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## About the Journal

*The Primary Teacher* is a quarterly journal brought out by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi. It carries articles and research papers on educational policies and practices, and values material that is useful for practitioners in contemporary times. The Journal also provides a forum to teachers to share their experiences and concerns about the schooling processes, curriculum, textbooks, teaching-learning and assessment practices. The papers for publication are selected on the basis of comments received from two referees. The views expressed by individual authors are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the NCERT, or the views of the editor.

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## EDITORIAL

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Raja Rammohan Roy (1772–1833), a prominent nationalist and social reformer, believed education to be a necessary tool to bring about societal changes and eradicate the prevailing social evils. He advocated induction of western sciences in the Indian education system. He also stressed that English should be used as a medium of instruction in educational institutions across the country so that citizens, especially students, could be made aware of the advancements taking place in the areas of science and technology in western countries. He realised that India, being a multilingual country, offered its citizens a verbal repertoire, thereby, encouraging cognitive growth and divergent thinking.

The first paper titled 'Problems faced by English Teachers in Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh' by Cheenang Pertin and Vivek Singh highlights several factors that affect language learning in students, especially, at the primary stage, which only a language teacher is able to identify and understand. It brings forth some of the common problems faced by teachers teaching English, which is the medium of instruction in the area.

Ruchi Kaushik, in her article titled 'Using Games to develop English Speaking Skills in Children', discusses some research studies that underline the benefits of using games for inculcating such competencies in young learners, as English, in most cases, is the second language in the country. It suggests that in order to develop communicative skills in students, particularly, spoken English, games may be incorporated in the teaching-learning process as activities.

In the article, 'Intertwining Innovative Teaching-learning Practices in Classrooms', the author, Sunita Singh, underlines that teachers need to use innovative teaching-learning strategies, apart from the conventional lecture and chalk-and-talk methods, so as to enable a clearer understanding of concepts to the learners. She describes different teaching-learning methods like peer learning, peer tutoring and blended learning that would make the teaching-learning process more effective, informative and interactive.

In the next article, 'Catching them Young — Nurturing Primary Students into Global Citizens', author, Sangeeta Pethiya, emphasises that teachers can help students to inculcate global citizenship values right from the primary stage. One may undertake activities that would encourage the young learners to engage in reflective thinking, and also make them socially tolerant and respectful of diversity, while being ethically responsible for one's own actions.

In the article titled 'Primary Education e-Access Initiatives in India', authors, Pooja Jain, Parveen Babbar and Garima Dalal, provide an overview

of various digital platforms available for primary education in the country. These platforms have, primarily, been initiated by the Government of India for open access resources in different formats and languages.

The paper, 'Child Development — A Psychological Perspective', by Krishna Chandra Choudhary and Prabhat Kumar Mishra touches upon various domains of child development, such as physical, mental, emotional, psychological, and so on. It stresses that a learning environment, allowing maximum opportunities for play, is best suited for children's overall growth and development.

Vandana Kerur in her article, 'The Wind beneath their Wings', describes how Katharine, the lesser known sister of the famous Wright Brothers, fuelled their passion to invent an airplane. The article elaborates that though Katharine did not design, build or pilot the Wright Flyer, she still played a pivotal role in the lives of its inventors, i.e., her brothers — Wilbur and Orville, and was the wind beneath their wings in true sense. The article aims to encourage teachers to help the young learners realise the contributions of their silent supporters like parents, grandparents, siblings, neighbours, friends, etc., and acknowledge them.

The Journal also carries its regular features — 'From the States', 'Book Review', 'Did You Know' and 'My Page'.

In the 'From the States' section, author, Neeraja Rashmi, sheds light on how community effort helped establish India's first floating school in Manipur's Loktak Lake. The Loktak Floating Elementary School, inaugurated in the year 2017, is the country's first-ever floating school.

Ujjwal Banerjee presents a review of the storybook, '*What a song!*' by illustrator Jitendra Thakur, who also happens to be its author. Banerjee tries to underline the point that the roots of a country's literary traditions may be traced to its oral literature, which has survived over generations.

In the 'Did You Know' section, V. B. Patil talks about various educational kits designed and developed by the Division of Educational Kits (DEK), National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi. These portable kits are used by teachers across the country in classrooms as supplementary material to textbooks in order to ensure an interactive teaching-learning environment.

In the 'My Page' section, Varada M. Nikalje in the article titled 'The Scales of Languages', addresses the proposition that all languages are equal, and that no language is superior or inferior.

— Academic Editors

# 1

## Problems faced by English Teachers in Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh

Cheenang Pertin\*

Vivek Singh\*\*

### Abstract

*Teaching and learning is a two-way process. Hence, feedback of teaching-learning experiences must highlight the needs and expectations of both learners and teachers. It is often observed that school managements and parents tend to put the onus onto teachers, especially, English language teachers, if students are unable to understand topics being taught in classrooms. Learning, especially, language learning, does not take place by confining children within the four walls of a classroom or by merely making them memorise some grammatical rules. There are other factors as well that contribute to language learning and competence, which only a language teacher would be able to shed light on. The present study tries to identify some of the common problems faced by English language teachers in teaching the language in the Doimukh area of Arunachal Pradesh. A face-to-face survey was conducted to identify the problems being faced by English language teachers in the area.*

### INTRODUCTION

Elementary education is the first stage of compulsory education that children gain after few years of formal schooling. Therefore, it lays the foundation on which a child's successive education is built.

In Arunachal Pradesh, elementary education is chiefly imparted through

English as a medium of instruction. But most students at this stage in the State are not fluent in the language, making it difficult to comprehend other subjects as well. This, in turn, encourages rote learning, which hampers their academic performance.

It is often observed that teachers are held responsible, if students face

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difficulty in comprehending various concepts, especially, in cases, where the mode of instruction is English. Learning, particularly, language learning, does not take place in isolation, or by being confined within the four walls of a classroom, or by merely cramming grammatical rules without understanding the concepts. There are many other factors that contribute to language learning and only a language teacher can point those out.

### **RATIONALE OF THE STUDY**

Problems are always highlighted from the students' point of view. It is rare that teachers' feedback is collated. This study tries to identify some of the problems being faced by teachers, teaching English language at the elementary stage, in Arunachal Pradesh's Doimukh region.

### **DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY**

Twenty-three teachers, teaching English in 17 elementary schools [both private and government, affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE)] in the Doimukh region of Arunachal Pradesh were surveyed as part of the study.

### **METHODOLOGY**

The 23 teachers were selected through purposive sampling technique. All teachers were surveyed face-to-face through focussed interviews. A coding

system was adopted, wherein, each teacher was assigned an alphabetical code like A, B, C, etc., to keep their identities confidential. Only one question was asked to the interviewees, i.e., "Do you face any problem(s) in teaching English?" All interviews were recorded and a photo of each interviewee was taken for records.

### **FINDINGS**

Some of the major problems identified by English teachers in Doimukh, Arunachal Pradesh, are as follows.

#### **Lack of fluency**

Most students are not fluent in English (spoken and written), and hence, are unable to understand the subjects being taught in classrooms as the medium of instruction is English. Teacher B, who teaches English to students of Classes VII and VIII at a government school in Doimukh, said, "Students are unable to understand when we speak in English. This is not the case only in lower classes but in higher classes as well, where 50–70 per cent students don't follow the lessons being taught. Even if they understand, they are unable to answer the questions orally. The main problem is that they cannot converse in English. However, if asked to write, they may be able to do so."

Therefore, teachers have to translate the entire chapter into Hindi, as it is the connecting and communicating language of the State. This consumes a lot of class



time, which could otherwise be utilised in some productive teaching–learning activity. Moreover, as teachers translate the entire chapter into Hindi in order to simplify it, the students are ‘unintentionally’ denied the opportunity to polish their communication skills, especially, spoken English.

Many teachers also shared that apart from lack of fluency, students mispronounced quite a number of English words as the language in the area is heavily influenced by local dialects. They added that the students committed a lot of spelling mistakes as a result of mispronunciation.

Teacher D cited an example of how ‘apple’ was often pronounced as ‘aapel’. She also spoke about the influence of local dialects on differentiating between the pronunciation of ‘p’ and ‘f’ sounds like ‘pineapple’ was often pronounced as ‘pineaffle’. She said students often acquired the incorrect pronunciation of many words and were not even willing to correct themselves.

The teachers further shared that due to lack of fluency, the students were even hesitant to ask questions or clarify their doubts. All these reflect the low confidence and poor communication skills of the students. Thus, the classroom environment becomes teacher dominated as pointed out by Hosseini (2007). Therefore, with hardly any feedback received from the learners, it becomes difficult for them to evaluate the

effectiveness of the teaching–learning exercise, which is a two–way process.

They opined that one may cram formulas, rules and facts, but communication is a skill, which can only be acquired, developed and mastered with practice, that too, over a period of time.

### **Defence mechanism behaviour**

Teacher I, teaching at a government school in the area, said that students in government schools were hesitant and scared to communicate in English, and hence, conversed only in Hindi or some other local dialect. This may, perhaps, be said to be a defence mechanism to compensate for their lack of fluency in English and in tandem with the fact that most government school students come from an ‘English illiterate’ background. Moreover, in their rural and agrarian lifestyle, they see no scope for English. Their learning of English is limited to the curriculum only (Akbari, 2015).

### **Literal translation**

Another concern of the teachers was that when the students needed to write or speak in English, most of them would think in Hindi or their mother tongue, and do a literal translation. According to Seng and Hashim (2006), it is human behaviour to think in one’s mother tongue before starting to write or speak in a foreign language. However, it becomes a problem, if the translation is literal.

### **Influence of code mixing**

Some teachers pointed out that one aspect of code mixing, i.e., the use of SMS (Short Message Service) or text or chat language, posed a problem in English language learning. Chat language like 'TY' for 'thank you', 'ur' for 'your', etc., has even reached classrooms, and students find it trendy and easy to use.

Another problem that the teachers shared was the replacement of formal English with SMS or chat language, and attaching '-ing' suffix to Hindi words while conversing in English like "are you *chalo*-ing (coming) with me?" One of the researchers experienced this first hand, as in the midst of an interview, a Class II boy came to complain to a teacher about another student. The boy said, "Ma'am, I am *batao*-ing (telling) you, xyz is *batao*-ing (calling) me a liar. Please scold him."

It was realised from teachers' feedback that the students did not understand that such language was not acceptable in formal situations like classroom setting. Moreover, they felt that using such language made one an expert in English and improved one's status among peers. This pattern of adding '-ing' suffix to Hindi words shows the learners' dependence on their mother tongue, i.e., Hindi. Odey, et al., (2014), in their study, pointed out that the use of SMS language by students adversely affected their writing skills. They found that in essay writing, of the total grammatical errors,

the maximum, i.e., about 26 per cent comprised omission of vowels like 'before' becomes 'b4'. The second highest number of errors was that of homophones like writing 'r' for 'are' and 'd' for 'the'.

### **Limited exposure of parents to the English language**

Almost all teachers opined that parents played a vital role in a child's language learning. They emphasised the importance of home environment in language learning. Many students in Doimukh are first generation English language learners or come from families, where parents have limited proficiency in the language. As many parents are unable to teach English to their wards, they expect schools and teachers to do the needful.

### **Change of school**

Teacher G, teaching Classes V to VII at a private school in Doimukh, said, "Students frequently change schools, i.e., a few leave the school in mid of a session or at the onset of a new session, and a few are new admission. So, it is initially difficult to bring the new admissions at par with others." Other teachers also opined change of school to be a major impediment for students in the course of learning the English language as children from different schools come with varied learning experiences. This increases the workload of the teachers as they have to repeat a topic several times. This, especially, holds true in case of

students, who shift from government to private schools.

### **Teachers' proficiency stunted**

Teacher M shared that it was challenging for her and many other teachers to speak fluently in English as they did not get enough opportunity to converse in the language in their daily lives. The only place they spoke the language was school, that too, while taking the class, where they had to translate the entire chapter into Hindi. Due to the limited participation of students, who are heavily dependent on translation, the English language skills of these teachers also get adversely affected. Lalsangpuii (2015) reports lack of social set-up to use the language to be a major challenge. Research studies reveal that more than 20 languages are spoken in Arunachal Pradesh. But the State does not have a single common indigenous language spoken by all.

