

English Language Workshop

24th to 27th September, At CTE, Khandwa (M.P.)

Session Plan for Workshop-

Day	Morning Session (warm up activity) 10:00 to 10:30	Pre Lunch Session 10:30 to 1:30	Post Lunch Session 2:30 to 5:30
1 (sep 24)	Breaking the ice	Nature of Language	Language teaching v/s subject teaching
2 (sep 25)	Song based activity	Communicative Language Teaching	Reading for Meaning
3 (sep 26)	Song based activity	Making Sense of the Unfamiliar Text	Second Language Acquisition
4 (sep 27)	Song based activity	More English in the Classroom	Making the Most of the Textbooks

Tea breaks: 12:00 – 12:15 during the pre-lunch session & 4:00 – 4:15 in the evening.

Lunch break: 1:30 – 2:30 p.m.

Day one (24/9/2013)

Inaugural session:

The arrangements were wonderful, the CTE is an old establishment, the Principal was waiting for us, on meeting he informed that the CTE had already sent a letter to call the participants, as it was the first day it was expected that the participants would reach late. By 11:10 there were four participants in the hall. Some of the faculties also showed willingness to join us.

Sudhir at 12:00 pm with fifteen participants began the warm up activity in which participants had to introduce themselves by associating them with two adjectives, two geographical features and two animals/birds. It was heartwarming to see that all the participants including the Principal and a faculty not only participated enthusiastically but enjoyed it also.

Post lunch session began with an assumption that **language is learnt not when we learn about it but when we learn through it**. Pallavi started seeking the opinion of people on the assumption.

Participants came forward with the following ideas about the language:-

- When rules are taught we feel bounded it is not learning the function of a language but learning about it.
- Language is a medium of instruction and expression.
- A language needs its own atmosphere.
- Medium of communication.
- Language gives words to our gestures, signs and expression, feelings through tones.
- Listening and speaking are the most important usage of language.

Participants then were asked to read a reading from the manual 'BHASHA KI PRAKRUTI'.

The article talks about the whole range of functions a language does in one's life, certainly it provided the participants a new perspective to think about what language exactly is.

Pallavi asked them to discuss certain things that one disagrees with, the things that one has never experienced while using a language, but no one disagreed or pointed out anything which falls out of his experience of using a language. Then she started discussing the insights of the reading. The crux of the discussion is as follows –

- The cognitive development and the development of language depend on each other.
- Originally language is oral writing is done to preserve it.
- The smallest unit of a language is sound, no sound individually has a meaning they give us meaning only when kept in an order.
- Language is a manmade system which has its smallest meaningful unit as word and the meaning of that word in a lingual group is limited.
- In the form of a words these entities are concepts and their names, in a society these names are arbitrary, stable and collectively accepted.
- Language is a well arranged system, on the basis of which we get the meaning of the world out. The capability of creating meaning of this system is infinite.

So as the participants had gone through the reading and discussed the above points they were asked to revise their definition which they had given earlier and create a new definition. The groups came up with the following definitions:-

- Language is the basic system of sounds associated with the concepts, to communicate our ideas in proper way.
- Language is like a pipeline with which we can circulate so many kinds of ideas, feelings, emotions etc.
- A language is a medium of exchanging our thoughts and ideas through human made concepts, skills and visioning.
- Manmade systematic speech system its smallest unit is word. Medium of instruction....

So ultimately the participants did not move from their earlier definition.

Participants were instructed to read once again this reading at home so that they could think beyond language being medium of expression. To make them realize the other functions of the language they were given the situations **(a road accident, a birthday party is being discussed in a family, a principal is holding a meeting at school with staff, a surgeon is discussing the condition of a cardiac patient with medical students)** to simulate as a group.

Seeking help
 Interrogating the victim
 Investigating the case
 Conversation
 Interpreting the situation to simulate
 Concluding
 Discussion
 Agreements
 Disagreements
 Planning
 Gathering information
 Suggestions
 Making decision
 Asking the well being
 Instruction
 Explaining
 Argument

While simulating the situations the following functions of language were noticed:-



The groups very well simulated the situations and drew above functions of language intelligently. At the end of the day Pallavi could establish successfully that language does much more than merely being the medium of expression.

