

Enders Elementary School, Los Angeles, California, USA

Nanritam's search for good models of running a school took the Nanritam team to Enders Elementary School, at Springdale Street, Garden Grove California in May 2015. This is one of the largest public schools in Los Angeles, USA.

The teachers in the school have complete autonomy over the class assigned to them. They decide on what sort of charts, posters and decorations are to be put up on the walls of the classroom.

The school bags of the students are kept outside the classrooms. The students are supposed to take out all that is essential from their respective bags before a particular class starts and enter the class with those items only. If anything is left behind and the student concerned is required to come back to collect it, he can do so with the Teacher's permission. But such forgetfulness has a cost. There is a wall chart on the wall with the name of all the students in the class, and the offender has to deduct some points against his name for this lapse. Such deductions would physically translate into deduction from the time allotted to him for games, sports or any other activity he is particularly fond of.



The team met Mr. Brad Kenoyer, the class teacher of Grade V, who was taking a maths class when we dropped in. He maintained discipline but did give space to the student to grow and realise their potentials. The teaching was mostly interactive, with all the children participating actively. When the teacher felt that things were getting monotonous, he called his mother who happened to around on that day, (She is a retired teacher and a Tangram expert) to do some Tangram activities with the children for about ten minutes to break the monotony.

We were impressed with his teaching techniques which were very effective in engaging most of the children's attention. As we entered the classroom we found two of the students basking in the sun outside. These were the ones, we later learned, who were not able to concentrate in the class on that day. The school norms allowed them to spend that period outside the class provided they are able to catch up on the lessons taught on that day on their own. A student can have such breaks only for fixed number of days in a year.

We were introduced in the class as visitors from 'India', and the children could immediately link that up with their history lessons, invoking Christopher Columbus and Marco Polo.

The take away lessons from this school were:

a) Autonomy of teachers, b) making the students responsible for their action and ingraining the realisation that every action has its consequence – including dropping out from a class or two if the child is not in the mood provided the child can make up for such absence on his own, c) Parents are oriented about faith on teachers. d) There are no regular Parent teachers meeting, d) parents of recalcitrant students are individually contacted or the Parents themselves can seek an appointment with the teachers concerned in case the consider such consultation necessary, e) neither teachers nor parents are encouraged to make any negative comment about any child – including their own child.

Google photo link for this school to be attached

https://photos.google.com/share/AF1QipPSIn913XxGUlaG3133TVolqVjXTToXlrzd_FqkDbdcivQC81mBEM33hsuwd3sx5DA?key=c2Q5RUJXczd1Z0pjbjA2T19wNXVkcZnZIM3cmZB