### **Lack of motivation for teachers**

The researchers point out that not only students but teachers, too, lack motivation. They do not get appreciated for the efforts they put in to develop English language skills in students. Besides, the underperformance of students and lack of interest during the teaching-learning process in classrooms also discourage them. According to Behraam, et al., (2015), Abdulla and Mustafa (2015), Kalia (2017) and Tok (2017), untrained teachers are a hindrance to language learning.

### **Inadequate resources and infrastructure**

This issue was highlighted only by teachers teaching in government schools, where NCERT textbooks are taught. According to them, there is no separate NCERT English grammar textbook and only a few grammar exercises are given at the end of each chapter in English textbooks meant for the elementary stage, which is insufficient. Balo (2016); Kapoor and Lhungdim (2016); Khamari, et al., (2014); and Upadhya (2012), too, have questioned the quality of English textbooks being used in many schools of the country.

Teacher B said, "The CBSE frames the syllabus as per the standards of English (of students) in metropolitan cities. This syllabus is not suited to States like Arunachal Pradesh as we don't have the required infrastructure like language labs, etc. We only use conventional methods of teaching, i.e., chalk-and-talk and lecture. Therefore, we cannot hold only the students responsible for all problems."

### **Lacunae in evaluation**

Three teachers, two from government schools and one from a private school, criticised the evaluation system being practised in their schools for the absence of spelling, dictation and spoken English tests. Khamari, et al., (2014) and Rahman (2011), too, voice this concern. However, it may be suggested that giving spelling

and dictation tests to children, as well as, inculcating reading habit in them may be encouraged through reading exercises, classroom discussions and other oral activities.

### **Lack of interest among students**

All teachers unanimously opined that students were highly distracted and inattentive in class due to their lack of interest in the subject. As a result, they repeatedly made the same mistake(s) in basic things like use of capital and small letters of the English alphabet, punctuation marks, etc. Teacher 'F' said, "Their attention span is (very) limited...10 minutes at the most. So, it's a challenge for us to retain their attention."

The lack of interest is due to unattractive and mundane school curriculum. Ahmadpour (2004) and Hosseini (2007), too, blame the obsolete curriculum for failing to attract and retain the interest of the students.

### **Effect of 'No Detention Policy'**

Many teachers pointed out that even students with poor academic performance were promoted to the next class. Teacher O said, "Teachers teaching lower classes do not do their job properly. As a result, we are overloaded when (incompetent) students are promoted to higher classes. We don't know what to do — whether to teach the basics or focus on the syllabus." Teacher P shared

an incident when she had to teach a Class VII student to write the small letter 'a' of the English alphabet. She added that many students in Class VIII, too, wrote without any distinction between capital and small letters of the English alphabet.

### **THE WAY FORWARD**

The findings of the study highlight the following areas that need to be worked upon.

- School managements and teachers must work towards improving English language skills in students.
- There should be a separate grammar textbook for the elementary level.
- The State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) must be made fully functional with qualified professionals, rather than deputed administrators manning it. This is necessary to ensure a localised curriculum suited to the State.
- There is an urgent need to establish language labs in all government and private schools of the region.
- Since language involves four skills, i.e., Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing (LSRW), the evaluation for language competency must take into account the examination of all these skills.

- New language learning methods and approaches like Community Language Learning (CLL) must also be adopted.
- In-service teacher training must be provided to language teachers.

## CONCLUSION

Thus, it may be concluded that most of the problems, as identified by the teachers, are interrelated. Issues, such as lack of fluency in English, literal translation, influence of code mixing,

students exhibiting a behaviour of defence mechanism, limited exposure of parents to the English language, etc., in addition to tangible factors like lack of appropriate infrastructure and resources, etc., are all interrelated causes that affect English language learning among elementary school students in the area. To ensure effective learning, all four language skills — Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing — must be emphasised in classrooms.

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## Using Games to Develop English Speaking Skills in Children

Ruchi Kaushik\*

### Abstract

*Children, at the primary stage, have an innate ability to acquire and learn a new language. Therefore, it is important for teachers to provide them with a stress free environment so that learning may become fun, and the young learners may feel inclined to learn the language (i.e., the second language or L2, apart from their mother tongue or native language) in a natural way without feeling intimidated or burdened. In the Indian context, this second language is mostly English. Research studies indicate that fun activities and games make English classes enjoyable. This article reviews some research studies that describe how games and fun activities are beneficial in teaching English to students at the primary stage. It also points out that many teachers use games as warm-up activities or fillers, which may be incorporated meaningfully in prescribed lessons for developing students' communicative skills, particularly, spoken English.*

### INTRODUCTION

The *National Curriculum Framework* (NCF) 2005 describes the status of English in India as that of a “global language in a multilingual country” and offers justification for its introduction at the elementary level in schools “as a matter of political response to people’s aspirations”. It, however, recommends

that children, at the primary stage, should be taught in the native language and that English should serve as one of the languages through which they may be able to explore the world. Moreover, the NCF–2005 defines the objectives of the second language curriculum to be “attainment of basic proficiency... and development of language for knowledge acquisition”.

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Several States and Union Territories (UTs) have responded to public demand and introduced English in primary classes, as early as from Class I. However, most school teachers face immense difficulty in teaching English to students, particularly, in government, government aided and regional medium schools located in rural and semi-urban areas of the country, as many children are first generation learners and have had little exposure to the English language outside classroom. Moreover, it is often observed that in many cases, teachers lose the enthusiasm to creatively engage with students when they see a majority of them struggle with the basics of the second language. In such a situation, most teachers are left with no other option but to teach English in the vernacular or bilingual mode with only one objective in mind, i.e., to complete the prescribed syllabus within a stipulated timeframe.

This is corroborated by the findings of a national level study conducted by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and the Educational Consultants India Limited (EdCIL) in the year 2012. The study investigates the status of teaching of English at the primary level in government schools in eight States across the country. It was found that “teachers made little or no effort to develop the skills of listening and speaking” (in students), as they fell into “the textbook trap” and failed to “move beyond the textbook” (Dutta and Bala, 2012).

As conventional methods of teaching the second language have not yielded the desired results in the Indian context, it is time to examine the teaching methodologies being used in classrooms and come up with learner centric innovative strategies so as to develop and hone the language skills of the young learners. Incorporating games in the teaching of English is one such strategy.

According to Rooyackers (2002), “Language is immensely powerful, but it can also be loads of fun. In fact, a sense of fun can make language more powerful...Language and play complement and enrich each other” (as cited in Klimova, 2015). Since playing is a natural phenomenon for children, it can be an effective method for igniting in them a desire to use L2 for communication, especially, in oral interactions. Thus, activities that require children to move around, complete a task and talk with their peers naturally in the second language may help them acquire it as well.

## **GAMES — DEFINITIONS AND TYPE**

Language researchers and practitioners have offered different definitions of the concept of ‘game’. Hadfield (1984) defines game as “an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun”. She also distinguishes between ‘linguistic’ and ‘communicative’ games, arguing that the former emphasises the production of a grammatical structure, while the latter focuses on the successful completion of a real-life task by making use of a language. Hadfield lists a



variety of games that teachers may employ in classroom for inculcating language (or communicative) skills in students, such as sorting games, information gap games, search games, puzzle solving games and role-play or drama games.

According to Lewis and Bedson (1999), games are language activities that are primarily rule driven and goal oriented, and also could be 'competitive' or 'cooperative' in nature. They distinguish between 'rousing' (to wake up a class) and 'settling' (to calm down a class) games, and argue that a teacher may decide which of these games to use, depending on factors, such as the profile of the children, the time of the day the English class is scheduled to begin, etc.

Similarly, Wright, Betteridge and Buckby (2005) consider a game "to mean an activity, which is entertaining and engaging, often challenging...in which the learners play, and usually, interact with others". According to them, games provide opportunities to children to feel and experience language in meaningful contexts. They classify games using verbs (like 'do', 'describe', 'create', etc.), which, according to them, primarily, focus on the manner in which the learners would be engaged while playing the game. The games designed by them also incorporate a wide variety of learning styles, ranging from visual and kinesthetic to dramatic.

## **BENEFITS OF INCORPORATING GAMES IN THE TEACHING–LEARNING PROCESS**

Many studies point out the beneficial effects of incorporating games in the teaching–learning of a foreign or second language. Uberman (1998) reported a successful small-scale experiment of using games to introduce and revise vocabulary with Class III students. Ara (2009) analysed the dismal learning atmosphere of compulsory English classrooms at the primary level in Bangladesh and concluded that songs, rhymes and games may be incorporated as effective tools in the teaching of English.

Chirandon, Laohawiriyanon and Rakthong (2010) reported significant improvement in the communication skills of sixth grade Thai students, who were taught English using games in a small experimental group study.

Wang, Shang and Briody (2011) investigated the impact of using games on sixth grade EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students in China, and found remarkable improvement in their learning motivation and vocabulary acquisition, apart from reduced levels of anxiety.

Masri and Najjar (2014) explored the impact of using word games on first grade students in Jordan and found that there was significant improvement in the vocabulary of experimental group students, who were taught using word games than those taught via traditional methods.

These are only a few research studies that have been conducted

to explore the beneficial results of teaching L2 using games. It has been proven that by playing such games, children get involved in learning L2 and feel motivated to use it creatively, as well as, spontaneously in a stress free environment. This, in turn, boosts their confidence. However, using games in the classroom must be purposeful. Before introducing any language game in the classroom, a teacher must have clarity about the following.

- Learning outcomes (what the students will accomplish by playing a particular game)
- Designing and the implementation of the game (content, material, rules, instructions, etc.)
- Appropriateness of the game (factors like students' age and proficiency level, learning style, class size, etc.)
- Suitable time to introduce the game (before, while or after a topic or lesson)

### **INCORPORATING GAMES TO DEVELOP SPOKEN ENGLISH SKILLS IN CHILDREN**

It has often been observed that teachers use games in language classrooms as “warm-ups at the beginning of class, fill-ins when there is extra time near the end of class, or as an occasional bit of spice stirred into the curriculum to add variety” (Jacobs, as cited in Klimova, 2015). However, games may be used in a more meaningful manner by incorporating them as a fundamental part of the teaching-

learning process. For example, NCERT's *Marigold* series of English textbooks for Classes I to V carry an interesting set of contents, covering different genres, along with relevant CDs. The textbooks focus on developing the language skills of the students. Unit 8 of *Marigold* — Textbook in English for Class V carries a poem titled 'Nobody's Friend' and a short story, 'The Little Bully', based on the themes of friendship, growing up, and a person's rights and responsibilities, to name a few. The exercises given at the end of the Unit, particularly, focus on developing and polishing the listening and speaking skills of the students. These are designed in such a manner that encourage the students to share their thoughts and feelings, narrate personal accounts or experiences, and think creatively. For instance, the speaking section after the poem, 'Nobody's Friend', is titled 'Let's Talk' and comprises the following questions.

- Do you like to share your favourite food or toy with others? Why?
- Who is your best friend? Can you describe him or her?
- Suppose you and your friends are very thirsty and there is only one glass of water, what would you do?
- If you had a bat, could you play cricket by yourself?

These questions are structured in such a manner that require a teacher to encourage the students to reflect and respond, and thus, initiate a

discussion. There is a probability that the learners, who are shy, hesitant or underconfident may speak little or not speak at all. In such a case, the teacher could convert this exercise into an interesting game like the one as follows.

### **Name of the game — Find a friendly or unfriendly connect**

This game has been adapted from the activity titled ‘Two Pictures’ by Wright, Betteridge and Buckby (2006). It can either be played at the beginning of a lesson to introduce the students to the theme of ‘friendship’. It may also be played as an after lesson activity to reinforce their concepts, and enrich their vocabulary and speaking skills.

#### **Objectives**

To enable the students to imagine and creatively draw connections between words, objects and situations related to the theme of friendship

#### **Group size**

Five to six students in each group

#### **Duration**

One hour

#### **Material**

A bell; a tape recorder; a stopwatch; three sets of chits — one set comprising 15–20 chits with words describing good and bad qualities (one quality written on each chit), second set comprising 15–20 chits with names of objects (one name written on each chit) and the third with 15–20 chits describing situations [one situation in the form a phrase written on each chit]

#### **Step-by-step procedure**

Step 1 — Divide the class into groups, comprising five to six students each. Allot a number or letter to each group.

Step 2 — Explain the objective(s) and rules of the game clearly.