Day 2 (25/9/2013)

The session started with **the song I have a dream**. Parul and Bharti conducted the warm up session and asked the candidates to share their dreams, most of the gents said that they wanted to join Army but due to being physically unfit, they could not do so whereas ladies wanted to become a Professor. Then they were asked to share their children's dreams. They shared – their children want to become Doctor, Engineer, Management person etc. Then they were asked to explain their students' dreams. The participants shared that their students want to become Driver, Conductor, Vegetable seller etc. Then the question was asked that how can we help our students to fulfill their dreams.

The pre-lunch session was taken by Sudhir. Participants were made to sit in 5 groups, each group was given one envelope containing some pictures and sentences describing those pictures. They had to match the pictures with the sentences, later they had to create a story based on the picture/s.

The objective of the activity was to make the participants realize the following things-



- While reading it is important to make meaning otherwise only decoding takes place in the name of reading.
 - While working with the language one forgets the self-consciousness hence the language learning happens excellently.
 - Learning aids and peer group learning ascertain stress-free learning environment.
 - Learning a language is working with the language, using it for various functions and not learning about a language.
- Creating real life situations helps children to get away from mechanical drill and to learn language in a natural environment.

Later a Reading based on Communicative Language Teaching was given to read, an intense discussion took place on the reading covering 10 points on the paradigm shift in the language classrooms they are -

Paradigm shift in class room practices:

1. A great attention is now focused on the role of learner not on an external stimuli, this shift is known as the move from teacher centered instruction to learner centered instruction.
2. Focus on the learning process rather than the products learners produce.
3. Focus on the social nature of learning rather than on students as separate, decontextualized individuals.
4. Seeing the diversity among the students as a resource to be recognized, catered and appreciated, not an impediment to learning.
5. The views and experiences of students are more important now rather than the views those come from outside.
6. School and study are now connected with the world beyond the class room.
7. Helping students to understand the purpose of learning and develop their own purpose.
8. A whole to part orientation instead of part to whole orientation approach.
9. Emphasis on meaning than drill.
10. Learning is a lifelong process rather than something done to prepare student to pass the exam.

In the post lunch session each group was given the task to design one communicative activity based on any lesson of the text book.

Group presentations-

- 1) Group 1 presented a class room scene- Discussion on map, map of India were drawn, children were asked to find out the no and names of states from the book.
- 2) Group 2 presented class room scene in which question answers session and discussion were included- **what is a fort, have you seen any fort, where is Maheshvar fort etc.**



They presented it as information transfer activity on which Sudhir commented that it could be done with the help of a bar graph or bio sketch.

3) Group 3 presented story completion activity in which a story was broken into many sentences and children would sit in groups, read and arrange the sentences to recreate the story, it was a good example of a jig saw activity.

4) Group 4 presented a question answer session based on water. They presented it as information gathering activity.

Sudhir explained how an information gathering activity can be planned.

5) Group 5 presented a Quiz which was again a one way question answer activity with no possibility for a lively communication to take place.

The second half of the post lunch session was conducted by Pallavi on Subject teaching v/s Language teaching. She took a quick recap on yesterday's discussion on Nature of Language. Then she told the participants to compare a language class and a social studies class. She compared the classroom practices of both the classes and came to the conclusion that both the classes look same when we see the classroom practices but the teaching objectives of both are totally different.

Pallavi asked if the same practices continue in the schools, will the children master the language and achieve their goals of life?

Two case studies based on the teaching practices were given for reading. They were divided into two groups and told to analyze the case studies and put the analysis on the board and explain the difference in both the practices.

Case 1- Reading of the words and sentences by the teacher, Students were not able to pronounce the words, didn't understand the text, children were not attentive, No activity, enough context setting was not done

Case 2- Group study, task was given to develop confidence, teacher as facilitator, children were enjoying the learning. In case 2 children are actually learning by doing on their own, they are discovering, analyzing, thinking and learning.

Day 3 (26/9/2013)

Warm up activity was conducted by Bharti and Parul.

They played a song "You are my Sunshine". In the first round participants just listened the song. In the second round they were provided with the script of the song to fill in the blanks they had to concentrate on the words and fill the words to complete the song. Participants took two rounds to fill the words but still some were not sure about the words. At the end the script of the song was given to the participants and all enjoyed it singing together.

In the pre-lunch session the Facilitator- Pallavi asked the participants whether they read the reading of Hridaykant Diwan discussed yesterday. In between she also tried to remember participant's names.

