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CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES PART 2

Editorial Team

Chandrika Muralidhar
Madhumita Sudhakar
Prema Raghunath

Advisors

Sachin Mulay
S Giridhar
Umashanker Periodi

**Special Advisors
to the Issue**

Nimrat Khandpur
Shobha Lokanathan Kavoori

Cover Picture Credit

Jagjot Sethi

Designed by

Banyan Tree
98458 64765

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Bangalore - 560 062
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+ 91 98450 42233
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“Learning Curve is a publication on education from Azim Premji University. It aims to reach out to teachers, teacher educators, school heads, education functionaries, parents and NGOs, on contextual and thematic issues that have an enduring relevance and value to help practitioners. It provides a platform for the expression of varied opinions, perspectives, encourages new and informed positions, thought-provoking points of view and stories of innovation. The approach is a balance between being an ‘academic’ and ‘practitioner’ oriented magazine.”



FROM THE EDITOR



The classroom experience is unique – it is different for each one of us which is why when people reminisce about their school, opinions can differ about the same subject or teacher. The teacher, for her part, also has unique relationships with the class she goes to. It is a dynamic, organic process.

Just to remind our readers, when we decided that the classroom, with its exchanges and vitality, was going to be the focus of the issue, we did not imagine what a great response there was going to be – so great, in fact, that not a single article could be left out. This is how the second part of the issue was conceived.

The same concern, involvement and thoughtfulness that was evident in the experiences recounted in the first part are present in the narratives of this issue. We have an array of articles – on teaching language through maths, on language teaching and one very interesting account of classroom seating and its impact on learning. We also have a very informative article on teaching children with special needs.

Since teachers have a permanent significance in the lives of children, exchange is a basic necessity – exchange of information, experience and ideas. We hope that the readers of this magazine will find it useful and will write to us about their own findings. What worked, what didn't and what worked in an entirely different way than the one envisaged – this has been the thrust of these writings.

We once again thank Rajesh Utsahi and his team whose help in translating has been invaluable.

Your views on this issue are welcome and we invite you to write to us.

Prema Raghunath

Editor, Learning Curve

prema.raghunath@azimpremjjfoundation.org

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How Do We Discipline?

Rajni Dwivedi



Introduction

Whether the conversation is about schools, education or children, the word discipline is sure to figure in it. One of the main purposes of sending children to school is to have them learn discipline. The expectation is that, keeping in mind their roles in society, the school must try to teach them some form of discipline and succeed in it to some degree at least. It is not being argued that there should be no defined way of functioning. However, the form, nature and amount of discipline need to be analysed. While, each school has its own definition of discipline, the most popular and prevalent understanding seen in schools is that disciplining is synonymous to meting out punishment. They do not have separate existence. Therefore, there is no disagreement on the principle of punishment per se, but its degree and nature sometime become causes of concern. Not only teachers, but most parents also believe that children can be taught discipline only by beating, scolding or imposing other such coercive methods. There may be a few households where the guardians do not approve of the idea of beating children, but they too believe in the practice of inculcating good behaviour by rewards and enticements. The spectrum of views on discipline may thus appear varied but at the core they are the same. The real issue is whether there can be any radically different alternative spirit to understand discipline. In this article, I will share my experience of working with children in the school and in this context, discuss the notion of discipline in a classroom and in the school.

The Classroom and Children

The exploration around discipline arose in the context of exploring the interaction of children with the new set of text books that had been prepared for them. We were interested in finding out issues like: how appropriate the new textbooks were for the children, do they like them, can they understand and do the tasks given and other similar issues. My colleagues and I decided to work with some classes to look for answers to these questions.

After talking to the head-teachers and teachers, each of us selected a school and a specific class to engage with and observe children. I chose class III of a school. The plan was that in the first three days, we would observe the class so that we could understand the

children as well as the dynamics of the classroom. We also wanted to simultaneously plan how we would engage with children using the textbooks. The three days of observation went off well, perhaps because I did not have to do anything much. The teacher was teaching and I was merely observing and writing my report. On the fourth day, the teacher handed over the classroom to me as he had to go for a training programme, for a few days.

I think the children perhaps came to know that their teacher was not there and that I would be their teacher for a few days. Even from far, I could hear that there was a lot of noise in the classroom. Children were playing, running around and fighting over the durries (due to their shortage). Due to the noise, they had to shout loudly to converse. And so when I entered the room I too had to shout out the instructions - 'Sit down, sit down, don't shout and please sit down!' When the noise had somewhat subsided, I thought we could begin some work. I asked the children to take their Hindi books out and open the chapter that I had chosen. I showed them the illustration on the first page of the chapter. Some children were able to do this on their own while I started helping the rest. Not even two minutes had passed when a child asked, 'Madam, can I go and have water'. I permitted the child to go and started speaking, when another voice spoke up, 'Can I go too'. This went on and every two minutes, some child or the other would ask for permission to go to have water or visit the washroom. The limit was when there was a stampede to rush out from the classroom at the bell, for the short break, like the exodus of passengers from the overcrowded busy Mumbai local train. There was a lot of noise, jostle and pushing - pulling. And when the bell sounding the end of the break was rung, many children did not come back. I had to send a few children out to fetch those who had not come.

I thought that it was the problem of the first day, but this continued on the second and the third day as well. I was unable to understand what was going on in the class. I was a bit worried that while a few students listened to me, I was not able to do much with the class as a whole. I was in a fix; it was wrong to hit children so what do I do? I thought it was best to share my concern with them and told them that I could not teach them if they kept making noise,



and that no one could make out who is speaking and what was being said. I said, 'I have to shout to say what I want to say and that makes my throat pain. So please do not make a noise. You can talk, but screaming or talking loudly is absolutely forbidden. If it is absolutely necessary to ask something or tell someone something then you can talk.' The second thing I suggested was that after the prayer, they could visit the washroom or drink water before coming to the class. After that no one would get permission to go out of the classroom till the brief recess. Since there was no wall clock in the classroom I drew a clock on the board. At the commencement of the class at the arms were at 10:15. I told the children that at 11:00 I would shift the hands of the clock to indicate 11 and then they could go out. I made it clear that there should be no snatching of durries, throwing of bags or hitting each other. The durries were to be spread and each sit down one after the other. A tug of war with the durries would only lead to them getting torn.

Gradually, I started feeling that the children had understood what I was saying. The noise level reduced and so did the seeking of permission to go out. We started to do some work, even though children slipped back to talking in loud voices or again asking permission to go out. Yet I felt that they were understanding me. It was obvious that the situation had become better than it was before.

But every other day something would occur that would get me to wonder how the situation could be dealt with. Examples of such situations are children eating in the classroom and not cleaning up afterwards, throwing the shoes around, moving the classroom furniture around in a rough manner continuously, writing on the furniture, not spreading out the mattresses properly, not waiting for their turn to get notebooks checked or to speak, sometimes getting in to a fight and hitting and hurting each other, not coming to the classroom in time, etc. All this led me to feel that children needed to understand some rules of behaviour so that not only the classroom work can carry on, but children appreciate that the classroom and the school in which they are studying, belong to them and it is their responsibility to take care of them. Some work was done in the direction of children understanding this. This included conversations with children about it being right to do a particular thing or not, and if not, why not? It also included telling them my concerns and limitations, listening to their concerns and expectations, understanding them, working together with them on specific tasks like cleaning the classroom, spreading the durries, arranging the shoes properly, etc. Gradually many things improved.

It was not that the conversations among children stopped entirely or they did not jostle in getting the notebooks checked, or completely stopped fighting with each other, but there was some difference in the way that all this occurred. This made the classroom function smoothly. In this context I would like to highlight another aspect. During the initial phase, when I was unable to manage the classroom, some children from the class told me that I should threaten them by saying that I would complain about them to a particular teacher, who was notorious for hitting children. Few students of class V came to my class and said, 'Madam, if you need our help, let us know. We will ensure that all of them are quiet. You would have pin-drop silence. You do not know how to make these children quiet but we know how to do it. In other words, it is fine if you do not want to hit these children, give us the permission to beat them and they will become completely well behaved'. Thus the common perception was that there was only one way to discipline children, give them a few blows with a stick. After studying in the school for five years these students had also understood that the practices of the school - meaning discipline or in other words, following instructions, and the rules - can only be internalised when beaten by the stick and there is no other way to it. It is not just the children, but the parents and even the teachers who believe that children cannot learn discipline without being hit or punished. How should we understand discipline? We must recognise that by the age of three or four, children have already learnt a lot. We also know that children have an immense capacity to learn. They absorb like a sponge absorbing water. This is often said in the context of language, but it holds for many other aspects like behaviour pattern, manner of interacting with others, how to talk and converse, listening to the others, learning how to respond and whether a response is even needed or not, how to function in different situations, etc. They learn all this and improve their understanding day-by-day. All this, they learn by being with us adults and in the course of conversations with us. Therefore what and how children learn depends, to a great extent, on us adults as well. We keep giving them instructions. For example at home and in school we tell them things like, 'don't do this, do this in this manner, sit down quietly, don't play in the mud, stand in a queue, participate in the prayer quietly without moving, don't talk, walk in a line', etc. Nobody talks to children about why these instructions are being given to them. I also felt that the way we think about children - our perspective on them and their capabilities - impacts the way discipline gets defined and practiced. Thinking of children as mere 'kids', i.e., 'they are still too young and do not understand anything', or, 'it

is not possible to engage them in a dialogue on the instructions as they cannot understand them', are wrong beliefs.

The second point is that many years ago (about 90 years ago), Gandhiji, in the context of curriculum for Nai Talim, said and also wrote a lot about self-discipline. The most important idea was that one main purpose of education is to make children learn self-discipline and discipline cannot be imposed on children. Sharma, in her article, says, 'It (Nai Talim) is an integration of gyaan (knowledge) and karma (action), resulting in joy. It is an education for non-violence. It is founded on freedom and mutual cooperation. And the aim is to be free from fear. It is for self-reliance of body needs and for independent and critical thinking and wisdom. It believes that education should develop social consciousness among students, as well as the attitudes and habits of doing things in cooperation with others. The social principle of Nai Talim is that all human beings are to be equally respected and that education is to achieve self-discipline and build character and one should not be dependent on eternally forced discipline. Nai Talim is a continuous process of learning.' (Sharma, 2017).

Children will learn discipline when they are given responsibilities, freedom to express themselves and to do what they want to do, when their ideas are understood and given importance. It is only then that they would feel that they too have a role to play in the class, the school and in the society. And if all this is with the teacher, with her support and to support her, then it would have a real and deep impression. Since the role of children in making the school function well keeps changing, they are able to automatically perceive and sense contextually appropriate and inappropriate behavior. This helps them feel their role, its importance and usefulness. Functioning in these different roles demands that the child has a continuous internal dialogue with herself, in the context of different situations and the associated aspects; dialogues in which she is the speaker, the listener and the decision maker. As Vinobha Bhave says in his Basic Education, 'Our plan for education is a plan for discipline, its mainspring, that is to say is not self-indulgence but self-control. Our chief aim should be that our children should learn from their earliest years to keep their sense, mind and intellect under control. Their speech must be imbued with the spirit of truthfulness; we must train them to

express their thought clearly, and to choose words for their fitness, not for fashion. I would like to invite your attention to this difference between fitness and fashion. I have one more thing to say if we are to carry out this task of creating a spirit of discipline and self-control - basic education must be entrusted so far as possible.' Today we still talk about basic education, but the number of schools where such a curriculum is followed are far and few. If we want our children to understand and to learn discipline, then we have to include facets of basic education in the curriculum. We need to take steps towards making these possible in the classrooms and in the schools.

Conclusion

If we look at children as individuals, as independent entities, then the way that we deal with them will automatically change. We will share our thoughts and our concerns with them, listen to and value their perspective, not just give them instructions to do or desist, but discuss with them why we want to do something and if we do not do it then what could be the possible consequences of that. The under-pinning of this way of relating to children is the understanding that children are to be respected; they also observe, understand, analyse and are capable of taking decisions. When children feel that they have a role in the classroom, the school and in society - and that role is certainly there - then they themselves feel a sense of responsibility. Slowly, they begin to understand their responsibilities and learn what they need to do to fulfill them. They also begin to fulfill their responsibilities. In Nai Talim also it is evident that children must begin to understand their responsibilities right from the beginning. We expect that children will grow up and contribute to the society, but forget these expectations while dealing with them at home, in classrooms and in the school. After all, home, classroom and the school are components of the society.

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Rajni is currently engaged in capacity building efforts, developing and editing materials for teachers and teacher educators and in doing translations. She has a Masters in Child Development from College of Home Science, Udaipur and a Masters in Elementary Education from TISS, Mumbai. She may be contacted at ritudwi@gmail.com

My Experiences With Children

Basudev Bhatt



My classroom experiences are like a journey. I try to create a pleasant atmosphere in the classroom as soon as I enter. I start the new lesson with some activities and poems. A few children ask the questions connected with the lesson while some others ask entirely different questions. Children feel happy and free when I enter the classroom. Some children shout and scream – ‘Bhatt Sir has come... Bhatt Sir has come’. Working with children and interacting with them has given me an opportunity to understand many things. I feel happy giving a proper direction to children’s fresh enthusiasm and energy. Every child learns at his or her own pace.

It is true that a few children take more time in building understanding. Each child has different ideas and the class comes to an agreement only after many activities, which could be based on stories and poems which have been done with them in class. They make some models either on their own or with the help of teacher and, by touching and feeling it to develop their understanding. These activities help children to learn faster. They are more interested in the activities than mere textbooks. They also love to enact the lessons that have been taught or take part in poem related activities in groups and as a teacher I also enjoy doing them with the children. It is a beautiful feeling to see the pictures drawn by the children or read what they have written. All the children are talented. They are more interested in activities rather than their textbooks since it becomes easy for them to understand the lesson. So we try to present the lesson in the form a role-play and adopt ways that are easy for children.

Lessons plans are prepared keeping every child in mind so that the information may be given according to the need of each child. Teaching is done with a view that each child learns at his or her own pace. Activities are planned to bring freshness and excitement in class. So the children feel comfortable in receiving the new information. Using various examples and pictures while teaching helps children in learning. We can see that the children are always doing something new and imaginative. Apart from studying they also take active part in games, dancing and singing. They like to come to school. They feel happy when they write well, make things out of paper and make toys with clay. They love to paint the hand-made items. They are forever asking the teacher to tell new stories. Children should be imparted knowledge according to their capability so that they can understand it properly. They like to sit in a group and draw and paint pictures on an A4 sheet of paper and one can see their zeal, passion and energy on such occasions. This school enlightened me about the fact that there is so much to learn from children apart from books. There are different types of children in a classroom who consider reading and writing activities as a form of art. The method used in a classroom should be simple to enable learning. For children, their language is the basis to learn other languages and subjects. They like to learn at their own pace. They try to have their own understanding of a subject rather than numbers. Whenever they want to read a new poem they try to break it into words and lines and then read it together. Thus, they are able to learn it. We have selected a few songs (shown in the box below) which were sung with dholak and harmonium and the entire school was echoing with melody and thus music got an important place in school.

• साँभर झील से भराया भैरु मारवाड़ी ने, बंजारा नमक लाया ऊँटगाड़ी में • इसलिए राह संघर्ष की हम चुनें
जिंदगी आंसुओं से नहाई न हो • गीत गा रहे हैं आज हम • हम होंगे कामयाब

I gained the experience of preparing TLM. All these efforts have helped in increasing the interest of children in learning and the school has become a more interesting place for them.

Basudev has been working in Azim Premji School, Uttarkashi, since 2012. The main subjects he teaches are Social Science and English. He has also taught Hindi, English and Environmental Science. He has additional experience in the management of the school library. He may be contacted at basudev.bhatt@azimpremji.org

Language Teaching – An Experience

Chhote Lal Tanwar



Talking about teaching of languages raises a lot of questions in our mind such as what is language, how is it learnt etc. And as we try to understand these questions, the main point which emerges is that language is usually considered to be a medium of expression or is a means of exchanging ideas. When we look at the language in such a limited sense, then our perspective on language teaching also narrows down. And if our thinking about the nature of the subject is limited, then it would certainly impact the way we teach that subject. This article deliberates on this very basic discussion which is going on since many years. It also talks about the methodology of language teaching and the issues connected with it. We will also share the experiences we had with children while teaching language.

The attempt here is to give a glimpse of the efforts that are generally made to achieve the objectives of language development skills and which appear as not only the obstructions but also as something that discourages the smooth process of language learning.

Preparation for reading and teaching methods

Usually when children come to pre-primary classes or class one, they are taught alphabet so that they can read. This is because the understanding behind adopting the above method is that only after learning alphabet, can children develop the ability to read, whereas when a three year old child sees a picture book, she starts acting as if she is reading it. But very few people give importance to such efforts of a child.

Preparation for writing

It is assumed that when a child knows the alphabet and *matras*, he can read fluently and only after that we can work on her writing skills. However, most of us adults do not consider drawing pictures as preparation for writing though it is an integral part of writing.

Development of ability to speak and listen

Adults also feel that when children go to upper primary, secondary schools and college level, then

they will develop the ability to speak and listen naturally. So there is no need to specifically work on these capabilities as far as small children are concerned. This kind of perception about language development causes an academic gap, which neither provides the ability to learn in the right way nor builds the basis for logical understanding for thinking. To see the development of language skills in such a deconstructive or as a 'part of whole' manner and then trying to work for their development impacts the process negatively. When we do not see the development of language as a whole then we do not consider the need to work on all the skills of language and feel that skills of listening and speaking can be developed automatically over the time. In this scenario, it appears that there are some basic problems with the way language is taught and learnt. We need to work on them in order to move towards the desired goals of language teaching.

All the above factors have been taken care of in Azim Premji School, Tonk. In addition to this, the theoretical dimension of language learning has also been asserted while working with children and this, in turn, inspires the teacher and encourages him or her to further deepen his or her efforts. Let us look at it like this – we believe that language is not a mere medium of expression. We think, argue, conceptualise and know things only through language. We also identify ourselves with the things, people and organisms present in nature. Looking at language from this perspective gives us an understanding that if we want to engage with children then we cannot start with something as monotonous as teaching them alphabet.

Experiences of working with the children of class 1 in Hindi language and the level of language development in them

Activities undertaken for the development of listening and speaking skills among the children of class1 to work on their listening and speaking skills –
Compilation of 15-20 nursery rhymes and working on them –

The class began by sitting in a circle and singing

nursery rhymes. The teacher performed them with gestures. The children repeated. After two or three days when the children learnt the rhymes a little, they were written on a chart and arranged within the reach of children. Now we made them repeat the rhyme a few times by sliding a finger or a stick under the words while reading.

After a few children learnt the rhyme, they were given the opportunity to slide their finger or stick under the words and make the class repeat the rhyme. When the children recited the rhymes with rhythm and linguistic flow by sliding their fingers under the words, they also understand the nuances of reading. For example, they were reading the entire line together with focus on left to right word sounds, pronouncing the words correctly and moving from top line to bottom line in a systematic way.

Simultaneously, discussing the words with them, familiarising them with those words and thus taking them through the initial process of reading is also helpful. When the children go through reading experience in the early years of their life, their level of confidence increases and the teachers can also see the flow with which the child is progressing. We find this approach to be almost miraculous because we can see a six-year-old child beginning to read within three months with the help of nursery rhymes.

Along with nursery rhymes, 18-20 stories were selected and the children were asked to work on them. In the beginning the children were trained to listen to these stories and we then worked with them on picture stories. During this process, we talked to them about their surroundings and experiences, facilitating their spoken accounts.

When the children really began to listen to the stories, we started talking to them about them. Here I would like to mention a conversation I had with them. The title of the story was 'Meeta Ke Jadui Jootey' or 'Meeta's Magical Shoes'. Some of the questions asked were –

- How did you like the story?
- It was nice.
- Who did you like most?
- Meeta.
- Who else did you like in the story?
- The shoes with the wings.
- If you get the flying shoes, where would you like to go?

All the children came up with interesting answers. Some wanted to go to the places where their father was working such as Delhi, Jaipur, Saudi Arabia or Kota. Some wanted to go to their grandmother, aunt's or sister's mother-in-law's place. When we enter the emotional world of children and give them the freedom to express their feelings, they share numerous things. It is not correct to say that we cannot work with the children of six years on their listening and speaking skills. We believe that listening and speaking, and reading and writing with the kids needs to be done at this level itself, otherwise, as they grow, they get into a world of silence which, many a time, pushes them to state of permanent silence.

The process that was followed consisted of telling the stories and rhymes to the children, enacting them, drawing pictures, and reading by sliding finger under the words, reading the important words of the stories and rhymes differently etc. What emerged from this experience was that by adopting this method about two-thirds of the children learnt to read fluently by the end of the year which was required for their class level test. The good thing about this experience was that these children were not breaking the words into parts or letters while reading but were reading the entire word and sentence together which is basic requirement for reading with understanding. Besides, developing skills to read through stories and poems not only provides an opportunity to read with understanding but it also opens the possibility of reading more books and become a good reader.

Apart from this, talking about a good collection of 30-35 nursery rhymes and 15-20 short stories helped children to narrate the same in their own language and style. They were able to enact them as well.

Now, after two years, when I talk to some of them, I can see a certain level of linguistic depth in them. It does not mean that all this achievement is the result of work done in class one only. But I do feel that the exposure given to the children in class one has definitely offered a rich linguistic experience to them.

The children of class two, who are already exposed to 15-20 story books and have worked with them, automatically get attracted to reading more books as we practically saw in case of some children.

Challenges and achievements

A few children were unable learn to read because of various reasons, but their ability to listen and speak, which is essential for learning any language, developed remarkably. This does not mean that they did not learn anything. They have acquired

those basic skills of language with which the children of even upper primary classes usually struggle and which are very important for learning any language.

Chhote Lal has been working with Azim Premji Foundation since August, 2011. Prior to this, he worked with Bodh Shiksha Samiti at Alwar district, for about 11 years, as coordinator and facilitator. He also worked there as a resource person for Hindi and Mathematics and worked closely with teachers, students and communities of 15 small schools to establish them as good schools. Before this, he has worked in Lok Jumbish, a well-known experimental project implemented by the government of Rajasthan, mainly in rural areas. He may be contacted at chhote.lal@azimpremjifoundation.org

My First Class

Deepa Bisht



I have been working in the Azim Premji School, Dineshpur (Uttarakhand) from February 6, 2012. Our school came into operation with effect from April 10, 2012. A month before that, we went around Dineshpur, visiting homes and gathering information from parents about the children – children going to school, those who left studies midway, in what circumstances going to school stopped, and whether or not they now wished to resume and complete their studies. Thereafter, we told them about the Azim Premji School, its functioning and management, what facilities children would be provided there, and also that this school has been set up with just one purpose : Education for all – no one should be deprived of this boon.

An understanding of the geographical location and milieu of Dineshpur revealed that most of the inhabitants had migrated to this place from Bangladesh, and so the language of most of the inhabitants was Bengali – and Punjabi. In the initial days, we tried to get an idea of the social, economic and family circumstances of the children as well as their ways of living. We tried to establish a relationship with them through dialogue and games. Through the medium of games we could plan to teach them in accordance with their capabilities.

This was a new experience for me.. The National Curriculum Framework, 2005 speaks of giving space to the local language in the class. We saw ourselves standing at a distance from this. It was now the time either to keep this distance or meet the challenges face-to-face and go beyond them. We accepted this challenge and gave the children an opportunity to express themselves in their own language., Bengali. Soon enough, we were able to understand their language a bit and the children started to enjoy speaking in Hindi. It seemed that things were going fine and we continued to make efforts at understanding each other.

“This unit is about the reality of many of those classes where the mother tongue of the students and the language of the school is not the same. Such situations are often considered to be challenging. The purpose of this unit is to highlight the awareness and positive understanding about multi-lingualism which underlines the fact that through the medium of multi-lingualism, language can be taught to all students together.” N.C.F.2005



Class1 had thirty students. Rani Mandal (not her real name) was one of them but her behaviour was different from that of others – or we may say that she was caught up in her own little world. Hitting one of the other children was a normal thing for her, sometimes even going to the extent of biting. No child would sit near her, or talk to her and she too would not play with anyone. Whatever one said to her, she would respond by staring back, sometimes even trying to hit out with her feet and arms. This would happen even if we tried to engage her in normal conversation. I was lucky enough to have escaped the beating, though she seemed to have decided to bite me at times. Anyone who saw her behaviour would say that she was a misfit our society.

Back then, we were twelve teachers in all, along with Aruna V. Jyothi, a colleague-cum-guide who gave us a direction in terms of meeting the challenges we faced in the process of teaching. She had been active in school education over the last twenty one years. We would share thoughts on all that was necessary for a school to run smoothly and would then work together on whatever rule was framed. There were differences of opinion too but in a living situation, that is a good thing to have.

All the children were upset at and troubled by Rani Mandal’s uncomfortable behaviour. Dealing with her was a challenge for me. I discussed this with Aruna who accepted that it was a challenge, but said that I had to decide on my own how to deal

with her. She cautioned me on just one thing – that I should never speak to Rani in a loud voice. This, she said, is likely to bring about a change in her.

I conveyed to all the students that none of them should talk to Rani until and unless she herself wished to talk. No one should trouble her. The children would play, be engrossed in stories and poetry and Rani Mandal would look at them from afar, never speaking to anyone. This continued for a few days. One day the children were playing and some were reciting poems. Looking at how they enacted the poems, Rani Mandal began laughing. I felt happy looking at her laugh. I now started organising some activity or the other which she would feel happy to look at.

One day she herself came and stood in a circle with us, clapping with all children. I then started talking to her a bit and she too began responding with a nod or a shake of the head. I would now call her to myself or go to her and work, sitting by her. In a few days she herself started coming to me. Her behaviour with the children also began to change now. As time passed, she also began playing with the children.

One day I happened to go to her home. I came to know that she had a brother. Their parents would go out for work even before the children woke up. Her brother was just one and a half years old. She cleaned the house, washed the utensils and took care of her brother the whole day. When she came to school, the little brother had to be left at the mercy of the neighbours. Her mother would scold

and beat her even for petty issues. Her parents never came to the school for the parent-teacher meet.

I once came across the parents in the market and talked to them about Rani Mandal. They thanked me and said that she now relates stories and poems to her younger brother and keeps busy doing some painting. I felt happy and requested them to come to the parents' meetings, saying that children will feel happy to be praised before them, and feel encouraged to make better efforts.

When Rani Mandal was in Class 3, there was a Painting Competition conducted by the magazine *Chakmak*, and she won a prize. She came to me and said, 'See madam, what I've got as a prize. You are my first teacher. That's why I have come to show this to you'. It gave me a strange sense of joy that filled my eyes to the brim – it was a moment I can't express in words.

How time flies one does not even realise. She is now in Class-6 and comes to the school in salwar-kameez, hair tied in two braids. When I am with my students in Class 1, Rani Mandal comes to me and helps me take care of the children in the class.

In these five years I have learnt a lot. The most important has been the lesson to keep patience. Aruna ji comes to the school every year and we discuss issues with her. She says, there are some things to which there are no answers. Time guides us, our sense and sensibility helps us understand and make the required effort.

Deepa has been a teacher at Azim Premji School, Dineshpur, Udham Singh since February, 2012. She has been working in the field of education since 2004. She strongly believes in learning from her students. She may be contacted at deepa.bisht@azimpremji.org

How do I make them sit?

Gajendra Kumar Dewangan



The moment we hear the word school, a picture of a building with many teachers and children appears in our mind. And when we talk about the academic activities of the school, we visualise a classroom where the teacher is facing the children who are sitting in rows in a systemic manner. There is nothing wrong with this imagery because this is how we see the classrooms most of the time. Almost all kinds of activities, such as giving instructions, telling and listening to stories and poems, having discussions, reading-writing, evaluation and displaying the teaching learning materials, etc. are conducted in this kind of seating arrangement. Though this arrangement has some benefits, there are certain drawbacks also which have a direct impact on the learning process of the children. I will share my experiences with the alternative ways of seating arrangements. If we pay a little attention to the way children sit in the classroom then we can see the positive effect on the understanding and learning of the children. This is especially so in the early stages of schooling, that is, in classes one and two. As a language teacher, I have had opportunities to work on different types of activities for the development of linguistic skills.

