

# **LOOK BEYOND TEXTBOOKS**

**SAMEEM.R**

**Principal**

*Arrahmaan International School, Melur, Madurai District,  
TamilNadu, India*

[shameem.r@arrahmaanschool.org](mailto:shameem.r@arrahmaanschool.org)

## **1. OBSERVATION**

Current education system completely relies on text books and emphasis on memorizing the facts rather than thoroughly understanding the concepts. Textbooks fail to draw today's students' interest. Teaching methods are too rigid and stubborn. Students have no freedom to think creatively and to question the content in the text books. Schools are considering marks as assessment of student's talent, when marks can be easily obtained by memorizing the pre-written answers from the text books. Schools are not encouraging research and innovation. Forceful study of the textbooks make students half-heartedly attend classes and will not do them much good, subsequently lose interest in studies.

Method of teaching needs a relook. Schools should encourage logical thinking & creativity in students. There is a dire need for revolutionary changes in Indian Schools. Not just the syllabus and pedagogy, but also the attitude change towards the learning environment needs to be changed. Our attitude towards marks and grades needs to be changed.

Actually, people tend to be losing interest in what they are forcefully obliged to do. It is just in human's nature to pursue what's new and exciting and detest repeated works. In such sense, going to school, listening to teachers, doing homework and taking exams are definitely out of the list of "interesting things". Students involve and do better in their own interested area. School should provide space for the students to Look Beyond

the regular Textbooks and four walls of the classroom, and to choose their interested learning path.

This study investigated the learning thirst of the Arrahmaan International School students from grade 1 to grade 8 beyond their textbooks, how students performed when they are allowed to select and study their interested area and thereby cultivated in students mind that learning has no boundaries.

## 2. PLAN OF ACTION

A team of six teachers had been formed and prepared “**Daily Contest**” which focus on bringing out the creative, analytical and logical thinking of the students under different headings in different streams namely;

1. *Spot It Out (Spot the errors, differences, vocabularies, grammar, etc. - Monday)*
2. *Surf the World (General Knowledge-Tuesday)*
3. *Math Genius (Math tricks- Wednesday)*
4. *Creative Buzz (Creative answers to be expressed through their interested language/Art- Thursday)*
5. *Crack your Brain (Aptitude Questions- Friday)*

*All the above contest had been conducted at three levels;*

- a. *Level 1- I and II Grade,*
- b. *Level 1&2- III, IV, V Grade,*
- c. *Level 1, 2 & 3- VI, VII, VIII Grade*

It was clearly instructed to the students that the Daily Contest will help to learn beyond what their teachers teach them, beyond what their books teach them. Every contest should be in display on the school notice board for one week. They could select their own interested area, try to search for answers and post their answers in the box allotted separately within one week of time. Teacher in-charge of particular contest checked for correct answers and guided students further. Students are allowed to participate in more than one contest. One

teacher coordinated all the contests and every month, during assembly prayer, winners were rewarded.

### 3. INTERVENTION

The total strength of Arrahmaan International School from Grade 1- 8 is 416.