Step 3 — Say ‘start’. All students are supposed to start tapping on the desk or stand and turn around as music is played (ensure some kind of movement that is neither too noisy nor too chaotic).

Step 4 — Stop the music after some time. Ring the bell and speak aloud an adjective or a noun that describes either a ‘good’ or a ‘bad’ trait in a friend, for example, ‘trustworthy’.

Step 5 — If the word spoken aloud is a negative, undesirable or bad trait, then the students are supposed to act as statues till they are told to ‘relax’. If a student moves, the group gets a negative point.

Step 6 — If the spoken word is a positive, desirable or good trait (like ‘trustworthy’), then the group that identifies with it, asks one of its members to shout out something like this — “True friendship lives forever” (it could be any short quote or affirmation or tongue twister). The group gets the opportunity to send one of its members to select three chits — one each from Set A, B and C (which could be arranged set wise on the teacher’s desk).

Step 7 — If a group identifies or does not identify with the spoken word but forgets to speak the decided quote

or affirmation or tongue twister, or in case, there is a tie, then the teacher needs to 'start' the game again.

Step 8 — Once a student has collected three chits, one needs to run and hand it over to the group that is next in order of number or letter. For instance, if the student belonging to Group 2 or B comes forward to collect the chits, then one needs to hand them over to Group 3 or C.

Step 9 — The group that receives the three chits has to quickly and loudly inform the class (any group member may speak) about their contents. After this, the group gets two minutes to connect the three words and weave a story, describing a friendly or an unfriendly act in 10–12 sentences. For example, if a group receives chits consisting of the following.

**Set A:** The word is 'Selfish'.

**Set B:** The word is 'bottle' or 'bottles'.

**Set C:** The phrase is 'at the bus stop' or 'in the school bus'.

The story could probably be woven somewhat like the following.

It was a hot and humid morning. Aditi was standing at the bus stop waiting for her school bus. Suddenly, she felt thirsty and reached out for her water bottle. To her dismay, she realised that she had forgotten it at home. It was too late for her to go back home and fetch it. She would not face much problem at school as she could drink water from the water

cooler installed there. But how would she quench her thirst now? Her friend, Vaishali, was standing close to her. She shared her problem with Vaishali and requested if she could sip some water from her bottle. Vaishali was a selfish girl and refused, saying that she had a sore throat, and so, could not share water from her bottle as Aditi, too, could catch the infection. Aditi realised that Vaishali was not her true friend.

Step 10 — In case the group is unable to connect the three words and develop a story within two minutes (use a stopwatch to take note of the time), the opportunity would automatically get transferred to the next group in line. If this group is successful in weaving a story using the set of words and phrases, it will get 2 bonus points.

Step 11 — The teacher would give 5 points for a complete story narrated by a group, 2.5 points for a partially developed story and 1 point for an innovative idea, even if the story has not been developed (the teacher may also develop one's own set of points to be awarded).

Step 12 — The teacher should carry on with the game till all students in the class get the opportunity to participate in it.

Step 13 — Then, at the end of the game, one needs to calculate the score of all groups and announce the winner.

Step 14 — The next day, the teacher may invite the students to share their experiences, and the story they liked the most and why.

### Possible variations

The students may be encouraged to be creative. So, the story could be in the form of dialogues or it could just be a simple narration of a personal account or experience. The students may also be encouraged to enact the story in the form of a role-play with props. Further, the teacher may even tweak the game and simplify it, or make it slightly difficult. The students may also be encouraged to include at least one idiom on friendship in their story (for instance, ‘a shoulder to cry on’, ‘through thick and thin’, etc.). But for this, the teacher will have to familiarise them with some idioms related to ‘friendship’ before they actually begin play to the game.

### Challenges and opportunities

Some of the challenges and opportunities that the teacher may come across while incorporating this game in the classroom are as follows.

- Students, at the primary stage of education, tend to get excited at the mere mention of getting to play a game. So, noise and chaos are bound to happen. However, one may try to minimise such instances by laying down few rules, such as each student will have to wait for one’s turn and raise one’s hand, if one wishes to say something. Also, the teacher needs to encourage the

students to clarify their doubts before they actually start playing the game. This will reduce instances of confusion or chaos. Besides, the teacher needs to give clear-cut instructions to the young learners and explain with the help of examples, wherever necessary. Once the students realise that they will miss the opportunity to play the game in case of chaos, they will cooperate with each other and follow the rules.

- In a multilingual classroom set-up, it is quite natural for students to speak in their mother tongue while interacting and playing the game. It is important to use multilingualism as a resource and not impose the ‘speak only in English’ rule. Thus, one may encourage the learners to discuss things within the group in multiple languages, but at the same time, ensure that they focus more on the use of English as they write or narrate a story. One may also make the game more multilingual by encouraging the students to include at least two to three words from other languages in the story, for which they may be awarded extra points.
- The young learners may make some mistakes while using the target language, in this case — English. Instead of disrupting the game by pointing out

their mistakes repeatedly, the teacher may make a note of few common mistakes being made by the students and carry out a practice session on grammar and vocabulary with the entire class, after the game is over. Since it is a communicative game, the emphasis is on developing students' fluency in speaking rather than checking the accuracy of facts, grammar and vocabulary at all times.

- As children exude immense excitement and energy while playing a game, it is sometimes easy for a teacher to digress or lose track of the objectives. So, the teacher must make a checklist that would help one to understand if the aims have been accomplished.
- The students may be encouraged to share their feedback on the game. This, in turn, will help the teacher to modify the game, if necessary, and make it more appropriate to meet the learners' requirements.

## CONCLUSION

There is sufficient pedagogic evidence that suggests that foreign or second language teaching-learning may be made more interesting, interactive and meaningful by employing games in language classes. Games help develop children's communicative skills, reduce their anxiety levels and motivate them to explore L2 in a relaxed and fun-filled environment. However, teachers need to optimally and purposefully use games so as to achieve the desired learning outcomes, i.e., making the students fluent in spoken English. Rather than treating games as marginal activities that may be undertaken once in a while, they must be incorporated in the language classes frequently. This will help to reinforce the concepts and develop the communication skills, especially spoken skills, of the students. Therefore, making language learning a joyous experience for children depends a lot on language teachers.

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# 3

## Intertwining Innovative Teaching–Learning Practices in Classrooms

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### Abstract

*Education is the way to progress and lays the very foundation of society. Given the rapid advancements in knowledge, science and technology, the quality of education being imparted is of paramount importance. But with an array of information available online, imparting knowledge and information has become an even more daunting task for educationists, especially, those catering to the primary stage. The young mind is inquisitive by nature, i.e., full of questions and information. As teachers are the most effective interface between students and knowledge, they need to possess a desired set of skills and be updated at all times in order to cater to the myriad needs of the young learners. They need to use different teaching–learning methodologies and strategies in classrooms, apart from conventional methods like lecture and chalk-and-talk, so as to enable the learners to have a clearer understanding of concepts. This paper describes different teaching–learning methods like blended learning, peer learning and peer tutoring that would make the teaching–learning process more insightful, impactful, interesting and interactive.*

### INTRODUCTION

Technological advancements and globalisation have influenced the present day education system, making it imperative to re-define and revisit the curriculum and pedagogical practices in place so as to prepare students to

successfully face the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Many research studies suggest that the 'lecture model' of teaching is highly ineffective in addressing challenges that relate to imparting the twenty-first century competencies and skills but it still

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prevails as a dominant instructional approach in education and is used worldwide (Saavedra and Opfer, 2012; Scott, 2015).

Today, being an era of knowledge explosion, one can access a gamut of information, using one's mobile phone, from almost anywhere. The world has become a global village for children of the Z-generation (Rosen, 2011). They are all connected via the Internet and social media sites. Therefore, they are aware of many local and global issues, and real life problems compared to children of the previous generation. Leadbeater and Wong (2010) argue that worldwide successful reinvention of educational systems depends on renovating pedagogy and reframing learning tasks. They emphasise that learning strategies for this century will not be limited to school but also include learning with peers, inter generational partnerships and community relationships. The contemporary system of education seeks learners to possess communication, problem solving, critical and reflective thinking, and collaborative skills.

## **INNOVATIVE TEACHING–LEARNING PRACTICES**

The traditional practice of classroom teaching may be transformed by incorporating 'constructivism' as an innovative teaching–learning strategy, which would help develop necessary competencies and skills in the learners, enabling them to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Some of the innovative teaching–learning strategies that may be implemented in classrooms are as follows.

### **Peer learning**

It is an instructional method that involves active learning. Students are given opportunities to frame questions, discuss issues, explain their opinions and viewpoints, and engage in cooperative learning by working in teams on problems and projects. Peer learning is based on Albert Bandura's 'Cognitive Social Learning Theory'. It is a form of cooperative learning that enhances the value of student–student interaction, and results in various advantageous learning outcomes. Peer learning refers to students' learning with and from each other as fellow learners, without any implied authority to an individual. It is based on the tenet that students learn a lot by explaining their ideas and understanding to each other and by participating in activities, where they can learn from their peers (Boud, 2001).

Hence, in peer learning, students get an opportunity to construct their own learning and knowledge. Besides, they are involved in researching, collecting, analysing, evaluating, integrating and applying the acquired information and knowledge to complete an assignment or solve a problem. Thus, they engage themselves intellectually, emotionally and socially in a constructive

conversation, and learn by talking and questioning each other's views and reaching a consensus or dissent (Boud, 2001).

Peer learning, thus, helps in developing many skills in the learners like communication and collaboration, organisation and planning, and analytical and evaluation, among others.

Here, the role of a teacher changes from that of an instructor to a facilitator. Teachers also raise questions and issues, prompting the students to think and reflect, and engage in meaning making.

Peer learning, thus, involves active assistance and support from similar social groupings, who are not professional teachers but help each other learn. The role of the 'learner' and the 'teacher' may change during the teaching-learning process as participants share their knowledge and work on common problems.

Peer learning is optimised when incorporated as an integral component in curriculum, paying attention to creating a conducive teaching-learning environment. Students must build mutual respect, trust and confidence in each other so that they feel free to express their opinions, test ideas, and ask for or offer help when needed (Boud, 2001).

### **Peer tutoring**

There is an old adage — "To teach is to learn twice". Though not a new idea, 'peer tutoring' is gaining popularity these days. In peer tutoring, the students help each other learn.

It is characterised by seniors helping out juniors with studies or intelligent students helping their classmates learn.

Peer tutoring is a term used to describe a wide array of tutoring arrangements. But most research studies refer to students working in pairs, helping out each other learn a material or practice an academic task. Peer tutoring works best when students of different abilities work together (Kunsch, Jitendra and Sood, 2007).

In peer tutoring, students help each other learn and understand a concept, and treat each other as a 'tutor', i.e., a resource person. It is the process by which a competent pupil, with minimal training and teacher's guidance, helps one or more students, studying in the same grade or of the same level, learn simple skills or basic concepts. It is used for various subjects, such as mathematics, language and science. In this, a higher performing student is paired with a lower performing student to review critical academic or behavioural concepts (Hott and Walker, 2012). However, it may be employed only for a small part of the school day.

Peer tutoring, thus, is a beneficial way for students to learn from each other in the classroom. While one student may excel in mathematics, another may be good at English. The two may work together and help out each other understand various concepts in their respective subjects of excellence. This will help deepen their own knowledge.

Peer tutoring may be categorised into four types—Instructional Peer Tutoring (IPT), Monitorial Peer Tutoring (MPT), Pair Peer Tutoring (PPT) and Structural Peer Tutoring (SPT). In IPT, older and intelligent students coach juniors in a one-to-one or one-to-group arrangement. Such a teaching methodology is employed when there is a major difference between the tutor and the tutee. In MPT, a class is divided into four or five groups, and the class monitors are assigned with the task to lead each group. In such a set-up, a teacher has more time to attend to each student. In PPT, two students of the same age group, one of whom is better skilled than the other, plays the tutor's role and helps out the other with studies. In case of SPT, the assistance of a trained tutor is required.

Some other types of peer tutoring are unidirectional, bi-directional or reciprocal, class wide and cross-age.

In 'unidirectional peer tutoring', a trained peer tutor teaches another student. The peer tutor carries out this responsibility throughout the entire teaching-learning programme.

A dyad (pair) is important for 'bi-directional' or 'reciprocal' tutoring. Each participant in the dyad performs the role of a tutor and a tutee, reversely.

