

## Making a Difference: Planning of the Zero Hour

6 July 2019

Senior School staff members gathered for two consecutive days to discuss the planning of the zero hour. Facilitators Ms. Vaishali Bhargava, Ms. Nandini Kochar and Mr. Pankaj Kumar started Day 1 with energizing activities that helped everyone to relax and loosen up. The first one was a short song 'I am happy to be here' which the participants were encouraged to sing with great gusto. Then everyone sat in a circle and held hands to take a pledge of greater bonding and oneness as members of SMS family.

The main objective of the meeting was to find out challenges faced by the class teacher that created a hindrance in making the zero-hour effective and then offer solutions for the same. For this purpose, the participants were divided into two groups of Achievers and Challengers. After a brief deliberation with their respective groups, the Challengers put forward the following moot issues:

1. Erratic timings and duration of zero period
2. Absence of students from the class-room due to various extra-curricular activities.
3. Inhibition to share their concerns for fear of being labelled/discussed in staff room.
4. Collection of money and forms, particularly the SEWA form took up a lot of time.

Achievers, then, put forward their solutions to the above-mentioned obstacles. Planning emerged as the key component in the smooth functioning of the zero hour. It was felt that a lot could be achieved if the time was well-planned and the task at hand skillfully executed.

Day 2 of 'Planning of the Zero Hour' was conducted by Madhuri ma'am, Jose sir and Madhubani ma'am. This time the focus was on 'expanding' the zero hour and thus expanding the students' as well as our horizons;

it was a time to create 'super heroes'. All the answers, according to the facilitators, lay close at hand; we just needed to look outside the window of the class-room for limitless ideas. The three A's of Abundance, Automation and Asia could give us enough relevant matter for discussions during the zero hour. The idea was to make the children see the not so obvious and be creative. Thereafter, an activity in lateral thinking was conducted in which a 'bag of problems' was given to various teams of 5 members each and they had to solve it in 40 minutes.

Well thought out activities, high energy of participants and meaningful inputs by everyone made planning of the zero-hour a fruitful exercise.