Following points came from participants as the insight on the reading-

- Limited time allotted for language teaching in schools.
- Limited exposure and opportunity of learning language.
- There is no fun in language learning.
- There is no place of home language in school.
- Emphasis on rote learning- because child has to show this in examination.
- In place of correcting errors we need to look at our assumptions about errors.
- There shouldn't be so much emphasis on grammar teaching.
- Very little opportunity for speaking and listening as far as English is concerned.

Pallavi summarized the session as follows-

- We need to provide atmosphere to children.
- Use language with clues and gesture while speaking- For example- Akash shut the door (and you can indicate towards the door)
- Problem is lack of exposure and opportunity
- When you tell the meaning in Hindi- Then brain don't need to struggle for finding the meaning, you ease the work by giving meaning.
- We discourage home language in school- Their language should be used as a medium to teach in English.
- "We don't learn language when we learn about them we learn language when we learn through them."
- Acquisition Vs learning- First language is acquired however second language acquired through learning.

After the discussion Pallavi asked participants to read the last paragraph from the article-"Prathmik Kaksha mein bhasha shikshan"

Some thoughts from discussion on this reading-

Myth- we have think in the same language which language we are trying to learn.

Because we even need language to think and thinking cannot be possible without language. We mostly generalized the things in our mind. For example- Experience of bird in a child's life. For this child definition of bird is- which can fly, perch and have feathers. In her world even kite and aero plane are some category of birds.



Simulation- when we plan our action/task by using language to organize your thoughts and action. For example a child mutters while doing her task. Speaking is important to build own understanding.

After the discussion Pallavi asked them to write six points about nature of language and a teacher needs to do in the class as per nature of language (a prescription for teachers according to nature of language)

Following points come up-

- More emphasis should be given to listening and speaking at primary level.
- More opportunities should be given to the learners for independent learning.
- Language games/activities.

Summarization-

- Problem in our approach is – that we don't start with meaning, we start with alphabets. If we start with words we start with meaning. And take away the process to find out the meaning.
- As teacher's come from the same background so there is question of their competency also. They can start speaking small sentences in English.
- Activities to make visual connections- association of words with images.
- When we recognize somebody's face we don't recognize it in parts as eyes, hairs, etc we perceive it as whole face. And remember it as familiar face of a friends. Same is with the words.
- We should start with familiar words of their environment. Children remember the image of word.
- Some word/language activities were suggested by facilitator.
- If child knows the meaning then we don't need to write the meaning for every chapter they can read and write at their own.

Session on First and Second language acquisition

Pallavi asked participants to share objective of using first language acquisition-

Participants shared the following points-

- To express
- To fulfill their needs
- To understand what is being talked about and what is happening
- To be able to do something, etc.

Discussion- Every child learn language even if deaf and dumb then sign language. We are biologically programmed to learn language. There is mechanism in brain helps us to follow the structure of language whether SVO or SOV.

Process of acquiring first language?

- Through experiences and building understanding by connecting experiences with words. Because this language is in the environment.
- If I have to acquire Tamil while living in a Tamilnadu, my objectives of learning Tamil will be same as first language.
- We have to understand whether we are taking English as a subject or English as a language. Objective is to use language.
- Objective of learning second language will not be same as objective of acquiring first language.
- So by learning grammar you cannot learn to use language.
- When you acquire a language you can use it but when you learn a language you can know about the language but you cannot use it.
- If we acquire a language there will be no difficulty in using that language. So our process needs to be changed towards acquiring rather than learning.
- Example- Using technology without knowing language. Technology is acquired effortlessly because it is in the environment.
- In acquiring English language problem is in the process of teaching methodology. English is not tough of different language as generally perceived.

After the discussion reading "Second language acquisition" was given to participants. And discussion was held on consolidation points.

- Affective filter
- Non-threatening environment.
- Silent period to absorb/understand the language
- We don't focus on content when we gave writing to children we only focus on mistakes.
- Teacher's raised questions about using sms language in the examination. It was discussed with the following example-
 You my sunshine
 U r my sun sign

In which sentences we can that student knows the syntactical order. Which is better content wise?