During the early days of my teaching, my methodology was not very different. Based on my routine work, experiences and challenges pertaining to classroom situations, I started making changes in the way children sit in classroom. They were made to sit in a certain manner for different activities. These changes definitely had very good impact on class. I am sharing some of these experiences with you.

1. **Circular seating arrangement** – It is a good and convenient way to sit in a big circle with children for having general conversation, giving instruction, forming rules or to have discussions. This type of seating arrangement allows us to have direct eye contact between listeners and the speaker. Everybody can see and listen to each other. It becomes easy to express oneself and listen to others. No child is left behind. Also the problem of some children sitting in front and some at back does not arise at all.
2. **Semicircular seating arrangement** – This arrangement is suitable to tell and listen to a story and poem. Gestures and facial expressions are very important in this activity. The speaker expects everybody to look at him carefully so that they can understand the spirit of the story or poem being presented with gestures and which cannot be expressed only by words. During the session, relevant pictures or TLMs are shown to the class and each child is extremely eager to see it. This type of seating arrangement is ideal in such situations. If the class is big, then two or more rows of semicircles, one behind the other, can be formed.
3. **U shaped seating arrangement** – When we work with TLMs for reading and writing in a class then first we have to demonstrate the process to be taken up. For example - arranging story-based pictures according to sequence of events, pairing words and pictures, arranging words and sentence strip in a sequence, etc when we want every student to see and listen to the proceedings carefully. This arrangement helps children to see the ongoing activities properly and the teacher also gets enough space to keep the materials and show them.
4. **Compact seating arrangement** – There are many occasions when children sit very close to each other such as during story telling activity. Their feet almost touch each other. I would also sit with them. There is no special purpose in this arrangement. It is a situation where children, especially small ones, want to sit close to the teacher and be in close proximity of the teacher so that they can talk to them. They also want to see the material brought by the teacher as soon as they can. Teachers also become closer to the children if they sit near them. This type of seating arrangement can be delightful. Teachers need less energy to speak because children are close to them and can modulate the voice and use gestures according to the events of the story better. But it is not possible to sit like this for a long period of time.



5. **Group-wise seating arrangement** – In classes one and two, we generally do activities such as drawing, discussion on pictures and arrangement of words and letters in sequence. It is convenient to do such things in smaller groups. This kind of arrangement gives children an opportunity to learn together, though we have to keep in mind the number of children per group. I have been doing these activities in class on a regular basis and have found that it is good to have four or five children in a group. If there are thirty children in a class then it is better to make six groups in two rows so that the activities can be done comfortably.
6. **Seating arrangement facing the green board** – If a teacher has to do most of the work on a green board, it is necessary that children are able to see the board clearly. The distance between the board and the children should be right and the children should be seated suitably, while the distance between the children should be such that there is no disorder and the teacher is able to keep an eye on whatever they are doing. I have tried to make them sit in different ways when they have to look at the board and do the activities of reading and writing. For example when reading is happening then the distance between the children is made less and during writing it is slightly more so that they can keep their notebooks or slates comfortably and they are sitting separately for comfort. If the activity is decided earlier then it becomes easy to plan the seating arrangement. In this kind of arrangement, I was never rigid with making them sit only in a line. I believe that the children should sit comfortably, everyone should be able to see the board clearly and I should be able to see them. Of course, one thing that I kept in mind while following this seating arrangement was that their position should change by rotation. They need not always sit in a designated place.

7. **Seating arrangement according to the level** – Sometimes in our classroom we come across a situation where we have to pay special attention to a few children to help them learn and understand better. We need to have a different kind of strategy for them and give them special work. Many a times we form a separate group of such children to work with them. If there are five or six, or more, then smaller groups of 2-3 children have been made. It is better to make them sit independently in an empty and big space within the classroom. It consists of two main groups and a few sub groups.

I have experienced that in smaller classes there are two or more different types of seating arrangements in the same period. Making changes in seating arrangement is a challenging task. We have to plan it well and practice it regularly otherwise a lot of time of the teaching period may be spent only in making these changes. It is easy to follow this arrangement for the children who are sitting on the ground. It is better to make the children of Classes 1 and 2 sit on the floor where a carpet or mattress is spread. Because then it becomes easy to make the seating arrangement quickly without spending time on moving furniture and the noise is also avoided.

In this way, having proper and activity-based seating arrangement has made it easy for me to work with the children. I have personally experienced the positive effect on children's learning. I am inspired by my own experiences which has made it possible to work smoothly with the children. For me it has now become an essential and regular part of classroom processes to use different types seating arrangements.

Gajendra is currently a teacher at Azim Premji School, Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh. He has been teaching here for nearly six years now. Prior to this, he was a primary school teacher in a government school in Chhattisgarh, where he started his career and taught for twelve years. Some of his hobbies include writing stories and poems for children, listening to music, and painting. He may be contacted at gajendra.dewangan@azimpremji.org

Dialogue: An Interesting TLM

Janak Ram



When we work in the realm of education we often realise that there cannot be any single/uniform pedagogy that can be claimed to work for every single child. It is important that we are not afraid of incorporating the various approaches to education in our own teaching style. I have always believed that each child is capable of learning, even if it may take a little extra time. In 2014 through my fellowship I travelled to Dehradun and it was in an office there that a poster captured my attention. The poster carried a slogan which said that dialogue was the best mechanism to come closer to children and explain things to them. When one notices something of this kind written somewhere, the faith in its strength becomes deeper. It is this spirit of dialogue that I have been using as part of my pedagogic practice for long. In the elementary classes this enables students to understand concepts from tangible/concrete to intangible/abstract.

In class five I told the students a story – the milk-man comes to my house every day. One day my niece asked him, “how much milk do you get each day?”. To this, the milk-man replied, “now we have 7 cows so we get around 56 litres of milk every day. So my niece said, “this means that each of your cows gives 8 litres of milk.” The milk-man said, “No, some cows give less than 5 litres while others give more than 5 litres, but in total we have 56 litres of milk every day.”

My niece said, “How is this possible? I did not understand.” The milk-man said, “both the red cows give 6 and 7 litres, the black-brow cow gives 8 litres, the brown cow gives 12 litres, another brown cow gives 14 litres, the white cow gives 5 litres and the spotted cow gives 4 litres, so in total did it not amount to 56 litres?” My niece did not fully understand the explanation given by the milk-man and looked towards me and she said, “Uncle, if in total there is 56 litre of milk then each of the cows is supposed to give 7 litres, but the milkman explained...?” Concluding the story, I asked the students how I could explain things to my niece.

Out of the 30 students in the class, two raised their hands. Then I said that we would now be doing some activities and then we would discuss them and then eventually discover how I could explain the matter to my little niece. All the children nodded in agreement.

I handed over some marbles each to 6 of my students and then asked them to close their palms. Then I told them that when I say start they should all come in collectively and decide how they would allocate the marbles if they were to be equally divided amongst them all and only the student’s name I would call out would reveal the plan. After some time the students declared that they were ready. So I called out to Kanha to explain, he said that the first thing that they did was to see how many marbles each of them had in their hands and then when they discovered that Kanha had the maximum number of marbles he began by giving one of them to the person who had just a single marble in his hand. Then the person who had four marbles gave to the person with two marbles one marble and now three has 3-3 marbles each so then I decided to give one marble to the boy who just had one marble originally, so now everybody had three marbles each.

Then I asked if anybody in the group would like to say anything. They said they did not have anything to say. I asked that 5, 4, 5 members also repeat the same activity and most of these explanations were similar to those of Kanha. Then I gave all the students plastic cups and told them that each must have marbles equal to the number of cups that they had. All of them placed their plastic cups on the table. When I turned around I saw that some of the children were doing the same thing that they had done in the first activity and some were trying to do something new (the two students who had raised their hands earlier were asked to separately solve it on the board). After a while Manisha and Arzu exclaimed that we could solve it in another way. I asked them to present this in front of the others in the classroom. Arzu asked if she could



be permitted to speak to Manisha for a bit and I agreed. They discussed for a while and then placing six cups on the table, Arzu said “Teacher” (then I told her to address the entire class instead). She smiled and agreed and continued by saying that in the six cups that I have the marbles are placed in this order (I urged her to write on the board and so she wrote and spoke) 1,3,4,2,5,9. Then I placed all marbles in one cup (in between both had asked for a cup each) and counted these and in total there were 24 marbles. How many cups do I have to put them in, 6? So then I divided 24 by 6 and 4 was the answer and then I put 4 marbles each in the 6 cups? Manisha said “In my 8 cups 2,0,7,6,5,3,8,1 marbles were there so I put them all together in one cup and counted them to be 32. I was supposed to divide these in 8 cups so in this way I put 4 marbles each in each of the cups.” After listening to this, both of them (the ones who wrote on the running board) started laughing. I asked – “What was the least number of marbles?” Arzu-“1” and – ‘the largest’ Arzu-‘9’ after this the rest of the students started shouting that they too had solved the problem. I called the two former students. They too agreed that first they combined all and then divided the marbles equally. I said -“Arzu and Manisha are saying that it is 4 marbles and that the mean was between 1 and 9” and then both the girls agreed. I told them that it was this that was called the average. But can we formulate a rule about how the average can be discovered?

Kanha who was so far busy playing with the marbles spoke with a startle – “I will explain teacher” and I urged him to explain. Then including the four children many others too raised their hands. So according to the rule that the children themselves had made, I asked the child who first raised his hands to speak. Kanha said- “First I will combine all the marbles and add them”. I urged him to speak for any object and not just marbles. He stopped for a while and then spoke - “I will combine all the given things and then divide them by the number of sources that they came from”. When I looked at the children, their expressions revealed that they were still not clear about the concept, so I said – “Good, then let’s do one thing – we will listen to everyone and I will write them on the board, then collectively we would come to a decision.” The children agreed in unison and by then I had asked the four kids to sit down. The children placed their arguments and

I wrote them on the board. The children came to an agreement that if everybody is to get the same amount, then-

Average= the sum of all numbers / total given

I proceeded the discussion -“We are getting some information through the story and the activity of cup - marbles, these quantities are called numbers. So what would you call the quantity of milk in the story and the number of marbles in your cup?” Everyone (almost) exclaimed – ‘numbers’

Then we can write this rule in another fashion- “what” the children said - “yes”

Average = the sum of all given numbers/the total number of units given

I asked how then we to solve the problem in the story were and asked everybody to solve it one the running board. Some students also solved the marbles question.

The solutions were like this-

The milk man has milk – 6, 7,8,12,14,5 and 4 litres
The total quantity of milk = 6+7+8+12+5+4=56 litres

Total number of cows = 7

Every cow will give= $56/7 = 8$ litres

After this we did many written and oral question-answers.

Make a guess-

1. A cricket player in a total of 5 matches has made 20,15,10,5,0 runs then what is his average run per match?

The children were able to make the guess that the average would come between 0-20

Homework

1. I divided the children into groups of six and asked them to find the average height of the group
2. I asked them to find the average weight
3. I asked them to imagine some questions related to average
4. I also gave some kid questions from the textbook

My Understanding-

1. The process of open discussion with the children was of great use and this time was utilised at different occasions during the assembly, break-time, play-time and during other activities of the school routine.

2. The children were independently able to find answers and also discover the logic
3. It is important to remember the numbers that are given during discussions as these are often forgotten by the children.
4. The fact that each child can learn provided he/she practices is a belief that was reaffirmed.

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- 2 Pull-outs from Azim Premji University, Bengaluru
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Janak Ram teaches at Azim Premji School, Dhamtari, Chhattisgarh. He joined Azim Premji Foundation in 2014, as a Fellow, under the Fellowship program. He has taught Mathematics for nine years' in a school in Uttarakhand. He loves working with children and is currently interested in understanding the teaching-learning process in Mathematics. He has a graduate degree in Science from Hindu College, Muradabad, Uttar Pradesh. He has also completed B.Ed. (Mathematics and Science), and M.A. (Education and Sociology), from Kumaun University, Nainital, Uttarakhand. His hobbies are reading, playing cricket, and interacting with people. He may be contacted at janak.ram@azimpremjifoundation.org

Many People- Many Perspectives

Lalita Yaduvanshi



Generally when thinking or speaking about any theme sometimes it is possible to arrive at a consensus of various viewpoints while sometimes it is not. To look at the world with open eyes everybody has their own perspective. It is according to one's thinking that one looks at the world. Our thinking impacts the extent to which we will be successful in life. We should always look at ourselves, our family and friends with a positive perspective and give them positivity too. In any matter in life, before one adopts a rigid perception it is important to understand the various dimensions and then arrive at any conclusion. When we look for possibilities despite adversity it displays our positive attitude towards life. This is because sitting idle without making any effort is of no use.

If we want to be successful in life then we have to cultivate a positive outlook. The percentage of our success will not increase until and unless we sow the seed of positive thinking in our minds. We often hear around us in some contexts that people say we have not heard much about this situation or that they think in a particular way about it and what you think must be your perspective. During conversations and dialogue we often see that our viewpoint become rigid manifestations of the ego and we find it very difficult to understand other people's ideas and become intolerant to perspectives that do not match ours. For any dialogue to be meaningful it is important for each person to freely express their ideas and then allow open discussion and deliberation on each of those ideas in a way that is productive and positive.

Being a teacher it is impossible for me to talk about something and yet not once mention students or the classroom, thus I wish to share one anecdote from my diary which took place only some time ago when students shared their viewpoints about a certain topic and through that discussion I was enabled to understand their minds and thinking.

This happened on 4th February, 2015 when we were working on a story. The story was narrated through talking-masks and in its illustrations conveying various emotions were drawn. My purpose behind organising this activity was to help children look

at any picture, incident, news, emotion, story or object and by hearing, reading or looking at it understanding the inherent emotion/expression in it and then in simple and clear language explaining their reasons for arriving at that conclusion.



In the beginning everybody closed their eyes. They were given instructions slowly and in a low voice that they should recall any incident or emotion that they went through and would like to share it with the others, and once they had thought of it they could slowly open their eyes and continue to sit without disturbing the other children. The children followed my instructions and in a precise manner shared what they had recalled with the others and also told what that emotion was associated with. While some emotions were associated with marriage, books while others were associated with the house and other things. Then I asked them to link what they said with any of the four mask faces. According to their own thinking they chose a particular face and explained themselves. The children realised that when we hear, read or see something we may have a pleasant feeling while others may not. And behind this everybody may have different reasons.

To take the class forward I started off with the next activity. Two illustrations were drawn on the blackboard. No discussion happened on the illustrations. The children were asked to look at them and think how they felt about them and why. The children were allotted some time for this. I instructed them to associate the illustrations with one mask face and then explain why they had chosen it. Looking at the various perspectives and interpretations of the pictures that the children came up with had amused me. Interpreting a single picture one child said- I like the picture because it shows that the river is close to the school and so the children can have a good time swimming and coming to school while another child chose the face with the sad expression because he thought that the picture resembled children going back after a good day at school.

All the children hear each other and the reasons they gave for their choices and interpretations very

carefully, after hearing them all I asked them to do one last thing. I asked them to think whether they would look at the story as having a happy-ending or a sad one and why? When during the story did you feel happy? When did you become sad? What troubled you? What made you angry? Which aspects of the story did you like the most and which ones were the most disappointing? I asked them all to go back home and also think about all these questions and I said that we would discuss everything next day in the class. I wrapped up the class and just when I was going out of the classroom a child asked- Ma'am, when you drew these illustrations what exactly was going on in your mind?

'Viewpoint/perspective' depends on what we have heard from our childhood, the kind of environment

that we have grown up in. While for some people time and new experiences alter their viewpoint/perspective for many it may remain the same throughout. Everybody has their own way of thinking and even the same situation can be looked at differently by various individuals. Whatever that a person does is the best according to him/her but sometimes we must also try to think from the other person's point of view too. To make our perception of the world strong and clear we have to alter the way that we see, think and understand the world and those around us because it is the way that we see, think and interpret shapes us and influences the way that we lead our lives. It is important that our orientation is positive and optimistic and has space for dialogue and debate.

Lalita currently teaches Hindi and English at Azim Premji School, Tonk, Rajasthan. She has a Bachelor's degree in Education and master's degrees in Hindi and Education. She has been working as a teacher in different institutions since 2005. Her hobbies include reading, listening to music, and travelling. She may be contacted at lalita.yaduvanshi@azimpremjifoundation.org

The Aims of the School Assembly

Monika Bhandari



In this article, I shall discuss two important aspects of school life. First, the aims and use of the school assembly and second, teaching the same subject at different levels.

The Assembly

We gain new experiences every day while working with children in school. I believe that if we go to school as a subject matter expert then it becomes difficult to connect with children. This is because we would be learning something different with the children and the expertise in the subject takes a back seat. I do not mean that expertise in the subject is unimportant but all I am trying to say is that we should bring ourselves to the level of children where they are at a given time. It is not necessary that all of them should be at the same level. Generally the children of our schools are at different levels which, at times, poses a problem while teaching.

I teach science and mathematics to the children of Classes 6 to 8. Both subjects become quite challenging when students of Class 6 do not have a strong understanding of the basic operations, such as addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. In such a situation things become a bit more difficult if we try to follow the syllabus. The fat mathematics books raise many questions in our mind such as : how and when to teach so much! Will I be able to do something according to the interest and level of the children at all? Then I think and ask myself - what do my dear children need? Completion of syllabus or understanding of fundamental operations and concepts? And I decide to do something by which these children continue to have faith in me and at the same time they understand the content properly.

Children are very active and imaginative. Many times we cannot understand their nature. On many occasions, I have learnt from their experiences. I feel that the aim of education is not merely teaching a book from one end to the other. The important thing is to create a free and secure environment for children where they can learn something that develops their understanding.

Here I am sharing whatever I have done or have been doing with my school children.



The usage of school assembly and its aim

School assembly is considered to be an essential part of every school. I agree with this because this is the time when all the children are fresh. They learn from each other in this gathering. However, I realise that each child is at different level and they cannot be grouped class wise. We need to divide them into groups according to their level. The main purpose of the assembly is to let children overcome their shyness, learn something in the group and display it. So I divided children into three groups. Generally children feel shy to speak in front of others as they lack self-confidence. This is the situation even in my school in spite of children having full freedom to speak. I had to make plans to escalate their self-confidence so that each child could come forward and speak in the assembly or elsewhere. In order to overcome these fears of theirs, I formed three groups of children according to the number of students in the school. The number of boys and girls was equal in each group though the adolescent boys and girls of class 6 to 8 want to be in separate groups of only boys or only girls. But considering their emotional development, I put them together and in equal numbers. Each group was given different names like Yellow House, Red House and Green House. Yellow, red and green coloured badges have also been made for them. The groups were given the responsibility of conducting prayers, cleaning the classrooms, watering the plants and some other small tasks. Now it became the responsibility of the children to take up the various duties.

For the first two days of the week the first group would be on duty, the next two days the second group and the last two days it was the turn of the third group. This way the activities of school were managed well as every group wanted to be the best and it helped in achieving the aims of assembly. The children of each group sing the prayer, group songs etc. group wise. General knowledge quiz, story, thought for the day, news headlines, local news etc. are presented according to the roll number of the class and this method ensures that every child gets

an opportunity to speak.

Now the shy children are trying to come forward and have started speaking a little. Some children have become bold enough to face the assembly and give commands. It was fun working in group for the assembly programme and the abilities of the children also developed. Some children are still hesitant but efforts are on. So there are lots of benefits in working in groups. My main motto was to make children speak without any inhibition and the assembly proved to be the best medium for it. Working in groups is very useful as children are beginning to understand the importance of being in a group. Sometimes the children complain that so- and-so is not doing such-and-such work. But they resolve these issues among themselves.

Therefore, school assembly is a good and useful means of working in groups and also helps in attaining the goals of the group.

Teaching the same subject at different levels

As I mentioned before, children who come to us are at different levels. Their skills and abilities are different. So what should be done to develop and sustain the basic skills of each child in this sort of situation? I have been teaching upper primary classes for the past three years. Earlier I used to follow the traditional method of teaching and teaching basic operations of mathematics to different classes separately used to consume a lot of time. Then there were some children in each class who knew these operations and wanted to learn the next concept. This problem was also solved by making groups. The children of different levels were selected from all the three classes. They were divided in three groups. Group 1 had the children who were struggling with the basic operations of mathematics, group 2 had understood the basic operations and was a little ahead and group 3 could generally understand any topic. Though working in groups made things a little easier but since the other teachers had to take classes to teach their subjects, it also posed some difficulty to get children in groups from each class. Still, it becomes easy to work once the different levels are identified because then we know what is to be done with a particular group on a particular day.

The experience of teaching fractions in classes 6, 7 and 8 has been very good. Earlier I was adopting a simple and general method of teaching but I felt that though the children are doing different mathematical operations they have not understood

the concept of fractions clearly. Perhaps the abstract nature of mathematics was bothering them. Then I decided to do something that would clear the concept of fractions in children's mind. My friends from APF (Azim Premji Foundation) helped me in this effort. Based on the discussion with them, I did some activities on the concept of fractions.

First of all, I talked to the children and drew their attention towards fractions. I took some paper, a pair of scissors, gum, colours etc. to the class and told them that we would be doing some activity wherein we will fold or cut papers and make something new. All the children eagerly took part in this activity. With the help of folding papers I taught them the concept of half ($1/2$), one third ($1/3$), one fourth ($1/4$), one fifth, one sixth and so on. The most interesting part of this activity was that the children were trying really hard and in case the folding went wrong they would try to do it again and again till they got it right. Finally, all of them were able to prepare the fraction strips properly. We pasted them on a chart paper and hung them in the class room. The children pasted them in their notebooks as well. They also understood about larger-smaller, ascending-descending and equivalent fractions.

The best thing about this activity was that the children understood the concept of fractions themselves by doing the activity (folding the papers) with their own hands. I am reminded of an incident here. There was a child whose paper got spoilt while folding. It was lunch time. All the children went out to have their food but not this boy. He sat in the classroom, folded the paper again and went out for lunch only after all the fraction strips were ready. It was a heart-warming experience for me. The next day he showed me his work and it was such a satisfying feeling to see that twinkle in his eyes. So this too was a good and useful experience of working in the group.

Wall Magazine

In my school, I have also tried to work with the children on preparing wall magazines. Wall magazines are a wonderful medium to increase the creative capacity of children. The children write their own articles/poems, paste them on a chart paper in a decorative way and hang them on the wall of their classroom. The wall magazines not only decorate the walls, but are also a means to increase the creative capacity of children. Initially the children are not able to bring their original write-ups because it is a little difficult to do that.

So first I told them stories, made them read poems and got them books from the library to read after which some could write on their own and some are still trying.

The wall magazine is called *Umang* and promotes creativity and brings forth the skills of writing and thinking. All the children happily take part in this activity. They say – ‘Ma’m! We have never done something like this before in our school. We love it very much’. Working with the children of different levels is challenging but if one tries and works in groups then a certain level of success may be achieved.

While working with the children of my school; I felt that in order to achieve bigger goals, one has to try and achieve smaller goals first. The most important thing is to make children understand the basic concepts. My classroom experiences inspire me to do something new every day. The children also believe in me. I hope to continue working with children like this in future as well.

Monika is an Assistant teacher at Government Girls’ Upper Primary School, Baldogi, Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand. She teaches Science. She may be contacted at monikaamod6006@gmail.com

The Whole Language Approach: My Experience

Monu Kumar Shastri



What is the best way to teach young children a language? This topic has been baffling and creating a lot of deliberations among teachers and educationists. Although a lot of experiments have been done to address this issue and many innovative techniques have also been developed, but language teaching, particularly, depends on environment and circumstances. Each child develops his own understanding of language. It is in this context that I want to share my teaching experience.

When I got the opportunity to teach primary classes, I was very excited and happy though, at the same time, I was a little concerned since I did not have any experience of teaching primary classes, especially grade one. I was happy because I love little children and was sure I would definitely learn new things from them. So when I started teaching grade one I used the traditional method but then I was completely confused as to what to do next. Though I was going to the class and teaching, something was amiss. I was not at peace with myself.

Then one day I had to teach a poem titled *Badal Aaya*. I read the poem and noticed some special features in it. It had only *aa ki matra* and very few letters. This triggered an idea and I wrote the first line of the poem on the blackboard and drew the picture of a cloud. I made an effort to see that the children should at least recognise one word though I wasn't sure this would work because these children did not know the alphabet and hence they would not be able to recognise the word. During the lunch break as I was talking to a boy standing next to me, I wrote the word '*badal*' on my hand and asked him what it was. He looked at it for some time, thought for a while and answered. I was surprised because I had not expected this. I tried the second word and he recognised that as well.

The next day I went to the class, wrote the words of that line on the blackboard and asked the children to recognise them. My enthusiasm knew no bounds when I got right answers from the children.

For the next few days I kept writing the lines of the

poem in an order and made children read them and then revised them. The children were able to recognise the lines and words and this enthused me further and I could see the way forward. I made flash cards with the words and introduced them to the children. Some students recognised the words quickly and were helping those who did not understand. Along with this I also wrote those very lines in their notebooks which the children had read in the class so that they could revise them at home as well.

Because of revising the poem every day, they learnt it by heart. Then I divided the children in groups and gave them strips of papers on which the lines from the poem were written and they were supposed to put them in order which they did easily and enjoying greatly since it was like a game for them. After the group work the students were given the strips of papers individually and were asked to arrange the lines in a proper order. Almost all the students could do this. Once they matched the lines, they were given the words of the lines separately and were asked to put them together in an order.

At this point I felt that the students were having difficulty because they were asked to arrange the whole poem. So the next day I gave them the words of only half the poem which they found easy to arrange as they were also able to recognise the words. Once they developed an understanding of the words, they were able to recognise them wherever they saw them. I had put up these words in the classroom also to help the children so that these words were always in front of their eyes. It took me about three weeks to complete this poem.

After this poem I created a new poem titled *Aaya Badal* using the words from this poem itself. The new poem had only four new words. I adopted the same method for this poem also as the earlier one. The children understood this poem really fast. Their self-confidence was also increasing faster than before. After working with this poem I also made changes related to the word *badal*. The next level was to not only separate the words but also

introduce the letters in them. Sometimes I would make simple new words with these letters or ask about rhyming words or give them worksheets. I worked like this for about four to five months. Not only did the self-confidence of the children increase, my enthusiasm was also at its peak though even now a great worry was whether the children would actually learn to read through this method. Would this method be appropriate? On the one hand I was grappling with this question while on the other hand my mind would encourage me by saying that I am working sincerely and so the result would be good.

In the meanwhile, something wonderful happened in my class. I found that all the students of my class were involved in some activity but two students were looking at *Batuni* magazine and were trying to read a poem connected with *badal*. I stood quietly behind them watching as both the girls were helping each other and trying to read the poem by joining the letters and words. I was overwhelmed with joy and there were tears of happiness in my eyes. These were the two girls about whom I thought that perhaps they would learn to read only when they reach grade two.

After this I started teaching a story where the children were trying to catch the words but they lacked self-confidence and I also felt that perhaps I am doing something wrong. After much thinking I realised that the story/content I was using was far too advanced and most of the words there were big/difficult with many *matras* whereas I had not told them much about *matras*. So I thought of using lines where only one '*matra*' was used. After this I started using paragraphs having three or four lines, very difficult to do since I could use only one or two *matras* and the words also had to be simple and easy. However, I looked for such paragraphs from various sources and created some on my own and continued my work. In order to implement my work effectively I increased the use of worksheets. As a result, the children were able to read simple

and short paragraphs. I got books by NCERT and other publications where the pictures occupied almost the full page with very few simple and easy words as text. I also started giving them worksheets that had a small story of three to four lines along with very easy question. The children took my help for a few days then they started doing the work themselves. In this way by March, the children could read the texts at their level easily.

At the end of the session I was satisfied with my work and I also learnt a lot from it. I still think who is the real educator? I or the children? But with this method of language teaching my understanding has developed much. I am not saying that this is the only relevant/appropriate method and all the students can learn through this method. But on the basis of my experience I will definitely say that all children can learn easily because language is not just the order of letters and words. If the learning environment of the children is similar to the way they use the language then they learn faster.

