

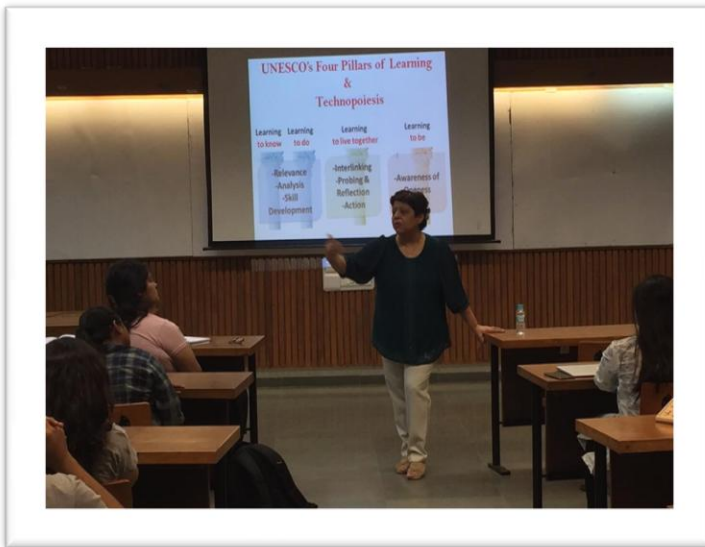
Report on Special Lecture by Prof. Coomi Vevaina

“I never teach my pupils...I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn.” – Albert Einstein

Mar. 19, 2019: On Tuesday, March 19, 2019, an expert talk with Prof. Coomi Vevaina was organized by the Department of Languages, Literature and Aesthetics, SLS. The theme of the talk was ‘Re-thinking Education in Digital Age’, a very relevant area of discussion. The talk was interactive and informative. Prof. Vevaina began with a story of a little girl who turned out to be her own childhood self. Emphasizing upon the importance to understand childhood phase, she conveyed her inter-connected message through different stories. The talk aimed to bring out various strategies for creating meaningful effect on learning environment. She presented her innovative ideas through interesting narrations and visual presentation.



Dr. Vevaina talked about a wide range of topics such as left and right sides of the brain and how right hemisphere is connected to creativity. She further talked about Artificial Intelligence (AI) and how AI can play an important role in literary interpretation & criticism and Augmented Reality (AR) and its amalgamation of digital and human



communication. She referred to *Technology v/s humanity* by Gerd Leonhard, which believes that “*Our world is entering a period of truly transformative change, and many of us will be surprised by the scale and pace of developments we simply hadn’t anticipated*”. Tremendous potential lies in these exponential technological advances, yet with these new opportunities, tremendous new responsibilities

also arrive. A combinatory set of ‘*science and technology enabling mega shifts*’ are coming together that will redraw not only literature, culture and society but also our biology and our lives. An avalanche of technological changes will reshape the very essence of humanity and touch every aspect of life in our planet. (Leonhard 2016). In a nutshell, she gave many examples from Neuroscience, Computer science, psychology, education and literature, to argue that there can be a way, an approach to reach out to student which encourages them further.

Dr. Vevaina is an active speaker in various workshops. She has two doctoral degrees, i.e. one in English Literature and the other in Education. She amalgamates both of the researches when she speaks. She retired as a Professor and Head of the Department of English) from University of Mumbai, and currently working in her organization named Centre for Connection Education and Management.

Her years of work certainly gets reflected when she speaks. She told her experience of transforming Shakespeare into the ‘*Cool dude Shakespeare*’ which made literature interesting and relevant for school students.



Dr. Vevaina focused on ‘what children really want’ in her entire lecture. She referred to many educationists who believe that the system of schooling in formal institutional framework is designed to process groups of students in standardized monolithic ways where the individual brains are wired for learning in a certain way. The examples from Shri Aurobindo Ghosh and Shri Rabindranath Tagore’s idea of education were also discussed to show how innovative ideas can be path-breaking in teaching young mind. Moreover, the idea on how we can create equality among teachers and students (without the hierarchy of authority) was also examined.

The former professor also gave example from her days in Mumbai University and talked about how she initiated student involvement in syllabus revisions, and how teaching should not be considered as *teaching* (preaching) but as a sharing of experience (among peers in a round circle). It was an interactive session where students asked their doubts and questioned if the ideas are practically possible to be implemented; where she replied quoting Mahatma Gandhi “*be the change you want to see in the world*”, and further said that a change is no matter how small is, will certainly make a difference.

Learning is a process, it’s an experience. Learning is never confined in the four walls of the classroom, and learning certainly gets more exuberant and uplifting when it goes beyond the walls of classroom. This small event, in many ways gave a long-lasting impact on student’s mind, and motivated them to take a tiny step towards transforming education.

