and enthusiasm. Surrounded by vibrant flowers and lush greenery, children's excitement was palpable as they were formally allowed to fight against each other, be it verbal !!

While displaying their knowledge of different species using their facial expressions, roars and gestures the place was no less than a battle field of creatures for a while!! Maybe the beautiful surroundings fostered the connection better with the concept and the learners earnestly wanted to be in their characters. By incorporating performance in their learning, it became more meaningful rather than memorising some facts. This unique experience was a sheer joy to all of us and I thank TAPAS to make teaching and learning experiential and rewarding.



Tapas recognizes the importance of civic education and aims to provide its students with a comprehensive understanding of the election process in India. To achieve this, the school has developed an engaging and immersive learning experience where students will actively participate in an election to elect presidents and secretaries for their respective clubs. By engaging in various activities such as creating manifestos, designing logos, canvassing, campaigning, and participating in the final ballot, students will gain practical knowledge and insight into the political science domain. In addition, the school will organise masterclasses focused on speech creation, speech analysis, campaigning strategies, branding exercises and the development of skills as a proficient orator. These activities align with the school's goal of providing interdisciplinary learning opportunities that merge political science with mathematics. This entire process will culminate in the final investiture ceremony, scheduled to take place on the 14th of August, symbolising the students official induction into their leadership roles.

Objectives:

- To introduce students to the election process in India and enhance their understanding of political science.
- To provide students with hands-on experience in various aspects of elections, including creating manifestos, designing logos, canvassing, campaigning, and participating in a final ballot.
- To foster critical thinking skills by analysing and evaluating speeches, both past and present.
- To develop effective communication skills and oratory abilities among students.
- To encourage students to work collaboratively and demonstrate organisational skills within a given time frame.

ELECTIONS AT TAPAS

Republic of Tapas

Elections at Tapas



Keenly listening to all the speeches



Voting & Marking



Tallying the votes



Celebrations



Installation of new leaders



Oath taking



Presidents and secretaries of the clubs for the year 2023-24

SPEECH DELIVERY

Speech is power. Speech is to persuade, to convert and to compel.

These are the skills a leader also needs, in an election more specifically.

Knowing how important this skill was, the learners were more than thrilled to know how to persuade everyone for their votes.

There were sub masterclasses

1) Structure of a Speech

- They learnt the power of hook in the speech. How it grabs the attention of the audience and keeps the audience hooked to your speech.
- They understood that people will listen when you talk about how can you help them. So instead of boasting themselves, they wrote why they are capable to be the leader.
- Conclusion is where they fit in their slogans.

2) Body Language

"Our mouth and all body parts are a team", said Mishitha. The body language has to depict what the mouth is saying. Using appropriate hand gestures, giving everyone eye contact, using the stage and giving the right expression can enhance the experience of the speech

3) Voice modulation.

With voice modulation, the most boring piece of work can turn into an art, a story. Using high or low tones can really convey the emotions of the speaker. The pace and pause both matters, as they give effects.

With 3 weeks of practice, all the learners were able to implement some bits of the masterclass!!

BY

Reetu

The delicate art of letter writing that is timeless appears to be undergoing a gradual decline, not confined to India alone but resonating globally. From the earliest documented handwritten letter dating back to approximately 500 BC, sent by the Persian Queen Atossa, to the pivotal invention of the telephone in 1876 and the subsequent proliferation of emails during the 1980s and '90s, the pace of communication has incessantly quickened.

In contemporary times, the convenience of connecting knows no bounds. With a mere tap, we engage in video calls with friends and family continents away, incurring negligible charges beyond our prevailing data subscriptions. Consequently, the question arises: has the venerable tradition of letter writing truly lost its significance?

Amidst this rapid evolution, does the age-old tradition of letter writing languish in obsolescence? Notably, India's telegram service folded its operations in 2013, concluding a remarkable 163-year run. However, the postal department perseveres, even if the younger generation remains largely oblivious to its existence.

Clearly, the act of letter writing, in theory, still persists. However, it is a rare endeavour among the masses! How many among us truly indulge in this timeless practice?

My attempt to make my students fall in love with this somewhat lost artform demanded creativity and fun. To delve into the contemporary relevance of letter writing, an attempt was made to gauge its significance through a classroom debate. To magnify the gravity of this debate and to make it fun, the classroom ambience was innovatively transformed into a courtroom drama. Two teams, functioning as 'advocates,' presented their arguments—one advocating the revival of letter writing, and the other opposing the motion.

A LETTER TO EVERYONE

WITH LOVE,

Samiksha

This particular class emerged as one of the most rewarding language classes for me as a facilitator, for the academic year thus far. This class has proven to be a highlight of the academic year because I was profoundly impressed by the depth of their reasoning and their consistent ability to challenge each other's perspectives. As the class came to an end, a sense of accomplishment flowed through the room so effortlessly. The subsequent classes were about learning the nuances of letter writing.