'Class wide' peer tutoring is a teaching strategy, wherein, the entire class is divided into groups, consisting of not more than five students each. The tutoring happens during the regular class time, and is led by

students. The groups must include students with different abilities as well. It is a unique way of teaching-learning as all students are given task cards, which help them to stay focused on the objectives a lesson tries to achieve.

In 'cross-age' peer tutoring, an older student is chosen as the tutor. The student has to teach a younger student, who is selected as per one's willingness, and physical and intellectual abilities. The tutor gains teaching experience, while the tutee gets effective individualised instruction and feedback. However, the teacher needs to be careful while selecting the tutor, i.e., an older student from a higher class. It must be taken into account that the tutor is more skilled and knowledgeable than the tutee.

### Implementation in classroom

Peer tutoring, thus, helps both the tutor and the tutee to learn better and faster. In other words, it is a flexible peer mediated strategy, where students serve as both academic tutors and tutees. In peer tutoring, one-to-one interaction takes place, which helps in promoting the academic and social development of both the tutor and the tutee. As both the tutor and the tutee are (usually) from the same age group, it becomes easy to communicate. It, thus, increases their self-confidence and self-efficacy (Spencer, 2006, as cited by Hott).

Research studies indicate that peer learning activities are beneficial

for both the tutor, as well as, the tutee. They develop team spirit and forge supportive relationships. Besides, such exercises boost their confidence, improve their psychological well-being, personal and social relationships, and communication skills, leading to improved academic achievement.

Thus, the tutor and the tutee understand a concept better as they both work together through assignments and projects. The tutor not only learns the way to pose questions but also develops listening skills in the process, as one is required to listen to the responses of the tutee. Moreover, peer tutoring gives more chances to students to interact with each other and clear doubts. Besides, it enables both the tutor and the tutee to inculcate values like compassion, cooperation, caring and sharing, honesty, respect towards each other, tolerance for each other's faith and diversity, etc. Peer tutoring motivates the participating students and helps to improve their academic achievement and relationship with peers. Besides, it fosters their personal and social development as well.

When the students help each other, learning gets strengthened. They begin to recognise that they do not always have to wait for a teacher to explain a concept or clear their doubts. They have their peers, sitting right next to them who are ready to help. When these peer tutors are prepared to utilise most of their time teaching or tutoring each other,

everyone in the class gains from the knowledge shared.

The teacher, too, benefits from this model as one gets increased opportunity to individualise instruction, facilitate inclusion or mainstreaming, and reduce incidences of inappropriate behaviour among students.

### **Blended learning**

Students, today, are full of information and have an unquenchable thirst for acquiring more knowledge. With the rising technological advancement, they collect information from the Internet, apart from accessing other media like textbooks and related books, newspapers, magazines, etc. The present generation is techno savvy and often takes part in online communities to share opinions, critique ideas, swap insights and comment on each other's plans and aspirations (Davidson and Goldberg, 2009). Moreover, penetration of social media in the life of people has transformed the teaching-learning process. Therefore, the need of the hour is to synchronise all information and present it to the students in a systematic manner. This may be achieved only by combining the conventional method of teaching with Internet information. This new method of teaching is known as 'blended' or 'hybrid' learning. This method helps in modifying the way knowledge and information is conveyed to the students.

Blended learning is a type of learning that mixes various event based activities, including face-to-face classrooms, live e-learning and

self-paced instruction (Valiathan, 2002). Therefore, incorporating blended learning, as a reflective teaching practice, in education is important in the twenty-first century in order to create a learning environment that would contribute towards the development of necessary competencies and skills in students. It would enable the students to learn according to their time and place, thereby, advancing the quality of learning. Thus, this method of teaching-learning is student centred.

Such a learning strategy includes integrated learning activities like online and face-to-face learning. Information and communication technologies offer a mix of face-to-face interactive facilities, allowing individuals to learn anywhere and anytime (Singh, et al., 2016). Blended learning supports benefits acquired from e-learning, which focuses on cost reduction, time efficiency and

location convenience for the learners, as well as, the essential one-on-one personal understanding and motivation (Brown, 2003).

## CONCLUSION

It may, thus, be said that classroom teaching approaches need an urgent reform. Teachers and educators need to shift from the conventional lecture and chalk-and-talk methods of teaching. They need to adapt reflective teaching practices based on constructivist approach, such as peer learning, peer tutoring, blended learning, etc., in order to make the teaching-learning process more interactive and effective. Such teaching-learning practices would help to develop analytical skills in students, enabling them to understand different contexts and respond accordingly. Besides, they promote teamwork and foster students' creativity.

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# 4

## Catching them Young — Nurturing Primary Students into Global Citizens

Sangeeta Pethiya\*

### Abstract

*Global Citizenship Education (GCED) aims to transform students into global citizens by developing core competencies in them, allowing them to actively engage with the world, and making it a more just and sustainable place to live in. This paper underlines that education is not only about obtaining high scores in examination but involves in-depth knowledge and insightful learning as well, especially, at a time, when the students have easy access to a vast array of information available online. Teachers, who are the most effective interface between students and knowledge, play a crucial role in shaping these young minds, many of whom may emerge as future leaders. Therefore, they need to be skilful, updated at all times, and use teaching–learning methodologies or strategies to ensure maximum learning. This paper also tries to bring forth some of the best teaching–learning practices, including ‘blended learning’, that may be implemented in classrooms.*

### INTRODUCTION

With the world shrinking to becoming a global village, it is imperative to develop a feeling of mutual trust and respect among students, coming from diverse backgrounds — beginning right at the primary stage of education. It is important for educators to see to it that the young learners are happy and calm so that they may be able to contribute

towards building a happy and peaceful world. Besides, it is equally important to educate them about ‘human rights’ and ‘dignity’ from an early age, and that every citizen in the world enjoys this ‘basic right’. They also need to be educated about promoting a gender neutral world, and the importance of living in harmony with each other and nature, and thus, conserving it.

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The *National Curriculum Framework* (NCF) 2005, too, underlines promoting and upholding the values of equality, justice and freedom; democracy; concern for the well-being of oneself and others; respect for human rights and dignity; and promoting sustainable development as some of the main aims of education. The NCF–2005 goes on to declare “human rights” as a “universal frame of reference” and recommends age appropriate introduction to these. It emphasises human rights to be at the core of peace education and peace building in society.

## GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

These educational goals, as enshrined in the NCF–2005, are synonymous with those listed in the *Global Citizenship Education* (GCED). The GCED aims to transform the existing education system and nurture learners to becoming global citizens by encouraging creativity and innovation in education, and also promoting the values of peace, human rights and sustainable development. The GCED ideals include aspects like education for respect of cultural diversity; human rights education; peace education; education for sustainable development, local and global justice; and education for gender equality.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which published the *Global Citizenship Education — Topics and Learning Objectives* in the year 2015, outlines three core conceptual

dimensions of GCED — cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural, which are interrelated. Each of these dimensions indicates the learning domain it focuses on in the learning process.

### **Cognitive**

To acquire knowledge and understanding about global, regional, national and local issues; and analyse the interconnectedness and interdependency between different countries and populations on each other

### **Socio-emotional**

To have a sense of belongingness to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity

### **Behavioural**

To act effectively and responsibly at the local, national and global level in order to create a more peaceful and sustainable world

## **GCED — key learner attributes**

The UNESCO has identified three learner attributes that the GCED aims to develop among students — informed and critically literate; socially connected and respectful of diversity; and ethically responsible and engaged.

### **Informed and critically literate**

Students at the primary stage are curious by nature. In pursuit to know and learn more, they are actively engaged in acquiring knowledge and information, making sense of



the world around. Teachers and educators can help these young minds to understand the interdependence and interconnectedness between local and global issues. These young learners may also be imparted knowledge and skills through effective and meaningful teaching-learning activities. This would help them to inculcate the skills of reflective thinking, critical inquiry and analysis.

### **Socially connected and respectful of diversity**

The young learners need to be educated in such a way that they are able to understand and respect their own identities and that of others. Besides, they must be taught to develop an understanding of relationships and belongingness with the society and the world around; shared values and human dignity. They must be able to appreciate and respect individual differences and diversity; and understand the complex relationship between diversity and commonality. This will lead to the development of global citizenship values in the young learners as they would be able to understand the reasons behind such diversity in language, religion, culture and food habits, and identify themselves with the people around, despite the differences. Once they are able to do so, they will be able to understand the ill effects of inequality and discrimination in society, and be committed to fight against these prejudices.

### **Ethically responsible and engaged**

Education at the primary stage plays a crucial role in the life of a person as it helps in shaping one's character. Classroom teaching at this stage may address issues like those relating to climate change, consumerism, poverty, sustainable development and peace. Values like compassion, caring and sharing, respect for all individuals and the environment may be nurtured in the young learners only by following effective pedagogical practices in classrooms. These would help in transforming their personality, and developing a sense of personal, social and environmental responsibility in them. Besides, they will feel motivated to participate in community activities, and develop collaborative and social entrepreneurship skills in the process, inching closer to achieving the aims of GCED.

### **Embedding GCED at the primary level**

As GCED is progressive in nature and aims to transform education, it is important to adopt learner centred pedagogies. These would help in achieving the holistic development of the students. Therefore, the existing teaching-learning practices need to be revisited and revamped so as to meet the requirements of the learners and provide them with ample opportunities to experiment, explore, innovate and reflect.

Teachers may use a variety of pedagogical practices to create a safe, inclusive and engaging classroom environment. Some such practices that may be incorporated in the classroom are as follows.

- The teachers may work with the learners to frame basic rules for interaction.
- Furniture and other articles in the classroom may be arranged in such a manner that allow the learners to move freely and facilitate them to work collaboratively in small groups.
- There must be enough space for the learners to move around and display their works.
- The teachers must also pay attention to factors like a student's socio-economic background, physical and mental ability, race, culture, religion, gender and sexual orientation, among others.

### **GCED — pedagogical principles**

The GCED observes six pedagogical principles, which mark a shift from conventional to transformative teaching-learning processes. These may be incorporated in classroom teaching as well. It has been illustrated with examples from NCERT's Class III EVS textbook, *Looking Around*.

#### **Dialogue and participation**

This principle suggests creating a democratic and liberal atmosphere in the classroom, where the learners

get an opportunity to think, analyse and reflect, and voice their opinions. Creative and learner centred teaching-learning strategies need to be employed in the classroom so as to encourage active learner participation and student-teacher interaction. Adopting such classroom measures would empower the students to voice their opinions on many social and environmental issues.

A few examples have been cited from NCERT's Class III EVS textbook, *Looking Around*.

#### **'The Concept of Water'**

The teacher can pose some questions to the learners. For example — why do we need to boil or filter water? Why has water become so dirty? Who is responsible for making it dirty? What can you do to ensure that water does not become dirty? How can we save water? Why do we need to save water?

Such questions would make the students think and reflect, evoking responses. This would, in turn, help them acquire twenty-first century competencies like communication, analytical and critical skills.

#### **'Our First School'**

The teacher may start a dialogue in the class by asking some questions to the students, making them think and reflect. For example — do you love your family members? Who all are there in your family? How do you help your mother and father? Do you sometimes fight with your brother and sister? What are the reasons for the fights?

Are you able to solve the problems that lead to the fights by talking to each other? Do your parents settle the disputes between you and your siblings? How do they do it? Do both of you get scolded for quarrelling? Would it be better if you would manage to settle your disputes mutually? Will you try to resolve your disputes peacefully in future?

These questions would again make the young learners think and reflect, evoking responses, and hence, make the classroom environment interactive and participatory. Here, the teacher may encourage the students to resolve disputes among themselves, or with their siblings, or anyone else through communication and dialogue, and educate them about the importance of ‘peace’ and ‘non-violence’ at the same time.

### **‘Poonam’s Day Out’**

The teacher may ask some questions to the students. For example — do you love animals? Where have you seen a tiger, a lion and a panther? In a zoo? How would you feel if you were locked in a cage? Do you think we have kept the environment and surroundings safe for animals? Besides, videos may be shown to the learners on how plastic dumped into water bodies like lakes, rivers, seas and oceans is life-threatening for animals and fish inhabiting these. Such things will encourage critical thinking, analytical and decision making skills among the learners.

Moreover, it will sensitise them about the importance of coexistence of different species on the planet and conserving the environment.

