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Education beyond boundaries – Thinking out of the box

In India, education is a reality and quality education is a myth. Most discussions about the future of education or education reform stop at being just those — mere discussions and are at best winning-dining get-togethers. In this barren landscape with few good actionable public engagements, iDiscoveri's School of Tomorrow conference comes as a whiff of fresh air. They say doing something well once is luck, twice is effort but making it work for three years in a row — that is the hallmark of quality. Running successfully for three years now, the 'School of Tomorrow' started off as a thought-leadership initiative in Chennai in 2009. In its third edition, the 2011 conference touched over 1,000 top educators from across the country in four cities — Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Hyderabad.

Over the years, the conference has evolved as the biggest thought-leadership engagement for education leaders in India. Educationists share a common platform to work out an agenda for shaping the 'School of Tomorrow'. Under the theme of "Education beyond Boundaries", this year's conference focussed on understanding how improving teaching learning 'methods' can lead to better learning. The launch of XSEED Digital was another highlight of the evening and got school leaders extremely excited about iDiscoveri's foray into the technology space.

"We started School of Tomorrow three years ago, with the aim to create a momentum for progressive change in schools," Ashish Rajpal, iDiscoveri's CEO and MD said in his address during the conference. "In its third year now, the School of Tomorrow desires to make a call to action on investing in innovations in the methods of teaching and learning ahead of infrastructure and resources."

Prof. Alison Gopnik delivered the international keynote address. Speaking live from the US, she dwelt on the need for uninhibited exploration, experimentation and reasoning for children. Author of such international bestsellers as "The Philosophical Baby" and "The Scientist in the Crib", the Professor of Psychology and Affiliate Professor of Philosophy at the University of California at Berkeley, talked about her research and insights in how young children learn.

Visionaries like Gowri Ishwaran, Craig Johnson, Paul Sellers and Dileep Ranjekar challenged the way we restrict our thinking about 'education', while policy experts like Chandana Khan provided the much needed 'view from the ground'. To quote one of the participants, "the opening address by Craig Johnson (superintendent of the American School of Bombay), was extremely touching and inspiring. His message centred on the power that each individual has - to break down boundaries, change education, and the nation. Craig's energy was infectious!"

The conference also provided a platform for selected schools that have imagined and achieved visibly better results in children's learning by doing things differently. Natco Public, Shishuvan, TI Matriculation are just three of eight such innovative schools from across the country. As Arunabh Singh of Nehru World School summarized



in his talk, "you do not always need more resources to make a change, sometimes just the right thought does it."

To elaborate further on these thoughts school leaders, principals and owners across Kolkata schools will come together for a workshop and dialogue on how over 700 schools & 25,000 teachers have raised the quality of learning inside classrooms at the XSEED School Leaders Clinic to be held at The Conclave on December 17. Yes, change is possible!