

WISDOM MENSA ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2010-11.

Mensa India has been keen to branch and promote its activities in different cities; under this project Wisdom International school of Nasik was initiated in the year 2009. The main objective was identification of gifted students from standard 5th onwards and introducing the nurturing program for children and building awareness among parents was started.

Identification of giftedness: Mensa began conducting its screening regularly each year for classes from 5-6th std. More than 200 students were tested and 73 students were qualified as Mensans and given certificates. The school psychologist Mrs. Sucheta Kulkarni was trained in testing and was encouraged to assist in the testing procedures and later was able to test independently with a co-observer from Mensa Office. The scores were done by the mother institution Jnana Prabodhini Institute of Psychology (JPIP) pune. Qualified students were given the option to join regular nurturing classes conducted by Dr. Narayan Desai at the school premises each month for one whole day.

Visit to Belin Blank, IOWA University: Mrs. Sucheta Kulkarni received an opportunity and fellowship to attend the Belin Blank summer workshop on gifted education in 2010 summer. She received her certificate on gifted education.

Parents Orientation: Selected students parents were given orientation about mensa and its activities. Parents doubts or queries were addressed at Nasik. Dr. Devasena Desai, Psychologist and Parent counselor participated in conducting a parenting workshop on giftedness for some parents. She also met few parents who needed individual attention and were counseled to handle children who were different and parents had difficulty in coping with them. Individual counseling was available for parents while the nurturing program was being conducted.

Addressing Socio-emotional development of gifted students: As gifted children have several psychological issues with regards to being emotional, withdrawn or interpersonal problems Dr. Devasena Desai conducted individual counseling for each child so that they could have a rapport and share their concerns with her. The observations during the nurturing program or workshops were discussed with the school counselor. A personal profile of each child was maintained and submitted to the school.

Gifted Nurturing Program: Dr. Narayan Desai who is gifted and has 14 years of experience working with gifted children conducted the monthly nurturing programs for students. The main objectives were

1. Developing creative thinking and openness in expressions.
2. Challenging their conventional thinking styles to become more creative and bold in expressing their new ideas
3. Building their self confidence and promoting cohesiveness as a group
4. Addressing their socio-emotional needs as a gifted person
5. Building vision for themselves as leaders.

Methodologies adopted were: Discussions, dramas, physical activities, games, debates, lectures, audio visual movies, documentary discussions, group activities, project methods and poetry expression. Children were encouraged to think out of box and come with creative ways of expressing. Appreciation among fellow participants through praise and encouragement was used.

Eco Tours: Thirty five students participated in the residential camp organized by Mensa in Jan 24-27th at Kaivalyadham, Lonavala. (Detail report enclosed). Children who had been nurtured during the previous academic year participated with a few new students. They had the opportunity to apply all their learning into practice during their residential camp. The learning outcome was huge and significant as seen by the tests conducted by the psychologists before and during the program. Children learnt to use all their talents and skills or learnt to improve in the areas of weakness.

Future Projects:

1. Collaboration between Wisdom school, India and Belin Blank to attend the summer of 2012 for 15 gifted students at Belin Blank, IOWA University has been proposed. Dr. Laurie Croft's visit to Nasik in September, 2011 will further strengthen and bring a continued interaction between the two organizations.
2. Eco tour for the new students.
3. Regular monthly one day residential camp on nurturing has been proposed.
4. Regular parenting workshops for parents of gifted.

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WISDOM HIGH INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL, NASIK-A GIFTED NURTURING CAMP IN LONAVLA

January 2011.

Introduction: Giftedness and nurturing go hand in hand. A few gifted children from Wisdom High have been identified and since last 2 years nurturing program has been conducted by Dr. Narayan Desai. Several areas and topics have been addressed during the past year like creative expression, thinking scientifically, interpersonal skill development, and group cohesiveness and communication skills. It was essential that all these skills are tested in a different setting under residential environment away from their regular environment. A four day residential nurturing camp was organized in Lonavla for 35 students. It is said that children need to play and do activities to utilize their skills as play is unrestricted and open for children to express themselves in an unbiased environment.

Objective:

1. To observe physical, mental, emotional and social skills of gifted children.
2. To challenge their mental abilities into creative and other expressions.
3. To help them understand and accept their strengths and weakness as a gifted child.
4. To enhance their thinking skills and motivate them to continue to aspire for excellence.

Schedule:

Day 1: Travel from Nasik to Lonavla by noon.

- Visit to the Kaivalyadhama campus to orient and work within their groups.
- Games

Day 2: Visit to Bhaja Caves

- Yoga practice
- Preparation of each group activity.
- Games

Day 3: Republic day celebrations.