Gradually, the students became convinced of the distinctive gratification derived from composing letters. They have embarked on a journey of letter writing and I hope they continue to be drawn to its charm.

They will be posting their first set of letters from a post office and their excitement is reassuring! The charm of writing and receiving letters indeed is timeless.

A personal touch was added when I wrote letters and posted them to each student. The moment they collectively received these letters bore a significance that matched my own sentiments. The excitement among the students was unmistakable and heartwarming. These were the first ever letters they received from a post office, their exuberance and excitement were palpable, painting a vivid picture of the impact of the written word.

I would like to end with a quote- Writing to someone, taking the time to craft each letter, to buy a stamp, to select an envelope, to travel to the post office—none of this goes unnoticed. A letter, before the content is even read, has already said, 'I care about you. You're someone special.' And that is a message that all enjoy.

A LETTER TO EVERYONE

WITH LOVE,

Samiksha

During my time at Tapas foundation I observed palpably, something I had always believed about learning: Play can help us learn better. When I found out about Tapas, I was incredibly excited to begin working here as I had discovered that many of the ideologies regarding pedagogy aligned with my own.

I wholeheartedly believe that learning must be learner-driven, experiential, interactive, multifaceted and multi-sensorial. The various methodologies used must cater to different kinds of learners. Progression should be evaluated in terms of the learner and their own growth, not by comparison with other learners. Most of all, learners should be motivated to engage in the act of learning. If they are to grow into humans who learn how to learn, they must see the value in what they are learning. This is achieved by constantly situating the content in context.

I observed how the Eagles and Kingfishers at Tapas were constantly encouraged to ask questions, and challenge the rationale behind each and every concept we put forth in front of them. They were given the freedom and tools to critically analyse the questions we posed, and come up with solutions that seemed logical to them. I was understandably astonished to see the significant amount of agency with which the learners at Tapas navigated the learning spaces, taking charge of their own work. This freedom did come with some tradeoffs, occasionally resulting in learners freely channelling their varying energies into excited pandemonium. Yet I soon realised that I would readily choose a hullabaloo over humdrum. For as chaotic as it might be, it was always filled with inquisitiveness and enthusiasm; traits which are unfortunately discouraged in other systems of education.

As I settled into the rhythm of life at Tapas, I began to realise how my approach to planning had been tinted by the comfortable colours of conditioning, which slowly faded to reveal the hues of something new. I was finally able to implement in my lesson planning, ideas and visions I had carried with me since I was a child: puzzles and treasure hunts, role-plays and storytelling sessions, games; these were all powerful instruments for learning, and I was in a space that not only permitted but encouraged their use!

THE JOY OF FACILITATING LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

BY

Prashanth

Gamification immerses learners in the context by engaging all their senses. It gives them agency by offering them decisions to make. It simulates the functioning of real-world systems in safe and simplified environments for learners to digest at their own pace. It creates visibility of one's own progression. It also rewards through the experience of fun, thus creating a strong motivation for learners to strive for achievements. Finally, it validates the learners on their growth, thus instilling a sense of accomplishment. In many ways, the methods of gamification were analogous to the tenets of Project Based learning.

My most recent employment of gamification was in a set of blocks dedicated to learning the concept of probability, and I decided to use an imagination-driven role-playing game called Dungeons and Dragons.

Learners would grapple with their destinies while roleplaying characters they created in a fantasy world built collectively by them. They would make decisions and face their consequences subject to the whims of probability, a randomising force that governs the outcomes of all our attempts in life.

In many ways, D&D represented my own attempt to step out of the safe zone of conditioning and make a gamble on being different. While my plan was as foolproof as I could make it, probability could have reared its beastly head and forces beyond my control could have derailed it completely. However, I seemed to have gotten a fortunate roll by the dice of destiny and the grace of the learners who embarked on this Journey with me. The learners revelled in their victories, and graciously embraced their failures. They showed how they could reflect on their decisions. They learnt to accept outcomes that were due to forces beyond their control. Most importantly, they showed solidarity; that they could overcome any hurdle as long as they worked together.

After classes filled with immersive storytelling, mirth and drama with probability as the cornerstone of our adventures, my faith in learning through play has not only been reinstated, but reinvigorated. I look forward to the journey ahead of us which I hope will be full of rich and playful learning experiences.