Of course there were problems in following this method because we were working with the poems which had only a few words for many days and the parents felt that the same homework is being given every day. So it was necessary to take them into confidence and talk to them on a regular basis. I myself felt a sense of negativity creeping into my mind because it seemed that the children were unable to learn. The important thing is to remember that the pace of learning of each child is different: one may learn a particular thing quickly while another may learn something else. Hence a lot of patience is required.

Generally we depend on conventional methods to the extent that we tend to ignore child's mental state and his/her evolving understanding. Our children have to bear the brunt of our neutrality towards newly developed logical and relevant methods. Using these experiments and approaches in whole language teaching is very relevant.

Monu teaches at Azim Premji School, Matli, Uttarkashi. He has been teaching here since 2012. He has been working on the Whole Language Approach in Hindi language teaching with the children at the school, and the results of his work have been satisfactory. He may be contacted at monu.kumar@azimpremjifoundation.org

Learning – from Struggle to Excitement

Narendra Kothiyal



This article is an account of student's experience in class and my experience with teaching-learning methods. It is an effort to share how teaching can be made more interesting and creative and studies can be made an enjoyable process.

It gives me immense pleasure to share some of my experiences as a teacher that gave me a wonderful opportunity to learn new things which made me a better teacher. But before I do that, I would like to share my learning experiences from the past without which it may be difficult to perceive the changes that took place in my teaching style.

Let me take you back in time - about 20-25 years back when we were studying in school. As students, while trying to understand any topic, we felt that we needed additional information to grasp the concept fully. It might have been a small piece of information that was required, but it was critical to the process of understanding that particular concept in the absence of which the unsolved queries would remain in our minds and we would end up mugging without understanding.

There were the two factors that were preventing us from asking questions and clarifying our doubts in the class: one was fear and the other shyness. We were scared that if we asked questions then the teacher might pose counter-questions and we were shy because we felt that if we could not answer those questions then we might be ridiculed in the class. As per the rule, 35% to 90% of the students passed, but most of them would be deprived of the knowledge needed for the next class. Due to shyness and fear the children would resort to rote learning and their problem would multiply and eventually it would be impossible to solve the cumulative loss. This type of situation created a dislike for the subject and there was a continuous struggle in the process of learning.

Unfortunately the biggest problem is that there is no reverse gear in the vehicle of time, that is, once we cross a stage in life, we cannot go back and correct our mistakes. In this case, it meant that we were on such a threshold of time from where we could neither go back nor go ahead on the basis of

acquired capabilities and then we would keep on compromising with life and ambitions.

When I started working as a teacher, I began to take care of things that had made me unhappy or troubled me. I discussed the topic with students, made an effort to know their experiences and understand their problems. These things did help students to understand the principles of science to some extent but they were not able to understand them fully. So we decided to relate the principles given by the scientists with the students' experiences and allow them to experiment and see for themselves whether it actually happens that way or not and thus make the learning process their own journey. To illustrate, we did the following experiment in grade eight for a topic in science. All the materials required for the experiment were brought and the students were very eager to see and do the experiment. The topic was the force of buoyancy.

A beaker was filled with water. A stone was tied to a piece of foil and attached to a spring balance. The students had to measure the weight of the stone both in air and water and observe whether there was any difference in the weight. Almost all of them found that the weight of the stone was less in water than in air, but there was a difference of one or two grams in their reading. They were discussing the difference and taking the reading again and again to convince themselves. Then they began to question among themselves why the weight of stone was less in water. Though they were sure of the fact that the weight of stone had reduced in water but there was a mixed response on why it was so. They were not able to agree on one answer.

So one more experiment was done to give them a clue. One student was asked to pick up a bag full of books and notebooks and asked whether he could feel the weight of the bag. The student answered in the affirmative. Now another student was asked to apply force on the bag from below or push it upwards. Again the first student was asked whether he was feeling the weight to be same as before. This time he felt that the weight was less than



before. At this point, the students were asked to give the reason for it. They replied saying that this is because the second student is applying force on the bag from below. The next question was: if the weight of the stone was more in the air, then why was it less in water? Were they able to relate this activity to their experience? Some students stood up with excitement and one of them answered that water must be applying force upwards. All the students were divided into groups and were asked to give a thought to whether water was applying force upwards or not. All of them started thinking intensively. There was reflection, enthusiasm and happiness on their faces because they had understood the facts completely. After a while, all of them agreed and came to the conclusion that water did apply upward force.

Once they inferred the result from their own observation they were asked to read the chapter, again in groups so that agreement and uniformity could be established between their actual experience and the principles given in the textbook. The students found each line of the lesson meaningful now. In the end as they read that the force applied by water is called buoyant force, there was no unusual reaction on anybody's

face nor was there any confusion. Because they already knew it! 'Buoyant force' was not just a new term for them - it was something they understood quite well. Finally, when the students were asked to write out the activity as homework, they did not find it burdensome at all. Rather, all of them felt that all they needed to do is simply write what they experienced and describe their own discovery.

I was excited by this experiment. I discovered that when you engage the students with the content, they get involved in the process completely and accept the challenges willingly. They discuss and reflect on every possible way to understand the subject matter. On the other hand, if we simply describe the lesson then they do not relate to the content, are unable to imbibe all the information necessary to understand the concept and find it difficult to describe the process orally or in written form. Another important thing that I could see during the experiment was that the students were full of enthusiasm and confidence and were eager to learn more. It was also remarkable that they were now keen to go through such experiences more profoundly, intensely and at a continually increasing rate. Perhaps the learning process was now moving from struggle to excitement.

Narendra has been working in Azim Premji School, Matli, Uttarkashi since April 2013. Prior to joining Azim Premji School, he was teaching at various schools in Dehradun. He is born and educated in Dehradun. His hobbies include reading story books. He may be contacted at narender.kothiyal@azimpremjifoundation.org

What I Learned from Children

Neha Mishra



This is my first ever experience of working with children as a teacher. There are 10 children between the age group of 4 ½ - 5 years in UKG class. I spend the whole day with children, talk to them formally and informally and participate in various activities with them. Hence there are plenty of opportunities for me to understand them deeply throughout the day. Though I have been working with the children for past six months only, but because of the new experiences with them every day, I am able to understand children better and better. While interacting and working with the children on a regular basis, I felt that we adults have a lot of misconceptions about them which, I find, are seen in the classroom. In this article I am trying to explain what I have learned from children especially in terms of developing more understanding of children and breaking many misconceptions.

Children do cry while going to the school. This a natural phenomena for us. The children are deeply attached to their homes and all of a sudden we forcibly send them to an alien place called school which is like a different planet for them. There are very few things in the classroom with which the child feels connected. And then they start crying. They are intimidated, threatened and made to sit in a classroom/school. The question is – can learning become a pleasant process in such an environment? What I have learned is that the children are naturally interested in learning provided you give them a good environment. Then they will never want to leave school. When I started teaching, I also had the same impression that small children often cry while coming to school. Gradually I realised that if the school environment is friendly and they can associate their homes with school then they come to school happily. I remember the first day of my class, a child came to the class crying bitterly. It was with great difficulty that his father brought him to the school and left him in the classroom. But the same day the child was not ready to go back home after the school. I did not understand the reason for this that day though I knew that the attractive environment of the classroom and toys attract children but there was something more

important than this. I observed that during play time and eating time this child used to speak a lot but when we sang or something was asked during circle time, he would be scared. I talked to his mother about it. She said that they were sending him to a tuition centre to prepare him for school life and he used to get beaten up there. He used to plead with folded hands not to be sent to the tuition centre. The madam at the centre would say that she had corrected many children by beating them because that is the way children learn. He will also become alright. I was baffled and did not understand what kind of improvement the madam was talking about since this child was ready to learn on his own. Anyway, the mother stopped sending him for tuitions after our talks. She told that earlier he used to cry to go for tuition but now he himself gets ready to come to school. Nobody had to dress him up or do any such thing for this little four and half-year-old child in the morning. His mother also told me that if they had to go somewhere and the child had to take leave, he would insist that school should be informed about his absence only then he would go to grandmother's house. So more than an attractive classroom, it was the fear free environment, respect and recognition of the child in the classroom that created interest towards school in his mind. There is one more instance related to this child. He was trying to write his name for several days. Before the children came to school, their names were written on their almirahs. There were hand made folders with photographs, a slate and a card with their names and pictures. These were given to each child on the first day when they were introduced to each other. No separate activity was done to teach them to write their names but in a few days, it was found that the children were writing their names everywhere. Before starting any work they used to write their names first. Perhaps they were doing this because though they knew it was their name but they liked to write it. This child copied and wrote his name for many days. Then one day he wrote it without seeing and shouted loudly, "Oh! What fun today! I learnt writing my name today." We clapped for



him. When a child is recognised in the class, made to feel important then he feels that he is not just a part of the crowd but has his own identity and he develops a liking for school and studies. This is not the case with one or two children, almost all the children do this. I am surprised to see that when children can learn in such a natural manner without being forced, why we pressurise them so much.

Small children also think deeply about the way they are treated - whether it is good or bad. They may not have a fully developed language to express their views, but they have their own thoughts on how they are being dealt with. One day a child was saying that he enjoys coming to school and does not like it even if there are holidays for two days. When I asked the reason he said, 'Before coming to this school I was going to anganvadi which was not at all good. We had only two toys there and the madam used to beat us. There were two sticks, one big and one small. The small stick would hurt badly. "When I asked whether somebody beat him, he answered, "Yes, madam used to hit if we talked. Whoever talked would get beaten up." This child is only five years old. He said, "Madam would ask for a stick to be brought if a child came crying there. The child would stop crying and if any child continued crying then madam would hit him. It felt bad when madam hit. I did not understand why we were beaten up for talking." My next question was, "Were you not afraid to come here?" He said, "I was very scared. When I came to the classroom my eyes were watering but I was not crying." I thought I might have misunderstood him, so asked him again, "Oh! So when you came to school for the first time you were crying because you were scared." He said, "No, my eyes were watering but I was not crying because I was happy. The class was beautiful, there were many toys, so I liked the place and I felt happier because there were no sticks here." Of course, the child did not share all this in one go. I talked to him for a long time and his feelings were revealed bit by bit. So the broken language, in which he explained his point, is not important here. What is important is how deeply he felt about these things. Another girl coming from a different school said, "The A B C D madam used to beat, 1 2 3 madam used to beat and chota se anaar madam used to beat. We would get beaten up if we did not write beautifully." The children shared many such experiences where they were raising questions about the actions of elders. Although there can be various kinds of discussions on this subject but I want to impress upon the point

that even small children think seriously about the happenings taking place around them and can react to them. The children may not be equipped with proper language to make their point, but they feel everything and given a chance they can even express them. Only we adults need to listen to them carefully.

When I started teaching, all the items kept in the classroom were entrusted to the children. Since it a classroom for small children, there are lots of toys and many learning materials that attract children. There is a small library also having many small books. The very first day I told children that it is their classroom and everything kept here belongs to them and so they have to take good care of all the things. Once a few people from DIET came to visit their classroom and one of them asked a child if he breaks the toys. The child responded promptly that these are our toys, why would we break them. I was reminded of what I had told them on the first day. I never had to tell them to take care of things again and again, rather they would discuss things like – this book is torn, we need to stick it. No child has damaged any item deliberately. It was necessary to mention this point here because generally it is believed that children, especially small children damage things but as I continued my work and interaction with them I learnt that if we trust children and if they are treated like adults then they will never disappoint you. Children are responsible provided they are treated with equality and respect. Another special thing that I have experienced is that children do not want to be treated like a small child. We often see that while talking to the children, elders use an exaggerated, animated baby talk style. Sometimes they talk angrily or authoritatively. If we talk to them in a normal way with respect and listen to their views carefully then they also listen to us attentively and follow it. If things are explained to them logically then they understand it very well. Treating children like elders, believing them, talking to them logically and reasonably and encouraging them goes a long way in their development. Do not tell lies to children because they can make out that it is not true and they are not being taken seriously.

Working with children also gave me insights into how to tackle children when they commit any mistake. It is not necessary that we should make the child realise her mistake or scold her. At times, we should keep quiet and give them space to think about their mistakes. One day, while playing, a

girl got hurt by two other girls and started crying loudly. The two girls were really scared because they were sure that they would be scolded. I made all the three girls sit together but did not mention anything about the fight they had. The two girls sat quietly for sometime. Then I saw them talking to the third girl who was crying. I could not hear what they were talking but their gesture told me that it was not about the fight. They were together the whole day in a friendly way. These things are common in children and their altercations can be solved in many different ways. At times, they are made to sit on thinking mat where after thinking they tell what mistake they have committed or whether they have done anything wrong at all. Sometimes both the parties sit on thinking mat and put forth their point in front of everyone. This process is quite advantageous because the children become aware and take care of each other. I feel that they do not hit each other deliberately. Small children often fall because they lack balance, so they may hit each other by mistake. But I observed that now they immediately say 'sorry' if any child

is hurt. Of course, they go on complaining about each other the whole day. This definitely does not mean that one should ignore every happening. The child should have full faith that if something wrong is done to her the elders will listen to her but one need not react to every little thing. Trust them and they will be able to solve their problems.

By understanding each other's point of view the children have started to understand each other's feelings. One day the children were playing. One of the games required them to come running, pick a toffee in their mouth and run back. One child was unable to do this and another child took away her toffee. She started to cry. Just then two children came running to her and gave away their toffee to her and started shouting, 'you have won... you have won.' Little ones have deep understanding of other's feelings.

The children are like a seeds having full potential. We need to give them a fertile environment so that they may flourish fully and to do this we need to understand the childhood.

Neha currently teaches at Azim Premji School, Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand. She has a post-graduate degree in Education, specializing in Early Childhood Education, from Azim Premji University, Bangalore. Her interests are in understanding childhood, teacher-child relationship, role of childhood in the construction of society, and socio-emotional development of children. She also has a Master's degree in Journalism and Mass Communication, and four years' experience in news reporting, writing, and editing. She has worked with the Hindi National Dailies, Amar Ujala, Lucknow and Dainik Jagran, Dehradun. She loves to write and sing. She may be contacted at neha.mishra@azimpremjifoundation.org

Am I big or small? Or nothing?

Nemaram Chowdhary



Adolescence is a time when one tries to understand things like health, development and rights and develops knowledge and skills. It is also a time when one learns to control emotions and maintain relationships in order to prepare for future life. The boys and girls of this age need proper guidance and emotional encouragement. Psychologists believe that the children should be made aware of adolescence, but on the other hand we see that a large section of society believes that these things are taboo and prefers to remain silent rather than talk about physical changes and emotional side of adolescence. This is a challenging area and I have had some experience regarding this during my teaching in the school. For the past five-six years, I have been involved with teaching in field of inclusive school education. During this period I have mainly worked with children of the rural background who are in the age group of 11 to 15 years. About four years ago, I had to teach a lesson on male and female reproductive system to grade seven. While preparing the lesson plan on this topic, I was a little confused. My concern was that whether it would be appropriate to teach these children about reproductive system who do not have a general understanding of human body. Secondly, would the children feel comfortable in discussing these things? I was in a state of dilemma for couple of days and then I got a book from the library titled '*Bitiya kare saval*', in which the initial chapters had the kind of information that the children could read freely. The good thing was that this reading material created a few questions in their minds and they could get a certain level of information from it. We could start our discussions through these questions in the class and the children could understand the anatomy and functions of human body and were able to have an understanding about formation of human body and reproduction. This teaching experience, institutional training and the need of the school encouraged me to discuss adolescence with children, outside the classroom and on a regular basis. Our school team designated one male and one female teacher to take up this work and we helped in creating '*kishore-kishori*

manch' in school. They primarily worked with the students of upper primary classes and helped them with their curiosity and common problems as per their needs.



The children freely pose their questions in this forum and most of the time, instead of giving them the answers straight away, they are provided with the answers in the form of stories, videos, posters and interactions. Going forward in this direction, we have procured more than 30 books on adolescence for the children and teachers. They are available in our school library. First, these books are introduced to the children in the forum and then they are issued for them to read. This effort helps children in understanding the physical, mental and behavioural changes that occur during this age and also provides guidance in solving their conflicts and problems. We work for two hours in a month with children. So far we have held 40 meetings with them and regular interactions are happening with other teachers as well. These meetings include discussions on anatomy of human body, health and balanced diet, behaviour of children, social issues such as discrimination, untouchability, theft and abduction of girl child, boys and girls not playing together in the playground, grouping (boys/girls, girls /girls, boys/ boys), use of abusive language, security, stress and frustration, first aid, cleanliness, menstruation and superstition and social beliefs. In this plan of work, the children have been able to discuss about 100 questions so far. A common room for the girls has been made in the school through this forum and proper arrangements for things like sanitary pads, cloth and dustbins have been done. The requirements of the boys is also being taken care of equally. During this work we also felt that all the problems of the school cannot be linked to adolescence alone and this forum is not the only option for them. So we meet the children every week on a Thursday and decide on issues like not to waste water and food, keep the school clean, not to fight or quarrel in the school or any other general issue that is important for school.

A few examples of the hundreds of the questions put forth by hundreds of children:

1. Why do I try to humiliate someone?
2. Why don't we form an image of our mother or sister when we look at a girl?
3. We are all together in school then why is there a discrimination in the village?
4. Why do only girls do domestic work and not the boys?
5. Why do only girls menstruate? What is its relation with the creation of a baby?
6. A transgender is a female or a male?
7. Why do people get addicted to intoxicants? Why do they use tobacco or beedi on a regular basis?
8. Why do boys and girls not want to sit next to each other? Whereas this is not the case with small children.
9. I do not know how to read. Why am I mocked at?
10. Why do court marriages take place?

I think this kind of free atmosphere of discussion and dialogue on the untouched aspects of adolescence helps the children to take their own decisions, develop leadership qualities, and have awareness about the body and understanding of democratic values. There have been quite a few experiences with the children but I would specifically like to mention some.

Case -1. A girl had irregular menstruation cycle or periods and was subjected to '*tona-totaka (some kind of black magic/sorcery)*' and visiting '*babas*' for a long time because her family and neighbours believed in these things. The girl decided to share this problem and was given proper assistance. We talked to her mother and encouraged her to seek medical help so as to get favourable results. It is worth mentioning here that this girl opposed the child marriage and forced the society to follow the new way of thinking. The question is, how many girls are given such a platform by their society where they can express their feelings and people can understand them?

Case-2. During physical changes in the body, one child was under lot of stress because he thought that he has a lump in his chest (nipple) which is painful and so it is a disease. The child knew that something like this happens in cancer. So he was told to discuss it with other children of his age to find out whether they also had the same issue. And if there is any problem then why not contact a doctor? Can we forget this delicate period at all?

Case-3. We often talk about children being rude and disobedient. But the point is why do they behave like this? It is very important to know the reason. And do all children behave like this? May be not. There was a child in our school who lived with his grandparents. He unsuccessfully tried to cut his wrist veins. During personal interaction it was revealed that he was frustrated with the continuous ruthless behaviour of his family, friends and neighbours towards him and the recurring emotional instability made him very sad and he thought of taking this extreme step as the final solution to his problem. What is worrying is that we do not hesitate to take a biased decision and have very little interest in knowing the actual reason behind such drastic actions of children.

Case-4. This student, who had completed grade eight, was eldest among four sisters and used to help her parents in arranging vegetable cart, wanted to leave school because she was suffering from stomach pain for the last two or three years. But the family was not interested in getting any medical help for her. According to her, she was disturbed because she did not want to create a scene in front of her friends and teachers on account of her stomach pain. Surprisingly she never let anyone feel anything about her condition whether it was playground or any other school related activity. It is obvious that there may be many such reasons for school dropout and these small things prompt teenagers to take their own decisions like this.

Case-5. There was some misunderstanding between the boys and girls of grade seven and eight and they were hardly communicating with each other. So they were not playing together in the playground and there was some disturbance in the classroom teaching as well. The school had to organise annual sports week. I could clearly see the disunity and conflict within the groups of boys and girls. I was in the school sports committee and had to prepare sports timetable. Instead of making twelve teams for Kabaddi from our side, we allowed children to form their own teams and told them to have equal number of boys and girls in their team. The result was quite unexpected. We witnessed a very spectacular and energetic game where six boys and six girls were captains. The boys and girls were cheering their teams sitting together in the final match and the boys were happily playing for their team under the captaincy of girls. The point I want to make here is that as a teacher we get many opportunities and it entirely depends on us how we

utilise them. The playground abolishes distance.

I cannot say that this forum is a panacea for all the problems but one thing is sure. It is the responsibility of the school to come up with such innovations, as and when the needs arise, to change the educational scenario. We get immense satisfaction that this effort is helpful in moving towards child-centered, inclusive and accessible education. Kasturba Gandhi residential schools, Kendriya Vidyalayas and Navodaya schools are working in this area in collaboration with UNICEF. Apart from this, NCERT has also taken the initiative to make adolescence a part of the curriculum. But the most important thing is that the teacher plays a critical role in this regard because s/he has to be fair and mature, and adhere to moral values in front of children which is scarce in mainstream society but it is not difficult. It can be done. Psychologists consider adolescent stage to be very difficult, stressful and full of turmoil but efforts like these can make it a little less difficult and smooth. It is important because when the child is small, she is very close to her parents but as she grows the closeness reduces. So as a teacher, can we give them emotional strength and be sensitive towards them? That too at a time when they need their parents or someone who understand their feelings most. According to the keynote speaker of Mission Genius Mind, an organisation on behaviour of children, the effect of the words is more than an atom bomb. He says that if a child is repeatedly told that he is lazy and cannot do any work properly then she will become lazy and not do her work

properly for sure, more so during adolescence. Many a time such words are used for children either because we are angry or by mistake. The parents have to understand that unknowingly they use such language many times. Do they realise that it is wrong? These issues can be discussed in parent teacher meetings. We need to tell them about the adolescence forum and the work that is being done with the children in school. These things have to be conveyed in a very mature and careful way. We even try to talk to the mothers separately so that their participation in the development of the child is ensured.

Adolescence is the age of change. We must understand that the children are going through many changes between adulthood and childhood. At times they behave like adults and their search for identity in the society begins in the adolescent years. They are confused about their role. They feel responsible as growing adults while they still have their desires as children. If they want to put forth their thoughts before elders they are told that they are small. And if they behave like children then they are told that they are big and should mend their ways. The fact is that they are very confused and cannot understand whether they are big or small or nothing.

Acknowledgement:

I would like to thank all the colleagues who gave me commendable support in my work and writing.

Nemaram has been teaching Science in Azim Premji School for the last 6 years and is involved with Adolescence Forum for the last four years. He also takes care of providing First Aid facility in the school. Before joining Azim Premji School, he was teaching Chemistry in a college for 4 years. He may be contacted at nemaram.choudhary@azimpremjifoundation.org

A New Chapter: Being A Child

Poornima Hegde



It was the end of the rainy season somewhere in month of September-2016 when I joined one of the biggest not -for- profit organisations in India, the Azim Premji Foundation. It gave a sharp turn to my life. The programme I joined, associateship programme, is mandated with the initial process to understand a government school through observations and facilitations of classes for a year as we needed to work with public school system, developing the teacher capacity more in terms of perspective along with content. Fortunately I had been assigned to Azim Premji School.

Teaching is a skill which needs special professional training and I had no such expertise at hand. Besides, I had been in primary school only when I myself was studying there! In the beginning the school seemed fascinating due to its enthralling learning environment and superlative schooling culture. As instructed I remained as observer and deciphered the academic as well as administrative process of public education system.

As I did this, I realised that I had reached the place where I supposed to be. The initial phase of observing English classes opened my eyes to the children's interests, their learnability and the challenges which teachers face in teaching a foreign language. This is when I had got the practical knowledge of teaching. At the same time, I started facilitating Nali-Kali classes. This is when I validated myself as a teacher.

It is now been three months that I have started taking English classes independently. At the beginning, as all new teachers assume, I also became aware of the fact that 'more is better', experience does matter in the teaching learning process. Initially, keeping order in the classroom took up a lot of time and there was not enough time for the teaching process and planning activities. I became a bit discouraged due to my incompetence in facilitating classes. As it was English class I spoke only in English which made students lose interest as many of them could not understand what was going on around them. Under pressure, I switched to the local language, but it appeared that it distracted everyone from my aim of creating the

right environment for learning English. It is rightly said that only an interested teacher can make the learning interesting, so I decided to motivate myself and develop the learning atmosphere.

The first two months, the process of assessment of children's baseline knowledge, that is, locate my students' learning level, helped me to get back on track to create the right learning background.

When we talk of English language in primary schools, the aim is to cultivate the children's ability of speaking and communication, as English, like every other language is a tool of communication. But among four skills of language learning- listening, speaking, reading, writing,- I found reading, even without understanding, is perhaps the easiest for children, whereas speaking is the most difficult. There may be various reasons for the children's inability to comprehend what they read, and speak what they understand, but for our school children the obvious reason is that they have little or no exposure to English environment and speaking practice outside the classrooms. This means that the school may be the only place for them to use what they have learnt, so they need lots of practice when they are here.

This raised the following questions in my mind:

What can be done to create an English learning environment and enhance students' engagement and individual involvement in classrooms?

Which method to choose?

How to connect the whole class where we have children of different interests and levels and bring in individual inclusive development?

How to evolve lesson plans tailored with activities to the interest of each individual?

At this point my experience of observing classes and children led me to the conclusion that 'language has to go in before it can come out'. Developing vocabulary can help me to achieve this goal. And I admit that one of the ways of learning a foreign language is through the ears - what children hear is one of the sources of the learning. I wanted to choose the best way to make their



learning interesting and began to explore as well as experiment with my own learnings to ensure the children to achieve second language competency.

One of the activities that was designed focusing on the listening ability was rhymes. Children of any age love to sing poems and rhymes. My first step towards building vocabulary was to sing and repeat the rhymes, which encouraged children to feel the language, the sound, the intonation and the rhythm. The rhymes were chosen with a combination of pictures and movements which helped to establish the link between words and their meaning. I accessed the rhymes through internet and made the selection according to the lesson. I was supposed to teach body parts so I took up the rhyme, *'Two Little Eyes to Look Around'*, while the poem. *'What's the Weather Like Today?'*, linked the idea of clothes to the concept of weather. In this way, rhymes have become a tool to teach concepts in my classes. Through these rhymes I have tried to make the children understand naming words, action words, and sentence structures. *I am, I can, I like* are usages that were easily conveyed to children only through rhymes.

Little bird can you clap?
No I can't, can't clap.
Little bird can you fly?
Yes I can, can fly.

Another tool has been stories which not only helped me in language teaching but also in widening the imagination and introducing new concepts relating to other subjects. Extensive use of body language has proved to be smarter when I tell stories to children. I am interested in music and theatre, which paved the way for an effective

delivery of stories. Stories of animals, science and traditions got the children's attention. Children asked questions about the characters, themes in simple sentences and modelling for stories in the summer holidays has been a big help, particularly in building vocabulary.

All this requires proper planning. Lesson planning is a very demanding task which takes great effort and time to understand. Designing materials is a challenge. I understood that to teach, designing Teaching-Learning Material (TLM) is a very challenging task. Along with this, alternative plans and teaching material and a good command over language are absolutely important in language classes. I needed to think out-of-the-box to bring in the right English learning atmosphere. Role playing, games, opinion writing and many such fun assignments enabled me to get children's attention and interest in learning a foreign language. Secondly, to fulfil lesson objectives, different worksheets were prepared to address different interest groups. Special attention was paid to grab the attention of the children who had not reached the class level. Activities such as group discussion, video screening, picture matching (related to the concept), and vocabulary building were redesigned. The earlier difficulties gave way to confidence - my zeal started paying off.

The list of activities tried goes on. Here I have been able to mention very few instances and activities which I have tried in class. Some were very successful, others less so. I am happy that I am exploring myself and finding many possibilities of teaching learning process. Although there are many challenges I have to face, will face with a smile and enthusiasm to go forward as the learning never ends. My motto now is, to quote Alfred Tennyson, *'To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield'*.