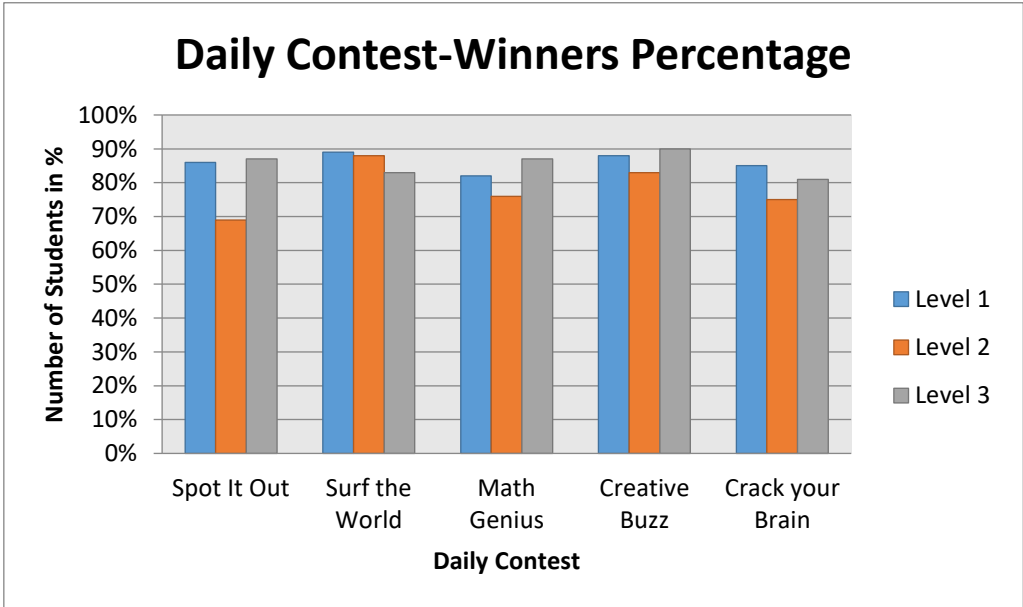
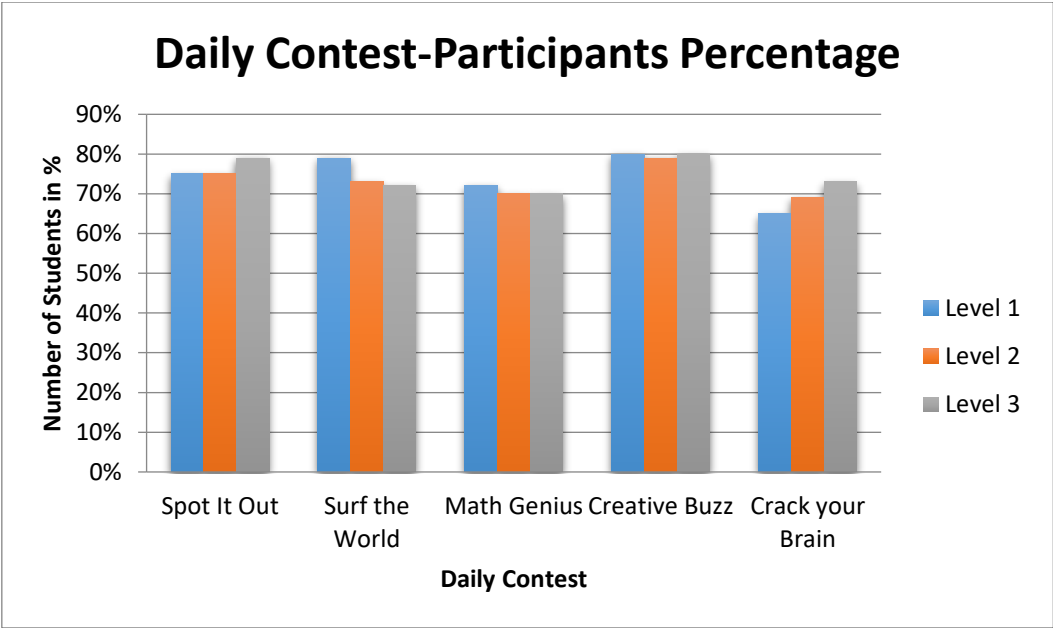
Percentage of participation improved every week.

1. Almost 80% of the students participated every week in different contests.
2. Most of the students participated in Creative buzz, Spot it out and Surf the world.
3. Students, who are interested in Mathematics, continuously attempted the Math Genius and approached math teachers for solving the critical math tricks.
4. Students looked for library books, magazines and websites to search answers for Surf the world contest and improved general knowledge skills.
5. Students showed much interest for answering Creative Buzz in which they have much space for their creativity and innovation.
6. Crack your Brain contest provided space for the logical skills of the students. Most of the upper primary level students showed much interest in this contest.

It was observed that those who are irregular in homework and showed lack of interest in regular school studies were interested in searching for answers for their interested contest field.

**TABLE 1: Participants and Winners Percentage of Each Contest**

Daily Contest	Participants			Winners		
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Spot It Out	75%	75%	79%	86%	69%	87%
Surf the World	79%	73%	72%	89%	88%	83%
Math Genius	72%	70%	70%	82%	76%	87%
Creative Buzz	80%	79%	80%	88%	83%	90%
Crack your Brain	65%	69%	73%	85%	75%	81%



**4. REFLECTION**

Daily Contest under different streams built confidence and students started to see beyond the textbooks. It improved the self-learning, self-regulation and time management among the students. We at Arrahmaan International School planned to continue the contest with different set of innovative questions and different motivational strategies in order to provide space for the students to learn in their interested area.

Therefore it is recommended for the schools to come out from the regular academic cycle of completing the syllabus, conducting test for what they memorized, focus on next exam portions and so on. School should focus on developing passion among the students for becoming lifelong learners. Teachers can provide activities that allow students to have more control over learning to a greater sense of ownership and interest. When students find a way to enjoy what they are studying, though, they will be more motivated to do well in school and might even have fun doing it.

**Photographs:**



