

TO BE MENTORED OR SELF-TAUGHT

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‘To self-learn or to join a coaching class’ - this question crosses the mind of almost all students and their parents when gearing up to prepare for an entrance exam.

The right to decide the better way should rest on the students, because each student chooses to prepare for a competitive examination depending on his or her ability to study. A key point to consider is that coaching is not complete without self-study. Coaching classes

alone cannot help, unless proper self-study is undertaken seriously by the students. Even coaching institutes give assignments to complement their in-class learning, making self-study is inevitable for students.

One of the primary reasons why students find a coaching class useful is because it systematises the preparation process, which many students find difficult. However, a coaching class functions at a set pace according to a batch and does not cater to individuals. Therefore, some students might not be able to keep pace with the class and may feel stressed.

Self-learning has its own benefits, provided it is taken up with diligence. It allows students to explore different ways of thinking and learning, and they can go through difficult concepts on their own. The process of self-learning improves the problem solving skills of students by encouraging them to actively participate in the learning process. Every student has the ability to solve problems regardless of their age, and while self-learning, students learn more about how to study more than what to study. In the current K-12 scenario, many courses have ballooned in size.

Thus, it is vital to know how to learn than just what to learn. Besides this, self-learning also induces self-confidence and discipline and makes students responsible for their own learning. It allows each student to tackle problems based on his or her capabilities. The best time to build this important skill is during the school years.

Additionally, quality coaching classes are not available in many towns and cities in our country. So, students have to travel to cities where these classes are available. Also, coaching for all the subjects may not be available in the same coaching institution. Thus, they have to attend classes for different subjects in different institutions which is time consuming and they are left with very little time for self-study.

In coaching classes, educators cannot differentiate the students based on their level of learning. In a batch that consists of more than 10 students, the class will move at a medium pace. The brighter students who learn fast will feel bored, while those needing help cannot keep up to the pace and are left behind.

This goes against the very reason why parents insist on coaching classes in the first place. A self-learning solution allows students to learn at a speed they are comfortable with. A good self-learning solution also offers a timetable so that students can benchmark themselves against real life competition.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking is also important against a much larger sample set. Quite often, the students think they are doing very well, but they have achieved this success in a very small peer group. Good benchmarking data at a national level is only available to providers who operate at a much larger scale.

Peer pressure also plays a very important role in coaching class structure. Many students are not comfortable with the subject in the first place; hence they go to coaching classes. But, due to the differential levels of students in coaching classes, these students hesitate to ask questions and cannot keep up with the pace of the class. Weak students may develop inferiority complex in a competitive environment.

Self-learning using electronic tools is a well-accepted reality in India today. Students now can learn from many sources other than their schools, be it television, radio or computer. Indeed, students are expected to know much more than what is available in static content like books or a set curriculum.

In fact, it is the ability to learn on one's own that is crucial for success in the world outside. Most people work on problems that keep on changing, there is no book or class that can prepare them with the answers - it is only the ability to learn anew that can help. Besides technology, coaching and self-study, confidence plays a crucial role while preparing for an exam. Taking coaching classes helps you prepare systematically.

At the end of the day, you have to realise that apart from deciding on coaching institutes and self-study, the main factor for your success in exams is still determination and hard work.

Source:

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