### **Holistic and interdisciplinary approach of teaching**

This principle emphasises inter-connectedness on all issues, affecting both humans and the environment. It involves analysing the issues from different perspectives. It also takes into account the diverse backgrounds and experiences that the learners come from. Besides, it aims that all domains of learning—cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural—are taken into account in the teaching-learning process.

A few examples from NCERT’s Class III EVS textbook, *Looking Around*, are as follows.

### **‘Chhotu’s House’**

The story starts with the picture of a boy, living in a pipe. A teacher may refer to this story and sensitise the young learners about how difficult life is for some people and how vast inequalities between people belonging to different classes exist. The teacher must try to sensitise the learners and make them realise that they are fortunate as they have a home to live in and a family to come back to.

Referring to the pictures given in the chapter, one may discuss other dimensions, such as overcrowding on roads, noise and air pollution.

The teacher may talk about the coexistence of human beings with

other living beings like plants and animals, and that it is important to live in harmony without disturbing or destroying their habitat.

Besides, the teacher may inculcate among the learners the values of maintaining cleanliness and hygiene as illustrated through an image, carried in the story, that shows the importance of keeping the toilet clean and hygienic at all times. The students must also be educated about the importance of maintaining hand hygiene, and that they must wash their hands appropriately and frequently. The learners may also be encouraged to participate in activities like cleaning the classroom and the school premises on a regular basis. Such exercises will help them to grow up into responsible adults.

All these dimensions may, therefore, be linked with the lives of the learners, encouraging participatory and joyful learning.

### ***'Foods We Eat'***

This chapter starts with a picture of children telling each other the meal they had eaten the previous day. Someone relished fish, someone had *poori* (deep-fried bread made from unleavened whole-wheat flour) and *kheer* (rice pudding cooked in milk), someone ate *langar* (religious dining) at a gurdwara, someone's mother brought noodles on return from her workplace, etc. But there were some children who had to go without food.

Here, the teacher may underline aspects like a human body's need for a balanced diet, and glaring inequalities in society as some people are compelled to go without food.

The teacher may, thus, inculcate in the students the value of giving respect to the food that they get to eat every day, and also feel grateful towards the person who cooks meals for them.

The teacher may also introduce a classroom activity like preparing a healthy weekly menu. The students may be asked questions as to why food must not be wasted.

The chapter also talks about the food requirements of the young and the elderly, and also the physical challenges that old people face like difficulty in climbing the stairs, etc. Here, the teacher may evoke the value of compassion in the young learners and they may be made to understand their responsibility to help the elderly.

The learners may also be educated to respect the cultural diversity existing in the country and the world through the example of food. Besides, there is an instance cited in the book, where a woman has picked up a culinary style from a place that she had visited some time ago. This may help to bring forth the point of interconnectedness and interdependence among people, and how these aspects influence and enable each other to acquire and learn new things.

These are some of the important points mentioned in the GCED principles.

The teachers may nurture basic human values like empathy and kindness in the students by way of role-play, dialogue and discussion, etc. They must, therefore, ensure that holistic learning includes cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioural domains of learning.

### Multi-modal learning strategies

This implies employing varied or multiple teaching-learning strategies in the classroom in order to make learning innovative, interactive and participatory. The teachers may make use of books, newspapers, magazines, audio-visual aids, etc., in the teaching-learning process and also promote art integrated learning. Such participatory pedagogies would ensure individual freedom to the learners and also enrich their learning.

All chapters in the Class III EVS textbook have incorporated art integrated learning. The teachers can make the learners do the exercises given in the chapters. For example, in the chapter — ‘It’s Raining’, the children can sing and dance on the poem. They can also draw clouds and colour a rainbow. Similarly, in the chapter — ‘The Plant Fairy’, they can draw the pictures of leaves and colour them. They may also be encouraged to go to a nearby garden or park, and collect leaves of different shapes, sizes and colours from various plants. In the chapter, ‘What’s Cooking’, the learners may be encouraged to prepare simple dishes like sprouts

*chaat* and beverages like lemonade, etc. The chapter, ‘From Here to There’, talks about a song sung aboard a train. The students may be taught the song, and encouraged to sing and dance to its tunes. Besides, the teachers may encourage them to play some games like those suggested in the chapter, ‘Games We Play’, to enable their physical and mental development. This will ensure that the students have fun as they learn.

### Value formation

Learning must not only centre around imparting knowledge to the young learners and asking them to memorise the facts. Rather, it should focus on their holistic development, and inculcating values like empathy, tolerance, mutual respect, etc., in them.

The chapter, ‘Saying without speaking’, enlightens the learners to express themselves without using their voice. It sensitises them about people, who may not be able to speak, see or hear, but be blessed with multifarious talents. Therefore, as teachers, one may help the young learners to become sensitive and respectful to people with differential needs. The teacher may also help the students learn basic Braille or sign language, and decode and understand various emotions by the way of gestures, postures and facial expressions.

The chapter, ‘It’s Raining’, may also be used to sensitise the learners about being sensitive to the

environment, and the need of plants and animals for water.

### Critical empowerment

The GCED empowers the learners to critically respond to a situation, analyse it and take action. The learners are expected to understand the challenges they encounter in different areas of life and take appropriate actions. For example, each child can plant a sapling and take care of it, thereby, helping in preserving the environment.

### Applicable and relevant

This implies that the pedagogies employed must be relevant to the learners' contexts and experiences. A teacher, as an effective and efficient facilitator and classroom manager, may use participatory techniques in the teaching-learning process, allowing the learners to make meaning out of their experiences.

In all examples cited in the article, there is a lot of scope for group work and collaborative learning activities, which would help in promoting creativity and innovation among students.

### CONCLUSION

Thus, as educators, one must understand that students at the primary stage are at the most impressionable age in life, and hence, imbibe the values and lessons imparted quickly. So, the teacher must see to it that they are able to relate with the examples being given in the class. Apart from the content, the teacher must be cautious of one's language and style of communication. One also needs to be careful of one's behaviour and mannerisms at all times as children, usually, take their teachers as role models, and imitate their actions and mannerisms.

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# 5

## Primary Education e-Access Initiatives in India

Pooja Jain\*

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### Abstract

*The Constitution of India guarantees free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6–14 years. But all children in the country are unable to get equitable access to primary education. Therefore, the Government of India has come up with numerous initiatives and programmes to create an environment so as to achieve the aim of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). Some of these government initiatives encourage collaboration, cooperation, and promotion of universal, equitable, open and free access to Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The government is also keen to address the issue of openness, which provides free accessibility to resources by surfing the Internet. This paper gives an overview of various digital platforms for primary education in India, which have been initiated by the Central government for open access resources in different formats and languages. It also tries to create awareness among teachers for optimum utilisation of open access resources for primary education.*

### INTRODUCTION

The *Constitution of India* guarantees free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of 6–14 years. It was made a Fundamental Right as enshrined in Article 21A of the

*Constitution* in the year 2010 (*Right to Education Act, 2009*). Even Article 45 of the Directive Principles of State Policy makes education for children in the age group of 6–14 years compulsory. It says, “The State shall endeavour to provide, within ten years from the

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commencement of this *Constitution*, free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of 14 years.”

The *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) is the government’s flagship programme for achieving Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). The programme aims to address the educational needs of all children (aged 6–14 years) in the country.

As per the draft *Educational Statistics—At a Glance* circulated by the Ministry of Human Resource Development<sup>1</sup> (MHRD), Government of India, there were 8,40,546 primary, 4,29,624 upper primary, 1,39,539 secondary and 1,12,637 senior secondary schools in the country in 2015–16. Thus, in 2015–16, there were a total of 15,22,346 schools in India. But the number of schools was far less as compared to that of children’s projected population at 12,99,42,000 in 2017 (Department of School Education and Literacy, MHRD, 2018).

## INITIATIVES FOR OPEN ACCESS

Keeping in view the aforementioned data, the Government of India launched a few initiatives to make elementary education accessible via open access to all children from Classes I to XII. Some of these initiatives are follows.

### **National Digital Library of India**

The project was developed by the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur,

under the aegis of MHRD, Government of India. The National Digital Library of India (NDLI) is a virtual repository of learning resources with a single window search facility and supports users at all academic levels, including researchers. It is accessible from all devices. Moreover, it offers features to ensure easy accessibility by differently abled learners as well. To access the NDLI portal, the users will have to register themselves. For this, they require an email ID and need to create a password. It is only then that they would be able to access it.

One may access the website at <https://ndl.iitkgp.ac.in/>. The NDLI website gives the option to browse by ‘Type’ (audio, images, video, presentation, animation, simulation and application), ‘Subject’ (first, second and third level of the subject), ‘Source’ (NPTEL or NCERT) and ‘Learning Resource’ (article, audio lecture, books, question papers, videos and theses). The portal also offers facilities like search as per the education level, i.e., from Class I onwards.

One may access the portal in three languages — English, Hindi and Bangla.

### **Curricula for ICT in Education**

The *National Policy on ICT in School Education* aims to prepare students so that they may be able to participate creatively in the establishment, sustenance and growth of knowledge

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<sup>1</sup> Under the New Education Policy–2020, the name of the Ministry of Human Resource Development has been changed to the Ministry of Education.



using Information and Communication Technology (ICT). It states that children must not merely be treated as passive consumers of knowledge but as its active producers. The Digital India Campaign (2015) strives to transform India into a digitally empowered society and a knowledge economy. It focuses on imparting digital literacy to children and their empowerment. Hence, the ICT curriculum, which may be accessed at [ictcurriculum.gov.in](http://ictcurriculum.gov.in), has been designed keeping in view the requirements of curricula for teachers, as well as, students in Indian classrooms. The curricula promote optimal utilisation of infrastructure and resources related to school programme. The website is a step towards achieving the goals of the *National Policy on ICT in School Education* and the *National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005*.

Following the guidelines as stated in NCF-2005, the website, i.e., [ictcurriculum.gov.in](http://ictcurriculum.gov.in), does not offer any separate course for primary students. Instead, it integrates ICT based games with core subjects at the primary level. The website has integrated 130 games for students from Classes I to V. These games are based on open source technology and may be translated into various languages (as per a student's choice). The basic aim of the games is to inculcate ICT skills in the students and help them to learn the subject. Some of the games available are — 'Make the Ball go to Tux', 'Penalty Kick', 'Rebuild the Mosaic', 'Complete

the Puzzle', 'Explore World Music', etc. The main objective of these ICT games is to make the students learn the use of e-resources in learning the curricular subjects.

### **e-Pathshala**

This is an initiative of the Central Institute of Educational Technology (CIET) at the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) to bring students, teachers, teacher-educators and parents on a single platform with the help of ICT. The portal may be accessed at <http://epathshala.nic.in/>. It allows the students to access digital textbooks, supplementary material, e-resources and flipbooks (e-books). The learners may access the 'flipbooks' on their desktops, laptops, mobile phones, tablets, etc. These flipbooks are responsive and enabled with features that allow users to select, zoom, bookmark, highlight, navigate, share and listen to the text using text to speech (TTS) apps, along with making digital notes. The flipbooks are available for Classes I to XII.

Similarly, parents, too, may be able to access various curriculum documents online, including National Curriculum Frameworks, National Focus Group Position Papers, syllabi, committee reports, etc., and help their wards with studies.

Teachers may also enrich their knowledge by accessing e-textbooks, e-resources, e-journals, etc., and devise innovative learner centric pedagogic strategies.

## CONCLUSION

Technology is being employed to develop a digital and virtual classroom culture in the country, right from the primary level of education. Hence, it may be said that India is moving towards creating a more accessible, accountable and

affordable education, where quality is maintained and all children have equal access to education and its sources. The Government of India has taken a number of initiatives to provide quality education to all children, including those at the primary level, by using open access resources.

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## WEBSITES

<http://epathshala.nic.in/>  
<https://ndl.iitkgp.ac.in/ictcurriculum.gov.in>

# 6

## Child Development— A Psychological Perspective

Krishna Chandra Choudhary\*

Prabhat Kumar Mishra\*\*

### Abstract

*The period of early childhood, i.e., between three and six years of age, is the most crucial in an individual's life. It is marked by rapid physical, psycho social and mental development. Children, particularly, in this age group, display curiosity, enjoy the company of peers and try to imitate adult behaviour. Hence, early childhood years need to be replete with friendly interactions with peers and family members so as to ensure the holistic development of the children. This paper reflects on the views of psychologists like Freud, Piaget, Skinner, etc., on various stages of child development. It also gives insight to various domains of child development, which would be useful for curriculum planners and developers, administrators, policy makers, educationists and teachers. It would help them to understand the different stages of child development and change in children's behaviour patterns, particularly, at the primary level.*

### INTRODUCTION

'Child development' does not simply imply a child growing up physically. It refers to a progressive series of coherent changes (physical, mental, emotional, linguistic and psychological) that occur in a person from birth till the beginning of adulthood. Therefore, child development entails the overall and

holistic development of a person so that one transforms into a responsible and an independent adult.