- Yoga Practice
- Visit to Khamshet tribal school.
- Preparation of the group activity.
- Psychological testing.
- Movie Time
- Games & forest trek
- Presentation of the group activity & evaluation

Day 4: Yoga Practice

- psychological assessment

- Imagery exercise
- Farewell & Departure

Activities: The activities that were conducted were only a means to meet the objectives set for the entire camp. Therefore while each activity was being conducted the children were guided into exploring their physical, mental, emotional and social challenges. The entire group of 35 students were divided into groups of 7 namely, ecology, tribal, yoga, spiritual and history. Students were to adorn the role of ecologist, tribal etc while participating in the activity. Example when the children visited the Bhaja Caves the history and the tribal students were able to make observations based on their given group. They had to work with their resource persons who were (Ms. Mamta, Ms. Mansi, Ms. Sucheta, Ms. Shilpa and Dr. Devasena along with Dr. Narayan Desai who headed the entire team).

Children had a food in charge whose duty was to ensure that all the members were feed and then have his meal. The group leader and assistant were encouraged to lead the group in each activity and arrive at the final presentation in the form of collage, drama or poetry. There was a member who was water in-charge and common food in-charge. The leaders also had to look into the well being of their members like provide juice, biscuits and snacks during the day and while travelling locally.

Resource Persons: Had to guide the students motivate them to participate and work along and within the group. They also had to maintain some discipline and observe children when they had to go for dinner or lunch, have their bath and report in time. They also had to sit along the students and encourage them to work on their projects and help them to work in their groups and inspire them to show all their potential. Maintaining discipline was also one of the roles and be a role model of a leader for their group.

Drop Outs & ILL health: Yatin had to leave due to ill health on the 2nd day by evening. Nidhi was sick for half a day, Ahmed was home sick and attention seeking for 1 ½ days. Mansi and Sucheta had head ache during day 1 & 2 respectively (therefore they had to utilize the break period for a nap to get better).

Children's Performance:

Day one: All the children took much time to get into the routine. They were more looking at the entire trip as a holiday and camp of enjoyment rather than learning. There were many distracters within the group were either a girl or boy used to disturb the entire group by either doing a misbehavior or not participating in any activity. This could be unable to settle into a new environment or compete with each other or draw attention toward self to be a part of the group. More energy physically therefore had to do a lot of physical activities and games to calm them.

Day Two: Both the groups of boys and girls were up by 6 am and were active in taking a bath and be ready after drinking milk by 6.45am for yoga. Bhaja caves which was a good experience for the children to observe a historical place and see it through other eyes like Tribal, Ecology etc. To discuss within a group write their observations and work around probing for clues, cues about the caves. Children were working in their groups at the campus discussing and arguing within groups and amongst each other. They were found challenging each others' ideas and thoughts for their group presentation later the

following day. Ahmed was moving lonely and at times not at all participating, Mihir and Prasad were their naughty best, so was Rane. They could have been more focused instead of being playful but it is quite possible they were looking at the camp as just a fun place rather than learning.

Day Three:

Republic celebrations the children participated in the campus celebrations and sang some patriotic songs. This was followed by the tribal school visit. Each group was allotted a teacher from the school who escorted them around the campus and oriented the group about the life of a tribal student in this school. Children could discuss with the teacher and gather information as per their group objectives like Historical, tribal, ecology etc. some children found it difficult to relate to such impoverished children while others were curious and wanted to know how they lived without parents and would their parents visit or call them, who provides them food and other amenities.

Ahmed and Prasad were found to be more casual and non participative, they were not keen to interact but just moved around and not being with the group either. Each group had to work on their presentations for the night. It was found that the leaders Ranvir, Nidhi, Zara, Saiyali and Akhil were learning to manage and mostly be more responsible than their team members.

Progress:

Shower and Food: Children were seen very energetic throughout the entire camp. They participated and were alert and active during early morning duties like bath and shower, no one complained the early hours but boys were found to wait until the late night at times to shower and had to be monitored. Food was also enjoyable and the children co-operated especially Shivam who was the food in charge used to eat last after serving everyone including the resource persons. A few kids would skip either roti or rice based on their likes and dislikes but resource persons ensured that each child had atleast one roti and some rice with compulsory vegetables. Again it was noticed that the children were used to more choices and were not happy to have less choice while eating inspite of sweets and drinks were served every 3 hours by the group leader who had the stock of food for his entire team.

Group cohesiveness: Most of the boys were playful and being naughty, some were more keen to do new things and work with the group, girls were sincere and keen to participate in all activities some were also in cliques and were found wanted to just chat or talk about other girls and incidents. It was difficult in day one to get them to do things together but slowly by day 3-4 they were seen as a group and were found interacting and helping each other with the presentations. The resource persons had to continuously question and challenge them to keep the focus and listen and absorb all the learning.