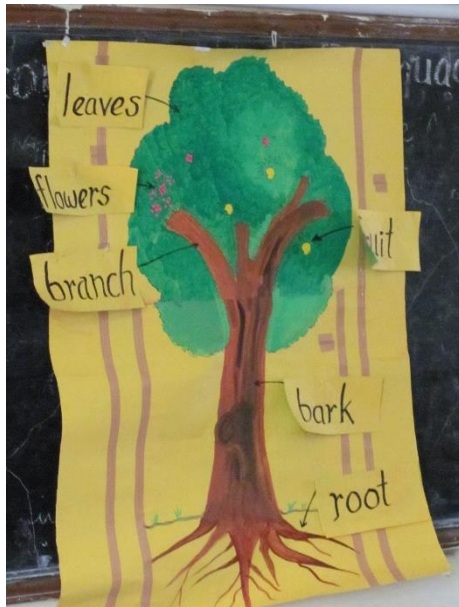
- Language is not slave of script. Script has limitations. We can write any language in any script.
- We only give emphasis on spellings and their corrections, we forget about expression and use of language and richness of content/text.

Post Lunch –Video of Jane Sahi's school part one was shown.

Discussion on the video- Pallavi drew participant's attention towards the

- Background of school
- Teacher's pronunciation and their raw English
- Context of school- Govt School, rural children.
- Children were following what was being said. Able to make meaning.
- Teachers were using small simple sentences with gestures and expressions.
- They were speaking only in English. We found it easy to translate but in the video no instruction was given in any other language- whether junior or senior class.
- It requires a lot of mental work and effort by teacher.
- Attitude of the teacher is also important

After a fairly long discussion on the video an activity was done involving the participants by Sudhir



A big beautiful drawing of tree was displayed on the board, all the parts were then introduced to the participants orally later the name of the parts written on flash cards were shown and spoken out loudly **with an assumption that we form a picture of a word in our mind and we read a word as a whole instead of reading it letter by letter**, participants then were called one by one to label the parts using those flash cards.

Further to add another layer of meaning making the parts were used in the sentences like -

- ❖ Flower turn into fruits.
- ❖ Roots remain under the soil.

Then he gave another exercise to use parts of a tree into different sense like -

- ❖ There are thirty leaves in my notebook.
- ❖ How many branches of this institute are there in our country?
- ❖ Cat mews while dogs barks.
- ❖ Your success is the fruit of hard work.
- ❖ What is the root cause of this problem?
- ❖ Lily flower in the month of June.

Thus the activity which seemed initially a primary class activity ended as a **multi grade, multi layered**, fun filled activity.

After this exercise part 2 of Jane Sahi's video was shown and Pallavi summarized the discussion by asking- what good pedagogical practices are shown in this video-

- No stress, boredom and punishment- all children were involved in all activities.
- Students were left to learn independently.
- Use of learning aids for purposeful engagement.
- Group work
- Teacher's constant support to students.
- Use of gestures, clues and expressions by teacher.
- Learning was fun, suspense, eagerness.
- Active participation and self-correction of mistakes.
- Children were taken out and outside world was taken into the classroom.
- Affectionate teacher
- Direct approach.

Day 4 (27/9/2013)



Sudhir started the warm up with BACK TO BOARD game. The participants presented the activities they had prepared yesterday for English language classrooms. Pallavi started the session with the question – 'who is a good reader' to find the following answers –

- One who can understand each and everything in the given text.
- One who can handle academic books.
- One who reads between the lines.
- One who can apply knowledge gained through books/printed material in one's own life.

Two things emerged from the discussion that –

We read for pleasure and we read for knowledge.

She put a question - if a good reader is what you describe as above then what is reading?