Child psychologists have measured development in terms of age and that it starts with conception. 'Prenatal' development covers the development of a foetus from conception until birth. Foetus development is described in terms of 37 weeks or 9 months.

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'Postnatal' development implies growth and development of a baby after birth. Infancy, babyhood, early and late childhood are measured in months and years. The school education period offers another convenient mode of fixing stages like grade wise classification, or preschool, primary, and so on. Yet, it needs to be taken into account that age or grade are only convenient points of reference and are not absolute thresholds.

Hence, it is inferred that development is a continuous process and chronological in nature. For example, a child does not demonstrate all types of behaviour at the same time. Jealousy in most children is observed at the age of 18 to 24 months. Children start participating in role-play and games at the age of four to five years, for instance they may place some leaves and flowers in a row and act as though it is a feast. Almost all self-initiated activities of children are examples of 'game' or 'play' in their natural contexts.

'Play', therefore, is a natural path for children and they actively participate in constructing their environment. A learning environment that allows maximum opportunities for play is best suited for the overall and holistic development of children.

### **DOMAINS OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT WITH STIMULATION**

There are eight domains of child development — fine motor, sensory, cognitive, language, emotional, social, personal and gross motor.

Child development may, thus, be examined through different domains or aspects, which are interrelated and interdependent. Development in each domain may be promoted by providing each child with an opportunity to participate in play based activities. Such activities allow children to actively engage in tasks, learn, practice and master skills, which would further help in boosting their confidence, and motivating them to fix and achieve goals. It is also important for policy makers, educators and curriculum developers to plan the curriculum in a manner that addresses all domains intended to achieve the overall and holistic development of children.

### **UNDERSTANDING CHILD PSYCHOLOGY**

Play helps in the 'psycho physical recreation' of a child. Psycho physical recreation relaxes one's brain, nerves, muscles and bones. Effective eye-hand and two-hand coordination are important areas of child development. Eye-hand and two-hand coordination involve activities related to sorting (like understanding the difference between two or more articles based on their physical appearance), classification (on the basis of size, shape and colour), grouping and balancing. Activities like walking, climbing the stairs, playing musical instruments, stirring food in a bowl and sorting require efficient eye-hand and two-hand coordination. Such activities require the child to handle many objects simultaneously, and look at and try to catch things.

Therefore, eye-hand and two-hand coordination develop the child's muscles and also nurture one's cognitive skills.

A variety of activities may be taken up in schools to help improve the eye-hand coordination of children. For example, a teacher may ask children in a classroom to sit in a circle. The teacher may sing a song or recite a poem in the mother tongue or regional language, along with corresponding gestures and facial expressions, and ask the children to sing along and imitate the actions.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Many prominent psychologists have also shared their theories and opinions as regards to human and child development stages.

Sigmund Freud, the 'Father of Modern Psychology', in his theory stated that child development consists of a sequential series of fixed stages. They are — oral, anal, phallic, latent and genital. He, however, stated that a child may not be able to adjust in a given stage, and hence, retreat to the previous or earlier stage, where one was successful. He termed this phenomenon 'Regression'.

According to Gesell, an American psychologist, pediatrician and professor, all development occurs in a definite, patterned and internally controlled sequence. Gesell's theory is also known as 'maturational-developmental theory'. This theory is the foundation of nearly every other theory of human development.

Early in the twentieth century, Gesell observed and documented the patterns, in which children develop. According to him, each child goes through similar and predictable sequences at one's own pace. So, 'maturation' plays a dominant role in child development but environment and culture may, too, help in modifying it.

Piaget, a Swiss developmental psychologist, views development as succession of definite stages for a given behaviour, emerging in an unchanging and constant order. Each stage incorporates the structure of the preceding stages and is characterised by the 'initial period' of 'preparation' and the 'final period' of 'achievement'.

Burrhus Frederic Skinner was an American psychologist, behaviourist, author, inventor and social philosopher. He represents the Behaviouristic School, which emphasises the 'role of environment' in child development. 'Behaviour' is described in terms of a series of 'stimuli' and 'responses'. According to the theory of behaviourism, development is continuous in nature, and children develop and change their behaviour as per their environment. Hence, this theory suggests that behaviour is acquired from the environment, and that innate or inherited factors have little influence on one's behaviour.

Sullivan, an American psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, emphasised that "personality can never be isolated from complex interpersonal relationships

in which a person lives”. According to him, interpersonal relationship(s) is the key to child development. Factors like how a child adapts, methods used for adaptation, ways of perceiving the world and relating oneself with others in the environment determine one’s development. The child’s behaviour is primarily oriented towards meeting one’s biological and security needs. Psychological problems stem out of insecurity. The development stages from infancy to childhood are characterised by new interpersonal needs and relationships.

However, it may be noted that no singular view can be accepted as the sole explanation of child development stages. The current trend is towards the formulation of an ‘integrated approach to development’. Whatever be the description of the stages, it is, generally, agreed that development follows certain trends, and principles of development have evolved on

the basis of studies conducted on children of varied age groups.

## CONCLUSION

It may, thus, be concluded that the first six years are the most crucial period of a person’s life. These early childhood years lay the foundation for the development of one’s personality. This period is characterised by rapid growth and development — both physical and mental. Studies suggest that there are critical stages in the development of the brain during this period. Researchers point out that chances of a child’s brain developing into its full potential are considerably reduced, if there is lack of a stimulating and enriching psycho physical environment in the early years. Deficits during the early years of life have adverse impacts on an individual’s overall personality, and thus, one’s physical and mental health, and behaviour.

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## The Wind Beneath their Wings

Vandana Kerur\*

### Abstract

*Science is, generally, seen as a male bastion. Books on science are replete with names of ‘great’ men, who dared to experiment, explore and invent. However, as the adage goes — ‘Behind every successful man is a woman’, it is not often known how much and in what capacities the female family members have contributed to such inventions and discoveries. Their contributions may have been as routine as looking after the nourishment and other basic life needs of budding scientists or inventors, keeping them away from financial obligations, and above all, providing much needed moral support when the experiments did not go as planned, and society laughed at them in derision. This article, through the story of the famous Wright Brothers and their lesser known sister, Katharine, tries to acknowledge the unspoken and latent contributions and sacrifices made by female members in a family. It also attempts to bring forth the point that without Katharine’s support, the Wright Brothers would not have been able to invent the ‘Wright Flyer’ and the world would have never been able to see the age of aviation.*

### INTRODUCTION

The whole world knows that the Wright Brothers (Orville and Wilbur) invented the airplane. Many may also be able to recall that their first flight was from Kitty Hawk, USA. But a few know that in that moment of euphoria, Orville elbowed aside well-wishers and

reporters to hurriedly send a telegram to their teacher far away, informing her of their success. The teacher was Katharine Wright, the lesser known younger sister of the famous Wright Brothers.

Katharine was the youngest and the only daughter in the family of

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\* Cuemath Franchise Teacher Partner and Freelance Writer, Goa.



five siblings. She was closer in age to Orville and Wilbur. During childhood, Orville and Wilbur often included her in their games and other activities. Katharine had always been a staunch supporter of all that Orville and Wilbur did. She was a witness to the glint in her brothers' eyes when their father had brought home a 'toy flying machine'. The book, *The Road to the First Flight*, sheds light on how the three siblings had played with the flying machine till it broke into parts. Orville and Wilbur sat for hours and repaired it, and to their amazement, the machine flew better now than when it was new. This made her encourage her brothers to try their hands at aeronautics. She lent all support to her brothers even as a child. She would help them collect bones and iron scraps to be sold at a fertiliser plant and a junkyard, respectively, in lieu of money. The two brothers used this money to fuel their passion at aeronautics.

Their bond grew stronger when their mother died of tuberculosis. Katharine was only 15 years old at that time, but remarkably intelligent and mature. Even though their mother had always encouraged her to study, she took over the household duties after her demise. Her father, too, encouraged her to go to college as he strongly believed in education. When about to enter college, the news of Orville being sick with typhoid fever made her rush back home, look after him and nurse him back to health. However, she managed to join

college the following year, becoming the only Wright to complete college education. Katharine graduated with a degree in classics and took a job as a Latin teacher at a school (Steele High School, Dayton) in Ohio.

### EARLY ENDEAVOURS

The Wright family owned a bicycle shop at Dayton, Ohio. The Wright Brothers' endeavours were largely funded through this shop. During school holidays, while the two brothers were busy fuelling their passion to invent an airplane at Kitty Hawk, Katharine helped out with the day-to-day operations at the shop. She would pack food for her brothers, and manage all correspondences related to the shop and purchases, so that they could work with a free mind. Katharine supplemented the household expenses with her stable income from the school as well.

When managing the household, school and shop became a little too much for her, Katharine hired a helper to help her with the household chores.

Orville and Wilbur frequently went to Kitty Hawk, a desolate North Carolina village, known for its gusty winds and sandy beaches (perfect for landing). They spent longer hours there to test their prototype flying rig that they fondly called 'The Wright Flyer'. They corresponded with Katharine about their successes and, particularly, setbacks after tough trials, which made them believe that their idea was indeed a hopeless one and that scientific journals were

correct that building a human flight was impossible. Katharine always lent a patient ear to her brothers, and offered support, encouragement and advice to them.

One can only wonder at their tenacity, for there was almost nothing to base their theories on, “no reliable mathematics tables existed for scaling wings to carry humans, and much to their surprise and dismay, no usable research existed at all on the workings of this thing called a ‘propeller’. The magnitude of the problem was (and remains) virtually inconceivable — how to build the wings; how to control a flight; where to position a person on this contraption; how to launch it; how to land it; how to build it; and how to build a suitable motor to run the thing. They had to deal with such problems while facing mockery by science journals of note, which dismissed the idea of human flight as lunatic notions of suicidal cranks” (Maurer, 2016).

Katharine, meanwhile, was always ready with solutions to problems not having to do directly with The Wright Flyer or the mechanics behind it.

## **SETBACKS AND CHALLENGES**

Many wondered if it was a disruption of the natural order of life. It is said that a certain religious preacher went as far as to say, “If God wanted men to fly, he would have given them wings”. It was Katharine who taught them to take criticism in stride in the initial years of discouraging results. When they began to spend more time at Kitty

Hawk, she regularly wrote to them, informing them about family matters and local news in a humorous way to keep up their spirits.

Meanwhile, for Orville and Wilbur, achieving the ‘impossible’ and actually building an operational airplane was not the end of the journey. The Wright Brothers faced the challenge of displaying before people that their airplane actually existed — something that people simply did not want to believe. Witness accounts were completely ignored and photographs were claimed to be cases of forgery.

The Wright Brothers were undeterred. They wrote to the US War Department, explaining what they had created and also provided photographs of their invention. Their correspondence was ignored.

However, the French government approached the Wrights and expressed interest in their invention. The brothers had to box up their invention and ship it overseas, guarding it zealously throughout the expedition to prevent details of their plane’s design from getting leaked as it would render their invention of no value.

Public demonstrations in Paris proved to be sensational. As the word spread, engineering societies requested the Wright Brothers to address public talks — something the duo was hardly prepared for or even wanted to attempt. It was Katharine, who encouraged them to attend and address such events.

Soon, the Wright Brothers, with their state-of-the-art invention,

captured the attention of the entire country, and gradually, the world. A number of people attended their public demonstrations, and the Wrights were feted in every corner of Europe. Although self-taught and brilliant in their craft, the two brothers always felt socially awkward and shy. Such adulation disturbed them as parties like these hardly left any time for the serious business of pilot preparation and aviation research.