Poornima belongs to the Associate Batch of 2016 at Azim Premji Foundation. As part of the Associates programme, she is currently facilitating the teaching of English in Azim Premji School, Yadgir, Karnataka. She may be contacted at poornima.hegde@azimpremjifoundation.org

A Taste of Empathy in the Social Science Class

Prakash Chandra Gautam



Teaching social science in upper primary has its own uniqueness since learners can understand changes in human society through the community around us, by close observations at homes, through newspapers, media etc. A teacher also gets similar experiences from community. But there is a big difference between adults' and children's experiences: children observe the things around them closely and build views after continuous brainstorming over social issues, facts, happenings, unlike adults who may have vast exposure but they are somehow conditioned about issues in a certain way. Thus most social issues may not surprise adults.

Let us think of a situation when a child, especially at 12 or 13, comes across a social evil for the first time. I usually meet such learners of social science in my school and spend my happiest hours with them when they ask me questions as, for example:

Why are some slogans like 'Save the girl child' written all over the wall around us?

Why is it not written for boys?

Why are only our mothers always busy doing household work?

Why have female family members been burdened from morning to night?

"Why is some work, like cleaning utensils and housekeeping done only by female members?"

For a teacher, the learner's involvement around community matters and the way they see the world usually comes through the questions, talks and reflections, especially during the classroom processes.

Here I am sharing some hands-on 'pictures' of my last year's classroom learning. Questions were frequent and close friends during our entire interaction when I was planning for my classroom and thinking of teaching the topic *Social changes between the 6th and 12th centuries*. I was at the point of assigning a project work and was trying to interweave their questions in my assignment plans and was completely absorbed in the process,

keeping in mind the 7th class, of the age group of 13/14 years. I was very excited about my preparation. Subjects like social science have wider angles and a great scope for unlimited discussions and debates. One can create, feel and pave the platform where children can cultivate their own interpretations irrespective of books.

Keeping all such things in my mind, I happened to design a project work for class 7 learners. We had thirty learners in our class and divided them into six subgroups. It was a relevant topic, in which the children were familiar with the complexities of medieval society and customs. We started working on *Comparative study of the Status of Women between 6th and 12th Centuries and the Modern Age*. We had chosen the course books, other medieval history books, library, newspapers. We also had resource people, like other teachers or resource persons from the school-DI, parents etc. It was planned to expand our catchment areas.

Projects took seven days to complete and learners were working beyond our regular classes. They then came to certain conclusions and had differences in their opinions, which made me very happy. Here are some discussions

Teacher – Can we begin class by getting clarity over some words / terminology used in our textbooks? "

Learners – Yes!

Teacher – So give me some examples!

Learners – *Sati pratha, parda pratha, baal vivah, shiksha se varjit hona etc.*

Teacher – Can anyone describe her understanding of sati-pratha?

A group of children – A custom where living women were forcibly put on the pyre of her dead husband.

Teacher – Can we imagine what pain a woman had during this? Was it as simple as talking about it?

A group. – No it was really a tough time for the entire family and village. Moreover, what happened to the children? We haven't learnt about them."

As adults, we work on contents and specifics whereas children concentrate on feelings. They ask about and feel about brutal events as they are part of joint families and emotions are contextual wealth in rural communities.

Teachers feel elated when children express their views, pause to think and reflect, talk and debate so that we can face the world with our own opinions.

As adults, we focus on the contents and specifics, while children focus on feelings. Being in joint families, they asked about the children of these brutally burnt mothers. Feelings and emotions are contextual wealth in rural communities. Unfortunately, children in metros are worst sufferers of this

As a teacher one gets elated when children have their own views, they pause to think and reflect. After some reading and debate, we had gone forward on the path to the social world with our own viewpoints.

Another group – I can imagine pain like once my finger burnt in a candle flame and it took weeks to heal.

Below are some notes from notebooks which they have discussed and written in the form of comparison.

Teacher – Oh! What do you think of the women who were burnt in the name of custom? Would have they agreed to it?

Learners – Perhaps not.....

Teacher – Lets discuss our findings. Could you suggest few comparisons between the past and present?"

A group – As a group we have come to the conclusion that there are as bad or even worse customs in modern times.

Teacher- How?

The group – We have lots of newspaper cuttings clearly showing that female foetuses are killed assert that girl children are killed at foetus.

Teacher – Yes It is being done. Sad to read this.

Learners – This and other evils such as child abuse and sexual harassments still exist. That means we are not different from the medieval age. Woman and girl children still struggle for existence.

Teacher – Unfortunately, this is our real world. But we have walked miles ahead of the old customs.

Learners – But we are in disagreement.

Teacher – Ok could you elaborate? I believe that we have travelled a good distance in education, poverty, technology etc."



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समाजिक विज्ञान

वर्षों का समय तो पहले से वृत्त है। अभी तो लड़कियों को जन्म लेते ही मार देते हैं फेंक देते हैं। कुछ करकट में फेंक देते और सैसाजो करते हैं उन्हें पुलिस को पकड़ लेना चाहिए और यह कानून जुम है। धन्यवाद

महिलाओं पर पाबंदियाँ

ब-2-16	मध्यकाल 7 से 11वीं सदी	आधुनिक काल / 17वीं सदी
- सती प्रथा		जन्म से पूर्व या जन्म लेने पर मारना
- बाल-विवाह		देहेज लेना
- व्यवसाय / यात्रा न करना		स्त्री को देहेज या वन्द्या के रूप में देना
- धूम्रपान करना		जन्म पर मार देना
- शिक्षा, धूमना फिरना वर्जित		मृत / अमानविय व्यवहार
- दूसरी शक्ति का अधिकार		अपना निर्णय नहीं लेने देना
- नहीं था		विवाह हेतु
- अपने मन से विवाह नहीं करने का अधिकार		पदपिथा
प्र.1	आपके अनुसार महिलाओं को कौन-कौन-से अधिकार मिलना चाहिए	सावधानता लड़कियों को बेचना लड़कियों की मदद काम में लड़कियों की मदद काम में
उ	गैर अनुसार महिलाओं को पढ़ने का, खेलने का, शादी करने का, यात्रा करने का	लड़कियों में श्रेष्ठ लड़कियों को बेचना लड़कियों की मदद काम में लड़कियों की मदद काम में

वर्षों का समय तो पहले से वृत्त है। अभी तो लड़कियों को जन्म लेते ही मार देते हैं फेंक देते हैं। कुछ करकट में फेंक देते और सैसाजो करते हैं उन्हें पुलिस को पकड़ लेना चाहिए और यह कानून जुम है। धन्यवाद

प्र.3 पुरुषों पर इस तरह की पाबंदी क्यों नहीं लगाई जाती? पुरुषों पर इस तरह की पाबंदी इसलिए नहीं लगाई जाती क्योंकि पहले सभी नीति-कानून सब पुरुष ही बनाते थे और फकी ही बनाते थे और उस समय महिला भी कुछ कहने से डरते थे और इस तरह का कारण है। पुरुष और वे ही इनसे मारने काम करने पर मजबूर रहते थे इस कारण से महिलाओं में हिंसा नहीं थी। उन्हें साथ मर्दा और व्यवहार और अत्याचार करते थे इसी कारण से पुरुषों पर पाबंदियाँ नहीं थी

-2016

समाजिक विज्ञान

- आपके अनुसार महिलाओं को कौन-कौन-से अधिकार मिलना चाहिए।
उत्तर ⇒ मेरे अनुसार महिलाओं को निम्नलिखित अधिकार देना चाहिए।
1. महिलाओं को घमने का अधिकार देना चाहिए।
2. महिलाओं को काम करने का अधिकार देना चाहिए।
3. महिलाओं को शादी करना का अधिकार देना चाहिए।
4. महिलाओं को मिय खपकर रहना चाहिए।
5. महिलाओं को अपनी पहचान बनाने की कोशिश देना चाहिए।
6. महिलाओं को जिंदा जमाने का अधिकार नहीं देना चाहिए।
- पुरुषों पर इस तरह की पाबंदी क्यों नहीं लगाई जाती?
उत्तर ⇒ पुरुषों पर इस तरह की पाबंदी इसलिए नहीं लगाई जाती क्योंकि पुरुष की अर्थात् मानते हैं सत्ता जन्म से पुरुष लोग के कंधे पर आती है और ऐसे पुरुष की यात्रा करना शादी करना, मितवान चुनना करना चाहिए। उच्च जीवन के आदमी के लोगों तक समाहित नहीं बनाई गई। और अभी पति के मर जाने पर सती प्रथा नहीं होती है। इस तरह पुरुषों को नहीं लगाई जाती है।
- सिपही विवरण
उत्तर ⇒ विंगायत ⇒ उन्का मानना या फिर स्वर से प्रेम बिना किसी आश्चर्य के करना चाहिए। ऐसे लोगों को विंगायत कहते हैं।
नाचपंजी ⇒ बसकणा व अककनदेवी इस आंदोलन के प्रमुख प्रेरक थे वे जात पति, ऊंच नीच के भेदभाव को भी मिटाना चाहते थे। इसी तरह के आंदोलन जो शुरू करते हैं उसे नाचपंजी, सिद्धों भी कहते हैं।
नाचनार ⇒ वे फर्म को तो व कई देवी-देवताओं की उपासना की जगह शिव या विष्णु के प्रति प्रेम और भक्ति को बढ़ावा देना चाहते थे। उन्होंने आम लोगों

classmate
Date 11/11
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समाजिक विज्ञान

करना, रात करना, लोगों से मिलना - जुलना ये सब बहुत बेकार समझा जा सकता है क्योंकि शादी करना शादी महिलाओं तो गरीबों अपनी मर्जी से नहीं करते हैं जब उनके आपसी मतभेद उनके घरवालों के होते तो तब कर सकते हैं ऐसे में नहीं कर सकते हैं।

प्र.2 आज के समय में महिलाओं के स्थिति कैसी है? अपनी संस्कृति से बताएं।
उत्तर ⇒ आज के समय में महिलाओं के स्थिति ऐसी है कि महिलाओं अपने मर्जी से कुछ भी नहीं कर सकते हैं जब परिवार वाले बोले तो महिलाओं आज्ञा कर सकती हैं पड़ भी सकती हैं शादी भी कर सकती हैं व्यवसाय भी कर सकती हैं। उस समय पत्नी की पति मर जाय तो पत्नी को भी जिंदा चिता के साथ जला देते थे।

महिलाओं पर पाबंदियाँ

मध्यकाल / 7वीं से 11वीं सदी तक	आधुनिक काल / 17वीं सदी तक
- सती प्रथा	जन्म से पूर्व या जन्म लेते पर मारना।
- बाल विवाह	देहेज लेना।
- व्यवसाय / यात्रा न करना	स्त्री को देहेज या कन्या के जन्म पर मार देना।
- धूम्रपान करना	लड़कियों को तपान देना।
- शिक्षा, धूमना फिरना वर्जित	रात / अमानवी व्यवहार
- दूसरी शक्ति का अधिकार नहीं था	अपना निर्णय नहीं लेने देना (विवाह हेतु)
- अपने मन से विवाह नहीं करना	पति प्रथा
	लड़के, लड़कियों में भेदभाव
	लड़कियों को बेचना
	लड़कियों के मदद काम में धकेलना।

Another interesting follow-up was the open ended responses, similar in appearance and making the project sequential in terms of connectedness with the previous topic. Here is a part of it.

Q- What are some basic women's rights in your view?

They have jointly developed and written:

- 1 – Right to travel freely.
- 2 – Right to work.
- 3 – Right to marry a person of her own choice.
- 4 – All women should live together.
- 5 – Women should have opportunities to increase their self-esteem.
- 6 – No one has right to kill/burn a woman.

Views written above have come after analysis and a level of understanding which is shared in brief and has a glimpse of larger society which we would like to see. Trust grows through dialogue and debates and is an intrinsic part of teaching social science. How a child aged 12 or 13 years sees women rights is a good example of this.

Some of these opinions come from the children's context, some from their experiences and some from understanding the contents of Social Science.



Prakash has been teaching at Azim Premji School, Dhamtari, since February, 2012. Prior to this, he was a school teacher for over 16 years in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, which included tribal, rural and urban setups. He has worked with children of standard 1 to standard 12. English, History and Biology are the subjects he teaches. He has also worked as a casual announcer in AIR Raipur, Chhattisgarh. He may be contacted at prakash.gautam@azimpremji.org

A Mela which Introduced Me to a New Form of Mathematics

Pramod Chandra Pandey



'Mathematics *Mela*' was an alien and unimaginable word to me before this was held in our school. Generally schools arrange science exhibition or science *mela* where children display things that take place in day to day life and are also connected with principles of science. These exhibits, or events, are presented from the point of view of science and children participate in it with a lot of enthusiasm. This was my only experience about *melas*.

This year while discussing science *mela* in our group, we explored the idea of making mathematics a part of the *mela*. We thought that it might help in breaking the misconception about mathematics being boring. Since I had been also working on mathematics with children for a long time, the challenges related to mathematics came to my mind one after the other. Personally, I liked the suggestion but it was difficult to figure out what could be done in a mathematics *mela* and what could be displayed or exhibited. Then I thought that it was probably not important to display or exhibit something. What is more significant is to create an atmosphere and opportunity where children can identify and connect mathematics to their everyday activity and learn mathematical skills in a play-way method.

Before taking this idea to the children, we decided that the plan of action should be explored in our mathematics team. While discussing in the group, we made an attempt to understand the topics that are connected with the children's daily life so that their interest in mathematics increases. Since we were doing something like this for the first time, very apt suggestions were not coming forth, yet we made a list of a few topics and decided to take help of the children and talk to them.

As the next step, we talked to the children about organising a mathematics *mela*. The children were also confused when they heard the words like 'mathematics' and '*mela*' together, though very few children expressed their doubts. Most of them expressed their willingness to participate in science *mela*.

I was also a little unenthusiastic, but I could see that the children were interested in discovering and

doing something and then exhibit their work. This is how children learn, I thought, and it is natural for them to be interested in science. We decided that we should play some mathematical games and solve certain puzzles with the children which they could enjoy. So we included these activities in our classes and continued our discussions with the children in small groups. During one of such discussion the children came up with the idea to make the people who visit the *mela* solve some puzzles. I said why not? Upon hearing this, the children's enthusiasm knew no bounds and they wanted to share the games and puzzles they had, with the visitors. Taking advantage of the situation I asked them as to what more could be done in the *mela*. That set children thinking. So I suggested that they should think about it and that I would also give a thought to it and then all of us together could come up with a plan.

Eventually we had a good set of children who had started thinking about doing something in mathematics. I talked to my team and decided that I would discuss topics with children and work on them in groups. We had substantial talks with the children in the next meeting and we decided with mutual consent to work on some important topics that were related to their daily lives. The topics were:

1. Changing forms of measuring devices
2. Mathematics behind mid-day meal (MDM)
3. Body Mass Index
4. The world of patterns
5. Puzzles and games

The children were aware of these topics but did not have an understanding of them from the point of view of mathematics. For example, they were involved with the MDM, but did not have much knowledge about things like which food item provides how many grams of nutrition, how much is each child getting and what is its cost etc. We wanted to go beyond the classroom or textbook - based learning of mathematics and so our team and the children were divided into small groups to move forward in this process. Each group chose the topics according to their interests.

After this, the outline of work plan began to emerge in each group. The children made efforts to understand their topics with the help of library books and Internet. I was the member of the group which had to work on the MDM and changing forms of measuring devices. Their responsibility was to understand these topics and explain it to others. We further divided ourselves into two sub-groups and one had to work on the MDM while the other would take care of measurement.

Now the time had come to work at ground level. The children started discussions in their groups. Initially they really got bogged down with the problem of gathering the material for their work. For example the MDM team was discussing the cost of provisions in the market, and things like does the cost of things always remain same in the market, how much rice or pulses are needed for daily meals and how will we know about the nutrition each child gets etc. Our solution to these queries was to make a list of work that we needed to do and divide the work between ourselves.

Now the children had a format and their responsibilities in place. For example, it was decided that two children would go to the kitchen every day to find out the number of children present that day and the quantity of food items used. The second group would find out the cost of the food items in this list and calculate the expenditure for that day. The third group had to find out about the nutrients and their quantities that would be available from the food included in that day's menu. This group also had the responsibility to get the information on why these food items are being included in our food.

The children started their work, collected data every day, read books, browsed the Internet and sat in their groups in the afternoon for the calculations and finally put all their research findings in a format. After a few days' work they started analysing the data, such as which food item's cost was increasing but its nutritional value was low. Using cooking gas was also increasing the expenditure. While working in groups, the children also calculated the expenditure of one month on the basis of the data available for a week and the expenditure of the whole year on the basis of the data available for a month. Not only this, they also calculated the MDM amount spent on each child.

The other groups were also working in a similar

way. They were discussing, sharing and preparing to present their work. For example, to understand the changing forms of measuring devices they collected the devices that were used in olden times, used them to measure things and compared them with the modern devices and thus understood the conversion by doing things themselves. To analyse the pattern the children collected things from around them where they saw some pattern. It clearly meant that they were trying to understand the mathematical concepts by associating these patterns with real life. Puzzles are always a big hit with children. They helped each other with puzzles, had good mental exercise and also made the visitors of the *mela* play these interesting mathematical games. The children calculated BMI of their group members to understand it. In this process, they did a lot of work on fast and mental calculation and it was clearly visible in their presentation. Children had also studied about the recommendations of eating habits based on BMI through Internet. They calculated the BMI of the visitors and gave them advice as a doctor would do.

On the whole, the *mela* was full of interesting experiences for me. It gave me the opportunity to understand different dimensions of teaching and learning. As for the children, their confidence grew since they were participating in various activities and exploring things themselves. The very topics that they used to find boring and burdensome in the classroom had become interesting and joyful because they were learning them by doing.

It became clear that when mathematical topics are applied in daily life and things are learnt in a practical way within groups, then the learning becomes interesting and long-lasting. It was so evident in the mathematics *mela*. Children were very active, self-assured and answered the questions of the visitors with confidence while also discussing certain points. They had to spend a lot of time and energy in calculating nutritional value of each food item of the MDM and although it was tiring, they were curious to find the result and hence their interest sustained.

The additional benefit was the experience the children got from the exercise. They had been fully involved in the complete process of *mela*, from planning to execution, hence it was not just a collection of data but it gave them the satisfaction of creating something new.

Pramod has been working with Azim Premji School, Uttarkashi as a Mathematics teacher for the past five years. He has 13 years of experience in teaching Mathematics in different schools. He may be contacted at pramod.pandey@azimpremjifoundation.org

Mathematics in Sweets

Pramod Kandpal



We have often seen that what we think happens the way we wanted it to happen but at times the results are much better than what we expected.

I am saying this because of an incident that took place sometime back. I was teaching mathematics to class 2. I was asked to keep the level of children in mind before going ahead. I was to teach them the concept of place value that day. One day before teaching this concept, I was discussing with my fellow teachers about the ways to teach it. I made a note of all the suggestions that came my way in my diary.

I went to the class the next day and had some general talks with the children about their home and family. Just then one child said, "Sir, please tell us a story today." Immediately the other child stopped him and said, "Are we studying Hindi? This is mathematics period and who tells a story in mathematics period?" When I heard children talking like this, I had a sudden insight. Why not use a story to explain the concept of place value? Immediately I made children to sit in a circle and started telling them the story of '*silai binai mithai*'.

The story was like this. A granny and her granddaughter lived in a village. Granny had a sweetmeat shop where she used to prepare *silai binai mithai* and sell them. Those were the days when the sweets were counted and sold. For example if someone asked granny to give 25 *silai binai mithai* then she had to count each sweet one by one. It used to be a big problem if somebody wanted 65 or 85 sweets because then granny had to count starting from 1, 2, and 3 till 65 or 85. Granny used to be very upset with this. Deepavali festival was round the corner. A big crowd was expected to come to granny's shop and buy sweets. So granny took her granddaughter to the shop with her to help her out and to get some respite. The granddaughter had vacation for Deepavali. So from next day, both granddaughter and granny started going to the shop.

Granny made her granddaughter to sit in the shop and sell sweets while she got busy in preparing sweets. But do you know something? The

granddaughter did not sell the sweets the way her granny used to sell them. She made many bundles of *silai binai mithai* having 10 sweets in each bundle. If somebody wanted 25 sweets then the granddaughter would give 2 bundles and 5 loose sweets. Similarly, if somebody wanted 45 sweets then the granddaughter would give 4 bundles and 5 loose sweets. Granny was watching this transaction from inside and felt that her granddaughter was counting sweets in haste and was so quick in her dealings that something might go wrong and perhaps it was a wrong decision to bring her along to the shop. She thought that the granddaughter had messed up things. However, granny continued to prepare sweets with a disturbed mind.

By evening granny had finished preparing sweets. She was upset that granddaughter had muddled up everything. She was sure that they would not have earned the expected amount of money. She thought that she used to earn well during Deepavali festival which was also about to get over. Anyway, granny came to the cash counter and saw a lot of money there. She was stunned! She could not believe that so much of money was earned. She was also puzzled about the fact that her granddaughter could count so many sweets in such a short time. How could she be so quick? She was dumbfounded.

She went to her granddaughter and asked how she could manage to sell so many sweets in such a short time because the cash box was full of money. The granddaughter was bombarded with many question like how did you do this or how did you count and sell so many sweets in such a short time etc.

The granddaughter heard these questions and laughed and then started explaining. She said that she counted *silai binai mithai* as soon as she came to the shop and made several bundles of them having 10 sweets in each bundle. When a customer came asking for 26 sweets, she would give him 2 bundles and 6 pieces separately. Similarly, if the customers wanted 45, 79, 47 or 87 sweets then I would give them the bundle/bundles of sweets and separate sweets on the basis of the number they wanted. Granny was amazed to hear this and thought that



she could neither do nor think of such a thing ever. Granny asked her granddaughter how and where she learnt these things. Granddaughter said that in their school they play these kinds of games in mathematics class. Granny was extremely happy to hear this. She hugged her granddaughter and said jokingly – Madam ji, you have eased my work. Now I will also sell sweets like this every day.

All the children were listening to the story very carefully. They were enjoying it a lot. After completing the story I asked them, “Would you also like to prepare *silai binai mithai*?” The children gladly agreed. We made four groups of children and each group was given many spokes, rubber bands to tie the spokes and a dice. Then the game started which was like this - if I get 5 by throwing the dice then I will keep 5 spokes with me. The other children of my group will also take turns and throw the dice and keep the number of spokes that the dice has. When my turn comes again and I get 6 then I will have 11 spokes with me. Out of these 11 spokes I will take out 10 spokes and make a bundle of them. As we get our turn we will continue to make bundles of 10 spokes.

The game was at its peak. The children were enjoying the game with lot of enthusiasm. After a while I went to each group and started talking to them casually. I asked them to give me 25 *Silai binai mithai*. After they gave it to me, my next question was that in order to give me 25 sweets how many

bundles had to be made and how many loose sweets had to be given to me. They would answer correctly. The whole process was progressing very well. I was going to each group asking questions and they were answering well. Later, we wrote the number of *Silai binai mithai* prepared by them. For example, 5 bundles of 10 and 8 sweets would mean 58 sweets.

The story followed by the game provided a new direction to the children. They were playing it every day and were able to explain it. I myself could not believe that the children were able to relate the understanding of bundles with place value. I would ask them to explain the meaning of 35 and they were able to tell me that (3 bundles of 10 and 5 sweets) it means 30 and 5. They were learning from each other and going ahead. This process had established the concept of place value well in the mind of children and the proof was the way they were all making bundles correctly. From bundles to place value – the journey was smooth and automatic.

The story of *Silai binai mithai* was not limited to that class alone, but it spread to their homes and neighbourhood. I tried to share this story with the teachers of other government schools during training sessions. And whenever I get an opportunity, I tell the story of *Silai binai mithai* to everybody.

Pramod is currently working with Azim Premji School, Uttarkashi as a Primary Teacher. He has 9 years of teaching experience in different schools. He may be contacted at pramod.kandpal@azimpremjifoundation.org

Development of Language in Mathematics

Rahul Singh Rathore



If we ask our colleagues or friends whether there is any connection between learning mathematics and language, perhaps their answer would be 'no, there is no connection'. This is because the relationship is not evident. Based on my experiences and certain articles that I have read, I would like to share a few things about how language has and can contribute in mathematics. They are as follows:

Usage of common language – While teaching mathematics (concepts, formulas, operations, theorems etc.), if the teacher uses common language then the children grasp it fast. For example: while teaching the concept of number four to a child, we associate it with groups of four concrete things so that they can understand the abstract concept. It is important to use child's first language, or the language that she understands best, while teaching mathematics. Most of the time we do not use a common language while teaching mathematics. That is why children find mathematics difficult.

The language of understanding and solving problems – An important objective of learning mathematics is to make the day-to-day work easier. The children try to achieve it through statement sums (or word problems) in their class.

Language of Mathematics – Mathematics itself is a language in which there are rules of various signs, symbols, its own words and grammar. These are based on some previous relevant preconceptions and are created based on the rules of logic which it is necessary to understand and use for the development of mathematical thinking. This ability depends on the creation of common language. For example, only after obtaining the ability to use conjunctions such as 'and', 'but', 'therefore' and 'or', the children will be able to understand sentences of mathematical reasoning such as: 'Every square is a rectangle, but every rectangle is not a square.' There is another aspect of interaction between two languages where some common words are used in both the languages. For example in mathematics some words of common language -such as operations- are also used but with a specific mathematical meaning.

Role of language in teaching of mathematics –

When we help a child in the classroom to get the concept of a number, say, the number four then we make a group of various things such as four pencils, four books, four children or four trees to make them understand the concept of four. In the same way, we use concrete objects to prepare the child for each abstract concept and the word related with it and then explain the same in common language.

We use child's first language or the language that she can understand to explain concepts of mathematics. Apart from this, the common language should be used at a level which the child can understand.

If we do not take care of these aspects from the beginning, then the forthcoming concepts and procedures will never be clear in child's mind. They will never be comfortable with the language of mathematics. They will be looking for signs and clues at every juncture, so that they may at least remember the definition or the formula. And the moment they face an unknown question, they will start making various kinds of mistakes.

Statement Sums or Word Problems – When the children are introduced to statement sums, we need to tell them about mathematical concepts and processes with the help of right kind of statement sums which provide them with the contexts that encourage them. While asking the children to do the statement sums, we should see that the sums are framed using simple words and are related to their daily life.

While solving statement sums it is necessary to understand what is being said in the question. After that it has to be changed from the real life context to the appropriate mathematical form, then it has to be written in the form of mathematical operations and in the end the answer is to be re-written in the same context of real life from where it started.

So, there can be the following steps to solve a statement sum –

1. Understanding the question in real life context.
2. Changing it to mathematical terms.



3. Constructing questions with the help of operations.
4. Solving mathematical questions.
5. Checking the answer by relating it to real life.

Most children do not come face to face with the statement sums. Many teachers and text books either go straight to abstract number problems or use words without pictures to teach concepts. They introduce statement sums only at the end of the year. Because of this the children face lot of difficulties- they are hesitant, lacking in confidence and so guess at the answers. Some start adding numbers or peering into the notebooks of their classmates to see whether they have done the sums in the same way or not.

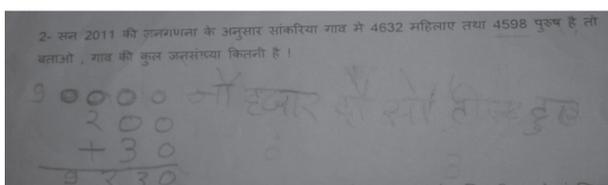
The situation becomes more complex when we start teaching the children varied and effective ways in order to help them know which operation has to be done. We teach them shortcuts and algorithms and though these methods aid them in finding expected answers of familiar sums, they cannot understand what is happening and why. The result is if the language of the same question is altered slightly then the child's difficulty increases.

As mentioned earlier, when children try to do statements sums, they face problems at many levels. The main hurdle is that they cannot express any real-life situation in mathematical form and cannot understand the meaning of any mathematical term in real life. Hence it is necessary that children are able to connect common language with mathematical symbols and operations. Assistance is required to establish this relation. We should explain the questions to the children by linking them with concrete objects and using appropriate gestures so that they can understand them properly.

Example :- I asked the following question :

According to the census of 2011, there are 4632 women and 4598 men in Sankaria village. What is the total population of the village?

