

Remembering Sanskrit verses- a moral teaching- learning practice

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Best Practice

1. Title of the Practice:

Remembering Sanskrit verses- a moral teaching-learning practice

2. Objectives of the Practice:

The objective of this practice is to keep the students and teachers closer to the important aspects of Sanskrit literature, moral teachings inside the verses and to keep ready for any interview, talks and examinations.

The underlying principle of this practice is to at least partially continue the age-old practice of storing Sanskrit wisdom in memory, which helps analysis even without the help of the actual text at hand.

3. The Context:

The contextual feature lies in its drive to inspire the students to go into the text and not to the translations. The main challenge to inspire the students to memorize verses and texts and convince them that such a practice will not only improve their career but will also lead them in good path. A teacher has to participate with students in memorizing texts.

4. The Practice:

Any higher learning needs an instant source of the subject which can be utilised any time. In the tradition of Sanskrit teaching and learning, memorisation of the basic texts is an age-old practice. In the modern education stream, it has lost its ethos. But this practice has a uniqueness in that it can impress the listener, can help the speaker, researcher, analyser and a doer of comparisons. It has a huge benefit in higher education in which students need enfoldment of their talent through the E-Books or hard copies of books.

Power of memorising is not the same for all. So, some have to constrain themselves to the small areas of texts. Memorising is completely different from the creative thinking – although the former helps the latter in many cases.

5. Evidence of Success:

Every Semester provides new and interesting books to the students. Teacher talks about the Departmental prizes for them who memorize and recite texts in different competitions before the celebration of Sanskrit Day in the Department. The outcome of this practice has been seen as many students, keeping different Sanskrit texts or portions on lips and winning prizes due to this in recitation competitions during Sanskrit Day Celebration. It is not that all students join in this practice. But many do join and get prizes too. Those who do not win any prize get the participation certificate. However, they all later feel that this practice builds confidence in them for facing the examinations, debates and interviews.

6. Problems Encountered and Resources Required:

It is not easy to inspire students for this practice. Nor do many readily feel eligible to begin memorizing. This is because Sanskrit is nobody's mother tongue now, although many loves it and a large vocabulary of Sanskrit is found in many Indian languages.

Students now-a-days, are distracted by other issues and aspects of their life and academics and hence show disinterest at times in memorising the texts – although they see that many have benefitted from it.

Remembering without the embedded meaning is difficult. So,

memorization also follows understanding – a process where a book is not sufficient. Here comes the need of a qualified teacher. Fortunately, the Department of Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit has many such helpful teachers.

This practice needs incentive for students. The Department provides from its Annual Grant a portion for the monetary prizes to the successful students. Even when the Department had less Annual Grant, this practice and the provision of prizes were not discontinued.

7. Notes (Optional):

There are many branches of learning beyond language and literature. The branches like Science, Commerce, Law, Engineering etc. should also implement this practice of memorizing the basic tenets of their fields and also the world-famous Sanskrit texts as Indians.