

**PAPER PRESENTED IN NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EXPLORING THE  
DYNAMICS OF EDUCATION ORGANISED BY SURESH GYAN VIHAR UNIVERSITY,  
JAIPUR FROM 5 – 6 JUNE, 2009**

**IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING - AN EXPERIMENT IN  
QUALITY EDUCATION**

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**SUMMARY**

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century has witnessed phenomenal explosion of knowledge. Education today has become more complex due to vast societal changes and new insights in the field of pedagogy. All these developments have brought about substantial changes in the methods and material of teaching & learning. Therefore, the demand for commitment driven teacher is no exception. A teacher in 21<sup>st</sup> century needs to be equipped with modern competencies to work effectively to cater to the needs of present day society. So everything has to be done to produce trained teachers of high quality & caliber. The important question is how to prepare the teachers for forthcoming challenges. The answer lies in conducting various professional in-service small training programme on a regular intervals. Sh. B.R. Sharma, Ex-Secretary CBSE also reminded the need for continuous growth of teachers, through in service training programme, in his address in Cenbosec “when I visit schools I am disturbed by the lack of awareness among the teachers and principals about professional growth. Principals should themselves become mentors and bring about healthy attitudinal changes among the teachers. We must learn for our own satisfaction. We need more examples of pace-setters so that every teacher is inspired”

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The model school Gyan Vihar took an initiative in this direction to train its English teachers in primary and middle section to execute the new trend in ELT successfully. Modern day India needs citizens who can use English in many different ways. The teachers are generally familiar with teacher-centered classroom, but in communicative approach to ELT the teacher is to adopt a variety of roles to make the students use English with confidence and fluency.

The head of the English Department planned the in-service training for her teachers with far sightedness. The programme was designed with an aim of achieving the desired results not only in English language but to see the impact of improvement (proficiency in English) in other aspects like:

- Comprehending lectures (lessons) in Science, Social Science etc.
- taking notes
- using library and its facilities
- engaging in computing & word processing

With this in mind, the teachers underwent training sessions during the seven-day orientation programme. The various areas were identified for the training.

The training responsibility was assigned to the senior teachers already trained in the new approach to ELT.

The participation of experts was avoided with a view to allow the members of the group to work in less formal atmosphere and develop a feeling of responsibility & participation of every member in the programme.

The programme was a delightful experience and highlighted the need for further discussions. However it yielded the authentic result. It proved that there is no substitute for learning by doing. It enhanced the learners' communicative capacity with a shift of emphasis from teaching to learning. The terminal exams further foreground the success of the programme. The marked difference in the performance of the students remains statistically significant. The members of the faculty also expressed their opinion, which reflects the same as said by Prof. Arindam Choudhary in his best seller.

“Enlightened, emancipated and empowered teachers lead communities and nation in their march towards better and higher quality of life. Global upsurge for education to all, revolution in information and communication technology, explosion of knowledge and rise in expectation and aspirations of people have led to the need of infusing teachers in a set of desired competencies, values and a sense of commitment and willingness to perform. The teacher has to transform herself/himself as an agent of change and not act merely as an information dispenser. The teacher is expected to be a mobiliser, motivator and an enlightened link between the school and the society. The modern teacher has to accomplish an uphill task of creating conducive learning environment where students are stimulated, challenged and motivated to learn. The teacher is not a mere deliverer of content in a four-walled classroom but a potential vibrant source of inspiration to the learner to design and develop his students' thought process.”

The problem is that a teacher cannot transform his pupils unless he/she undergoes radical transformation vis-à-vis change and innovation. If teaching children is one of the most important responsibilities a society can ask some of its members to undertake then the challenge to nurture and enhance the professional skills of each new generation of teachers for the vastly complex world of the 21st century and sharpen the proficiency of teachers already in service, must be an equally valuable assignment. The National Policy on Education, 1986 highlights the role and status of teachers through the statement "No people can rise above the level of its teachers"(Mangal, 2002) and demands a high level academic and professional competence from them. It is therefore essential to provide continuous in service training on the latest innovations and experiments, emerging issues and concerns to enable the teachers to perform their professional duties meaningfully and effectively. It is believed that it is not merely the command over the subject and the communication ability that counts but their orientation towards the profession and its values, skills in pedagogy, curriculum construction, and evaluation procedures is also essential. In-service