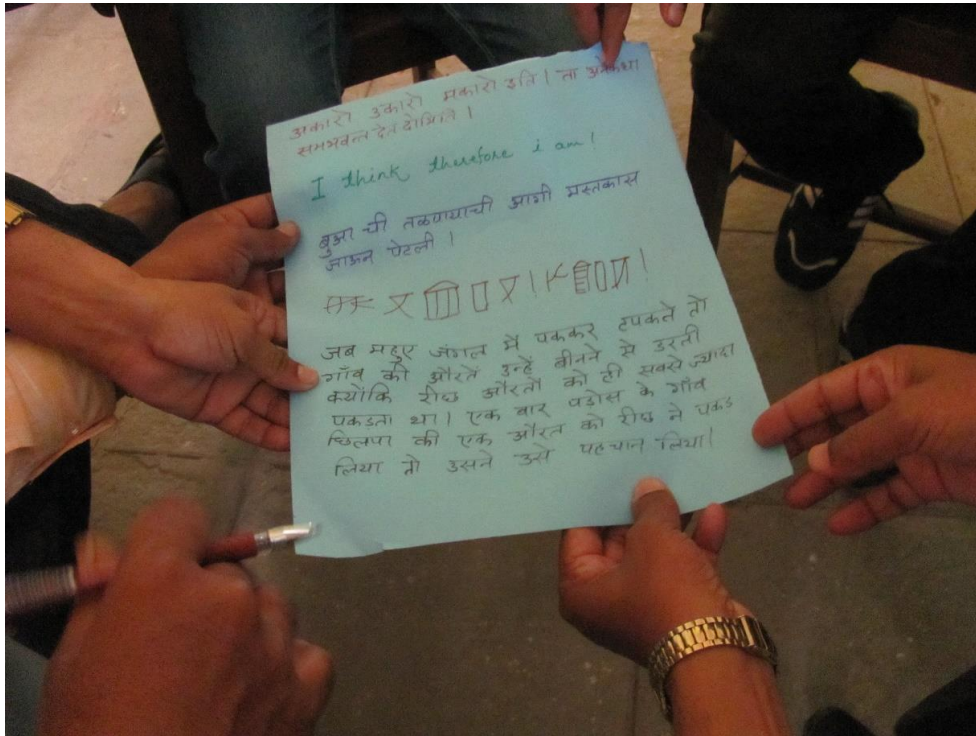
Answers were –

- Reading is – to understand writer's idea.
- To read the world through words.
- Reading with correct intonation and stress.
- Ability to connect with previous knowledge.
- Ability to read the script of a language.

Bharti asked the participants to make groups, she gave each group a paper with sentences written in many languages to read, and the findings were -

- Why could they not understand Sanskrit – the script was familiar but meaning was not known.
- They could get some meaning of the sentence – I think therefore I am – script familiar some meaning was known, each one made a different meaning because of different interpretation.
- In Chinese script neither the script nor the language was known.

- Marathi was the same case that script was known but complete meaning could not be made, whatever meaning was there that too was not correct.
- Hindi – script and language were known but the context and the previous events were not known so the meaning making remained partial and that too we could do because of the social context.



Bharti next made them to sing songs in four languages (Bengali, French, English, and Marathi). Participants were given the task to find the meaning of those songs taking the help from the meanings given at the foot note.

The participants further could make meaning partially but later when Bharti gave them the exact context they could find the complete meaning.

So the crux of the matter was that to read and understand a text one needs to know not only the script and language but context and previous knowledge and cultural background too are important.

Pallavi began the discussion on the whole activity and asked people to come up with ideas and insights that how could they make meaning, the findings were-

- With the help of some clues/hints/meanings given/gestures.
- Made guesses.
- Creating a context.
- Tried and fit the clues in the context.
- Single known word made a cultural context.
- A few words triggered us to connect others in a whole idea using our past experiences.
- Caught pattern, generalized and concluded.

Pallavi then prompted them to make list that **what is involved in reading -**

- Understanding.
- Interest.

- We learn through reading.
- Experiences.
- Knowledge.
- Perception.
- Interpretation.
- Hypothesis making.
- Imagination.
- Prediction.
- Guessing.
- Decoding.

We take out global and local meaning, when we give the children a readymade meaning we deprive them off the whole struggle of taking out global and local meaning by applying the above mentioned things involved.

Pallavi then explained **scanning and skimming, intensive and extensive reading** with the help of an example of newspaper reading.

The post lunch session began with a case study in which a child (Ashok) dropped out because he was not able to read properly due to the approach used by his teacher during his elementary years.

Pallavi proceeded with the discussion that-

- We recognize the words as a whole how can we expect a child to read word by word when we teach him the reading letter by letter, secondly the teacher was underestimating the child & she was unassuming.
- The thinking that the teacher is superior and giving knowledge to students as a charity is wrong, in fact the knowledge is created by the learners.
- Environment in the class too plays an important role in the learning of a child, giving freedom to talk, discuss, play, express are necessary.
- Why was Ashok demotivated?
 1. No opportunity to learn independently.
 2. He was unable to learn other subjects through language.

