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Digantar Shiksha Evam Khekkud Samiti is located just outside of Jaipur, Rajasthan. It has been working in alternative education for rural children since its founding in 1978. Digantar Vidyalay have been using Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) since 1978, an approach that has been highly recommended by NCF 2005 and RTE. Digantar believes that the purpose of education is to make the child a self-motivated and independent learner with the ability to think critically.

In Digantar Vidyalay, children have the freedom to learn at their own pace. Hence, the children in Digantar schools are not distributed according to their age but are distributed according to their level of learning.

30 The school is divided into 6 Samoohs with max. students of different age groups. The students are given an opportunity to name their own Samoohs. Students suggest many names, all these names are then written on the blackboard and each name is discussed. The name of my Samooh was AMAN, as the students had read a poem 'Aman (peace) ke hum Rakhwale', and they really liked the poem and its meaning.

AMAN Samooch had 27 students and 1 teacher.  
40 minutes were devoted for each subject ✓

The learning of language(s) was not just limited to the classroom ~~was~~ as a subject. Language was a base for learning other subjects and for day to day activities. The days began with 'Sabha' within the classroom in which students conducted the Sabha and gave instructions. Each student had an assigned day, thus, each student was given an equal opportunity. The Sabha had different activities for each day like dancing on the folk songs, Kanafossi, Shabd mala, acting, Gup, Riddles, Khula Manch, etc. which gave importance to their ~~their~~ regional language, builds confidence and enhances creativity of the students. [The Sabha focused on the speaking and listening skills of the students.] ✓

The classroom had a very Print-Rich Environment. The name of the Samooch was written in bold in front of the class. There were so many charts of every subject which had different drawings by children, hindi and English poems, stories, etc. The classroom also had materials such as storybooks, picture cards, etc. kept in shelves which was accessible to all the students at any time.

It has great potential for learning

It is not only to carry on L skills but also

driving the want to connect with

name of language and children

As already mentioned, the pace of learning of each student was respected and given importance to, there was ability grouping within the samooch. Students worked in groups of 5-6 on different topics. ✓

## HINDI

The Hindi class usually began with poems. The teacher as well as students took initiative for the poems. All the poems were based on the things they see around school and home. There were also some patriotic poems like चल चल रे रही चल रे... and poems which question gender stereotypes existing in their community like मैं झाड़ू पौधा करती, खेल खेलना भैया... ऐसा क्यों है भैया.

These poems were created by the students with the help of their teacher. There was another poem मेरी शाला गोल गोल, बच्चे आते दौड़-दौड़.. which describes the daily routine of the students in the school. These poems were also written and pasted on their walls which helped students to read and recite if they did not remember the poems. These poems helped students to make home - school connect. ✓

There were so many creative writing tasks which were done in the Hindi classroom.

- The students had already read some stories from their SCERT books. Their teacher made chits in which the name of these stories were written and students had to pick up a chit and re-write the story in their words and according to their own understanding. The stories in the SCERT and library books were not read for answering questions, but for enjoying and understanding. The stories were thus read in the aesthetic stance rather than efferent stance. ✓

- In one of the class, the teacher displayed 6-7 pictures in a circle and students had to create and write their own stories from the pictures. ✓

The focus of both these activities was not on spellings, errors, form or other mechanics, but on the language development and the creativity of the students. These activities focused on both reading and writing skills of the students. ✓

There was also a puppet-show activity, in which students had to create their own stories and dialogues and present it in front of the class using puppets. This happened through discussions among the students.

Grammar was taught in a very different way. Grammar was taught from a general to specific way, from examples to the definition.

- For teaching 'Visheshan' to a group of 8-10 students, the teacher brought 5-6 things from the school and asked each student to tell a 'Khasiyat' of any one object. Students were then asked about the 'Khasiyat' of few things which were kept in the classroom. The teacher then asked the students to construct any 5 sentences which has any 'Khasiyat' or 'Khasiyat ke shabd'. The students were able to construct sentences easily. No definition of 'Visheshan' was provided to the students the whole time.
- For teaching 'Upsarg', the teacher asked the students to write words starting from 'अं+...'. The students made random words like अंअ, अंअअ, अंअअअ, e.t.c.