training would mean that process which is undertaken to bring about qualitative changes in the faculty members in fulfilling their obligations to achieve the aims/goals and objectives of their institutions. Most of the commissions like the Secondary Education Commission, 1952-53, the Education Commission 1964-66, the National Policy on Education 1984, the DIETs, the CTEs etc. have also emphasized on the need for in-service training based on content up gradation, conceptual clarification and transactional skills. The National Policy on Education has advised programmes of in-service education in clear-cut terms. Particularly, the Education Commission 1964-66 has advised for large scale and co-coordinated programmes of in-service education for teachers. The NPE, 1986/1992 and programme of action 1986/1992 have provided for introducing and strengthening of the infrastructure for teacher education to organise in-service programmes through various modes including Distance Education (Prahallada, 2003).

The NCTE, 1998 has also identified 5 performance areas for teachers in which in-service education is necessary from time to time. These areas are:

- (i) Performance in the classrooms
- (ii) School level performance
- (iii) Performance in out of school activities
- (iv) Performance related to parental contact and co-operation and
- (v) Performance related to community contact and co-operation.

Further 5 areas of commitment have also been linked to this performance and competence of teachers. These are commitment to the learner, to the society, to the profession, to achieve excellence and basic human values (Raviya, 2002)

It clearly depicts that the masters of trade teachers require skill up gradations and training through the use of innovative technologies and methodology in consonance with existing systems.

### **MANAGING IN SERVICE TRAINING:**

The opportunities for faculty development may be provided both internally within the institutions as well as externally outside the institutions. The internal avenues take the form of facilitative and supportive arrangements made by the institutions to enable the individual teacher(s) to implement the ideas and skills acquired during a training already undergone by him/them through a platform arranged. The internal arrangements for faculty development can be effectively organised if the head of the institution carries a clean perception of the professional development needs of the colleagues (co-workers) and evaluation of their teaching and performance, which is a difficult exercise.

It is only possible with faith and confidence in the colleagues. Internal faculty development programmes can be more frequent to provide a continuous and regular avenue for acquiring knowledge and skills for faculty development. It is believed that accountability motivates people to learn and modify their behavior in the desired direction. Therefore, participating teachers should also be accountable to their heads for implementing the skills and knowledge acquired by them during the faculty development orientation programmes. In this way the in-service training programme can help in improving the quality of education and excellence in its standards.

## **Model School**

The concepts of internal In-service training were implemented in Gyan Vihar Public School, Jaipur during the session 2006-2007. Gyan Vihar Public School was established in the year 1990 and is the part of Gyan Vihar Universe which has become a name in Technical Education in the state of Rajasthan and has also been granted University Status by Government of Rajasthan. Gyan Vihar has become a pioneer Co-educational school. The school strives to promote quality education in its vision. It also faces the challenges of the present times. In the competitive world today, the students of senior classes show indifference towards English as a core subject on the false pretext of their good and sound knowledge of the same. The grim reality to the fact is that they possess a very little knowledge of the subject, which is highlighted in their classroom performance and various examinations. The mistakes pertaining to usage dominate but the attitudinal change to score better does not occur. The language teachers also show apathy towards the issue, as they know that their students in every case will score good marks in the present marks oriented examination system. Apart from this, the dearth of qualified, experienced and committed teachers towards their profession makes the matters worse, because teaching as a profession is the last priority of the youth today.

Therefore the issue of orientation programme received due attention and a platform was provided to the teachers to bring them together, and allow them to share and clarify issues, concerns and doubts about ELT in primary & middle classes. It aimed at the transaction of the new course material in the manner that would suit to produce better results in elementary classes where children acquire L<sub>2</sub> in their formative years.

It was realised that any important change in the school could occur with an intensive teachers' training. However, it was clear that the training would have to include a fundamentally alternative approach to language learning and an alternative view to what was meant by language teaching and language. The model adopted highlighted that the training would be held in a group with everyone sitting around the table, in the mode of discussions and thinking together and would not consist of sermonizing or giving lectures.

### **TARGET GROUP & RATIONALE BEHIND TRAINING:**

This training was organized for a group of English teachers engaged in teaching primary and middle classes. English Language Education has carved its own niche in Indian Education System. English enjoys its dominance over all the languages of the world today. Globally English has become a link language for all purposes. In a multilingual country like India, English seems to be a common language like other languages including Hindi. Hence English language Education is a reality today.

