

Going beyond Reading...

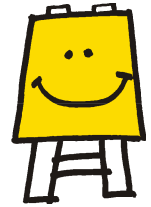
Learning in semi-literate society

Read India Conference at

University Pennsylvania

October 3, 4 2008

Learning to Read

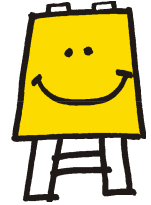


Pratham is undertaking large-scale programs in coordination with the state governments or independently – if not collaborating.

- The focus is on 'reading'.
- Children are given simple paragraphs to read.
- Practice is given to de-code the phonic alphabets.
- They chant rhyming words to understand different forms of the same consonants and vowels.
- They 'learn to read' within a couple of weeks, with guided efforts and appropriate teaching learning material.

THOUGH THE FOCUS IS ON READING, THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT US THAT CHILDREN DON'T JUST READ, HOWSOEVER POOR READERS THEY ARE, THEY THINK TOO – WHILE READING.

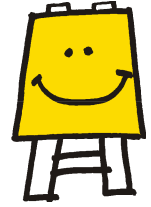
Comprehending what they read



- A child in grade IV has just learnt to read.
While reading, she stumbles on a difficult word and replaces it with simple synonym.
- A child has just learnt to read. Reads a simple paragraph– ‘Papa comes home. Washes his hands, eats food and talks to mother’.
Child looks up and says ‘my father never talks to my mother’.
- A child, who is unable to read, listens carefully to the textbook lesson from Mahabharata – read aloud by the teacher.
In the discussion session, he stands up and, in a choking voice, condemns the uncles of the young prince, because the young prince is killed. Becomes emotional.

FLUENCY IS NOT A PREREQUISITE FOR COMPREHENSION

Fluency and Comprehension



- Though fluency in reading leads to comprehension and enriches vocabulary,

- Slide 1 indicates,
 - An average reader can replace words with synonym
 - Can relate their real life experience to the content
 - Can grasp the emotion and expresses it explicitly.

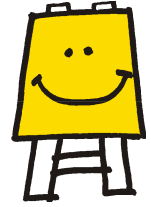
**HOW DO TEACHERS UNDERSTAND THIS PHENOMENON?
DO THEY TRANSLATE IT INTO CONCRETE ACTION OF
TEACHING CHILDREN FLUENT READING?**

Teachers- do they have adequate knowledge?



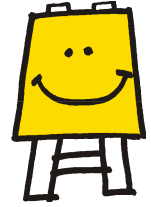
- It is assumed that;
 - Teachers have adequate knowledge base
 - Or teachers read to acquire the knowledge
- However, teachers
 - Take no efforts in creating lesson plans.
 - Cannot relate the content with their own or children's real life experience.
 - Their vocabulary is limited because they themselves hardly read.
 - There are no subject specific teachers appointed in schools.

Teachers, do they have



- Teacher's themselves are the product of the poor education system.
 - At the local level, libraries, reading material or even newspapers are not available for extra reading.
 - Apathy towards reading keeps them away from attempting to even actively involving in creating simple reading material, themselves.
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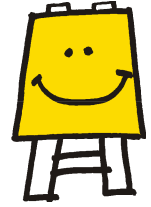
Challenges



- Poorly read teachers,
 - Have insufficient background knowledge.
 - Depend fully on the text books
 - Unable to appreciate and grasp children's emotional intelligence
- Text books is the ONLY reading material available –
 - Difficulty level increases from Std. III hence children have to deal with difficult vocabulary, concepts
 - Their reading capacity is not equipped to deal with the textbook content.

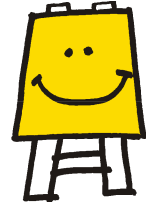
ENCOURAGING TEACHERS TO READ IS A CHALLENGE. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, SENSITIZING THEM TO GRASP CHILDREN'S EMOTIONS BECOME MORE COMPLEX.

Challenges- Home Support



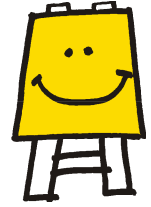
- Translating people's wisdom in to learning is becoming difficult day by day.
 - When illiteracy was rampant, the oral culture was a way of life.
 - Artisans chose to teach to their children through 'learning by doing'.
 - In the new era, 'learning can happen only in schools' has shifted people's mindset from teaching from home to schools.
 - **SEMI LITERAE AND ILLITERATE PARENTS DO NOT FEEL THAT THEY CAN BECOME A VERY STRONG SUPPORT TO THEIR CHILDREN'S EDUCATION.**

What is being done -Teachers



- Encouraging teachers to READ
- Creating support reading material based on text books to improve their background knowledge.
- Providing them with techniques to translate their newly acquired knowledge in to teaching processes.
 - Demonstrate talking: background knowledge (contextual)
 - Read aloud with proper pronunciation of each word and punctuation marks.
 - Encourage children to talk, provide direction – recall and tell sequence
 - Mind reading followed with group activities of question answer sessions.
 - Making them write the sequential events in their own words
 - Guiding them find out the main idea from the text and elaborate it.

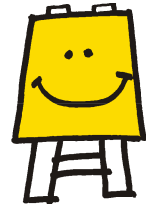
What is being done-Children



- Creating graded reading material keeping in view,
 - Their attention span and interest of reading- pictorial reading cards – which will encourage them to read.

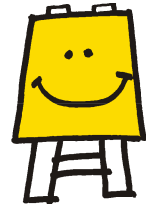
 - Their social, cultural and economic background
 - Read to think
 - Read to know
 - Read to do
 - Read to Solve

Reading



- Children's reading, expressing and writing ability is measured
- Reading:
 - Poor Readers: Children reading haltingly with no perception of punctuation marks.
 - Average Readers: Those who have difficulty in reading difficult words but have sense of punctuation marks.
 - Fluent Readers: Those who have good sense of punctuation marks and read fluidly.

Saying- Expressing



- Saying- Expressing:
 - There is hardly any attempt to make children talk about the text.
 - Teachers take no 'guided conversation' efforts.
 - Children just utter few words or say nothing.
 - 'Saying' is relatively easier than 'expressing'.
 - Children are encouraged to find the main idea and elaborate it.
 - They express openly once they get an idea about how to do it.
 - This ability is categorized as, 'nothing', 'talked in few words', 'talked in around five sentences' and 'talked in more than five sentences'

Writing



- Writing:
 - Observation indicates that children are able to do copy writing but they can hardly do independent writing.
 - Once the practice is given they can recall events and write but it takes much more time in writing the main idea and elaborating it.
 - Independent writing is mainly attributed towards writing the main idea.
 - However, we just measure whether children can write the events.
 - Writing ability therefore is categorized as, 'nothing', 'few words', 'less than five sentences' and 'more than five sentences'