The teacher then told the students that the second word should also have a meaning in itself, like  $सु + कर्म = सुकर्म$  ...

Then students made words like  $सु + सुग = सुसुग$ ,  $सु + दाता = सुदाता$ , because सुग and दाता had their own meanings.

This lesson plan was discussed in the teacher's meeting on Saturday, and the teacher asked all the teachers for suggestions. Some of the suggestions which came from the meeting were as follows:

- a) You should ask students to make words which enhances the meaning of the 'सुम श्लेष' when an up-sarg is added.
- b) You should create sentences and stories which has words <sup>with</sup> (सुदाता) and the same सुम श्लेष like सुदाता, सुदाता, etc.

These suggestions were then followed up in the class.

## ENGLISH

The English classes also began with poem recitation. There were different types of poems being recited in the classroom for different purposes and all these poems were recited with actions.

The poem Pigeon Kabutar,  
Udhan fly,  
Dekho look,  
Aasman Sky. was meant for the students to understand the English words or translation of certain Hindi words. ✓

There were also certain poems, whose meaning was constructed by students by interpreting the actions. These poems were also discussed in the classroom. ✓

The class was divided into 3 groups for the English class. ✓

Group 1 was working on the opposite words.

Instruction was written on the board as

दिने और रातों के Opposite words (मित्रा):

day

Tall

⋮

and the teacher kept on focussing on these words "Opposite words".

Group 2 was working on Jumbled letters. Certain jumbled letters were written on the board and students had to form words out of that. Example ERET - TREE, EABLT - TABLE.

Group 3 (4 students) were working on Text Reading. A small text was provided to them and they were trying to read and make sense of the text using dictionary and peer support.

In one of the class, students were given different story books. - use of authentic material

- a) The students had to read the entire storybook 2-3 times.
- b) Then students had to read aloud the story to a friend or the teacher.
- c) Then the students had to interpret the story using pictures given.
- d) Then, they had to find out the meaning of each word from the Hindi to English dictionary. (Grammar Translation Method).

Any comment on this



## Some other observations and Critique.

- \* Talk was one of the most important resource in the language and EVS classrooms. Students were asked to discuss <sup>certain things</sup> in pairs and groups, thus also leading to peer learning. ✓
- \* There was no right or wrong answers in the class. Each answer given by students was accepted and efforts were made to find out the reasons behind that answer. Even in the notebook, X and ✓ were not to be seen. If there was a mistake, a small dot (°) was put near it and it was discussed with that child the next day. ✓
- \* All the subjects were taught in integration like EVS, maths and language. Example, Maths was taught through English poems. ✓
- \* The books in the library were accessible to all students. They were properly covered and well maintained. The library had story books in Hindi, English, Urdu and Sanskrit. (Urdu and Sanskrit are taught in 6 to 10) ✓

\* There was a public platform - School Magazine "Baatooni", in which students' poems and articles were printed. This gave a sense of recognition and acceptance to the students.

\* Digantar had a very child-centered approach, lesson plans for each child was developed daily and each child was assessed daily on the work they had done. Thus, focusing on the process rather than the product.

Weekly review and suggestions were given on the lesson plans.

\* Whole language Approach (Top-down approach) was used for teaching language initially. Digantar has their own set of books with stories, and does not use primers at any stage.

⇒ Critique.

Dictionary was used for the meaning of each word. (Grammar translation method was used). It was very difficult to find the meaning of 'have, has, is, am, are', and it was very difficult to make meanings of the sentence because of the difference in word order in Hindi & English.

Overall,  
It is a well  
organized report.  
Good.

Bawar  
23.2.19