Solution -



When the child was asked about how he solved this question, he said that first he tried to understand

what was being asked, compared it to his village in terms of whether it can be done in his village as well. After that he used the mathematical process to solve the question though he wrote 90,000 instead of 9000, but he got the correct solution since he had understood that question.

Learning the language of mathematics – What is the language of mathematics? Like any other language, it is also made up of those concepts, words, symbols, algorithms and grammar that are specifically meant for it. The children can understand this language only when they use it. This means that they should listen to mathematical language, speak it and write it. Talking to children about mathematics, encouraging them to talk about whatever they are doing and discussing mathematics with them will give a shape to their understanding and their mathematical language and thinking will become better, even if their expression is consistent or logical. In order to say these things in a proper way, they should start paying attention to them. In doing so, they will get the opportunity to develop the ability to put together various mathematical processes involved in solving a sum, organise them and express them in words. It has a far-reaching effect in developing their understanding of and fondness for mathematics.

Sometimes children deal with the calculation processes correctly, though they may not be aware of the mathematics involved in it. For example, when we ask the children about five digit numbers, they may not be able to tell correctly even if they can do the operations correctly.

The reason for not understanding the basis of algorithm is often that children do not quite understand why we write numbers only in a certain way. Because of this they make different kind of mistakes. They must have complete understanding of concepts to overcome these mistakes.

So, in short, we should take note of the following points -

1. The use of language can impact the learning of mathematical concepts. It is only with the help of language these concepts can be firmly established their minds.
2. Children have to use mathematical language as well as the language that they speak every day while doing sums, reading books of mathematics or explaining what they have understood.
3. What is the children's attitude towards statement sums and what is the reason for that?

4. How can we help children understand and solve statement sums?
5. Applying an algorithm does not mean that it has been learnt.
6. It may be dangerous to get hold of some useful shortcuts or tricks in a specific context or time period. Because of them, children sometimes make wrong generalisation and get wrong ideas.
7. Children should be introduced to mathematical language gradually, in the right place and with enough practice in such a way that they understand and know it more deeply.

Some suggestions –

1. The same mathematical statement can denote many different situations.
 - The same situation can be presented as different statement sums.
 - Statement sums are not presented in algorithmic manner. So it takes time to understand them.

You may come across many other reasons during your contact with children.
2. We can create questions where we distribute four pebbles between children or do any other activity related to mathematics.
3. $3+5=8$ can be expressed in at least ten different ways as follows:
 - Three and five are eight.
 - Three and five together make eight.
 - The sum of three and five is eight
 - If three is added to five the answer is eight.
 - The aggregate of three and five is eight.
 - Eight is five more than three.

- Three is five less than eight.
 - If we add five to three, we get eight.
 - Three plus five is equal to eight.
 - Three plus five is eight.
4. These examples clearly show that some children, and many adults, who solve the questions quickly and correctly, may not be knowing the mathematics involved. Implementing the method does not mean that we understand the operations meant for these methods. As a teacher we should be aware of this.
 5. How do we present mathematical symbols and statements? While giving a thought to this, we should keep in mind that the children need to understand the meaning of these symbols and their mutual relation.
 6. We should think about ways and means of giving opportunities to children so that they may gain an understanding of symbolic language of mathematics and give a thought to the experiences that will help children understand mathematical equations and expressions, including brackets.



Rahul has been working with Azim Premji Foundation since February, 2012. Prior to that, he was working as a Mathematics teacher in Ajit Senior Secondary School, Sirohi, Rajasthan. The educational degrees he holds are M.Sc. (Mathematics), B.Ed., RTET and CTET. He may be contacted at rahul.rathore@azimpremjifoundation.org

Preparing Lesson Plans

Ramesh S Rathod



If real learning has to happen in children in the classroom, a good preparation on the part of the teacher is a must. We teachers need to know what kind of preparation is necessary. It's always better to think 'How does the child learn?', rather than thinking 'How to teach the child?', because the child learns only when he is ready to learn by himself. There is no end to learning, education is a continuous process. While learning in school is one stage, adopting the same in life is another stage. Later on, life itself will continue to teach one lesson or other to every individual. The education we impart to a child in school should be the foundation of his/her future life which will flourish according to the foundation laid. This being the case, pre-determining our role to prepare the child to learn and the kind of activities and resources we can use is the essential ingredient for learning to take place. To achieve this, one of the most important steps is preparing a proper lesson plan.

Before preparing a lesson plan, we need to answer the following questions.

1. What should a child learn? (Concept / theme)
2. Why should this subject be learnt? (Purpose)
3. How does a child learn? (Activities)
4. How can I assess the learning level of a child? (Evaluation)
5. What is my role in it?
6. What are the resources that can be used?

When we say that the teacher has to give personal attention to each and every student while teaching, it means that it is not enough for us to be experts in teaching but we need to be highly sensitive to the needs of the students who fall behind in learning. We should have the capacity to encourage students who lag behind in learning, so that they learn in a pace equal to that of the other students. Also we should be capable of using innovative activities and methods in teaching them. The prepared lesson plan should not be a common lesson plan applicable to the whole class, but it should be planned and adopted according to the level and pace of learning of each child.

My experience

When I was working at the Brilliant School of Talikote, I used to teach Kannada through the lecture method, after that I would dictate answers to questions and conclude teaching of that lesson. But when I came to Azim Premji School I learnt that it was necessary to develop the four key skills in the children. Then when I started working on it, I encountered a lot of problems, but I was also learning many new things which kept me motivated to continue.

Teaching from the learning level of the child

When I went to class with a common lesson plan for the whole class I had to face different kinds of problems. Some children were causing lot of trouble, while other children would not participate in any of the activities. This would disturb the rest of the students. When these problems came to light during an interaction with the children, I realised that each child's learning level in the classroom was different. I started working with understanding that it is proper to assess each child's learning level and the way they would learn. For this, I first worked closely with the children and observed that when they were given different work (suitable to their learning level) they were doing it with full interest. This made me learn many things and we tried to help children learn in accordance with the pace and level of their learning

From last year, we made teaching reading and writing skills in Kannada as sub steps and we prepared suitable learning activities and work sheets for them. Thereafter, we assessed the children according to their learning ability, identified their level of learning and started teaching them from that level. We found the children engaged in working continuously. I also learnt a lot from this exercise.

Preparing the learning steps

The creation of reading and writing skills as sub-steps was done by referring to *Kalika Saamrthyagala Kaipidi* (Manual of Learning Abilities) published by the Government of Karnataka, ' and the textbooks prescribed from 1st standard to 6th standard.



It was easy to develop steps for reading and writing skills, but there were many issues while developing steps for listening and speaking. I had discussions with my colleagues to overcome these issues and prepared the steps as per their suggestions. But even after these steps were prepared, I had to make some changes while working in the classroom.

Preparing the worksheets took more time. In order to determine the way, every activity was finalised having every child in mind and worksheets were prepared focusing on the fulfillment of our objectives and the felicity and interest with which the child can engage with it.

Initially we had prepared one or two worksheets for each step. These were changed while working in the class room and gradually many other worksheets were added.

Engaging Children in Learning

According to our plan we first evaluated the child's basic learning level (baseline) after which I prepared four or five work sheets to understand the baseline of children studying in 4th, 5th and 6th grades. Care was taken to ensure that the worksheets covered the assessment elements of all the steps. From this exercise, the learning level of some children is clear from the first worksheet, while for other children all the work sheets and dictations had to be looked into.

When we understood the learning level of each child, we worked with them in the classroom. Different activities were carried out in the classroom: collective activities with all the children and individual activities starting from the learning level of each child. When children were given activities suitable for their level of learning, they would immediately start working with great interest. I would introduce the concept to children and then give the exercise to them to do and would move to the next child. The children were constantly engaged in their own work. Some children wanted help in the middle. This involved getting children engaged in activities in different groups and also in individual activities that generated interest, enthusiastic participation, and very good learning outcomes.

Some examples

In 4th standard, the required objective of the lesson *Veeramaate Jeejabai's* is 'acquiring the ability to write with punctuation marks following the instructions'. This was not achieved by all the students because of differing abilities. Every child

needed individual lesson plan and activities. So the collective activity in each lesson was done collectively while the individual and worksheet activities of each child was from her own learning level.

I could not give personal attention to all the children simultaneously, so I would help them over a few classes. I also took the help of 5th standard children to teach / assess the first standard. The activities and assessment should go on constantly and the reflections should be recorded daily basis at the end of the lesson.

Homework

In spite of all these methods some children were not doing the assigned homework. I realised it is better to give different types of homework, suited to the learning level of the child. I gave them homework in the form of worksheets, summarising work, reading, observation, enquiry, etc. and then discussed them on Saturdays. After starting this, about 60% -70% of the children completed their homework on time.

Advantages of these changes

- Children were constantly engaged in work.
- Since every step had new methods and worksheets it made the children work with greater interest.
- Learning was a bit faster, as the learning was happening at the learning levels of the children.
- It was a child-centric approach being driven by child's interest.
- It is easy to assess and record children's learning.
- It encouraged giving personal attention to each child.
- I am constantly encouraged to stay active and I was also learning new things every day.

Issues I encountered in this method

- Here I need more time.
- It meant extra work because I had to prepare all the worksheets myself.
- The worksheets sometimes did not fulfil the objective intended.

Learning levels of Children

These steps are designed to include the capabilities of standards 1-6. They are in ascending order, it assesses child learning continuously and making it easier to guide further learning. In this case, I have made up 4 steps and sub-steps, and activities for each step is prescribed.

Step 1: Writing - Neat and legible writing

1. Simple word
2. Spelling
3. *Ottakshara* (underletter conjugation)
 - a. Same consonant *ottakshara*
 - b. Different consonant *ottakshara*
 - c. Mixed consonant *ottakshara*
4. Sentence formation
 - a. Simple sentence formation
 - b. Compound sentence formation
5. Neat and legible Writing
6. Orderly Writing
7. Writing on dictation using the most commonly used punctuation marks
8. Writing meaningful sentences about matters heard or read using appropriate punctuation marks

Step 2: Writing question and answers

1. Language learning
2. Dictation writing
3. Matching work

Step 3: Writing as directed

1. Constructing simple, dynamic, sentences comprehending language (grammatical) rules (on given data)
2. Orderly writing
3. Writing a report of excursion or celebration
4. Using Idioms, phrases and proverbs in own sentences

Step 4: Writing on their own/ Creative Writing

1. Writing independently informal letters, formal letters, travel articles and short essays.
2. Writing the matters narrated in the lesson, in story form, dialogues or as a summary
3. Our book
4. Short note
5. Independent Story Writing
6. Writing poems
7. Writing on looking at a picture
8. Converting spoken language (colloquial) to written language

After taking these steps and preparing activity-based exercises and worksheets, my classroom is where I learnt many things even from the problems I encountered. I prepared my further lesson plans based on these experiences.

ತರಗತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಮಟ್ಟಕ್ಕೆ ಅನುಗುಣವಾಗಿ ಪಾಠ ಯೋಜನೆ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದು.

ಪೀಠಿಕೆ

ಆತ್ಮೀಯರ ತರಗತಿಯ ಮಕ್ಕಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕಲಿಕೆ ಯಾಗಬೇಕೆಂದರೆ ಮೊದಲು ಶಿಕ್ಷಕರಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ಉತ್ತಮವಾದ ಸಿದ್ಧತೆಯ ಅವಶ್ಯಕತೆ ಇದೆ. ಶಿಕ್ಷಕರಾದ ನಾವು ಯಾವ ರೀತಿಯ ಸಿದ್ಧತೆ ಬೇಕು ಎಂದು ನನ್ನ ತಿಳಿದುಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕು. 'ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ಹೇಗೆ ಕಲಿಸಬೇಕು ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ಯೋಚಿಸುವ ಬದಲು ಮಗು ಹೇಗೆ ಕಲಿಯುತ್ತದೆ' ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ಯೋಚಿಸುವುದು ಸೂಕ್ತ ಎನಿಸುತ್ತದೆ. ಏಕೆಂದರೆ ಮಗು ತಾನಾಗಿಯೇ ಕಲಿಯಲು ಸಿದ್ಧನಾದಾಗ ಮಾತ್ರ ಕಲಿಯುತ್ತದೆ. ಕಲಿಯುವಿಕೆ ಕೊನೆಯಿಲ್ಲ, ಶಿಕ್ಷಣವೆಂಬುದು ನಿರಂತರವಾಗಿ ನಡೆಯುವ ಪ್ರಕ್ರಿಯೆ. ಶಾಲಾ ಕಲಿಕೆಯು ಒಂದು ಘಟ್ಟವಾದರೆ ಅದನ್ನು ಜೀವನದಲ್ಲಿ ಅಳವಡಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದು ಮತ್ತೊಂದು ಘಟ್ಟವಾಗಿದೆ. ನಂತರ ಜೀವನವು ಒಂದಲ್ಲ ಒಂದು ರೀತಿಯ ಪಾಠ ಕಲಿಸುತ್ತಲೇ ಇರುತ್ತದೆ. ಶಾಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ನಾವು ಕೊಡುವುದು ಶಿಕ್ಷಣ ಮುಂದಿನ ಜೀವನದ ಬುನಾದಿಯಾಗಬೇಕು. ಈ ಬುನಾದಿ ಯಾವ ರೀತಿಯಾಗಿ ಇರುತ್ತದೆಯೋ ಅದೇ ರೀತಿ ಅವನ ಜೀವನ ಬೆಳೆಯುತ್ತದೆ. ಹೀಗಿರುವಾಗ ಅವನನ್ನು ಕಲಿಯಲು ಸಿದ್ಧಗೊಳಿಸುವಲ್ಲಿ ನಮ್ಮ ಪಾತ್ರವೇನು ಹಾಗೂ ನಾವು ಯಾವ ರೀತಿಯ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆ, ಸಂಪನ್ಮೂಲಗಳನ್ನು ಬಳಸಬಹುದು ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ಮೊದಲೇ ನಿರ್ಧಾರ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದೇ ಪಾಠ ತಯಾರಿಯಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ.

ಪಾಠ ತಯಾರಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ಮಾಡುವ ಮೊದಲು ನಮ್ಮಲ್ಲಿ ಈ ಕೆಳಗಿನ ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಉತ್ತರ ಇರುವುದು ಸೂಕ್ತ .

1. ಮಗು ಏನು ಕಲಿಯಬೇಕು ? (ಪರಿಕಲ್ಪನೆ/ ವಿಷಯಾಂಶ)
2. ಈ ವಿಷಯ ಏಕೆ ಕಲಿಯಬೇಕು ? (ಉದ್ದೇಶ)
3. ಮಗು ಹೇಗೆ ಕಲಿಯುತ್ತದೆ ? (ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಗಳು)
4. ಮಗುವಿನ ಕಲಿಕೆ ನನಗೆ ಹೇಗೆ ತಿಳಿಯುತ್ತದೆ ? (ಮೌಖಿಕವಿಚಾರಣೆ)
5. ಅದರಲ್ಲಿ ನನ್ನ ಪಾತ್ರವೇನು ?
6. ಯಾವ ಯಾವ ಸಂಪನ್ಮೂಲಗಳನ್ನು ಬಳಸಬಹುದು ?

ಬೋಧನೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹಂತದಲ್ಲಿ ಶಿಕ್ಷಕರು ಪ್ರತಿಯೊಬ್ಬ ವಿದಾರ್ಥಿಗೂ ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ನಿಗಾ ಕೊಡಬೇಕು ಎನ್ನುವುದಾದರೆ ಶಿಕ್ಷಕರಾದ ನಾವು ಪರಿಣಿತರಷ್ಟೆ ಆಗಿದ್ದರೆ ಸಾಲದು ಮಕ್ಕಳು ಕಲಿಕೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹಿಂದೆಬಿದ್ದಿರುವ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಸೂಕ್ತ ಸಂವೇದನಾಶೀಲರಾಗಿರಬೇಕು. ಕಲಿಕೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಹಿಂದುಳಿದ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳನ್ನು ಇತರ ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳಿಗೆ ಸಮನಾಗಿ ಕಲಿಯುವಂತೆ ಪ್ರೋತ್ಸಾಹಿಸುವುದು ನಾವಿನ ಜಟಿಲವಟಿಕೆಗಳು, ವಿದ್ಯಾರ್ಥಿಗಳ ಬಳಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವ ಸಾಮರ್ಥ್ಯವನ್ನು ಹೊಂದಿರಬೇಕು ಮತ್ತು ಪಾಠ ತಯಾರಿಕೆಯು ತರಗತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದೇ ರೀತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಇರದೆ ಪ್ರತಿಯೊಂದು ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಮಟ್ಟಕ್ಕನುಗುಣವಾಗಿ ಇರುವುದು ಸೂಕ್ತ.

ನನ್ನ ಅನುಭವ

ನನ್ನ ಅನುಭವವನ್ನು ಹಂಚಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವುದಾದರೆ ನಾನು ಮೊದಲು ಬ್ರಿಟಿಯಂಟ್ ಸ್ಕೂಲ್ ತಾಳಿಕೋಟನಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುವಾಗ ಕನ್ನಡ ವಿಷಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಾಮಾನ್ಯವಾಗಿ ಉಪನ್ಯಾಸ ವಿಧಾನದ ಮೂಲಕ ಪಾಠಮಾಡಿ ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆಗಳಿಗೆ ಉತ್ತರ ಬರಿಸಿ ಪಾಠ ಮುಗಿಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದೆ. ಆದರೆ ನಾನು ಅಜೀಮ್ ಪ್ರೇಮಜಿ ಶಾಲೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಬಂದಾಗ ಇಲ್ಲಿ ನನಗೆ ಮಕ್ಕಳಲ್ಲಿ ಕನ್ನಡದ ಪ್ರಮುಖವಾದ 4 ಕೌಶಲ್ಯವನ್ನು ಅಭಿವೃದ್ಧಿಪಡಿಸುವ ಕೆಲಸಮಾಡಿಸುವುದು ಸೂಕ್ತವೆಂದು ತಿಳಿದುಕೊಂಡೆ. ನಂತರ ಅದರ ಮೇಲೆ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡಲು ಪ್ರಾರಂಭಿಸಿದಾಗ, ನನಗೆ ಹಲವಾರು ರೀತಿಯ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗಳು ಬಂದವು, ಜೊತೆಗೆ ಹೋಸ-ಹೋಸ ವಿಷಯಗಳ ಕಲಿಕೆ ಕೂಡಾ ಆಗುತ್ತಾ ಇತ್ತು. ಇದರಿಂದ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡಲು ಪ್ರೇರಣೆ ದೊರೆಯುತ್ತಿತ್ತು.

ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಮಟ್ಟದಿಂದ ಕಲಿಕೆ

ನನ್ನ ತರಗತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದು ರೀತಿಯ ಯೋಜನೆಯೊಂದಿಗೆ ನಾನು ತರಗತಿಗೆ ಹೋದಾಗ ನನಗೆ ಹಲವಾರು ರೀತಿಯ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗಳು ಎದುರಾಗುತ್ತಿತ್ತು. ಕೆಲವು ಮಕ್ಕಳು ತರಗತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ತುಂಬಾ ತೊಂದರೆ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು. ಇನ್ನೂ ಕೆಲವು ಮಕ್ಕಳು ತರಗತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಯಾವುದೇ ರೀತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ತೋಚುತ್ತಿರಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಇದರಿಂದ ತರಗತಿಯ ಉಳಿದ ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ತೊಂದರೆ ಯಾಗುತ್ತಿತ್ತು. ಈ ರೀತಿಯ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಯನ್ನು ಸಹಜಾತಿಗಳ ಜೊತೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಚರ್ಚೆ ಮಾತುಕತೆಯ ಮೂಲಕ ತಿಳಿದುಬಂದಿದ್ದು, ತರಗತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರತಿ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಕಲಿಕಾ ಮಟ್ಟವು ಬೇರೆ-ಬೇರೆ ಯಾಗಿರುತ್ತದೆ ಅವರ ಕಲಿಕಾ ಮಟ್ಟ ಮತ್ತು ಅವರು ಹೇಗೆ ಕಲಿಯಬಹುದು ಎಂದು ತಿಳಿದುಕೊಳ್ಳುವ ಸೂಕ್ತವೆಂದು ತಿಳಿದು ಕೆಲಸ ಪ್ರಾರಂಭಿಸಿದೆನು. ಇದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ನಾನು ಮೊದಲು ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಜೊತೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲವು ದಿನಗಳ ಕಾಲ ಅವರಿಗೆ ಬೇರೆ-ಬೇರೆ ಕೆಲಸವನ್ನು ಕೊಟ್ಟಾಗ ಅವರು ತುಂಬಾ ಆಸಕ್ತಿಯಿಂದ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದು, ಕಂಡುಬಂತು. ಇದರಿಂದ ನನಗೆ ತಿಳಿದು ಬಂತು.

ಕಲಿಕೆ ಹಂತವನ್ನು ತಯಾರಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವಿಕೆ

ನಾನು ಕನ್ನಡ ಭಾಷಾ ವಿಷಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಓದುವಿಕೆ ಮತ್ತು ಬರವಣಿಗೆಯ ಕೌಶಲಗಳಲ್ಲಿಯ ಸಾಮರ್ಥ್ಯವನ್ನು ಉಪ ಹಂತಗಳಾಗಿ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡೆ ಇದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ 'ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ ಸರ್ಕಾರದ ಕಲಿಕಾ ಸಾಮರ್ಥ್ಯಗಳ ಕೈಪಿಡಿ', 'ಅಜೀಮ್ ಪ್ರೇಮಜಿ ಶಾಲೆಗಳ ಕಲಿಕಾ ಸಾಮರ್ಥ್ಯಗಳು', ಮತ್ತು 1 ರಿಂದ 6ನೇ ತರಗತಿ ಪಠ್ಯ ಪುಸ್ತಕವನ್ನು ಓದಿ ಹಂತಗಳನ್ನು ತಯಾರಿಸಿಕೊಂಡೆ. ಇದರಲ್ಲಿ ಓದುವಿಕೆ ಮತ್ತು ಬರವಣಿಗೆ ಕೌಶಲ್ಯವನ್ನು ಸರಳವಾಗಿ ಹಂತಗಳನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲಾಯಿತು ಆದರೆ ಅಲಿಸುವಿಕೆ ಮತ್ತು ಮಾತುನಾಡುವಿಕೆಯ ಹಂತಗಳನ್ನು ಮಾಡಲು ಹಲವಾರು ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗಳು ಬಂದವು. ಅವುಗಳನ್ನು ನಿವಾರಿಸಲು ಸಹಪಾಠಗಳ ಜೊತೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತುಕತೆಯ ನಂತರ ಅವರ ಸಲಹೆಯಂತೆ ಹಂತಗಳನ್ನು ಮಾಡಲಾಯಿತು. ನಾನು ಹಂತಗಳನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿದ ನಂತರವು ಸಹ ತರಗತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುವಾಗ ಅವುಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಸ್ವಲ್ಪಮಟ್ಟಿಗೆ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಗಳು ಕೂಡಾ ಆದವು.

ಅಭ್ಯಾಸ ಹಾಳೆಗಳ ತಯಾರಿಕೆ

ಅಭ್ಯಾಸ ಹಾಳೆಯನ್ನು ತಯಾರಿಸಲು ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಸಮಯಬೇಕಾಯಿತು. ಪ್ರತಿಯೊಂದು ಹಂತವು ಸಾಗುವ ರೀತಿ ನಿರ್ಧಾರವಾಗಲು ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಅಭ್ಯಾಸ ಹಾಳೆಗಳ ಅವಶ್ಯಕತೆ ಇದೆ. ಅವುಗಳು ಪ್ರತಿಯೊಂದು ಮಗುವನ್ನು ಗಮನದಲ್ಲಿ ಇಟ್ಟುಕೊಂಡು ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ನಿರ್ಧರಿಸುವುದು ಮತ್ತು ಅವು ನಾನು ಇಟ್ಟುಕೊಂಡಿರುವ ಉದ್ದೇಶವನ್ನು ಇದರಿಂದ ಎಷ್ಟರಮಟ್ಟಿಗೆ ಇಡೆರಬಹುದು ಎಂಬುದನ್ನು ಗಮನದಲ್ಲಿ ಇಟ್ಟುಕೊಂಡು ಮತ್ತು ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ಇದನ್ನು ಸುಲಭವಾಗಿ, ಆಸಕ್ತಿಯಿಂದ ಮಾಡುವಂತಹ ಅಭ್ಯಾಸಹಾಳೆಗಳನ್ನು ಮಾಡಲಾಗಿತ್ತು.

ಪ್ರಾರಂಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರತಿಹಂತದಲ್ಲಿ 1-2 ಅಭ್ಯಾಸ ಹಾಳೆಯನ್ನು ತಯಾರಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲಾಗಿತ್ತು ನಂತರ ತರಗತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುವಾಗ ಮತ್ತೆ ಬದಲಾವಣೆಯಾದವು ಹಾಗೂ ಬೇರೆ-ಬೇರೆ ಅಭ್ಯಾಸ ಹಾಳೆಗಳು ಸಹ ಸೇರಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಲೇ ಇವೆ.

ಮಕ್ಕಳನ್ನು ಕಲಿಕೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ತೊಡಗಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳುವಿಕೆ.

ಪ್ರಾರಂಭದಲ್ಲಿ ಮೊದಲು ನಮ್ಮ ಯೋಜನೆಯ ಪ್ರಕಾರ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಕಲಿಕಾ ಹಂತ (ಬೆಸಲ್ಸ್) ತಿಳಿಯಲು ಪ್ರಯತ್ನಿಸಲಾಯಿತು, ನಂತರ ನಾನು 4.5,ಮತ್ತು6ನೇ ತರಗತಿಯ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಬೆಸಲ್ಸ್‌ನನ್ನು ತಿಳಿದುಕೊಳ್ಳಲು 4ರಿಂದ5 ಅಭ್ಯಾಸ ಹಾಳೆಯನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿದೆ, ಅದರಲ್ಲಿ 1ನೇ ಹಂತದಿಂದ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಹಂತದ ಮೌಲ್ಯಮಾಪನದ ಅಂಶಗಳು ಒಳಗೊಂಡಿರುವಂತೆ ನೋಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲಾಗಿತ್ತು. ಇದರಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲವು ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಹಂತ 1ನೇ ಅಭ್ಯಾಸ ಹಾಳೆಯಿಂದ ತಿಳಿಯಲು ಆದರೆ ಕೆಲವು ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗಾಗಿ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಅಭ್ಯಾಸ ಹಾಳೆ, ಉಕ್ತಲೇಖನಗಳನ್ನು ನೋಡಬೇಕಾಯಿತು.ಇದಾದ ನಂತರ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಜೊತೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡಲಾಯಿತು, ಅಲ್ಲಿಯೂ ಸಹ ಕೆಲವು ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಹಂತ ಬದಲಾಯಿತು.

ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಹಂತವನ್ನು ತಿಳಿದನಂತರ ತರಗತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಅವರ ಜೊತೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡಲಾಯಿತು, ತರಗತಿಯಲ್ಲಿಯೂ ಸಾಮೂಹಿಕ ಮತ್ತು ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಗಳು ಯಾವುವು ಎಂದು ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲಾಗುತ್ತಿತ್ತು. ಸಾಮೂಹಿಕ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ಸಾಮೂಹಿಕವಾಗಿಯೇ ಮಾಡಿ, ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆ ವ್ಯಕ್ತಿ ಹಂತದಿಂದ ಮಾಡಲಾಗುತ್ತಿತ್ತು. ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ತಮ್ಮ ಹಂತದ ಕೆಲಸವನ್ನು ಕೊಟ್ಟ ತಕ್ಷಣ ತುಂಬಾ ಆಸಕ್ತಿಯಿಂದ ಮಾಡಲು ಪ್ರಾರಂಭಿಸಿದರು. ಮೊದಲು ನಾನು ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ಪರಿಕಲ್ಪನೆಯನ್ನು ಪರಿಚಯಮಾಡಿ ನಂತರ ಅವರಿಗೆ ಅಭ್ಯಾಸ ನೀಡಿ ಮುಂದಿನ ಮಗುವಿನ ಬಳಿ ಹೋಗುತ್ತಿದೆ. ಮಕ್ಕಳು ನಿರಂತರವಾಗಿ ತಮ್ಮ-ತಮ್ಮ ಕೆಲಸದಲ್ಲಿ ತೊಡಗಿರುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು. ಮದ್ದದಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲವು ಮಕ್ಕಳು ಸಹಾಯ ಬಯಸುತ್ತಿದ್ದರು ಅವರಿಗೂ ಸಹಾಯ ಮಾಡುತ್ತ ಮುಂದೆ ಸಾಗುವುದು.