In 1908, after nearly three years of tireless efforts, the Wrights were able to convince the US Signal Corps to view a test flight of their flying machine, and if successful, consider it for sale to the government. Orville returned to the US for the demonstrations. After a week of successful and record-breaking flights, came a terrible accident on 17 September 1908. A propeller broke, and sent the airplane spiralling out of control. The crash killed the passenger, Army Lieutenant Thomas Selfridge. Orville, too, sustained serious injuries, and was left with broken ribs and a fractured leg. Katharine immediately took emergency leave from the school, where she taught, and rushed to be at his bedside at the Army Hospital in northern Virginia, USA. Orville was hospitalised for almost seven weeks. She looked after her brother and nursed him back to health. Orville, later, acknowledged that without his sister's unconditional love and care, he would have died.

## MANAGING THEIR SOCIAL LIFE

The accident turned out to be a catalytic event in Katharine's life as she now had to perform the role of a 'social secretary' to her brothers. Eventually, the furore in Paris became a bit too much, and Wilbur beseeched his sister to come to Europe and take on the role of his 'social manager'. She agreed and brought Orville along. In addition to caring for her now weekend brother while in Europe, she took public pressure off Wilbur as well.

Although Katharine had been a homemaker — something that was taken for granted for women during those times — she never considered it drudgery. Education helped her to develop poise and confidence that balanced the discomfort her brothers exhibited during public appearances. Katharine helped Orville and Wilbur in innumerable ways. She was the first woman passenger on their trial flights that the public viewed, quite naturally, with scorn, skepticism and fear.

### **In memoriam...**

The National Aeronautic Association, USA, awards the 'Katharine Wright Memorial Trophy' in the memory of Katharine Wright annually. The award was institutionalised in the year 1981. It is awarded to an individual, who has contributed to the success of others, or made personal contributions to the advancement of art, sports, and science of aviation and space flight over an extended period of time.

Katharine had flown “longer and farther than any American woman”. She was, in fact, the “only woman in the world who had made three flights in an aeroplane”, and would become, at the time, the only woman to have ever been invited to a dinner at the Aéro-Club de France (Brown, 2016).

She would often speak to newspaper reporters on behalf of her brothers. She learnt French as well, which enabled her to converse with scientists across Europe and people of rank, such as Alfonso XIII, the King of Spain; Georges Clemenceau, the Prime Minister of France; King Victor Emmanuel III of Italy, Edward VIII of England and Prince Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia. She was awarded, along with Orville and Wilbur, the *Legion d’Honneur*, the highest French order of merit — both military and civil, making her one of the few women from the USA to have achieved this feat.

Katharine was outspoken, and possessed intelligence and zest that made her unique. She had strong opinions on the ‘rights of women’, and had even supported the National Suffrage Movement in 1920, which won women in America the ‘Right to Vote’. Orville and Wilbur were fervently grateful to her, particularly, at times when the brothers found themselves surrounded with fame, and suddenly, submerged in an environment of European and world elitism that they were not familiar with. As Katharine Wright’s biographer put it, “They’re not the

kind of guys you would want to invite to dinner. You could picture them coming over for dinner and not saying a word” (Maurer, 2016).

After a few years, Wilbur died of typhoid in 1912, in the midst of fiery patent arguments over the flying machine. Katharine and Orville returned to their home in Dayton, Ohio.

### **DEDICATION AND SACRIFICE**

After Wilbur’s death, Katharine took over business responsibilities, becoming an officer at the Wright Company in 1912. She dedicated most of her time to the Suffrage Movement and to her obligations as a trustee at the Oberlin College, while living with and taking care of her increasingly reclusive brother, Orville.

At the age of 51 years, Katharine got engaged to Harry Haskell, who was also friends with Orville. This left Orville feel abandoned and betrayed. He smashed a pitcher of flowers against a wall and refused to attend their wedding, or even speak to both Katharine and Harry. With time, the siblings grew apart. Her one-sided correspondence with her lately estranged brother reflects her hope to mend their fractured relationship. It was only when she was on her deathbed that Orville come to be at her side.

On the day of her funeral, airplanes showered flower petals on her grave.

Brilliant, sociable and vivacious, Katharine lent unshakable support to her brothers in all their endeavours.

She cheerfully took on the role of the ‘woman of the house’ — managing the household affairs and taking care of the family. This was the role she felt duty bound to perform throughout life, especially to Orville, after Wilbur and her father passed away. Perhaps, that was the reason that she married so late in life. She was by their side at all times during flying expeditions, which sometimes resulted in mishaps.

Although Katharine did not design, build or pilot the Wright Flyer, she played a pivotal role in the lives of its inventors, and, in the truest sense of the term, was the ‘wind beneath their wings’.

## CONCLUSION

Teachers may take cue from the life of Katharine Wright, who rendered selfless support to her brothers’

passion to invent an airplane, and sensitise children, especially, at the primary stage to recognise the support they get from their family, particularly, female members, by asking questions like — who packs your lunch box every day? Who drops you to school? The teacher may also interact with slightly older students (those studying in Classes IV to VI) and quiz them about various discoveries and inventions like — who invented electronic machines, such as refrigerator, washing machine, kettle, etc.

After sharing the life story of Katharine Wright with the children, the teacher may also encourage them to reflect on whether the Wright Brothers would have been able to achieve this feat without her unconditional love, and constant support and encouragement.

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### Loktak's Floating School

Neeraja Rashmi\*

Achieving the Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE) has been an avowed aim of the Indian government. But assured schooling for children still remains a dream for most parents, especially, those belonging to disadvantaged communities or living in remote areas of the country. Manipur's famous Loktak Lake is one such area, where families, including children, face social and physical constraints in their everyday life. But these constraints have not been able to dampen their spirit, and they have devised innovative ways to overcome their difficulties, including ensuring regular school education for their children on the lake itself.

The Loktak Lake, located at Bishnupur district in south Manipur, is the largest

freshwater lake in the north-eastern region of the country. Known as the lifeline of the people of the State, the lake is full of floating masses of water hyacinth, locally known as *phum-di*. The wetland is swampy and home to a number of bird and animal species, including *sangai*, the brow-antlered deer.



Figure 1: Loktak Lake at Bishnupur in Manipur is the largest freshwater lake in the north-eastern region of the country.

\* Professor, Department of Social Sciences, NCERT, New Delhi.

The lake also serves as a source of livelihood for numerous fishing families, who live in huts built on these floating *phum-dis*. Ensuring their children's regular education and easy accessibility to a school in such trying circumstances had been a herculean task for these families until some local social groups in the area came forward with an innovative idea to construct the first-of-its-kind 'lake school'. They decided to start an elementary school on one such floating island so that children did not have to travel far to study.

Earlier, children of many families in the area were deprived of education, as there was no school within a walking distance from their homes. Those, who managed to get enrolled in some school, had to travel long distances to study. Lack of basic

facilities like transportation, day care, food and security made gaining education an even more difficult task for children.

The Loktak Floating Elementary School is the country's first-ever floating school, which could open due to the sustained efforts of the All Loktak Lake Fishermen's Union and an NGO. Situated about 50 kms from the State capital, Imphal, it started functioning with 25 children in the year 2017 at Langolsabi Leikai of Champu Khangpok village in Manipur. At present, the co-ed school runs classes up to Class V. However, the classes are planned to be extended up to Class VIII soon. Besides, efforts are underway to increase the number of enrolments in each class.

The school caters to the needs of children living in *phum-dis* on the lake and in nearby areas. Teacher volunteers teach the students at the school. The students, usually, have to travel 1.5–2 kms to attend the school. They are ferried to the school from nearby *phum-dis* by boats. Books are provided to the students for free under the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (Figure 2).

The school caters to the educational needs of illiterate adults as well.

The floating school runs from a hut shaped structure,



Figure 2: Children are provided with free books at the Loktak Floating Elementary School.



*Figure 3: The Loktak Floating Elementary School in Manipur is built with material like bamboo and thatch.*

which has been constructed using local building material like thatch and bamboo (Figure 3). The school is equipped with amenities like solar power and computers with Internet connection to name a few.

However, the school needs repairs from time-to-time as it is built with

material like bamboo and thatch. Parents, too, help in the maintenance and upkeep of the school building by way of providing physical labour. Besides, the existing school infrastructure, including teaching aids, needs to be upgraded from time-to-time in order to run the facility seamlessly and make it sustainable.

Thus, with education being provided to children living in the lake with the help of community and teacher volunteers, the school presents itself as a unique example. It symbolises the commendable social efforts being made to educate children living in such difficult circumstances, and hence, deserves to be acknowledged. Such efforts, if highlighted, will motivate people and communities to come forward and make similar endeavours in their respective regions.



## BOOK REVIEW

### ***What a Song!***

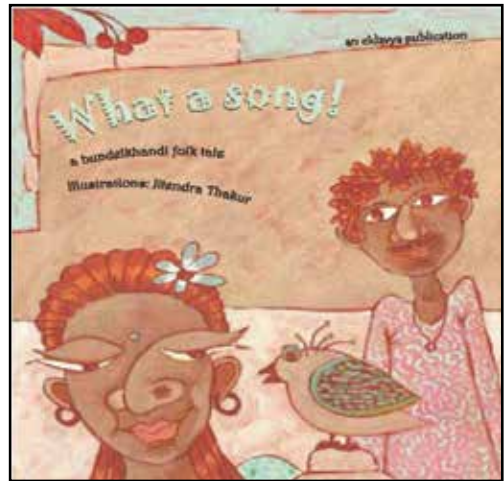
Ujjwal Banerjee\*

**Name of the Book** : *What a song!*  
**Publisher** : Eklavya  
**Illustrator (Author)**: Jitendra Thakur  
**No. of Pages** : 40  
**Language** : English  
**Price** : ₹120.00

At the very outset, it may be mentioned that the illustrator, who also wrote the storybook, took a conscious decision not to have his name printed as 'author' as he believes that folktales belong to a community and cannot be treated as the property of a single individual, and that, collectively, they are part of an area's literary tradition.

The roots of a country's literary tradition may be traced to its rich oral literature that has managed to survive for generations.

It is important to immerse children in timeless stories, which they may come across in oral or written form, or on digital platforms. In doing so, they



would gain valuable insights about different cultures, and related values, traditions and beliefs. This not only broadens their view of the world but also makes them more appreciative of their own culture and heritage.

The storybook, '*What a song!*', captures the readers' attention right from the beginning. The opening paragraph of the storybook reads, "There once lived a woman, who never sang.

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The other woman, who lived in the same village, would sing while grinding or going to the well, but this woman always stayed quiet. She also wanted to sing, but just didn't know any song." Once, she innocently asked her neighbour where she got her songs from. The neighbour jokingly replied that she had bought them from a market. The woman, then, sent her husband to the market to buy a song for her. He went shop-to-shop looking for a song but in vain. The struggle to find a song for his wife, finally, turns into a phase of creation, where weaves a song based on what he sees while on his way back home. The song is simple, with plenty of onomatopoeic words. For example —

A rat burrowing a hole inspires him to weave the following words.

*Khode kharar-kharar* [meaning,  
It (the rat) digs *kharar-kharar*]

Similarly a slithering snake makes him say the following.

*Sarke sarrar-sarrar* [meaning,  
It (the snake) creeps *sarrar-sarrar*]

A few more such lines are included and the song is complete.

The story proceeds as the woman is delighted on receiving the song. She starts singing it late into the night. Coincidentally, thieves were stealthily digging a hole to break into their house while she was singing. Thus, there is a synchronicity between the lines of the song and the actions of the thieves

— they are digging and creeping into the hole. Hearing the song, the thieves become alert of someone keeping an eye on them and run away without breaking into the house.

When the couple wake up in the morning the next day, they realise how miraculous the song had proven as their house was saved from getting burgled. They enjoy the moment over a cup of tea.

The book also carries vivid illustrations, which depict the rural backdrop of Bundelkhand (the hilly region divided between the States of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh), where the story is set. One can see the care that has gone into making the three-dimensional illustrations — the rough texture of the mud walls, the thick curly hair, the fur of the rat, etc., which attract the attention of the readers.

The narrative uses simple language with a lot of repetition of onomatopoeic words. The cadence of the story is smooth and every page seems to invite the readers to find out what happens next.

Since the story is based on a song, it consists of lines that rhyme, offering the joy of both listening and reading to the audience. Young students, when introduced to the story by their teachers or parents, may also enjoy singing the song imbued in the story. The book, thus, would be an invaluable addition to any school library, particularly, for the primary grades.