THE JOY OF FACILITATING LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

BY

Prashanth

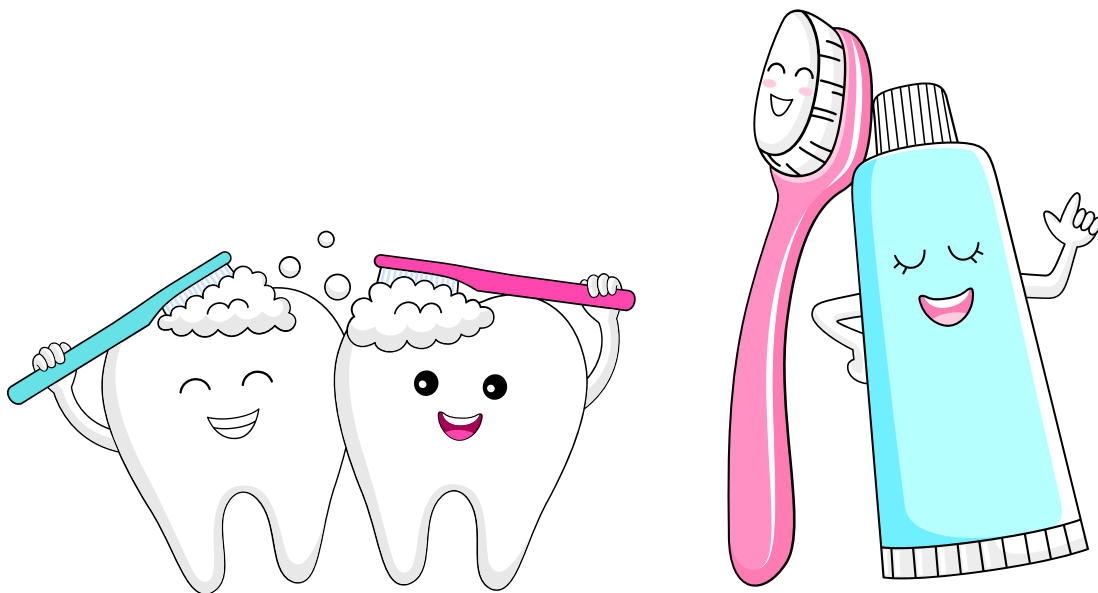
An interesting session with a dentist





An interesting session with a dentist

In July, a masterclass was organised for Kingfishers and Eagles on Dental hygiene. An interactive session was conducted by a dental surgeon where kids were shown different models and slides of the inner structure of teeth and their formation. Important information was shared and demonstrated on accurate brushing technique and maintenance of appropriate oral hygiene. There was a Q&A session that led to opening a can of worms and honest confessions of wrong eating habits and reasons for getting cavities at this early age. It is needless to say, these sessions motivate the kids to practise healthy habits for their mind and body.



Some moments among many





**Formally welcoming all
the wonderful new
additions to Tapas:**

**Prashanth,
Navya,
Richa,
Afrah,
Shalini,
Nayan,
Nandish**

Prashanth Raghuram



Dear All,

Thank you for welcoming me into the Tapas Team. My name is Prashanth Raghuram. I have done my Bachelors in English literature and my Masters in Game Design. I am particularly interested in exploring how gamification can be applied to education. I'm really excited to be an Educator at Tapas and bring my own unique spin to it. Looking forward to learning and growing with you all!

Navya Pramod



Hello everyone,

Thank you for the warm welcome. I am Navya Pramod have completed M.com and Vidwath in Bharatnatyam. I'm married and have twin daughters . I'm passionate about arts,crafts, music and dance. To be with children and help them develop is my dream. I'm thrilled to collaborate with such a friendly and supportive team. I appreciate the opportunity to work with you all, and I'm ready to contribute my knowledge and skills to Tapas.

Richa



Hello all,

This is Richa. I have done bachelors in commerce in 2007. I have worked as a teacher in an IB school 12 years back and with pre primary children before that. With my old experience I can say that working with children is always awesome. I am starting again after so many years after having 2 children of my own. Thank you for accepting me as one of the members of the Tapas family.

Afrah



Hello everyone!

My name is Afrah, and I'm excited to be a part of the Tapas community. As the facilitator, I'll be working closely with learners to cultivate a lifelong love for learning by making it enjoyable, engaging, and meaningful, encouraging young minds to be curious and enthusiastic about discovering new things.. With a passion for teaching and a background in Psychology, I'm dedicated to holistic development of children by focusing on their physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and creative growth. I look forward to getting to know each of you and working together to make Tapas a place of growth, learning, and fun and this school year a memorable and successful one.

Shalini



Hello everyone,

My name is Shalini and I have done my diploma in computer science & my hobbies are listening to music, dancing & browsing, I am glad that i got an opportunity to work at Tapas Progressive school as a day care incharge. Initially I was very nervous ,Now I have started to feel comfortable. Now Tapas feels like another home where people around me are so humble and nice to each other. Working in any organisation needs a healthy atmosphere and at Tapas it has been beyond my expectation . I am so happy & blessed to be a part of the Tapas Family & the important thing is that I learn new things each & every day in this space. Thank you Tapas for your kindness & warm welcome..Hoping for a long and fulfilling journey with Tapas.

Nayan Gowda



Hello all,

I am Nayan Gowda. I have completed my I T I diploma in the electronics branch. Excited to work in Tapas school as a school incharge.

Nandish



Hello all,

I am Nandish. I have completed B com, working in Tapas school as a school incharge.