ಇದರಲ್ಲಿ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಆಸಕ್ತಿಯನ್ನು ಕೇರಳಿಸುವಂತಹ ಬೇರೆ-ಬೇರೆ ಗುಂಪಿನಲ್ಲಿ ಮತ್ತು ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿಸುವುದು ನಡೆಯುತ್ತಿರುತ್ತದೆ. ಇದರಿಂದ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ತುಂಬಾ ಆಸಕ್ತಿಯಿಂದ ಭಾಗವಹಿಸುವಿಕೆ ಕಂಡುಬರುತ್ತಿತ್ತು ಹಾಗೂ ಕೆಲವು ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ

ನನಗೆ ಈ ವಿಧಾನದಿಂದಾದ ಅನುಕೂಲ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗಳು.

ಈ ವಿಧಾನದಿಂದಾದ ಅನುಕೂಲಗಳು

- ಮಕ್ಕಳು ನಿರಂತರವಾಗಿ ಕೆಲಸದಲ್ಲಿ ತೊಡಗುವಿಕೆ ಕಂಡು ಬಂತು.
- ಪ್ರತಿ ಹಂತಕ್ಕೂ ಹೊಸ-ಹೊಸ ರೀತಿಯ ವಿಧಾನ ಮತ್ತು ಅಭ್ಯಾಸ ಹಾಳೆಗಳು ಇರುವುದರಿಂದ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಆಸಕ್ತಿಯನ್ನು ಹೆಚ್ಚಿಸುವಂತೆ ಅನುಕೂಲವಾಯಿತು.
- ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಕಲಿಕಾ ಮಟ್ಟದ ಕಲಿಕೆ ಇರುವುದರಿಂದ ಕಲಿಕೆಯು ಸ್ವಲ್ಪ ಮಟ್ಟದಲ್ಲಿ ವೇಗವಾಗಿ ನಡೆಯುವುದು ಕಂಡು ಬಂತು.
- ಇದು ಮಗು ಕೇಂದ್ರಿತ ಪದ್ಧತಿಯಾಗಿದ್ದು, ಮಗುವಿನ ಆಸಕ್ತಿಯಂತೆ ಕಲಿಕೆಯಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ ಎಂದು ತಿಳಿದು ಬಂತು.
- ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಕಲಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ಸುಲಭವಾಗಿ ಮೌಲ್ಯಮಾಪನ ಮತ್ತು ದಾಖಲೆ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲು ಅನುಕೂಲ ವಾಗುತ್ತಿದೆ.
- ಪ್ರತಿ ಮಗುವಿಗೂ ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ಗಮನಕೊಡುವಂತೆ ಪ್ರೋತ್ಸಾಹಿಸುತ್ತಿದೆ.
- ನಾನು ಸದಾ ಕ್ರಿಯಾಶೀಲರನಾಗಿ ಇರಲು ಪ್ರೋತ್ಸಾಹಿಸುತ್ತಿದೆ ಹಾಗೂ ಪ್ರತಿದಿನವು ಹೊಸ-ಹೊಸ ವಿಷಯವನ್ನು ಕಲಿಸುತ್ತಿದೆ.

ಈ ವಿಧಾನದಿಂದಾದ ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗಳು

- ಇಲ್ಲಿ ನನಗೆ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಸಮಯದ ಬೇಕಾಯಿತು.
- ಇಲ್ಲಿ ನಾನು ಎಲ್ಲಾ ವಿಧಾನದ ಅಭ್ಯಾಸ ಹಾಳೆಗಳನ್ನು ಸಿದ್ಧಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳಬೇಕಾಗಿದ್ದರಿಂದ ಇದು ಹೊರ ಅನಿಸಿತು.
- ನಾನು ತಯಾರಿಸಿದ ಅಭ್ಯಾಸ ಹಾಳೆಯಲ್ಲಿ ಉದ್ದೇಶ ಪೂರ್ವಿಯಾಗದೆ ಹೋಗಬಹುದು ಅದಕ್ಕಾಗಿ ಹೆಚ್ಚಿನ ಕಾರ್ಯದ ಅವಶ್ಯಕ ಇದೆ.

ನನ್ನದೊಂದು ಯೋಜನೆ.

ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಕಲಿಕೆಯ ಹಂತಗಳು

ಈ ಹಂತಗಳನ್ನು 1-6ನೇ ತರಗತಿಯ ಸಾಮರ್ಥ್ಯಗಳು ಒಳಗೊಳ್ಳುವಂತೆ ರಚಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.ಇವುಗಳು ಏರಿಕೆ ಕ್ರಮದಲ್ಲಿದ್ದು, ಮಗುವಿನ ಕಲಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ನಿರಂತರವಾಗಿ ಮೌಲ್ಯಮಾಪನ ಮಾಡಿ ಮುಂದಿನ ಕಲಿಕೆಗೆ ಮಾರ್ಗದರ್ಶನ ಮಾಡಲು ಸುಲಭವಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಇದರಲ್ಲಿ ನಾನು ಒಟ್ಟಾರೆಯಾಗಿ 4 ಹಂತಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಉಪ ಹಂತಗಳಾಗಿ ಮಾಡಿದ್ದು, ಪ್ರತಿಯೊಂದಕ್ಕೂ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಗಳನ್ನು ನಿರ್ಧರಿಸಲಾಗಿದೆ.

ಬರವಣಿಗೆ

ಹಂತ : 1 ಸ್ಪಷ್ಟ ಮತ್ತು ಶುದ್ಧಬರವಣಿಗೆ

1. ಸರಳ ಪದ
2. ಕಾಗುಣಿತ
3. ಒತ್ತಾಕ್ಷರ
 1. ಸಜಾತಿ ಒತ್ತಾಕ್ಷರ
 2. ವಿಜಾತಿ ಒತ್ತಾಕ್ಷರ

ಇದಕ್ಕಿಂತ ಭಿನ್ನವಾದ ಕೆಲಸವನ್ನು ಕೂಡಾ ಬೇಕಾಗುತ್ತದೆ. ಮಕ್ಕಳು ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡಿದ ನಂತರ ಹೊರಬರುವ ಕಲಿಕೆಕೂಡಾ ಉತ್ತಮವಾಗಿಯಿರುತ್ತದೆ.



4ನೇ ತರಗತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ "ವೀರಮಾತೆ ಜೀಜಾಬಾಯಿ" ಪಾಠದ ಉದ್ದೇಶ ಬಂದು "ಸೂಚನೆಗಳನ್ನು ಅನುಸರಿಸಿ ಲೇಖನ ಚಿತ್ರ ಸಹಿತ ಬರೆಯುವ ಸಾಮರ್ಥ್ಯ ಹೊಂದುವುದು" ಇದೆ ಅದನ್ನು ತರಗತಿಯ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ವಿಧಾರ್ಥಿಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಸಾಧಿಸಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಿಲ್ಲ. ಏಕೆಂದರೆ ತರಗತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಸಾಮರ್ಥ್ಯ ಒಂದೇ ಇರುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಆದ ಕಾರಣ ಪ್ರತಿ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ಯೋಜನೆ ಮತ್ತು ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಗಳ ಅವಶ್ಯಕತೆ ಇದೆ.

ಇದನ್ನು ನಾನು ಆಯಾ ಪಾಠದಲ್ಲಿಯೂ ಸಾಮೂಹಿಕ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ಒಟ್ಟಾರೆಯಾಗಿ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದು, ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ಮತ್ತು ಅಭ್ಯಾಸ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆಯನ್ನು ಅವರವರ ಹಂತದಿಂದ ಮಾಡುತ್ತೇನೆ. ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಒಂದೇ ಆವರಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಕಡೆ ವೈಯಕ್ತಿಕ ಗಮನಹರಿಸಲು ಸಾಧ್ಯವಾಗುವುದಿಲ್ಲ. ಆಗ ನಾನು ಒಂದು ಅವಧಿಗೆ ಕೆಲವು ಮಕ್ಕಳನ್ನು ಮಾತ್ರ ಆಯ್ಕೆ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಳ್ಳುತ್ತಿದ್ದೆ. ಮತ್ತು 5ನೇ ಗುಂಪಿನ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಸಹಾಯ ಪಡೆದು ಒಂದನೇ ಗುಂಪಿನ ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಕಲಿಕೆ / ಮೌಲ್ಯಮಾಪನ ಮಾಡಿಸುವುದು. ಇದು ನಿರಂತರವಾಗಿ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆ ಮತ್ತು ಮೌಲ್ಯಮಾಪನ ನಡೆಯಬೇಕು. ಹಾಗೂ ಪಾಠದ ನಂತರ ಪ್ರತಿದಿನವು ಲಿಫ್ಟ್‌ಪ್ಲಾನ್ ಬರೆದರೆ ಉತ್ತಮ.

ಮನೆ ಕೆಲಸ
ಈ ಮೇಲಿನ ಎಲ್ಲಾ ರೀತಿಯ ವಿಧಾನವನ್ನು ಬಳಸಿದರೂ ಸಹ ಮಕ್ಕಳು ಮನೆಗೆಲಸವನ್ನು ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿರಲಿಲ್ಲ. ಆಗ ನಾನು ಮಕ್ಕಳು ಮನೆಗೆಲಸ ಮಾಡದಿರಲು ಕಾರಣ ಹುಡುಕಲು ಪ್ರಾರಂಭಿಸಿದೆ. ಆಗ ನನಗೆ ತಿಳಿದು ಬಂದಿದ್ದು ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ಮನೆಗೆಲಸವನ್ನು ವಿಧಿನ್ಯ ರೀತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ನೀಡುವುದು ಮತ್ತು ಅವರ ಹಂತದ ಕೆಲಸ ನೀಡುವುದು.ಹಾಗೂ ಅವು ಅಭ್ಯಾಸ ಹಾಳೆ, ಸಂಗ್ರಹ, ಓದು, ವಿಕ್ರೇತೆ,ವಿಚಾರಣೆ ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ ರೀತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲಸ ನೀಡುವುದು, ಮತ್ತು ಅದರ ಕುರಿತು ಪ್ರತಿ ಶನಿವಾರ ಚರ್ಚೆಯನ್ನು ಮಾಡಲು ಪ್ರಾರಂಭಿಸಿದ್ದರಿಂದ ಸುಮಾರು 60%-70% ಮಕ್ಕಳು ಪ್ರತಿ ನಿತ್ಯ ಮನೆಗೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದಾರೆ.

3. ಮಿಶ್ರ ಒತ್ತಾಕ್ಷರ
4. ವಾಕ್ಯರಚನೆ
 1. ಸರಳ ವಾಕ್ಯರಚನೆ
 2. ಸಂಯುಕ್ತ ವಾಕ್ಯರಚನೆ
5. ಅಚ್ಚುಕಟ್ಟಾಗಿ ಮತ್ತು ಸುಟವಾಗಿ ಬರೆಯುವುದು.
6. ಕ್ರಮಬದ್ಧವಾಗಿ ಬರೆಯುವುದು.
7. ಉಕ್ತಲೇಖನದ ಮೂಲಕ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ಬಳಕೆಯಲ್ಲಿರುವ ಲೇಖನ ಚಿತ್ರಗಳನ್ನು ಬಳಸಿ ಬರೆಯುವುದು
8. ಅಲಿಸಿದ ಮತ್ತು ಓದಿದ ವಿಷಯಗಳನ್ನು ಸೂಕ್ತ ಲೇಖನಚಿತ್ರಗಳನ್ನು ಬಳಸಿ ಅರ್ಥಪೂರ್ಣ ವಾಕ್ಯಗಳಲ್ಲಿ ಬರೆಯುವುದು.

ಹಂತ : 2 ಪ್ರಶ್ನೆ ಉತ್ತರ ಬರವಣಿಗೆ

1. ಭಾಷಾಭ್ಯಾಸ
2. ಉಕ್ತಲೇಖನ
3. ಹೊಂದಿಸಿ ಬರೆಯಿರಿ

ಹಂತ : 3 ನಿರ್ದೇಶಿತ ಬರವಣಿಗೆ

1. ಸರಳ ಕ್ರಿಯಾತ್ಮಕ, ಸಾಂಭೀಕ ಭಾಷಾಂಶ ನಿಯಮಗಳನ್ನು ಅರ್ಥ ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡು ವಾಕ್ಯಗಳನ್ನು ರಚಿಸುವುದು ದತ್ತಕಾರ್ಯ
2. ಕ್ರಮಬದ್ಧ ಬರವಣಿಗೆ
3. ಹೊರಸಂಚಾರ, ಆಚರಣೆಗಳ ವರದಿ ಬರವಣಿಗೆ
4. ಪದಸಂಜ್ಞಾನದಿಗಟ್ಟುಮತ್ತು ಗಾದೆ ಮಾತುಗಳನ್ನು ಸ್ವಂತ ವಾಕ್ಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಬಳಸುವುದು.

ಹಂತ : 4 ಸ್ವತಃ ಬರವಣಿಗೆ/ ಸ್ವಜ್ಞಾಪಕ ಬರವಣಿಗೆ

1. ಅನೌಪಚಾರಿಕ ಪತ್ರ, ಕುಶಲೋಪಚಾರಿ ಪತ್ರಗಳು, ಪ್ರವಾಸಲೇಖನಗಳು ಮತ್ತು ಚಿತ್ರ ಪ್ರಬಂಧಗಳನ್ನು ಸ್ವತಂತ್ರವಾಗಿ ಬರೆಯುವುದು.
2. ಪಾಠದಲ್ಲಿ ಬರುವ ವಿಚಾರಗಳನ್ನು ಕಥೆ,ಸಂಭಾಷಣೆ, ಸಾರಂಶ ರೂಪದಲ್ಲಿ ಬರೆಯುವುದು.
3. ನಮ್ಮ ಪುಸ್ತಕ
4. ಕಿರು ಟಿಪ್ಪಣಿ
5. ಸ್ವತಃ ಕಥೆಬರವಣಿಗೆ
6. ಪದ್ಯ ಬರವಣಿಗೆ
7. ಚಿತ್ರನೋಡಿ ಬರವಣಿಗೆ
8. ಆಡುಭಾಷೆಯಿಂದ ಗ್ರಾಂಥಿಕಭಾಷೆಗೆ ವರ್ಗಾವಣೆ

ಈ ರೀತಿಯಾಗಿ ಹಂತಗಳನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡು, ಅದಕ್ಕೆ ತಕ್ಕಂತೆ ಅಭ್ಯಾಸ ಚಟುವಟಿಕೆ ಮತ್ತು ಅಭ್ಯಾಸ ಹಾಳೆಗಳನ್ನು ಮಾಡಿಕೊಂಡು ತರಗತಿಯಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡುವಾಗ ಹಲವಾರು ರೀತಿಯ ಕಲಿಕೆ ಮತ್ತು ಸಮಸ್ಯೆಗಳು ನನಗಾಯಿತು. ಅದನ್ನು ಆಧಾರವಾಗಿಟ್ಟುಕೊಂಡು ಮುಂದಿನ ಯೋಜನೆಯನ್ನು ತಯಾರಿಸಿಕೊಳ್ಳಲಾಯಿತು.

ಆಭ್ಯಾಸ ಹಾಳೆ ಮಾದರಿ

1. ಸಜಾತೀಯ ಸಂಯುಕ್ತಾಕ್ಷರಗಳು ಪರಿಚಯ

ಒಂದೇ ಜಾತಿಯ (ಸಜಾತೀಯ) ಎರಡು ವ್ಯಂಜನಗಳು ಸೇರಿ ಆಗುವ ಅಕ್ಷರವು ಸಜಾತೀಯ ಸಂಯುಕ್ತಾಕ್ಷರವೆನಿಸುವುದು. ಇದಕ್ಕೆ ದ್ವಿತ್ವವೆಂದೂ ಹೆಸರು

- ಕ್ + ಕ್ =ಕ್ಕ್ ಟ್ರಿಲ್ಲೆಡ್ಡೆಡ್ಡೆ
- ಛ್ + ಛ್ =ಛ್ಛ ತ್ರಿಲ್ಲೆಡ್ಡೆಡ್ಡೆ
- ಜ್ + ಜ್ =ಜ್ಜ
- ಟ್ + ಟ್ =ಟ್ಟ ದ್ವಿಲ್ಲೆಡ್ಡೆಡ್ಡೆ
- ತ್ + ತ್ =ತ್ತ ಯಿಲ್ಲೆಡ್ಡೆಡ್ಡೆ
- ಶ್ಚಿ ಗ್ಚಿ ಘ್ಚಿ
- ಚ್ಚಿ ಛ್ಚಿ ಜ್ಜಿ ಞ್ಞಿ

ಉದಾ : ಸನ್ನ = ಸ್+ಅ+ನ್+ನ್+ಅ=ನ್ನ ಅಮ್ಮ = ಅ+ಮ್+ಮ್+ಅ=ಮ್ಮ

- 1. ಪಲ್ಲವಿ, ಸದ್ವು, ಮಲ್ಲನ, ಮಟ್ಟದ.

ಈ ರೀತಿಯ ಸಜಾತೀಯ ಒತ್ತಾಕ್ಷರ ಪದವನ್ನು ಆಯ್ದು ಬರೆ

2. ವಿಜಾತೀಯ ಸಂಯುಕ್ತಾಕ್ಷರ ಪರಿಚಯ

ಬೇರೆಬೇರೆ ಜಾತಿಯ ಎರಡು ಅಥವಾ ಹೆಚ್ಚು ವ್ಯಂಜನಗಳು ಸೇರಿ ಆಗುವ ಅಕ್ಷರಕ್ಕೆ ವಿಜಾತೀಯ ಸಂಯುಕ್ತಾಕ್ಷರ ಎನ್ನುತ್ತಾರೆ.

- ಸ್ವ = (ಸ್ + ತ್ + ರ್) ಧಾನ್ಯ = ಧ್+ಅ+ನ್+ಯ್+ಅ =ನ್ಯ
- ಕ್ಷ = (ಕ್ + ಷ್) ಸ್ವಾರ್ಥ = (ಸ್ + ವ್+ಅ + ರ್ + ಧ್+ಅ)
- ಜ್ಞಾ = (ಜ್ + ಞ್) ಕ್ಷಿ = (ಕ್ + ಶ್)

- 1. ಕರ್ತವ್ಯ 2. ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರ 3. ಕೀರ್ತಿ

ಈ ರೀತಿಯ ವಿಜಾತೀಯ ಒತ್ತಾಕ್ಷರ ಪದವನ್ನು ಆಯ್ದು ಬರೆ.

ಓದಿ ಸಜಾತೀಯ ಒತ್ತಾಕ್ಷರಗಳನ್ನು ಬರೆಯಿರಿ.

ಸಜ್ಜನ ಪುರಂದರ ಆಶಾಳು ಅಜ್ಜ ಅಜ್ಜಿಗೆ ತಂದಿರುವ ಮೊಸುನಕಾಯಿ ಬಜ್ಜಿ ಸಿಹಿ ತಿಂಡಿ ನೀಡಿದಳು.ಅಜ್ಜಿಯು ಆಶಾಳಿಗೆ ಸಜ್ಜಿಗೆಯ ಆಡುಗೆ ಮಾಡಿ ಬಡಿಸಿದಳು.ಹೊಸ ಸೀರೆ, ಬಳೆ, ಗೆಜ್ಜೆ ನೀಡಿ ಸುಖವಾಗಿ ಬಾಳೆಂದು ಪರಸಿದಳು. ಆಶಾ ಗೆಜ್ಜೆಯ ನಾಡಕ್ಕೆ ಹೆಜ್ಜೆಯ ಹಾಕುತ ಊರಿಗೆ ಸಾಗಿದಳು.

ಸುಗ್ಗಿಯ ಕಾಲದಿ ರೈತನ ಹಿಗ್ಗಿನಿಂದ ಹೊಲದಲ್ಲಿ ದುಡಿದೇ ದುಡಿಯುವನು ರೈತನ ಸಂತಸ ಕಂಡು ಮನೆಯಲಿ ಮಕ್ಕಳು ನಕ್ಕು ನಲಿಯುವರು ಮಕ್ಕಳ ಹಿಗ್ಗನು ಕಂಡು ಪಕ್ಕದ ಮನೆಯ ಅಕ್ಕಿಗೆ ಬಲು ಬುಡು ಮನೆಯವರು ಕೂಡಿ ದುಡಿದರೆ ಮನಕೆ ಆಗುವುದು ಬಲು ಬುಡು.

ನನ್ನ ವಿವರ

**ರಮೇಶ.ಎಸ್.ರಾಠೋಡ್ ಟಿಕ್ಟು
 ಅಜೀಮ್ ಪ್ರೇಮ್‌ಜಿ ಸ್ಕೂಲ್
 ಯಾದಗಿರಿ- ಕರ್ನಾಟಕ
 9632867888**

ನಾನು ಜೋಡಲು ಪ್ರಿಯಂಟ್ ಪಾಲಿ ತಾಳಿಕೋಟೆ ಎಲ್ಲಿ 5ವರ್ಷ ಟಿಕ್ಟುಕನಾಗಿ ಕೆಲಸಮಾಡಿದ್ದು, ನಂತರ ಸರಕಾರಿ ಹಿರಿಯ ಪ್ರಾಥಮಿಕ ಶಾಲೆ, ಮಾರನಾಳ ತಾಂಡಾ ದಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲಸ ಮಾಡಿ ಪ್ರಗತ್ತದಲ್ಲಿ ಅಜೀಮ್ ಪ್ರೇಮ್‌ಜಿ ಪಾಲಿ ಯಾದಗಿರದಲ್ಲಿ ಕನ್ನಡ ವಿಷಯದಲ್ಲಿ ಕೆಲಸಮಾಡುತ್ತಿದ್ದೆನೆ.ನನಗೆ ಹಾಡು ಹಾಡುವುದು , ಮಕ್ಕಳಿಗೆ ಸಾಂಸ್ಕೃತಿಕ ಕಾರ್ಯಕ್ರಮ ಮಾಡಿಸುವುದು, ಇತ್ಯಾದಿ ಇಷ್ಟ ನನ್ನ ಜೋಡ್ಡಲ್-9632867888



Ramesh is currently a Kannada teacher at Azim Premji School, Yadgir, Karnataka. Prior to this, he has taught at Government Higher Primary School, Maranala Tanda, and Brilliant School, Thalikote. His interests are singing and training children for cultural programmes. He may be contacted at ramesh.rathod@azimpremji.org

A Few Pages From My Diary

Ravi Pratap Singh



15th March 2013, Friday:

It started as a normal day - I did not have the least idea that it would turn out to be a day full of emotional happenings. Of course, I was prepared for one incident – Neelam was to leave school because she was getting married and today was her last day in the school. As far as the second incident is concerned, though I had a clue about it and had shared it with Monu Sir the previous day, I never thought it would happen so soon. According to me it would probably take place after one year or so. But it was not so.

The school started as usual. The children of my grade two presented a dance and a song. The classes started after a fun -filled quiz session. I had a grade 2 mathematics class in the first period and went to grade 3 in the second period. Within ten minutes of starting my teaching, I saw Aditya's mother coming in. Suddenly I felt very strange- a tremor of fear, like the fear of getting an examination result, crept up slowly as I saw her coming.

I came out of the classroom and met her in the veranda and before she could say anything I said, 'I was going to call you, Aditya has not been coming to school for the past two days.' Whatever she answered at that moment just did not register in my mind. I do not know whether my ears did not hear it properly or whether my mind was not ready to accept it. Suddenly it was like my heart had taken over my ears and mind. I felt like someone had pulled the rug out from under my feet or someone had suddenly pushed me into a pit a thousand feet deep. I could understand just one thing that she had come to take Aditya's transfer certificate because his grandfather was angry and had admitted him. I tried to pull myself together and told her that I would call her in the evening and let her know when she could collect the transfer certificate.

There is nothing unusual about a child leaving school nor is it a new experience in the life of a teacher. But something about this incident made me want to put it in writing. Nothing was unusual - not the request made by Aditya's mother, nor my reaction...but Aditya? He was definitely an extraordinary child and it is very important for me

to say something about him.

My Aditya is about 10 years old child, studying in grade 2. Fairly healthy, slightly chubby face, loose pants, ineffective belt, restless shirt eager to come out of the pants and a habit of looking at things with wrinkled nose and half -closed eyes. Though Aditya lived in our world, did not much care for it. He was happy in his own little world, unless we tried to interfere. He had his own sweet world full of vehicles, roads, traffic, police, army, helicopter, chief minister, India-Pakistan, Delhi, petrol pump, rally, flag, cycle, bridge, tunnel and many other things. He would enter the school, keep the bag near the door of his classroom and run from one end of the ground to other either chasing a car or taking a car backwards or caught in a traffic jam. Aditya was well-known for these activities by the entire school and the Foundation. We would be surprised at his knowledge about the transportation in the hilly areas. I have not seen such an imaginative child in my life till date. His wonderful drawing skill was icing on the cake. He would draw a helicopter, a long queue of cars caught in a traffic jam, a traffic police organising them, his own car, an ambulance, a boy cycling to school and many such things on an A4 sheet of paper. Every inch of paper would be used up. All these things would be in their proper place with a logical story and my – our- Aditya would be very eager to tell that story.

I had known him for one year now and I would give him every possible opportunity to draw when I realised that he was interested in drawing. I let him draw and tell stories whenever he wanted to. At times, I have felt that I am not a suitable teacher for Aditya. In addition to drawing he was always ahead, bold, truthful and honest. We would say that our lesson plans are successful because of Aditya.

There are many stories I could relate about him from the time I have known him but there are limitations to writing. Just a few days ago during lunch break he came running to me holding his pants with one hand and carrying a frame of a broken headlight in the other and said, 'Sir, these people are snatching it from me, please keep it carefully.' I washed it and kept it on the roof of the toilet. He kept on watching



till he was sure that it was safe.

When I had spoken to his mother in the last Parent-Teacher Meeting, she told me that he was her only son and she was concerned about him – he should not lag behind. I tried my best to reassure her and told her about all the special qualities of her son and showed his subject-wise report to her. But she was firm with the ideas of instructions in English medium, discipline and fear of teacher in her child.

Today, after listening to her decision though I feel sorry for her, I am angry with so-called educated and sensible parents. I am terribly sad for Aditya. It is possible that he may do everything that his parents want him to do, but perhaps he will not be able to do what he is interested in or what he wants to do. A passionate and matchless artist will be sacrificed under the loads of books and hardships of life. Through no fault of his, the biggest loser will be the child himself. And I am so helpless that I cannot do a thing about it. I talked to my mentor Prasad ji. He asked me to send for Aditya's mother the next day so that both of us could talk to her.

Now all my hopes are pinned on tomorrow.

16th March 2013, Saturday:

Aditya's mother came at 10 in the morning. Prasad ji and I spoke to her and tried to know the reason for taking Aditya away from the school. She said she was admitting him in another school because in our school medium of instruction was not English. I had deliberately asked Aditya also to come with her mother so that I could meet him once again. And for the last time I saw him smiling in his inimitable style.

Four years have passed since then. Since we continue to stay in the same village, I often see Aditya walking on the road or buying things from shops. But I see neither that magical glow on his face nor his confident personality. It appears that somebody has snatched away that magical charm from Aditya. Despite this, my wish is that this should not happen ever. Only then things would be good for Aditya and it will be a big consolation for me. Only time will tell if that wish will come true.