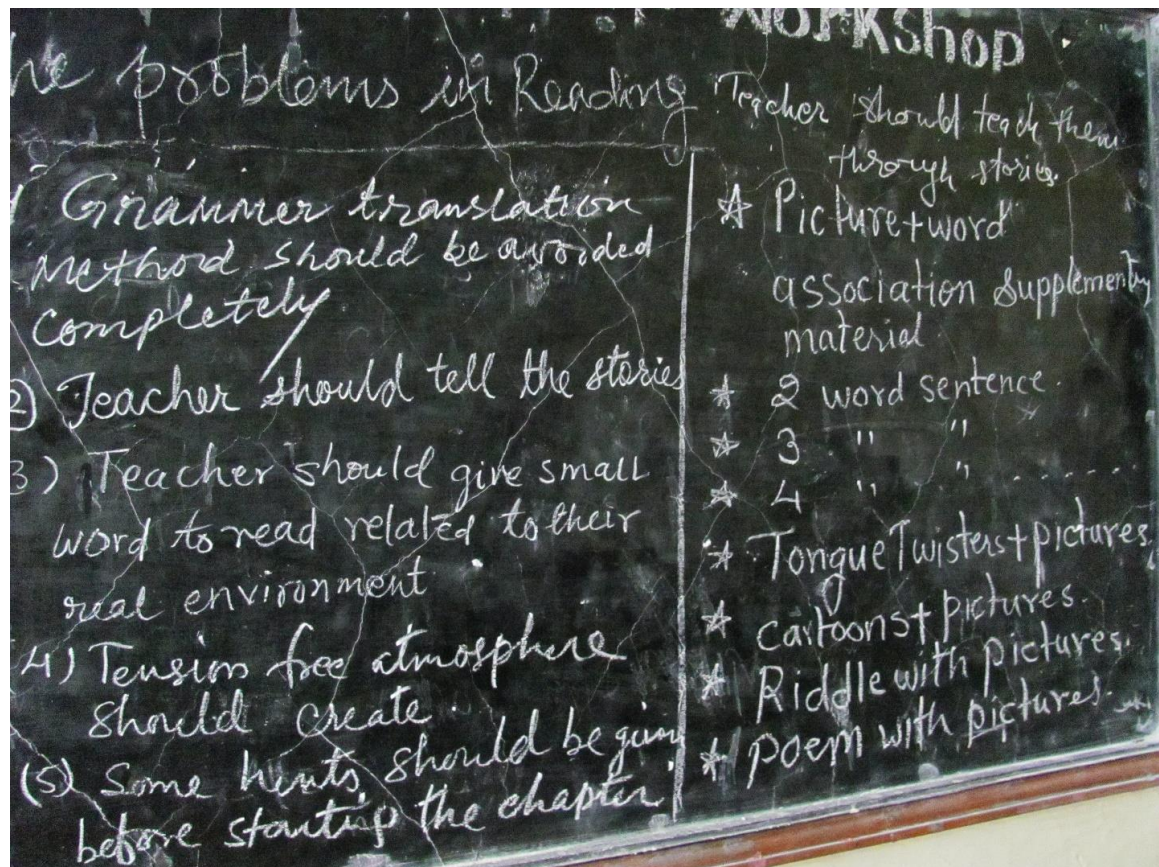
Then the case story of Janki was read out, later the insights were shared-

- She started associating the visual symbols with spoken language.
- She was given time and opportunity to enrich her experiences through story books, newspaper and TV
- What is happening wrong in our classes looking into the story of Janki- we are teaching our children reading in isolation we do not relate it with the experiences of a child, we do not give them opportunity to think, to speak, we do not give opportunity to enrich their experiences.

The excerpt from 'To Kill a Mocking Bird' was read out, and the discussion proceeded to have the insights like-

- The child learned only by following her father very unconsciously.
- She learnt reading as she learnt breathing, means she learnt without having been taught by anyone.
- Child has a mind which receives the things and logically processes them, it is not a brainless imitation.
- Child uses the words/uses in correct situations.

Participants were given the task to make a list for teachers about what to do and what not while teaching reading. The does and don'ts are –



- Use picture - word association method.
- Give small sentences to read.
- Use cartoons to read.
- Use riddles.
- Use poems with pictures to read and sing.
- Tell the students stories.
- Create stress free environment.
- Give hints before starting a new chapter.
- Do not compare two children.
- Avoid grammar translation method.

The participants were shown videos on Mathura Project, the participants could notice the following things –

- The children were reading the text created by them.
- Many activities were going on simultaneously like reading, writing, talking, discussing, sharing...
- The text created by children was being displayed.
- The reading of familiar story was being done on guessing (pretend reading) – a very important stage of reading.
- Input rich environment like -use of pictures, drama, and storytelling.

Thus the four day workshop with the session on Reading came to an end.
