

# Enhancing reading skills Through Visual Medium



## Key areas of interest:

- Developing reading skill through art work
- Organising School cultural activities
- Helping children participate in drawing competitions
- Organising Science exhibitions

## Last years' experience:

- We have set up a reading corner in our school and it was a wonderful experience. It has generated a lot of interest among students and we have seen improvement in their reading ability.
- I wrote English lesson ideas for Class 5 in Thisaimaani Magazine. We tried those ideas in class and then discussed solutions for some of the challenges faced in class.
- I have tried a few new strategies like comic book strips and breaking lengthy prose into short meaningful chunks in my class last year.

K. Adirai  
GPS, Kurusukuppam.

Previous School :  
GPS, Kirumampakkam

Student strength – 200  
Teacher strength – 12



Reading corner in our school

## Experience Sharing

### Class room challenge: Developing reading skill

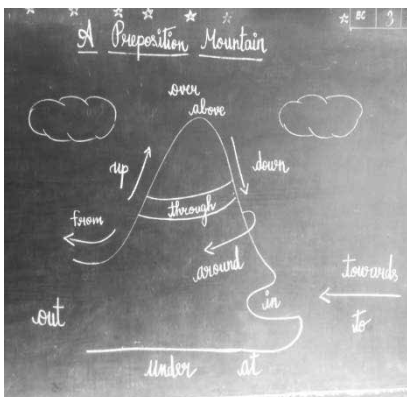
Visuals give cues for the children to comprehend a passage (a picture is worth a thousand words). English lessons in class five are too lengthy and wordy and visuals are very limited. So that makes it difficult for children to read the text. English can be made more exciting if we combine the text with interesting visuals. It will also give slow learners an opportunity to engage in class. Since I am deeply interested in drawing I tend to use more of it in class and I thought of creating visuals to make reading easier for my children.

#### Approach Used:

#### Pre-lesson activities:

- List out and teach the frequently used words through sight word charts and display it in class.
- Use simple stick figures to teach action words and pronouns.
- Use smilies to teach emotions.
- Use drawings to teach prepositions and new vocabulary.

A mountain pic to explain preposition in context



#### Using vocabulary in meaningful situations

In a language lesson the content is not as important as the use of the language. The given content is a medium through which you can facilitate children to learn the second language. It is not enough that the children study the lesson, use the vocabulary, answer the questions and pass the exams. I wanted my children to be able to use English they learnt in school in their day to day lives and ensure that the vocabulary they learn remains permanent in their memory.

branches spread out like strong arms.

This tree was the home of a flock of wild geese. They felt safe there. One of the geese was a wise old bird.

He noticed a small creeper at the foot of the tree. He spoke to the other birds about it.

"Do you see that creeper?" he said to them. "Let us destroy it". "Why must we destroy it?" asked the geese in surprise. "It is so small. What harm can it do?" "My friends," replied the wise old bird, "that little creeper will soon grow. As it creeps up this tree, it will become thick and strong."

"What of that?" asked the geese. "What harm can a creeper do us?"

"Don't you see?" replied the wise bird, "with the help of that creeper, it will be possible for someone to climb this tree. A hunter can come up and kill us all."

*A snap shot from English*

*TB – Class 5*

English is not widely spoken in the child's environment and it is limited to the classroom and the text book. So as teachers, we have to introduce the vocabulary in a meaningful context where the child is able to reuse the word (use the vocabulary in similar situations). I am sure we all try out different things in our classes and whatever strategy works for us would be our individual pedagogy, our style. Here I have taken up drawing as my strategy with children.

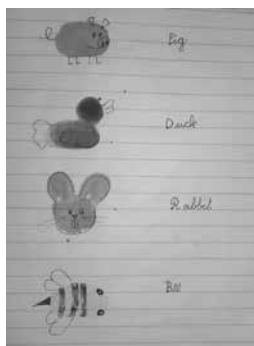
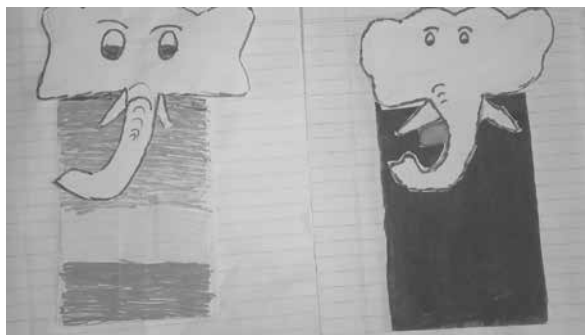
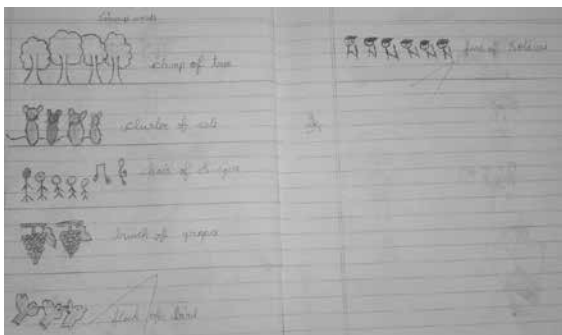
### Creating Comic strips.

Before starting a lesson, the vocabulary is introduced through pictures. I use pictures, models and realia wherever the situation demands to reinforce the learning. To facilitate reading, the prose is divided into small comic stories or small meaningful chunks. I took certain parts from the text, created a comic story sequence with the support of the pictures in the book and prepared slides. As and when I projected the slides, the children were able to read the text beneath every picture. Since they were already familiar with the frequently used words, they were able to read and the pictures aided the process. In case of longer words, I had taught them to syllabify and read. Whenever a child comes to ask me to read a word, I write it on the board and syllabify it for the whole class. This helped them read with reasonable fluency even at the 1st attempt.



*Simplifying text into meaning small chunks*

They also narrated what was happening in the picture in their own words. The sentence structure was not perfect but it was a good space to teach grammar and tenses in the context of story narration. They use picture clues from the slide to narrate the story in English. If we ask structured questions,



students also try to answer in a structured manner (For example: Where did she go? She went (did + go (past)) to the forest (where)). We could frame questions according to our students' level. This way, we can help students produce language than memorise it.

### **Checking for comprehension:**

Students were encouraged to tell the meaning of the sentence in their mother tongue. Wherever they struggled, I gave them clues. After doing this students were instructed to read the prose in the book.

### **Identifying the known words:**

I asked them to underline the new words in their text book and colour the known words and as they read more words in the prose, their confidence increased.

### **Relay Reading:**

I made them read in pairs as in a role play or relay reading. This helped in developing their listening skills and peer learning.

The picture reading gave them an opportunity to try reading on their own and I was happy to see them recollect the words they had previously learnt. The comic video has helped them learn English in an interesting way. We can encourage students to create puppets, masks, and stick puppets and use them to teach concepts and themes in class. My children had created puppets on family and animal world.

### **Way Forward:**

One common problem that children face is the difficulty in remembering the newly learnt words. When you want them to use a particular word in a conversation, they can't remember it. Memorizing words without using it will be of no use as far as English is concerned. One way to overcome this issue is to make them draw the new words in their vocabulary note book. Writing them down against the picture reinforces their memory. As teachers we must also try to use the newly introduced words in our classroom conversations. It will make the students to get to know the different situations in which they can use the words. In the coming years, I am consciously going to do this in my class.