Ravi is associated with Azim Premji School, Uttarkashi, since 2012 and teaches all subjects across the primary classes. He may be contacted at ravi.singh@azimpremjifoundation.org

Children's Experiences and Their Relation to Social Issues

Sahabuddin Ansari



Introduction

While studying Social Sciences, students should be able to understand contemporary social issues as well as their experiences in the classroom and be able to link it all up with the subject. There is not just one way of evaluation. What is important to see is to what depth children have understood the topic and if they have been able to see its linkages to their daily life. If they are able to articulate their views in writing, related as they are to their experience, this would be fulfilling the objectives of education.

The Constitution of India has made many provisions for the country's citizens including those of equality, fraternity, secularism etc. The citizens of India have also been granted certain rights – the Right to Education, for instance, and the Child-Rights. Keeping in view the significance of Education, the 86th Amendment to the Constitution, the Right to Education has been included in the Fundamental Rights. Articles 45, 21 (A) of the Indian Constitution contain the Right to Education under which all children in the 6-14 years' age-group are to be provided free and compulsory education irrespective of sex, caste, religion and other discrimination. They also have certain other rights – without discrimination on any of the grounds cited above, they should be listened to and respected and protected from exploitation, and children who are differently abled, those with special needs should also have their dignity defended. Children should get enough opportunities for progress and they should be kept away from tasks involving some risks.

Whatever the children have understood and learnt should also be felt by them in real life and they should also be aware of any incident or child whose rights are obstructed or kept deprived of education.

I gave a project-work to children of Class 8 in which they would have to conduct a survey and talk to people around them and identify five children who are deprived of the Right to Education or their rights as a child and find the reasons for this. They were to gauge how much the children had understood the issue of these rights. Also, there are many

occasions when we are unable to connect what happens in real life with what we study in school. The aim was also for them to be able to do so and to develop sensitivity towards such things.

The children took up this task happily. When we talked about it in the class, it gave rise to many questions about the deprived sections of society with very limited means at their disposal, those who have no parents or those that do not have any earning hands and one could sense a degree of sensitivity in the children about these issues. The questions that came to their minds included the one about choice – if the children are in poor circumstances what would they choose – the school or the home? If they come to the school, the home suffers and if they work, it would mean a violation of their child-rights. When they shared their experiences, it was quite obvious that they felt concerned about the deprived sections of society – the government does say that the right to education and child-rights should be provided to each child, but is this really possible? If yes, how then can it be made possible? How can the children working in hotels or garages go to school? If they go to school, who will be ready to retain them for work? When will they go to work? The law protects our rights and stops them from being violated. We might have to do something risky under compulsion and yet we cannot complain about it, afraid as to what would happen to other members of the family. There were other such difficult questions with no easy answers, and I tried to get the answers from the children themselves.

I asked the children to give expression to their experiences in writing – what they felt, what they liked and what change had come about in their thinking after their survey-work in society.

The children's experiences were very different. They became very emotional. They said that they did not like it at all because there is a law in place but the reality is altogether different. Problems cannot be solved just by making laws – there is a need to think of other methods and means too. Those with genuine problems at home cannot stop working, but there is a need to open schools for



them with timings that suit them so that they can get education even as they are working. Only then can the Right to Education (RtE) and Child Rights guaranteed by the Constitution be implemented.

Children's Experiences

Here are some reactions

- I liked doing this work because while doing it, I came to know that so many children in my village don't go to school and they have to face the violation of their rights as children. I also liked it because I got an opportunity to go out of home and roam around. Though I wanted to know the reasons for not being allowed to go to school, I was disappointed because they did not want to speak about this.
- I went for the survey during vacations and gathered information about children by going to various places. When I went to Suman's (imaginary name) place and asked her mother why she did not allow her to go to play, she said that their financial condition was not good, and she did the work of sewing quilts for which she got just 800 rupees per month. If Suman worked, it would be a help and she would also be well-equipped to work at her in-laws' place when she got married. I said to Suman that she should quickly complete her work and come to play. Suman's mother scolded me for this and I felt unhappy and sad that many in our society don't allow children to play and even study – how will our country develop and progress in such an atmosphere?
- While doing this work, I felt good as well as bad. I came to know that in our villages, cities and society so many children are unable to get education. I feel that information about those who don't send their children to school should reach to the government with the help of the media. The Constitution says that every child, whether rich or poor, male or female, has the right to education and also that parents who do not send their children to school may have to face legal consequences but we know that no parent has been punished. . Most girls have to do much of the work at home whereas everyone knows that a girl should be educated and well-read, for she is a mother – and if there were no women, no males would be born.
- In my village there are no children who face a violation of child-rights. I therefore went to a neighbouring village. We found three children

there who wish to study but are not in a good position economically. We came to know that their father is no more and mother is the lone earner and they are many brothers and sisters. I enjoyed doing this work but felt bad to learn that children in our society can't read even though they wish to, and have to work even at such a young age. They are not free to play and roam around at their leisure.

- I liked doing this work because I got an opportunity to meet so many people and talk to them and was also able to add to my knowledge. I did not like that even today many children are not going to school.

Working on this project, children have learnt a lot:

- There are many children in our society who do not want to go to school and their parents too do not send them to school. They work in shops and hotels, spend their earnings in wrong ways and become victims of drugs, etc.
- This was an opportunity to listen to the problems of children who do not go to school. The economic condition of some families is not good and I suggested that they should send their children to government schools that charge no fees for education. Parents should surely send their kids to school so that the campaign initiated in this regard by the government is a success.
- There are some who have got their children married very young and others who don't send their wards to school and involve them in hard work.
- I saw two brothers but could not go to them in spite of making an effort to do so and so I sent a friend to them who came back to me saying he could not understand their language as they were from Bihar. I saw that both of them live in a shop. The first brother works in the shop near our house and the second, in a shop in an iron goods shop.

Some suggestions given by children

- Everyone should be given education for the country to progress.
- There should be a separate provision for children working in shops, garages, etc.
- Those who have financial challenges have to choose between going to school and going to work. What should be given priority? Their

need is to somehow get on with life. In such a situation it will be good if such children can be kept in hostel and they are able to study as well as learn some work/occupation so that they can earn something and be a support for their family.

- o Children in senior classes should be given the responsibility of coaching and helping these students in studies so that deprived children can also study and there is social-cooperation also.

Conclusion

Two facts came to the fore:

First, the children found this a joyful task. They felt good doing it. One reason for this was that they could get out of their homes and talk to people. As a result they gained in self-confidence. They were able to witness the real face of society upfront. Had they not got this opportunity, they would have been

limited to reading books and not been acquainted with reality. They came to realise the significance of the Right to Education and of Child Rights, as also the shortcomings in the application of law at the level of the government and the circumstances in which parents do not send children to school. They also became aware of how child rights are violated by shopkeepers who employ children and make them do work.

Secondly, the children also came to think about the solutions and were able to present their views frankly without worrying as to whether what they say will be heard or not. And they gave some good suggestions too – like the one of reaching their views to the government through the media and of the senior students taking up the project of teaching such children, of a separate hostel for working children so that they can study even as they do productive work that helps them improve their economic condition.

Sahabuddin is a teacher at Azim Premji School, Dineshpur, Udham Singh Nagar, Uttarakhand. He has 5 years of experience in classroom teaching at Azim Premji School and 3 years of experience in evaluation at Azim Premji Foundation. He also has 10 years' experience in the food industry. He currently teaches Social Science in upper primary classes and other subjects in primary classes. He has a Bachelor's degree in Education and Master's degrees in Political Science, Sociology and Education. He may be contacted at sahabuddin.ansari@azimpremjifoundation.org

A Reflection on Children's Behaviour

Shipra Agarwal



I have been working as a teacher in the Azim Premji School in Dineshpur (Uttarakhand) since 2012 and talk about behaviour in the class on a regular basis. As of now I am the Class Teacher of Class-4. Five children in the class abuse the others and indulge in misbehavior of a similar kind, especially in the absence of the teacher and this leads to even physical fights because of which there are problems in the conduct of the class and disturbance in the class-room teaching. A lot of time is spent sometimes in resolving these issues.

Case Study

I thought of working with these five children whose behaviour and conversation had a high number of abuse-words. It is usually believed and said that

- Physical punishment is the easiest way to control children. But this would have had a negative effect on their studies as their attention would have been diverted to their physical hurt. I also felt that this would lead them to feel scared of me.
- Another thought was to make them leave the class. But then I realized this too would affect their studies and there was also the possibility that they would begin enjoying being out of class and the problem, instead of being controlled could have been aggravated.
- I then thought of calling their parents and talking to them. This would lead to a regular attendance of the students or they would at least continue to come to school without any fear. In the end I made up my mind to talk to the children separately after the class.

Work-Plan: In order to minimize the problem, I planned to talk to these five children after the class thinking that this would not affect their studies in any way.

Process: I started talking to them in generalities. I asked them about what they did in school. Each of them gave a different answer.

One of them said that they studied.

Another said that they played.

Yet another said they ate too.

I then asked them what they liked to do best in school. And they all replied in unison that they liked playing most of all.

I then asked them if anyone used abusive language with them. No sooner did I ask this than they began sharing their experiences.

One of them said that Priya uses words of abuse for him

The second said that many children called him by his distorted name.

In response to my query as to whether they too responded the same way, all of them said 'yes'. And when I asked them if they could remain silent and not answer back on such occasions, they again said 'yes'.

I said that we come to the school not just to study but also to learn how to behave well - and other such good things. I asked them - if we don't respond to the abusive language used by others, will there be less of quarrelling? All of them responded by saying 'yes'. No one likes to hear abuses hurled at him or her, and it is very difficult to remain silent at that point of time - will you be able to do so, I asked? All of them responded positively, and I said that we will see the next day how many children do not respond to such language used against them.

The next day, children shared their experiences. Someone said that I was called names but I remained silent and went home; another said, when I went out to play, I was faced with abusive language but I remained quiet. When I asked if any of them themselves used abusive language, they started blaming one another on this account, and I had to ask them to talk just about themselves and not about others, and they admitted that they did do so sometimes. I then asked them to take care and not use such language - and they promised to take care.

On November 5, 2016 the children came back to school after the Diwali holidays. Three of the five were present in the class. I talked to them separately.

I asked them how they had spent their holidays. I began my conversation thus so that they would feel comfortable. All shared their experiences and then we talked about the issue at hand. They all agreed that they do not use abusive language, nor did they respond to anyone who uses it. But when asked if they wait for their turn to speak in the class, they expressed their failure to do so – they do try but then they forget. I said that if they continuously keep this in mind, they will get used to doing so.

All of them said that they would try to do so. But no difference was to be seen as yet in their behaviour. With me they would talk with ease and in the proper manner but this was not to be seen in other situations. When, for instance, I went to Raj Kumar's place (name changed) during the community-visit, I did not like the tone in which I saw him speaking. I talked to these children about the manner in which one should speak and they all agreed about the tone in which one should speak to elders and fellow-students.

Change in behaviour is not easy and one has to be in continuous dialogue as well as create a suitable environment for it to happen. Providing the required environment may not be in our hands, for that will depend more on the community and the fellow-students but I do try my best through dialogue, as best as I can.

Thereafter, I could not talk to them as I got busy in the preparation of Report Cards. Their behaviour seemed to have reverted to what it was earlier and this got me thinking and I thought that whatever time I get, should be utilized in talking to them – even if that be during the lunch-break or some other time. I should not stop talking to them.

December 15, 2016 - I called Kamal, Raj Kumar, Vikas, Kavita and Prema (all imaginary names). Much of my time went in listening to them and this was the right thing to happen as the children were at least able to say what they wanted to say. But most of their talk was related to complaints about others and I also got to know that these were complaints to which they had already responded – for instance, such and such student said such and such thing to one, and so (s)he also said back something. I asked them to do just one thing – that instead of responding in kind, they should just note down the date when a certain thing happened. And whenever we converse, they should talk only about themselves, not others – they should be telling just about how they were able to behave with others. One can notice a change in their behaviour now but

this is visible till only the time one is in dialogue with them. Once the dialogue stops, they seem to revert to their earlier patterns of behaviour.

When there was sharing about behaviour with children in the meeting with fellow-teachers on 18th January 2017, I came to know that Raj Kumar (imaginary name) who would earlier hesitate even to read a single word in English, now asks for a book to read in English. No one knew how this change came about in him, but this was there for everyone to see. Another teacher told about Kavita (imaginary name) that she was earlier never willing to play but now herself comes to seek a leadership role and it was seen on the Sports Day that she led the Football team and brought victory to her team. There was a change in her way of speaking too.

It was only on January 23, 2017 that I could meet the children - after many days. First it was the winter vacation, then a break announced by the District Magistrate followed by a two days leave for personal reasons. I therefore planned to talk to the children - but could not do so because of being busy teaching in all periods and a duty to perform during the lunch-time.

I told my school-head about my problem and it was suggested that I could have lunch with the children. And so, the next day I talked to them over lunch. When I met the Head Teacher after that, he suggested that it would be better to talk to them informally as the children will talk unhesitatingly, without the hierarchy inherent in the teacher-student relationship. My experience, however, was different and I thought it would be better to sit separately and talk to them as I was more comfortable this way – though only the children could really tell in what way they felt comfortable.

The next day I tried to get to know the views of the children but just three of them were present and each of them had a different view with one wishing to talk during lunch, the second wanting to talk at the place we used to sit earlier and the third saying we could sit anywhere.

I preferred to talk to them sitting separately as there would be no disturbance. Outside, there would always be diversions and I would have to bring them back to attentiveness. But still we sat outside, which did not turn out to be a very good experience as there were repeated disturbances and breaks in the links of conversation. And so, the next day, we sat in a separate room. Four of the concerned five students were present. They were,

however, unable to concentrate even here and I had to request them to be attentive.

On February 4, 2017 I talked to them again. And they told me that they were not comfortable talking in front of all others and would prefer a separate space for interaction. Tushar reported that Narayan of Class-5 was addressing him with a distorted form of his name in the Assembly and he did not respond to that. I told him that he did the right thing and also asked him to tell this to the Class Teacher who would talk to Narayan. I reminded him that his

quarrel with Krishna of Class-4 took a worse form because he had responded to her and both had beaten each other because of which she was hurt in the foot. After a bit of talking thus, all went back to their classes.

Conclusion – Till the end of the session I thus continuously worked on the behaviour of these children and one could notice a change in behaviour many times. And yet there is a need to work more with them on this.

Shipra currently teaches at Azim Premji School, Dineshpur, Udham Singh Nagar. She has been working in the field of education since 1997. She may be contacted at shipra.agarwal@azimpremjifoundation.org

When Questions Become Answers

Shree Singh Kuriyal



Questions question our understanding of concepts, situations and ideas. There is no question about this. This is an account of the way one teacher, Kinzom Khampa, used the tool of enquiry to get children find the answers.

Kinzom, an English teacher, has been teaching for five years and is presently at GIC Pujar Gaon, Uttarkashi. She did not have to read heavy academic research papers to reach this conclusion. Armed with the passion to make her children proficient not only in English language but also in all subjects in and out of school, Kinzom quickly realised the power of questions.

The children in Kinzom's class were used to rote memorisation and Kinzom's initial euphoria in the first few weeks of the academic session about how well the children were responding to the lessons, turned into despair when she realised that they did not understand the meanings, usages and application of simple words in a given lesson. She also realised that the text book was a mere tool, and that too not a perfect one, for getting the process of learning going. She then started experimenting in her classroom. She closed the text book and asked the bewildered children to do the same.

Each lesson in the text book is just a pointer to a theme, thought and or idea. Once the core idea gets disseminated amongst and internalised by the children, everything falls into place. And this was where Kinzom started from.

She started discussing things in class. All sorts of subjects, ideas and thoughts started floating around the class room. Of course, it took her sometime to prod the thinking processes in the children but once she got through to actually getting them to wear and use the thinking cap, conversations flowed and ideas blossomed. The children were not really used to talking with the teacher. Before this, they were used to being talked at, but never really been heard. Now, Kinzom began her academic year with the curriculum of talk.

Once the children got comfortable with voicing their thoughts, Kinzom started the game of questions. She introduced a topic, a discussion got generated, thoughts solidified and then those thoughts were questioned. She was also aware that thoughts need to be questioned very gently otherwise it would be easy for the children to retreat into their shells, something she could not afford to allow to happen if she wanted them to think critically. So, a whole week, sometimes a whole month, was dedicated to careful selection of questions related to a particular discussion which would ultimately lead to the core idea behind the lessons in the textbook. However, before the children got to the lessons, they were armed with a logical understanding which had withstood the barrage of cleverly thought-out questions.

The children are encouraged to question the teacher and each other. Kinzom firmly believes in the creation of a positive space where the voice of each child is heard and respected.



Slowly, Kinzom understood that she had chanced upon a powerful weapon in her repertoire of questions. She also saw that close-ended questions with a simple yes or no for answer, the norm in the textbook, were not conducive to understanding. They were only encouraging learning by rote and she was not going to let that happen. She painstakingly created a list of her own of questions for each lesson, questions which tested the understanding of the child which encouraged the child to think beyond the lesson, which linked the lesson to her context. For the first time, question marks became friends!

Moreover, she made the questions easy at first then they got to different levels of difficulty. This also put a demand on the cognitive ability of the students. Unknown to her, Kinzom was actually working according to Bloom's Taxonomy in that she was trying to equip children with tools of knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

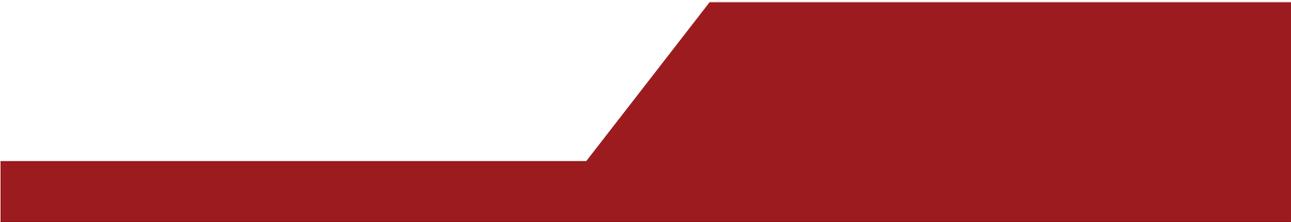
In all this, Kinzom is clear that once her children understand the lessons, they will also be able to read (with meaning), write (originally) and speak (without hesitation) in English.

She believes that questions have been able to foster critical thinking skills, better communication skills, enhance creativity in her children besides making them good listeners and it is rather evident in her class room where the children converse with confidence and are not fearful of asking questions.

Kinzom might not be able to finish her syllabus on time all the time, but she knows that her children will know how to question things rationally and that in itself is the biggest reward for her.

This article has also been published in Teacher Plus, March 2018 (<http://www.teacherplus.org/profile/when-questions-turn-into-answers>)

Shree works as a resource person for English and helps in subject specific teachers' training at Azim Premji Foundation, Uttarkashi, Uttarakhand. As part of her work, she does rigorous school visits to government schools and tries to improve her understanding about second language acquisition, particularly English, at the ground level. She may be contacted at shree.kuriyal@azimpremijifoundation.org



Lesson Adaptation as a Tool to Aid Reading Comprehension in Students with Learning Difficulties

Veena Venkatramu, Shweta Chandrashekhar, Neha Pant



When you google reading comprehension worksheets, you are inundated with passages followed by questions. Familiar sight?! Questioning is often seen as the only way to approach reading comprehension. And inevitably, it is in context to English as a subject, maybe extending to the social sciences - God forbid were we to see it in math class or in the chemistry question paper! Levity apart, this mode of the passage- followed -by -questions is mostly an evaluation of reading comprehension. What about approaches to explicitly teaching reading comprehension? Before we share our experiences, we would like very briefly, to set the context of reading comprehension and approaches to teaching it; then delve into the core topic of this article.

Reading comprehension:

The adage 'Reading maketh a man' hasn't gone out of style - The world runs on that constant cascade of information from various sources, from good old fashioned books through to the Kindle. Today's reader requires to manage these complexities. In the order of language skill acquisition, reading and reading comprehension is sandwiched between oral language and written expression. It is regarded as the bridge between these two essential skills of communication, knowledge acquisition and literacy of course.

Reading comprehension is a complex process, being the relationship the reader has with the written word. The reader constructs deep meaning from what is being read. The content of meaning is influenced by the reader's prior knowledge, experience and setting in which the reading takes place. The situational context or setting: whether the home or classroom, in a quiet space like the library, during a test, affects how text is comprehended while reading. Automaticity in decoding, print orientation and knowledge, fluency, vocabulary skills, attention and memory are pre-requisites to reading comprehension as is fluency, though it is not the same as automacity. Fluency is the reading, connecting and reading in-text material effortlessly and with expression. Vygotsky's social construct and context of learning deserves mention here. While

reading comprehension is an individual activity, it can be enhanced when part of a social activity, as in a classroom, where teachers and students, or parents and children read together and construct meaning through discussion together.

Reading strategies and learning are interwoven, that is if a learner has failed to understand the content of the text or tasks, learning will be, if not a challenge, impossible. As the student advances through school, the content becomes more complex, more in-depth and requires far more proficiency in reading and accuracy. The better the reading strategies, the earlier acquired, the higher the chances of effective learning. For struggling readers, comprehension of the text may be impacted due to lack of varied and rich vocabulary, deficits in the phonological processes, deprivation of adequate teaching comprehension strategies, lack of motivation and inattention.

Brindavan Education Trust is an exclusive remedial centre for students who have been diagnosed with severe specific learning difficulties, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), high functioning children on the Autism Spectrum, disorders such as school refusal and other psychological disorders. The junior programme focuses on academic skill development and concept learning according to relevant scope and sequence. The senior programme focuses on teaching select NIOS (National Open Schooling) subjects for secondary and senior secondary grades (10th and 12th classes). Curriculum - based skill development continues since students continue to have difficulties with academics.

Since the focus is on taking exams, teaching reading comprehension plays a huge role in the day -to -day teaching at Brindavan. Reading comprehension in context to academia needs to be explicitly taught to be developed in a systemic way. Most text is divided into narrative or expository. Through many years of continual research, teaching trial and error and training Brindavan follows the solid practice of teaching and using strategies to enhance reading comprehension in their students, a few of which are: activating prior knowledge, graphic organisers, concept mapping, webs.



- Questioning (Bloom’s Taxonomy) – Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation
- Creating mental or visual images
- Summarising – cloze passages
- Metacognitive Strategies – self- regulatory checklists, journals
- Reciprocal teaching
- Technology support
- Analysing text structure – chunking, lesson adaptation

The focus of this article is primarily on lesson adaptation, which is the child of differentiated teaching instruction, as a tool to enhance reading comprehension and aid learning. It is the standard required practice of meeting diverse learning needs especially in a classroom with special education needs and is a given at Brindavan. The approach to reading and comprehension is the three step approach – pre- reading, reading and post - reading.

Our typical class strength is eight students per classroom. In comparison to sixty neurotypical students, this is a very small number. However, catering to each learner’s diverse complex needs requires teaching individually and in small group setting.

In the context to reading and reading comprehension, adaptation is not to be confused with adapted texts – where literary classics, such as Tolstoy’s War and Peace, are officially adapted, published and sold so as to reach a wider audience including children.

Academic Lesson adaptation is a strategy, method, a tool to modify lessons for better learning. Adaptations can be across three domains – we have further explained it in context to reading and reading comprehension.

- a. Content – the actual text that student needs to learn. Content can be adapted to keep key concepts and vocabulary intact. This reduces reading load on the student. This is especially useful for students with dyslexia. The text can further be adapted to suit a specific learner’s needs.
- b. Process - of instruction or reaching, teaching the text to students. This involves the student to engage with the text. One of the best approaches to reading comprehension is the three stage approach – pre-reading, reading and post-reading. The reader is scaffolded with

the aforementioned strategies to master the text to the best of their capability.

- c. Product – evaluation of the text where the student is provided with the opportunity to demonstrate what has been learned. Levels of difficulty, group or individual work, learning style can all be adapted to assess text comprehension.
- d. Learning Environment – this includes physical and affective aspects of classroom adaptation and management. Creating a safe learning environment boosts motivation which is a huge component of reader engagement. The classroom can be adapted to accommodate a reading corner, seating to accommodate collaborative learning.
- e. Here are two samples of how text is adapted for teaching . We hope to successfully demonstrate the teaching process and strategies to enhance reading comprehension and aid learning. The first one is adapted for the Pre – NIOS level (roughly grade 9) from the NCERT textbook. The second sample is for the Junior NIOS (10th grade) class in English.

Sample 1 - THE THAR DESERT

Thar Desert, also called Great Indian Desert,

The Indian desert lies towards the western margins of the Aravalli Hills. It covers the state of Rajasthan and parts of Gujarat. It is an undulating sandy plain covered with sand dunes called Barchans (crescent shaped dunes).



Glossary

1. Undulating – up and down, wavy form like waves in an ocean
2. Crescent shaped -

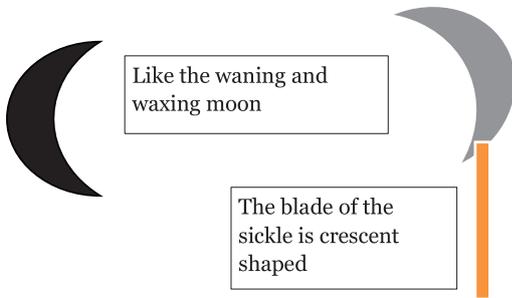


Fig. 2 Crescent shaped sand dunes – Barchans

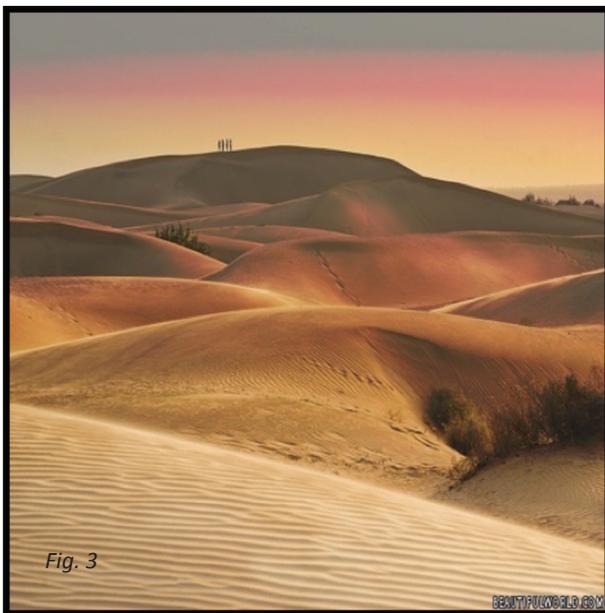


Fig. 3 The undulating sandy plains

This region receives very low rainfall below 150 mm per year. It has arid climate with low vegetation cover. Streams appear during the rainy season. Soon after they disappear into the sand as they do not have enough water to reach the sea. Luni is the only large river in this region.

Glossary

Arid – hardly any rainfall, dry, hardly any vegetation
Vegetation – what naturally grows in a particular area; not cultivated
Desert vegetation

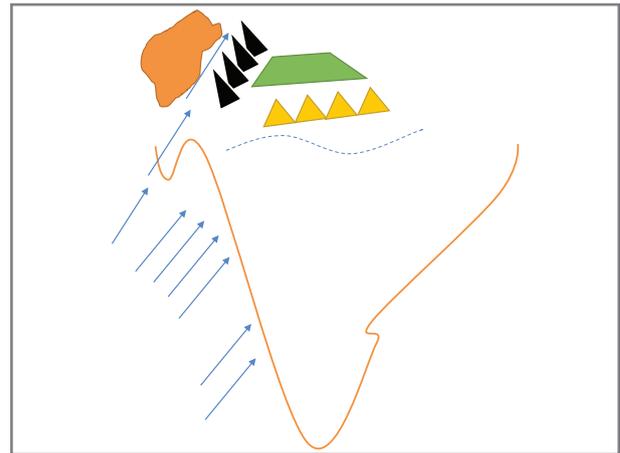


Fig. 4 Sketch

The rain-bearing winds go past the Aravallis because of their position. Had the Aravallis been positioned differently (see fig. 5) there is a high possibility that it would have received heavy rainfall.