It is difficult to think of an alternative to English. Therefore there has been a great revival of interest in making the teaching and learning of English more meaningful. The ELT has undergone a revolutionary change. The confusion, which has beset language teachers for a long time, is between 'knowing about the language' and 'using the language'. Both these subjects of study have their place but the intention of language teaching in schools is very clear these days: it is to teach pupils to be able to use English for practical purposes (CBSE, 1998). English as a school subject is therefore a

skill subject and it differs from other content subjects like History etc. English languages teaching in the present context means making pupils master the four basic skills - listening, speaking, reading and writing. These basic language skills have to be acquired through the help of the test material (textbooks and workbooks) prescribed in the syllabus for the primary and middle classes.

Since all skills are acquired by doing, the teacher's job is to organise her/his teaching in such a way that her/his pupils are given the maximum opportunity for doing things in the class room i.e. listening, speaking, reading and writing. The more, the pupil's practice, the more they learn. To make language teaching natural, meaningful and realistic, the trainee teachers were introduced to the ways in which the teaching and learning of various language skills can be integrated. It was felt that for effective teaching and upgrading the academic discourse the teachers need to know, understand and be trained in the new approach to ELT. It also aimed at enabling the faculty to modernise their teaching methods by minimizing the traditional 'chalk and talk' method of instruction, make their classrooms interactive and play their new roles (Teacher as Manager) efficiently to make their contact teaching effective. This new approach to ELT is termed as Communicative Approach to ELT. The new trend was the result of realisation of the fact that the use of English language in India for various purposes depends on its being learnt sufficiently well to make it a practical tool. The students in India learn it sometimes at primary level and sometimes at secondary level. It is therefore essential that the preparation of teachers to carry out the task of teaching English at both these levels must be very effective. It can't be denied that the proper learning of English facilitates the students in understanding the other subjects well in English medium schools and perform better in the examination least relying on cramming the details.

Several Boards of Secondary Education formulated their own way of teaching English. The West Bengal Board of Secondary Education was pioneer in this field by introducing Communicative Approach of teaching English way back in 1986 but the desired result was not achieved because the Board did not make an honest effort of training the English teachers. They went on following the traditional approach of teaching this subject and the final result is known to all of us. Not only has this but the casual approach of the teaching faculty also added fume to it.

The Central Board of Secondary Education- took an initiative in this direction to achieve long term goals and changed the curriculum in English course 'A' for classes IX & X in the academic session 1993-94. The learning material was designed with a special emphasis on developing skills and helping gain confidence to use them effectively in life situations.

The overall aims of the course include:

- (i) To enable the learner to communicate effectively and appropriately in real-life situations.
- (ii) To use English effectively for study purposes across the curriculum.
- (iii) To develop and integrate the use of four language skills
- (iv) To develop an interest in and appreciation of literature.
- (v) To recycle and reinforce structures already learnt.

The overwhelming success of the course throughout the country made the schools adopt the same for the primary & middle classes too. The proper execution of the new approach highlighted the need for training.

## **Comparative Methodology/ Emerging Trends/ Changing Perception**

People talk of teacher development programmes seminars and workshops but care is taken that these are organised only during holidays with an ostensible concern for not losing classes and valuable classroom time but really because of an attitude of callousness or indifference towards the vacation of teachers. The school teachers who generally work hard throughout the year need the break and hence may not find these programmes very effective. Keeping the same in mind, it was decided to organise the comprehensive development programme during the month of February when the board classes proceeded on preparatory leave and the senior teachers became free to plan and organise the training programme for the entire faculty. The opportunity was finally seized before the Annual examination for other classes when the students had their preparatory leave and the members of the faculty got free from their classes. It enabled the trainees to participate with vigor and enthusiasm to produce better results.

The Changes in the teaching learning process are influenced by a variety of factors. It is a sum total of these factors that determine what happen in the classroom. While the emphasis on the articulated essential expectations of the school has undergone a transformation, the reality is far more static. In current pedagogical parlance, we talk of activity based, child centred education in a democratic classroom, but the reality reflects very little.

