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## Digantar Report Learning of Language in Digantar Classrooms

Digantar Vidyalaya is an example of transformation in the education system. It has made possible the development of autonomous learners, democratic teachers and rational humans. Some of the observations showed that unlike traditional classrooms where the students are grouped (called a class) according to their age, the Digantar classrooms had students working according to their levels, in language classes. The levels depended on which unit the students were on. Clearly, there was vertical grouping, and hence, multilevel planning in the classroom.

\* - The classroom had loads of chart papers related to language learning (both English and Hindi) such

as poems, riddles, etc. which were made by the teachers. Some were at the eye level while some were not. ~~Thus~~ The teacher ~~prepares~~ <sup>plans</sup> what is to be taught everyday, understanding the needs and abilities of the children and mentioning the goals. Moreover, the teachers would also mention in their plan if any child needs attention in a particular task.

- Social context → Folktales are collected from the community and no concept is alienated. It is linked from their life.
  - Process model is followed where the focus is on how the task is done, rather than the correct answer! ☹
- Thus, the classrooms were child specific.

\* The students started their day ~~with~~ by ~~the~~ singing regional songs and sharing stories or poems from their lives in the morning ~~in~~ "sabha". Sometimes, children would perform a skit / play to enact some scenes from their recently read story. Thus, there

was acceptance of children's own viewpoints, language, real life instances and creative imagination as well.

\* The children would, then, sit in small groups (3-4) to work on their individual topics. The child could move onto the next topic as soon as s/he had understood the previous topic at his/her own pace. The students weren't forced to work on the same topic as a class, as the teacher understood that every child has his/her own pace of learning.

While in small groups, the students also checked errors in each others' work and helped each other. Importance was given to peer interaction apart from individual attention given by the teacher. The students were given enough freedom to ask their peer in case they needed help.

According to Vygotsky, much important learning by the child occurs through social interaction (peers in the classroom). And many times, more knowledgeable

other is not just a teacher or an older adult, but a child's peer can help who has a better understanding of the concept. Thus, cooperative learning could be observed in the classroom.

- \* The teacher never pointed out errors of children in their notebooks or never used red pen. The teacher, in order to teach the children the correct spellings, taught them using "Homophones" by writing various words commonly used by the children in their notebooks. Thus, there was acceptance of errors and <sup>also</sup> there was no right or wrong answer while giving their point of view.

For eg. - खुशी - खूशी  
 - समूह - समुह  
 - जयपुर - जयपूर , etc.

- \* The children were also taught one poem "Baba Black Sheep" by the teacher where he sang in front of the students and then, they

repeated after him. At the end of the poem, the teacher and the students also discussed some different words and their meanings. For eg.- Helping, caring, etc.

\* The Digital classrooms had a print-rich environment. There were story drafts, resources like concrete material present in both classrooms and the library. The use of flash cards could be seen ~~to~~ being used in the language classrooms. There were divisions in shelves for separate racks for different subjects, bags, lunch boxes, etc.

- The children were never forced to work. If a student was not willing to work, s/he could either go to the library or sleep in the class or go for a walk.

\* Such a healthy environment ~~was~~ is much needed in the classrooms as ~~all~~ all of this helps in the overall holistic development of the child. The teacher, here, is a motivator and a facilitator.