## DID YOU KNOW

### NCERT Kits for the Elementary Stage

V. B. Patil\*

The Division of Educational Kits (DEK) at the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi, is responsible for designing, development and production of various teaching-learning kits. Teachers across the country use these kits in classrooms as supplementary material to textbooks in order to ensure a participatory and engaging teaching-learning environment. Each kit, comprising aids and apparatuses, along with user manuals, comes in a portable container. The kits have the following benefits.

- Availability of necessary aids and apparatuses, along with the user manuals, at one place
- Easy portability from one place to another

The *National Curriculum Framework* (NCF) 2005, too, recommends the use of these kits in order to ensure a clearer understanding of concepts

by learners through hands-on learning approaches.

While textbooks serve as a springboard for instruction and learning, hands-on learning activities stimulate the mind of the students, encouraging reflective thinking and critical analysis of the concepts learnt in classrooms. At the completion of each chapter or unit, practical exercises and activities (using these kits) help the students to establish a relationship between concepts and synthesise their knowledge.

Such educational kits may be given to the students before teachers start a new topic. They should be given the opportunity to explore the material enclosed in these kits. This will help in retaining their interest in a particular subject. Hands-on activities may be used to enable the students observe the phenomena presented in their textbooks.

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\* Senior Technical Officer, Division of Educational Kits, NCERT, New Delhi.

The Division has developed kits for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), language, science and mathematics for various stages of school education. The kits are of multipurpose usage and appropriate for micro-scale techniques. They are priced reasonably.

### **UPPER PRIMARY SCIENCE KIT**

The Division has reviewed the old integrated science kits and modified them to suit the needs of new textbooks and curriculum. The Kit prototype has been developed in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi. It offers scope for more than 200 activities at the upper primary stage (Classes VI, VII and VIII). The Kit contains more than 130 equipment and models, among other items. The user manuals for the Kit are available in English and Hindi.

### **EARLY SCHOOL MATHEMATICS LEARNING KIT**

The Kit has been developed as per design details provided by the Department of Elementary Education (DEE), NCERT. It contains 37 type of items like clock, stamp, Velcro items, tile, play money, place value cards, dominos, etc., which may be used for performing activities as outlined in the manual. This Kit is useful for students studying in pre-school and Classes I and II.

### **UPPER PRIMARY MATHEMATICS KIT**

The Division has developed a Mathematics Kit for the upper primary stage. It contains 19 type of items that may be used by students of Classes VI, VII and VIII for performing practical activities. This Kit would help the students to understand the mathematical concepts better in a joyful learning environment. A user manual in English and Hindi is also available. A video guide for the Kit has also been developed.

### **LANGUAGE KITS**

#### **Raindrops — English language learning kit**

The Division has developed this Kit for students of Classes I to V to improve their communication skills, particularly, spoken English. It contains story charts, poems, alphabet letter cards, language games, pronunciation cards, etc., The Kit facilitates active engagement with the English language in easy and fun-filled manner. A user manual is also included in the Kit.

#### **Primary Urdu Learning Kit**

The Division has developed a prototype Urdu Language Learning Kit for Classes I and II. It contains stories, word tiles, skill games, anagrams and riddles in Urdu.

## **EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION (ECCE) KIT**

### **Resource package for awareness in ECCE**

The NCERT has also developed a resource package for awareness in ECCE in English and Hindi. It consists of banners, posters, leaflets, badges, puppets and other items. It also contains manuals in Hindi and English. The Kit may be used for enhancing the awareness of teachers and teacher-educators as regards to ECCE.

### **PROCEDURE FOR PROCUREMENT**

These kits may be purchased from the DEK, NCERT, by States and Union

Territories (UTs). After making the purchase, the kits are distributed among government schools in the concerned States and Union Territories.

### **CONCLUSION**

It may, thus, be concluded that the NCERT has brought out educational kits in almost every subject for the elementary stage in order to make teaching-learning a fun-filled and an enjoyable experience for students, thereby, promoting interactive, participatory and learner centric environment. These kits are attractive, safe, portable and easy to use. The students may perform activities and experiments, using these kits, individually or in small groups under the supervision of a teacher.

### The Scales of Languages

Varada M. Nikalje\*

A few years ago, I was invited to attend a seminar on the teaching of Sanskrit in schools. Academics (especially, those teaching Sanskrit) from various educational institutions, and representatives of various NGOs were also invited.

When I reached the venue, the inauguration ceremony had already begun, and one of the speakers was holding forth on the greatness of Sanskrit. "Sanskrit is a great language because it has existed since time immemorial. It is the language of the ancient sages, of the religious works, nay, the language of the Gods themselves," he echoed, amidst a huge round of applause.

As it often happens, logic seemed to be shrouded by emotion. Most people tend to 'evaluate' languages by putting them on a scale — at one end are the 'inferior' or 'primitive' languages, while the other end has languages perceived to be 'superior'.

The belief that some languages are superior is found in a fairly large number of people across the world.

Like Sanskrit in India, Latin has occupied a similar position in the West. This may imply that other languages, by default, are not so superior.

However, it may be noted that there is no consensus as to which language is the most superior. There cannot be. This is because the reasons given for superiority vary — that a language is the oldest, or its words are the easiest to pronounce, or it being the language of the Gods, etc. For example, Arabic is strongly identified as the 'Language of the Quran'. So, it is said to be the most beautiful language with incredible lexical richness. Other classical languages like Hebrew and Sanskrit lay claim to be the oldest languages, and therefore, superior — a topic hotly debated. Latin and Greek, for hundreds of years, were viewed as

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model languages of excellence in Western Europe because of their massive literature and philosophical thoughts expressed therein.

However, just because a language is the oldest, it does not mean that it has to be superior. Again, if a language has become widespread due to information technology, it does not lend it superiority.

Some languages like Persian were more in use in certain periods of history, and were considered more prestigious as they were the languages spoken and used by the ruling classes. Some languages may have got political recognition or status due to colonisation but that does not make them intrinsically superior. Some languages, for instance, French and Spanish, may be used solely for religious purposes, thereby, gaining sanctity. But they, too, cannot be termed 'superior'.

Quite often, there is a strong correlation between the prestige a group of people enjoy and the language they speak. For example, the prestige associated with European clerics and lawyers, who used Latin to communicate.

It is interesting to note that even an uneducated person has a view on language. It is a fact that mother tongue is the medium through which most knowledge is constructed. So, it is closely linked with the thoughts and identity of an individual.

Moreover, a sense of 'belongingness' gets attached to a language, making it 'personal', and as such, difficult to

think about critically and objectively. Because a layman knows to speak (and, perhaps, read) a language, one feels confident of understanding the corresponding literature as well, and therefore, has the right to hold an opinion about it. Language, in a sense, belongs to everyone. And when opinions differ about the nature of language, for instance, the 'purity' of language, or the way in which it grows, the debate has chances of deteriorating to irrational responses as emotions run high.

Languages developed naturally because of the need to express thoughts and emotions. For example, primitive humans, who led a nomadic way of life, and lived and worked in social groups, used various sounds, signs and symbols to warn their fellow mates of the probable risks and dangers while hunting or shifting to different places. So, they needed a language. Sounds, gradually, developed into words as they became referents to objects present in the environment. Some sounds got associated with time, home, safety, and so on. Thus, language developed through the travails of time.

There is no community in the world without a language in its spoken form. All languages are products of the human mind. Just as no human being is superior or inferior, no language is intrinsically superior or inferior. There is nothing intrinsically limiting or demeaning in any language.

All languages are, thus, equal in the sense that each was developed to meet the social and psychological needs of its users.

But many people may find it difficult to accept as they may not have thought deeply about it. They would probably brush off the idea and reject it. It may be mentioned here that 'equal' is not used in the sense of amount or quantity of grammar, vocabulary or phonology. Language cannot be quantified. It is not possible to rate the excellence of a language in linguistic terms.

As society develops, and as social and psychological needs grow and change, languages, too, change. It is a fact that words are continually being added to the existing vocabulary, and that meanings of words are continually changing. Growth of vocabulary, generally, manifests itself in three ways. For instance, new words are added due to inventions, or improvements being made on existing things, or cultural contacts, etc. Inventions lead to the coinage of new nouns, and sometimes, verbs. For example, the word, 'Xerox', could not have existed in the fifteenth century for the simple reason that the 'photocopying machine' had not been invented then. Similarly, 'wristwatch' was coined as a result of the improved smaller version of 'watch' and the convenience of wearing it on the 'wrist', as opposed to the larger, heavier timekeeper, which more often than not, rested

in a pocket especially made for it. Words like 'restaurant' and 'jungle' have entered the English language vocabulary due to interaction with other cultures.

The study of any language provides valuable information about the language, in general, and the human nature and society, in particular. Thus, all languages are equal in terms of self-sufficiency, with reference to the community, where they are used, and also in the sense that they are equally worthy of scientific study.

Pedagogically speaking, all teaching includes the use of language. Thus, language is central to the educational process. And a teacher's attitude to a language influences the teaching-learning process.

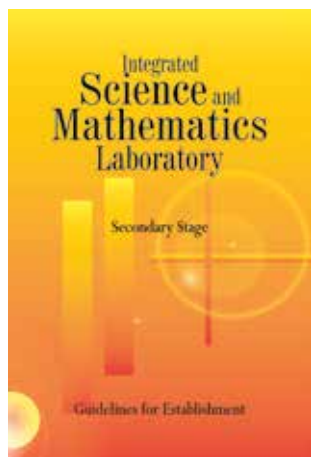
It is, therefore, important for teachers to internalise that all languages are equal. Such an attitude would be manifested by the teacher both through articulation and behaviour, and would influence one's pedagogical practices, which, in turn, would boost the confidence and morale of students. This would, particularly, be so in case of first generation learners, whose mother tongue may not be the language being used at school.

In a pluralistic society like India's, each social field, including the classroom, is multilingual. So, recognition and respect for the diverse linguistic backgrounds of the learners is essential. In addition, it should be made clear



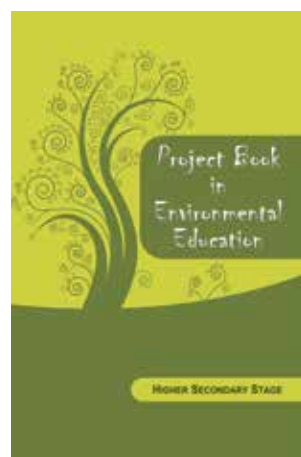
to the learners that all languages are equal, and that all languages are equally difficult or easy (depending on how one looks at it) to learn, and that no language is inherently superior or inferior. This would help in establishing a link between

knowledge acquired in the classroom and reality of the outside world. It would instill in children a sense of individualistic value, and the feeling that each one of them, their home, community, language(s) and culture, are valuable and valued.



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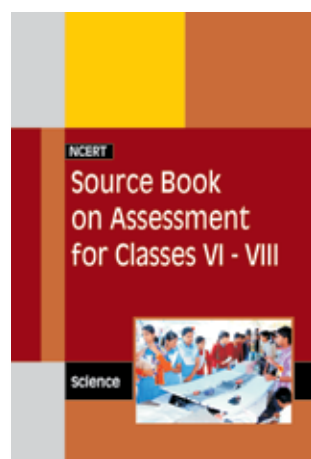


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*The Primary Teacher* invites you to write articles, field notes and reports that impact elementary education. The focus areas may be issues and concerns that you are sensitive to, which you feel should be shared with other teachers, working at the grass-roots level.

- Each article should be about 1500 to 3000 words.
- Each article should have a short abstract in about 150 words.
- Use simple and non-technical language, keeping the target audience in mind, who are primary teachers.
- The articles should have a friendly and communicative tone.
- The articles must be sent in two copies, along with the soft copy (CD/e-mail).
- The photographs and illustrations should be sent in JPEG format, having a resolution of at least 300 dpi.
- The papers may be sent to:

*Academic Editor*  
*The Primary Teacher*  
G. B. Pant Block, NCERT  
Sri Aurobindo Marg  
New Delhi – 110016

e-mail: [primaryteacher.ncert@gmail.com](mailto:primaryteacher.ncert@gmail.com)

### MY PAGE...

This section contains letters and feedback, where you can put forward your responses, suggestions and expectations in the form of articles, papers and columns. You may have issues, concerns and doubts related to teaching-learning processes, classroom practices, syllabus, textbooks, evaluation patterns, research pursuits, etc. These could also reflect the concerns of many others working in the area. You may also share incidences and experiences that may have baffled you.

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