



Knowing how to learn is more likely to foster a lifelong love for learning.

Beaconhouse promotes active learning

THE days of us viewing children as vessels in which we pour the 'right concoction' of knowledge from the pitcher have long gone.

What our predecessors have chosen to overlook is that all children are thinking vessels; given the optimum environment, thought-provoking stimuli, sufficient support and age-appropriate tools and materials, and Eureka! – they would become our very own little Einsteins, Leonardo Da Vincis, Shakespeares and Marie Curies.

Active learning advocates the use of hands-on activities to create understanding of how the world works. These activities usually apply the theory of multiple intelligence, hence children who are more apt in learning through the uses of their senses may find learning more fun, interactive, varied, and motivating.

In contrast to rote learning which requires memorisation, active learning provides many avenues for authentic learning. Authenticity in learning means comprehension and relevance rather than recitation.

The types of active learning activities involve:

Emergent literacy – role-playing a story, show and tell sessions and singing and dancing.

Conventional literacy – function and purpose of print, for example, making a shopping list, reading street signs and writing a greeting.

Mathematical manipulatives – create, design and use interlocking links and cubes, pattern block and measuring tools;

Science – growing plants from seeds, exploring the outdoors, investigating elements (sand, water, air);

Social studies – role play or dramatic play, group work and group dynamics for example Leader of the Day, and housekeeping routine.

Through the process of exploration in acquiring knowledge, a child is later empowered to seek continuous learning throughout their life. The belief that the mind and the body are not separate is true especially when a child uses his own senses to understand the world around him – the very same way a baby learns and understands the world.

Therefore, knowing how to learn is more likely to foster a lifelong love for learning.

"This reminds me of one of my lessons with five-year olds. It was a lesson on Robots. After the initial brainstorm session on what robots are which then drifted to the qualities and features of a fantastic robot, I gave the children a tub of playdough and asked them to create their 'dream robot'. They surprised me by going to the shelves to get blocks and tissue paper," said Beaconhouse Sri Petaling school head Lili Mariah.

They created their robots using not only the materials given by the teacher but sourced for other materials available in the class.

A boy made a robot with an armoured body using blocks and playdough that could protect people from danger and one of the girls made a fairy-like robot with tissue wings that could fly around and help her mother with the chores.

"I stood there wonder struck at how they had not only complied with the instructions but also adapted by including the functions for their robots. And the sweetest thing of all, their desire to help and protect reflected in their work. Now, who is the one thinking out of the box?"

Beaconhouse will be having its open day on Oct 8 between 10am-3pm. There are discounts for those who register on that day.

● For more information, call 1800 223 226, log on to www.beaconhouse.edu.my or visit the school.