### **METHODOLOGY:**

Hence, the teachers underwent serious and purposeful sessions throughout the seven-day orientation programme including simulation exercises demanding application of various techniques. It was observed that -

- The training would be participative and there would be no long lectures in it.
- The teachers must feel a part of the process and develop their abilities.
- The areas identified for the training included developing awareness and interest among the teachers' vis-à-vis:
  - a) Communicative approach to ELT. (Understanding curriculum and its transaction in the classrooms)
  - b) Various skills to be mastered
  - c) The proper use of the set of textbooks
  - d) Planning syllabus (term wise)
  - e) Planning the classroom teaching (lessons)
  - f) Make the classrooms interactive-using teaching aids
  - g) The process of evaluation
- The emphasis would be on linking training and teaching by assigning the training responsibility to the Senior Teachers and not merely depending on trainers (experts, resource persons)
- The training would be based on the review of the day's interactions and planning for the next day. The teachers know lot more about their own conditions and their students. They have specific abilities to be shared with others. Thus other trainees could also be resource persons in different areas.

- The handouts would be given for proper understanding of the concepts and the teachers to sit at various tasks to be done in groups.
- The various lessons (prose, poetry) for the four skills would be demonstrated for better/proper understanding - execution in the classrooms.
- The teacher trainers themselves would also learn during the training, as they are not fount of all information and understanding.
- The group would shed doubts and apprehensions on the execution of new approach to ELT in primary and middle classes and realise the need for identifying their strengths and weaknesses.

### **EXPERTS & EXPERTISM:**

The participation of experts was avoided in the training as it was felt:

- It overpowers the teachers with extra-ordinary knowledge and capability in an imposing way.
- It re-in forces teachers' own doubts about themselves and their abilities.
- It adds difficulties to their learning in areas where they find themselves incapable.
- It provides a role model who knows every thing and can't be challenged.

### **SALIENT FEATURES:**

The in-house training by working in small groups in proximity allows familiarity, which facilitates the trainees to ask questions and challenge the teacher trainer without inhibitions. The system has more flexibility regarding going back and coming forth with trainees' speed. The atmosphere is less tense and formal. It is not time bound. The session can be moderated as per the needs of the group. The relationship between the trainee and the trainer is not hierarchical and the trainers do not believe that they know more than the trainees. In fact the understanding is that the trainers have one kind of knowledge and the trainees another. They also highlight that they do not know everything. The division of work among the members of the group develops a feeling of responsibility and participation in the programme.

### **IMPACT ON ADMINISTRATION:**

- It helped in improving the professional skills of the teachers to become more effective in their classrooms.
- It facilitated to fulfill institutional aims and objectives.
- It did not exercise any pressure on administration to arrange resource persons from outside.

- It helped in keeping pace with the changing scenario of education especially ELT.
- It helped in executing the plan for the academic year and helps the students learn in better way.

### **IMPACT ON STUDENTS:**

- The key target of an educational system is the learner. The curriculum design, the teacher training and the evaluation process aim at helping the students to develop their mind. The pupils were at large affected in their learning process.
- The learning is linked with the context (situations) hence it becomes more interesting for them.
- The shift from traditional class room to interactive classroom sets the children free to stimulate their curiosity and enquiry, leading to sharpen their observation power and logical thinking.
- The Children learn in congenial atmosphere working in groups, pairs promoting better learning.
- The students get ample opportunities to listen/speak in the classroom to master the required language skills.
- The students are more active than passive which helps in acquiring L2 better.

### **RESULT**

The model school follows continuous comprehensive evaluation system. The formal examination is the yardstick to measure the academic progress of any school. Judging from this point of view the results proved to be encouragingly phenomenal. The tests and terminal exams at regular intervals highlighted marked difference in the performance of the students, which is statistically significant. It proved the authenticity of the idea that there is no substitute for learning by doing. It enhanced the learners' communicative capacity with a shift of emphasis from teaching to learning. The learners took over the stage from teachers. The members of the faculty added their reaction in the same way as expressed by Prof. Arindam Choudhary in his best seller "Count your chickens before they hatch" At first people refused to believe that a strange new thing can be done, then they begin to think it can't be done, then they see it can be done, then it is done and all the world wonders why it was not done before.

### **CONCLUSION**

The orientation programme was a good experience and highlighted the need for further discussions with classroom experience sharper focus. It is true that the most 'authentic assessment' of teacher learning resides in teachers' actual classrooms practice and the faith in what a middle school teacher has quoted:



A Friend recently noticed that I was reading a copy of “Learning to Teach” by Richard Arends and commented that I was too close to retirement to learn how to do it correctly now. At the time I laughed, but in reflection I know that it is never too late to learn to teach. That is the basis for the excitement, strength and motivation of the Puget Sound Professional Development Center renewal program. We at the middle level can learn better methods and strategies whether we are student teachers or veterans of twenty- five years.

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