

**THE TIMES OF INDIA**

**BEYOND BLACKBOARDS:** Children Learn In Open Classes, Handle Live Specimens  
**Science labs are happening hubs**

Garima Prasher | TNM

**Bangalore:** Spinning of cocoon, hardening of the outer layer, a silk moth laying an egg, and then a pupa crawling out —The chapter on the life-cycle of silk moth couldn't have been more interesting for students of Baldwin Girls' High School during a recently held science session.

From creating equation colour schemes to letting kids hold live specimens like human heart, brain and kidney; Science lessons have definitely moved beyond text books and blackboards. Some personal touch and fine tweaking by teachers are making science labs happening hubs in many city schools.

"The laboratory was packed on the day we exhibited the life-cycle of a silk moth. We also let children handle specimen organs like heart, kidney and brain. How a smoked lung looks different from a healthy one is very easy to explain with these specimens," says Phede Sheela Rani, high school science teacher, Baldwin Girls' High School. The school also conducts sessions with experts from the horticulture department to help kids with Botany lessons.

Educational institutions feel taking lessons to the lab attracts kids and helps them retain better. "Close to 90% of our Science syllabus is taught through lab work. Simulations, animated videos, E-lab sessions, field trips and even guest lecturers from institutes like IISc are invited to teach Science the fun way," says Sisi George, physics coordinator, high school, Vidyashilp Academy.

Students at Vidyashilp learn oxidation process through role play and dramatization. "Often kids get confused about whether it's a metal or a non-metal that's supposed to lose an electron. To make it clear, we organize role plays in class. For instance, to explain formation of sodium chloride, we have one child enact the role



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**NEW LEARNING TOOLS: MIND MAPS, POEMS, HANDS-ON EXPERIMENTS**

Chemistry is a volatile subject. To ensure formulae and chemical equations get registered, we use flash cards and mind maps. A lot of lab sessions are conducted, and students get to do hands-on experiments  
**—Chandra Ramasubramanian |**  
 CHEMISTRY TEACHER, BETHANY HIGH SCHOOL

Most of the scientific terms rhyme. When I take up a chapter, I filter out these terms and make a poem out of them. Kids are very enthused about such sessions and learn better  
**— Rachana Jayasimha |**  
 BIOLOGY AND CHEMISTRY TEACHER, CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOL

We have a weekly programme for students of Class III to VI. Under the supervision of engineering students from Jain Engineering College, kids perform experiments on concepts that are independent of the syllabus  
**— Archana Vishwanath |**  
 PRINCIPAL, JAIN HERITAGE SCHOOL

We have a separate department for hands-on Science. At these walk-in sessions students perform random experiments and draw conclusions. For example, students from Class IV recently devised a mechanism on how to drop an egg from the first floor to the ground floor without it breaking  
**—M Srinivasan |** PRINCIPAL, GEAR INNOVATIVE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

of a sodium and another the role of a chloride," says Saira Subramaniam, Chemistry teacher, Vidyashilp Academy.

To cut down on boredom, schools are going that extra mile to make Science lessons appealing. At Delhi Public School, South, teachers design their own teaching aids to help students with concepts. "We reach out to doctors and design personalized powerpoint presentations on various lessons. Recently, students went to Nimhans

to get a better understanding of 'control and coordination' of various body parts," says Naqeeba Taj, Biology teacher, DPS South.

When it comes to Science nature is the best teacher. "Science classes are conducted in the open. Instead of drawing pictures of plants and animals, we step out of the classrooms to explain concepts. This activates all sense organs," says Caroline Prathiba, Biology teacher, Ebenezer International School.

Interestingly, at Cambridge Pub-

lic School in Yelahanka, Science is taught using artistic tools. While chapters like photosynthesis and transpiration are taught through poems, hydrocarbon and hydrochloric acid is imparted through drama.

"Irritation or burning sensation after an ant bite is because the ant is sprinkling acid over the skin — This is how I derive examples from daily life to teach Science," says Radha Gurumurthy, head of department, Chemistry, Ebenezer International School.