(The teacher draws sketches and gets the children to draw it, to aid comprehension. Fig. 5 is a non – example which will help to deepen the understanding of the concept)

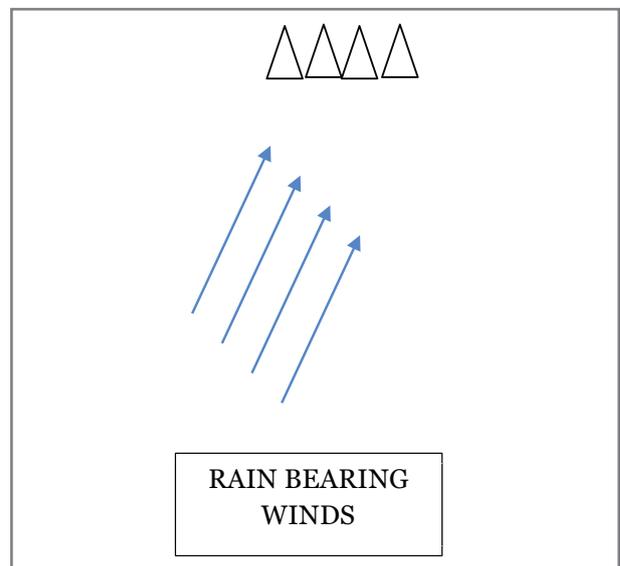


Fig. 5 Sketch2

Lesson plan – Thar desert

Objectives	Activity and strategy	Accommodations	Material	Evaluation
Pre – reading: To establish prior knowledge of desert	Strategy: Brainstorming Activity: Word association – Think of words that you would associate with a desert. Skill development Vocabulary Reading comprehension	Provide prompts for those who need it	Black board on which the words are written – either by teacher or student	Draw a desert using the words on the board. OR Write brief description of a desert (given to students who cant draw)
During reading activity – To gain knowledge about the location of the Thar desert. To gain understanding of why this area is a desert	Strategy: Teacher explanations using visual aid; Chunking – (3 Paras) the students read the portion from the text. Oral questions are asked for comprehension Activity: Students will place cones depicting the position of the Aravallis and explain why the Thar desert gets less rainfall. (instead of cones students themselves stand as a representation of the position of the mountains, winds and its effects) Skill development Listening comprehension Reading comprehension Oral language Spatial and motor skills	Provided pictorial representation of keywords Larger sketches	Maps of India depicting Thar desert Sketches depicting the position of the Aravallis and its effect on rainfall For keywords Glossary Word wall Flash cards	On a given outline map of India mark the following – Thar Deseret The Aravallis The direction of the southwest monsoons Give reasons for the Thar Desert being a desert.

Objectives	Activity and strategy	Accommodations	Material	Evaluation
<p>Post reading activity –</p> <p>To get the students to apply their knowledge of the Desert</p>	<p>Strategy: Visualization</p> <p>Activity: “if you were stranded in a desert how will you survive?” They will be asked to write their story based on what they have learnt from the concept. And read them out</p> <p>Skill development: Creative writing Reading comprehension Written expression Sequencing</p>	<p>Scribe for a student with dysgraphia</p> <p>Oral answers – recorded or expressed in class</p> <p>Express through illustrations</p>	<p>Cloze passage – sample attached below</p>	<p>Read the adapted lesson two times. Keep it away and answer cloze passage</p> <p>Read the newspaper article summarize and frame questions for the same (the article will act as a precursor for the research based activity that have been planned for the future)</p>

Cloze passage Sample

Fill in the blanks with words given in the box to complete the summary.

The Thar desert is situated on the western margins of the (a)_____. It is found mainly in the states of (b) _____ and (c)_____. It consists of (d) _____ crescent shaped (e) _____ called Barchans. It is an (f) _____ area that receives very (g) _____ rainfall. There is sparse vegetation. It is the (h) _____ of the Aravallis that result in the southwest monsoons to pass by (i) _____

Accommodation: recorded text for a struggling reader, text in larger font for a student with vision disabilities. (this accommodation is given so as to help the students with challenges work independently)

Newspaper analysis.

Read the following passage. Create at least three relevant questions based on the passage. Not long ago, the remote communities in Jaisalmer district, Rajasthan, made a living from a single annual crop of bajra, which was dependent on the mercy of the rain gods. The 48-degree Celsius heat of the harsh summer sun, frequent sandstorms and water scarcity posed a major challenge for survival. Droughts and the spectre of camel and livestock bones strewn on the sand dunes loomed ahead. But the advent of the Indira Gandhi Canal Project (IGCP) in the mid-1980s changed everything. Covering seven districts in the State — Jaisalmer, Barmer, Bikaner, Jodhpur, Churu, Hanumangarh and Sri Ganganagar — the canal transformed the landscape and the lives of its inhabitants. Assured availability of water for drinking and irrigation turned the once-barren fields of north-west Rajasthan into fertile farms, yielding two crops a year. “Now we harvest wheat, guar, mustard, groundnut, cumin and gram,” says Hasam Khan, Sarpanch of Hamir Nada ki Dhani in Mohangarh panchayat, 75 km from Jaisalmer.

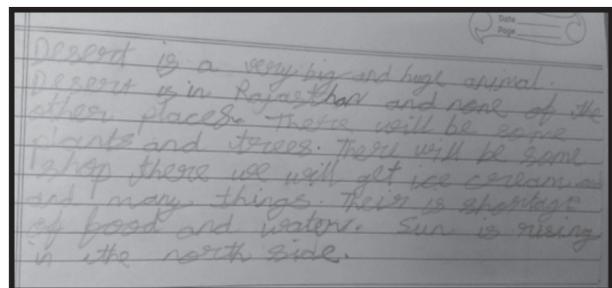
Self – Reflection:

The class as a whole responded well to pictures and other visual cues provided while teaching the lesson. The brainstorming session and drawing activities kept students engaged and got them thinking about the topic (pre – reading). The process of syllabication and using pictures to explain the meaning of the keywords helped the students understand the meaning of the words. Since the topic was abstract it was chunked into paragraphs, visually represented and involved kinesthetic activities (during reading). A number of post – reading activities the cloze passage helped the students with recall of keywords and the students were able to do so very well. The activities made the children think out of the box with respect to the concept concerned. Here are some of the out of the box responses given by the students for the questions asked. For example, during the discussion some of the questions that the students raised were – (they have been mentioned verbatim)

- a. When the desert is hot people are fair but when you go to Chennai people are dark. Why? Melanin in their body (the desert) should be more to be dark.
- b. Are there fish in the oasis? I will eat the fish to survive

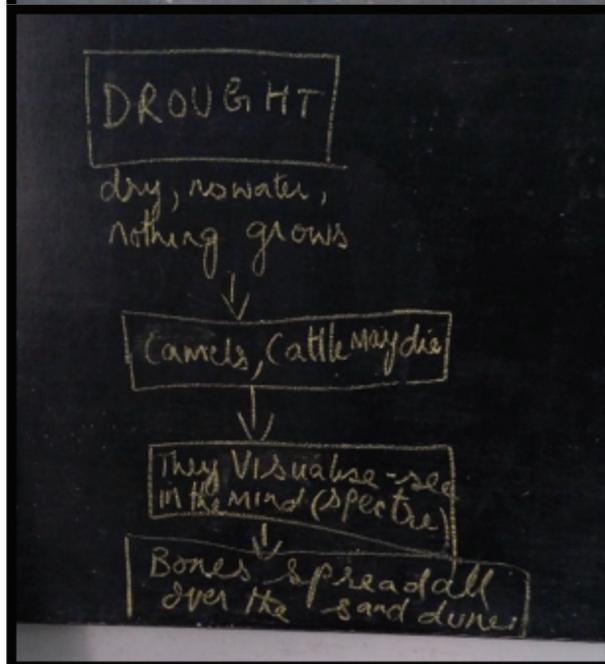
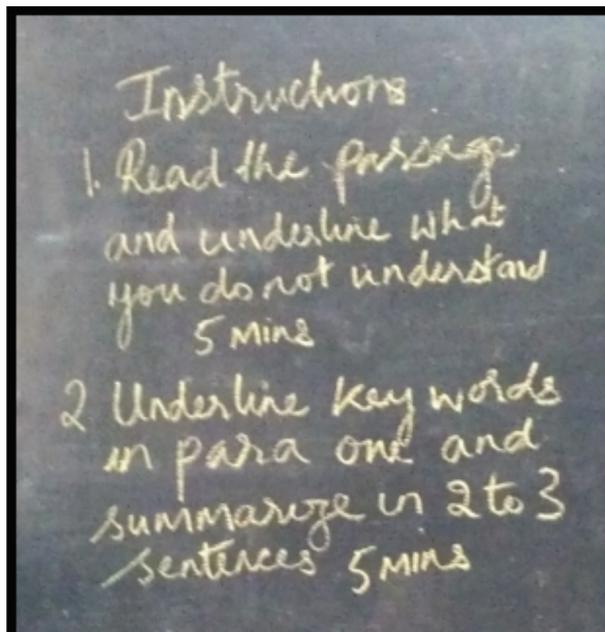


A student's representation of a desert. Some others had also tried to depict a sandstorm in the desert



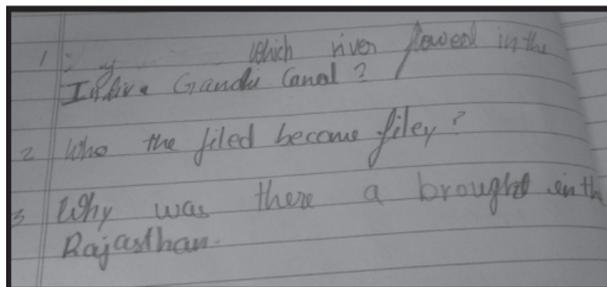
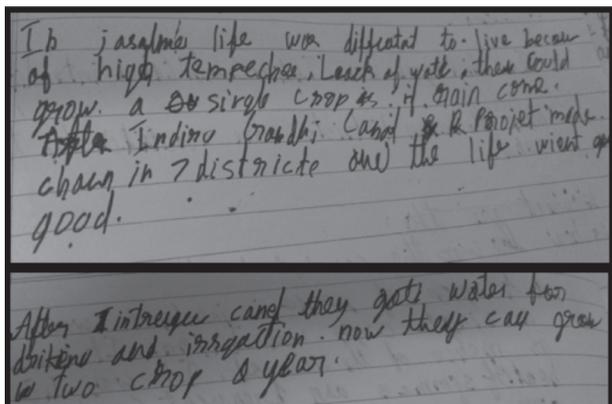
This child had no idea of a desert to begin with. Though the others had written a fairly good description.

The area that the students found challenging was the newspaper analysis section where they were expected to read unfamiliar text. The students faced challenges in reading and understanding unfamiliar words, summarizing. The words were explained by using them in a sentence and questioning to help them arrive at the contextual meaning themselves. The crux of the article was derived in points by the students and represented through a mind map. (pic below)



With respect to summarizing students found it challenging but when the teacher asked questions as cues the students were able to give appropriate answers. In spite of these questions the students found it a challenge to express their thoughts in

their own words. in order to guide the thought process of the students the teacher gave her own version of the summary the students were able to write even after a break. To bring the session to a close the students were asked to come up with 3 relevant questions based on the passage. Samples given below.



These pictures include a sample of a summary on a newspaper article and the questions they framed on it. In question 2 = who actually means 'how' and in question 3 brought actually means 'drought' (reversals)

Sample 2: Text adaptation of the English lesson 'The Indian Weavers' by Sarojini Naidu.

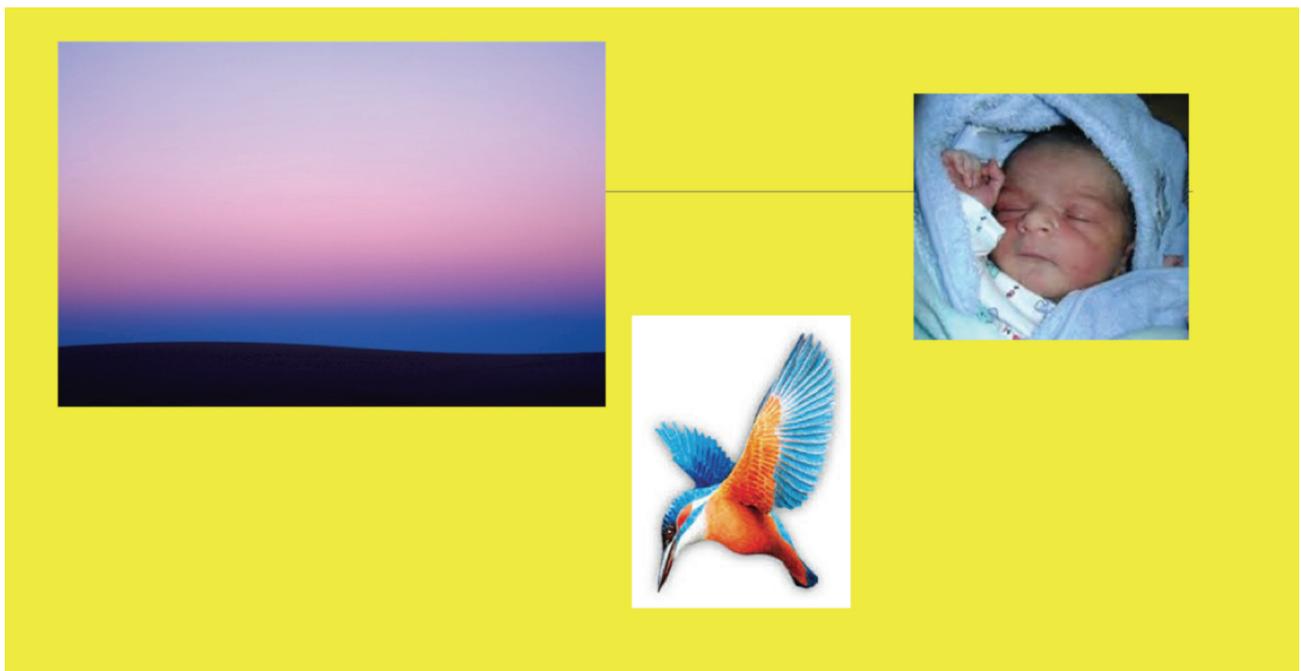
The poem, while short, is rich in imagery and abstract thought. Here's a brief of the poem to give you context. The weavers are weaving various types of cloth in different hues through an entire day. Each colour, time of the day symbolises phases in an individual's life. At dawn, a bright blue coloured cloth is woven for a new born baby symbolising birth and happiness; day/ dusk a bright coloured purple and green cloth for the marriage veil of a queen signifying life's celebrations. Finally, night and twilight a white shroud is woven signifying death. Colours symbolise different feelings, moods and ideas, e.g. red colour symbolizes romantic mood or love and danger. Different times of the day represent different stages of life – morning represents childhood, evening youth and night death, or end of life.

Reason for adaptation of the text – Given the student profile and one teaching trial, it was evident that the class found time concepts, rich word imagery such as metaphors, similes and certain unfamiliar keywords difficult to comprehend. To facilitate their learning, the text needed to be adapted.

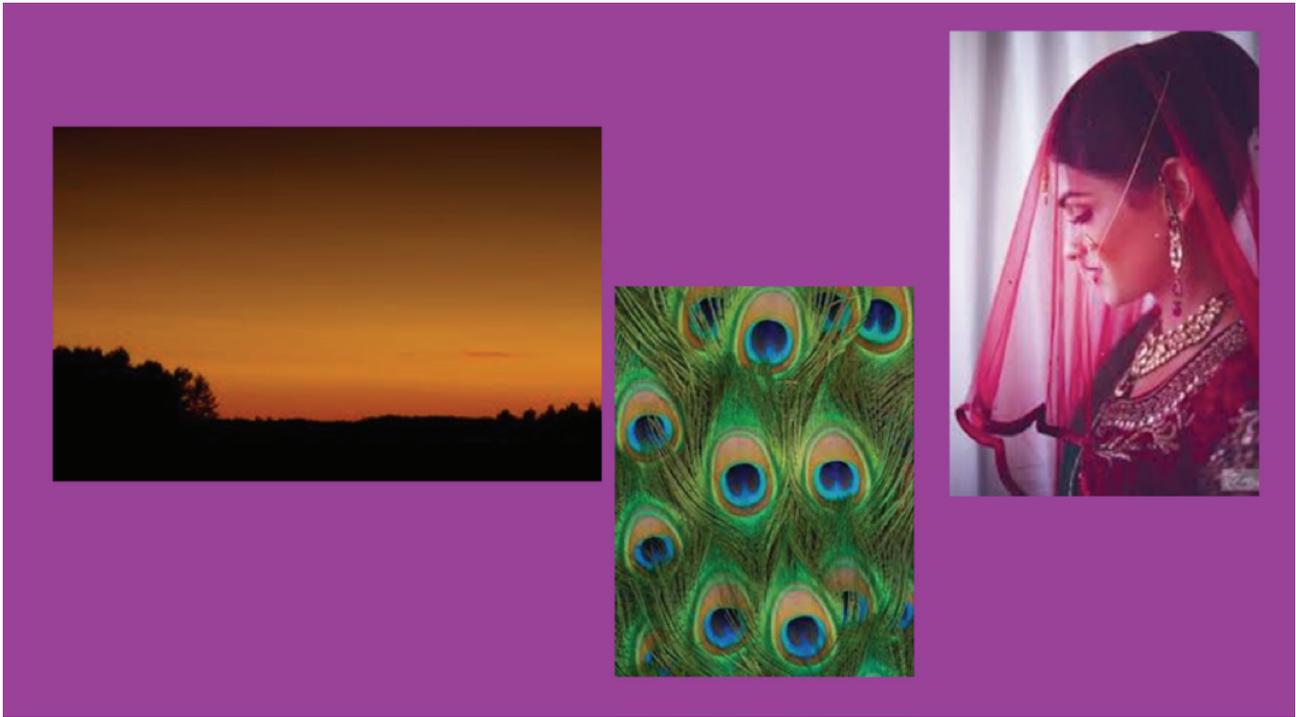
Here the adaptation was to represent the lesson in a completely different format that would better be understood by the class. Thought the length was short the concepts were complex and abstract. The focus of this section is on the pre-reading stage. The primary strategy is visualisation and word reading drills to build vocabulary and familiarise students with words from the text. The objective was also to demystify the notion of a poem being difficult to understand. Here is the lesson plan for the pre – reading section.

Objectives	Strategy/Activity	Material	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will be shown pictures the poem is read Students will read keywords Students will match keywords to respective pictures 	<p>Strategies: Show and tell Flashcards</p> <p>Activity: With each stanza being read by the teacher, reading cards are shown. Reading cards are flashed as the presentation is played with teacher explanation.</p>	<p>Power point presentation</p> <p>Text</p> <p>Reading cards</p> <p>Stanza 1 - Break of Day, New Born, Halcyon</p> <p>Stanza 2 – Fall of night, plumes , Marriage veil</p> <p>Stanza 3 – Shroud, Night, moonlight chill</p>	<p>Flashcard reading the keywords.</p> <p>Given words on reading cards , students should be able to label the respective pictures</p>

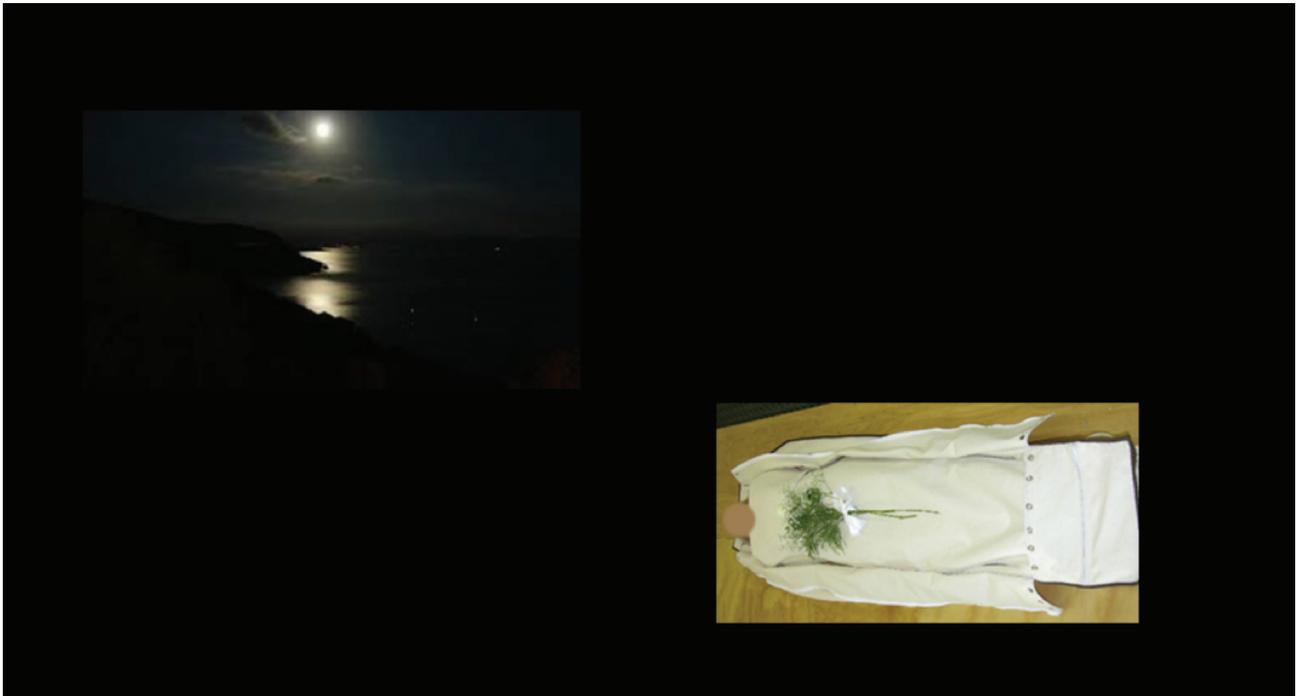
Objectives	Strategy/Activity	Material	Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will sequence time line of the day 	<p>Strategies: Tactile Learning Sorting Discussion - daily routine</p> <p>Activity: Students will read and sort words related to the day.</p>	<p>Reading cards Individual pictures Scissors & Glue</p>	<p>Using reading cards and pictures , students should be able to sequence time line of the day</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students will map emotions to colours in the text 	<p>Strategies: Role play Teacher Modelling intonation</p> <p>Activity: Mime out emotion mentioned Small passage is read out and the students are asked to name the emotion.</p>	<p>Colour cards Reading cards – Keywords Reading Cards – Emotions Passages of 3 sentences each. E.g. – Raja missed all his busses back home. He met a close friend who offered to drop him home.</p>	<p>Demonstrated an emotion, Students should be able to use text based emotion word, put up the appropriate reading card.</p> <p>Given the emotion reading card, student should be able to match the respective colour card & vice versa.</p>



Pic. 1



Pic. 2



Pic 3: Presenting the pictures aided in developing vocabulary and concept understanding.

Text Representation:

Indian Weavers: Sarojini Naidu

DURING READING: 1

POEM Word	Meaning
break of day	dawn
garment	cloth
new-born	baby
fall of night	dusk
plumes	feather

Objectives: Should know – poem, rhyming, emotions
Will understand – main idea via pictures, table – compare & contrast, explanation

Weavers, weaving at break of day, Why do you weave a garment so gay? Blue as the wing of halcyon wild We weave the robes of a new-born child.	Weavers, weaving at fall of night, Why do you weave a garment so bright? Like the plumes of a peacock, purple and green We weave the marriage veils of a queen	Weavers, weaving solemn and still What do you weave in the moonlight chill? White as a feather and white as a cloud We weave a dead man's funeral shroud.
--	---	--

Stage of life	Time of day	cloth	colour	Compared to	emotion	Occasion	Person
1. Birth	break of day	robe	blue	Halcyon	Gay	birth	new born
2. Youth	fall of night	veil	purple & green	Peacock	Excitement	wedding	queen/bride
3. Death	moonlight	shroud	white	Feather & cloud	Solemn & still	funeral	dead man

Pic 4: The entire poem was represented as a table as shown in the picture above. This format of representation, chunking and the preceding pictures helped during reading and explanation of text. However, one student was unable to still comprehend the text given all formats. He didn't have issues with word attack. However, he found it difficult to copy and translate text into tabular format. He fared better in the following activity that combined listening comprehension as well.

Indian Weavers: Sarojini Naidu

During Reading 2- Read each stanza. Discuss questions that follow:

Weavers, weaving at break of day, Why do you weave a garment so gay? Blue as the wing of halcyon wild We weave the robes of a new-born child.	Weavers, weaving at fall of night, Why do you weave a garment so bright? Like the plumes of a peacock, purple or green We weave the marriage veils of a queen	Weavers weaving solemn and still What do you weave in the moonlight chill? White as a feather and white as a cloud We weave a dead man's funeral shroud
--	--	--

1. Who is the poet addressing? 2. When are they weaving the cloth? 3. What is being compared? 4. What is the weavers' reply?	1. State the time mentioned in this verse 2. What type is being woven here? 3. What is the colour of the plumes? 4. What is the veil?	1. Mention the time of reference 2. What is the colour of the cloth? 3. What is the weaver's reply? 4. Trace the words in the stanza that mean a) calm b) serious
---	--	--

Pic 5: with teacher modelling reading and questioning, all students were able to map pictures to keywords and used these aids as prompts to boost reading comprehension

POST READING :

Main Idea - Different times of the day represent different stages of life -

- morning represents childhood,
- evening youth and
- night death, or end of life.

Colours symbolise different feelings

Worksheet - Concept Understanding

This is a _____ written by _____

This is set in a _____ community

The theme / poem is about _____

IW is rich in _____ and contains _____

SUMMARY

'Indian Weavers' is a poem, consisting of three stanzas. The flow of language is full of rhythm and word images. The weavers are busy weaving clothes in different colours throughout the day. Each colour as well as timing of the day symbolises different occasions in one's life. In the morning, they weave a bright blue coloured cloth for a new born baby symbolising birth and happiness. During the day, they weave a bright coloured purple and green cloth for the marriage veil of a queen signifying life's celebrations. Finally, at night, they weave a white coloured cloth for the shroud of a dead

Lesson Q n A

- Multiple Choice Answers
- Cloze
- Q n A
- Arrange in sequence
- Match
- Sequence

Similes - exercises

Pic 6: this is an outline of the post-reading tasks that will lead to evaluation. At Brindavan we also explicitly teach students to read and understand questions in question papers. The NIOS pattern of questioning is mostly application-based questions. Hence a crucial part of reading comprehension program is an emphasis on understanding instructions because that determines accurate output.

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Veena works as a Coordinator at the Senior Centre, Brindavan Education Trust, Bangalore. She has taught a number of subjects at the secondary level, including English, Home Science, Economics, and Business Studies. She has also taught Economics and Business Studies at the senior secondary level. Before joining Brindavan, she was a teacher in a mainstream school for 15 years. She has been with Brindavan for 17 years now. Her educational qualifications include M.A. (Economics) and M.Ed. She may be contacted at brindavan.srcentre@gmail.com

Shweta currently works as a Coordinator and Special educator at the Senior Centre, Brindavan Education Trust, Bangalore. She has been with Brindavan for 9 years now. Prior to this, she has worked with NIE. Her educational qualifications include B.A. (Communication and Psychology), M.A. (English), and M.A. (Inclusive and Special Education). She may be contacted at cshekar.shweta@gmail.com

Neha has been with Brindavan Education Trust, Bangalore, for about a year now. She works as a Special Educator for Pre-NIOS, at SSLC and Senior Secondary levels. She teaches Business Studies, Economics, Sociology and Mass Communication. She also organises theme-based activities that help in anger management and development of life skills. Prior to joining Brindavan, she has worked in an inclusive setup for two years. Her educational qualifications include B.A. (Psychology, Sociology and Economics), M.A. in Education, with specialization in Curriculum and Pedagogy, and Diploma in Special Education. She may be contacted at np101091@gmail.com

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No. 134, Doddakannelli
Next to Wipro Corporate Office
Sarjapur Road, Bangalore - 560 035. India
Tel: +91 80 6614 4900/01/02 Fax: +91 80 6614 4903
E-mail: learningcurve@azimpremjifoundation.org
www.azimpremjifoundation.org

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