

Good teachers focus on marks; Great teachers focus on growth.

A successful teacher wants your students to score well. A wonderful teacher wants them to grow. Students' marks are important. They help students understand their academic progress and prepare for examinations. But when marks become the only measure of success, students may begin to fear mistakes, compare themselves with others, and study only for examinations.

As teachers, your responsibility is bigger than helping students get good marks. You have the opportunity to help them become confident, curious, responsible, and lifelong learners.

1. Look Beyond the Report Card

A report card tells you something about a student, but it does not tell you everything.

A student who scores 60% today may improve to 75% tomorrow. Another student may score 90% but struggle with confidence, communication, or problem-solving.

You don't ask, "How many marks did you get?"

You can ask, "What do you learn?" "What was the result for you?" "What will you do differently next time?"

These questions shift the focus from marks to growth to your students

2. Make Mistakes Part of Learning

You know, many students are afraid of making mistakes because they think mistakes mean failure. Your classroom should be a safe place to make mistakes.

When a student gives a wrong answer, don't immediately say, "Wrong." Instead, you can ask, "How did you arrive at this answer?" Your response is very important. It can turn a mistake into a learning opportunity.

3. Compare Students with Their Own Progress

One of the biggest pressures students face today is comparison.

Marks, rankings, entrance examinations, and social media can make students constantly compare themselves with others. You should not say, "Why can't you score like him?" You can say, "You scored 55% last time and 65% this time. " You have improved. Let's see how you can reach 70%." Your student's greatest competition should be their own previous performance.

4. Provide Feedback, Not Just Grades

A number alone cannot tell a student how to improve. Instead of writing only “Good” or “Needs Improvement,” give specific feedback. You can tell your student what they did well, what needs improvement, and what they can do next. Your good feedback gives direction.

5. Celebrate Effort and Pre-examinations

Every student will not become a topper. But every student can make progress. You can celebrate improvement, sincere effort, better attendance, participation, creativity, kindness, teamwork, and responsibility. When you appreciate progress, your students begin to believe, “I can improve.”

Teach for Growth

Your student’s marks may open a door, but growth prepares students for life. Your real success as a teacher is not only seen in the marks your students receive. It is seen in their confidence, character, curiosity, resilience, and ability to keep learning. Good teachers help students score better. Great teachers help students become better. Lastly, teach for marks when necessary—but teach for growth.

— Dr. Sajeev M S —

sajeevms.com