

# Music & Dance to Enhance Learning



Socio economic context - Most of the students are from very poor families and have diverse family backgrounds. Some children are raised by a single parent, some are under the care of grandparents, some parents go to work early and come back home very late. The school is located in an industrial area surrounded by six chemical factories so the children have developed skin diseases as well as hair fall problems. The community faces water pollution issues because of these factories.

This was a single teacher for a long time with one teacher managing all the 5 classes. When I joined, we became two teachers in the school. I stayed in the same school till I got transferred recently. Handling multi-grade class was very difficult for me as a teacher.

Peculiar strengths and challenges –We had multi grade classes in KVP Kuppam School. We had classes I, II & III, together, LKG & UKG combined, and class IV & V together.

## Some key areas of interest

Puppetry, villupattu, drama, dance, singing and drawing

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Previous School :  
GPS, KVP Kuppam, Karaikal

Student strength – 36  
Teacher strength – 2

## Why I was interested in joining the teachers' circle?

Self-Development through exchanging thoughts from other school teachers.

## Summary of the different things I did last year

**Puppetry:** I have used puppets for story-telling and for lessons which have conversations. I attended a training programs for puppetry and I can make puppets for classroom teaching. **Villupattu:** I used villupattu to teach a 4th Std EVS lesson to convey the social messages in a fun way. Villupattu has songs with rhythm and will be attractive to children.

**Field visit for students:** We took children out for a Purpose Walk. During this the children walked through paddy fields and interacted with a farmer. He explained the process of paddy cultivation. Children had not interacted with farmers earlier and hence were very eager to know about various aspects of farming. We also visited a railway crossing and the gate keeper explained how the signal at railway crossing works. A month ago, they were taken in a train to Velankanni and had seen many railway crossings on the way. So they were interested to know more about railway crossings.



Children interacted with farmer to get to know about paddy cultivation.



Bouquet - Project work for EVS lesson



How a Railway crossing works

# Experience Sharing

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## Classroom challenge

In my class, there were students from multiple grades (class 1, 2 and 3) and it was a tough task to grab their attention. Initially, I started teaching them like I would have normally taught a class of 30. But I realized that when I teach class 1 and ask them questions, students of class 2 and 3 respond faster as they have already learnt the lesson. While teaching class 3, younger students would get bored and distracted. That is when it struck me that three different age groups needed to be handled separately. I had to do change my strategy to get their attention and make them sit in their respective places. So I decided to use singing and dancing as an energizer to draw their attention and make them concentrate in class.

## Planning and preparation

One day, the children told me that there was music in the computer and asked me to play it. I played it and they enjoyed listening to music and after 10 minutes when I asked them to focus on their lessons, all except one did. So I thought of using this as a strategy in class. I begin the day with songs and make them sing and dance and then start teaching. It initially started with movie songs and then gradually moved to cartoon songs from Chota Bheem and Dora and then songs from the text book. Singing and dancing is a good activity to channelize their energy and it helped us stay fresh throughout the day.

## What happened in class

Though it started from cinematic songs, I slowly brought in textbook songs as well. For instance, there is a rhyme in the textbook that goes 'Brush, Brush, Brush your teeth....' This is a rhyme on personal hygiene and daily routine. I begin this song with actions and follow it up with a conversation on the importance of personal hygiene. This is how the learning process began in my class. I used "hello English" cds, which has songs for children.

## Changes seen in class

Once I did the things which they enjoyed doing, they started listening to me. Music and dance removed the fear factor in the children and the teaching environment became a joyful one. There was a lot of change in the students attitude as well. Students started sitting in their respective places, participating in classroom activities and responding to my questions. Students started writing in four line notebooks and brought materials for projects. They completed tasks given to them and even finished a project work.

I developed a good rapport with my children. I usually never beat children but I sensed that they were initially scared of a teacher. with this activity, my children started opening up to me and I got an opportunity to know each of my student personally. Students even brought some local craft work done by them – toys made of coconut shells to show them to me.

We create TLMs and use various strategies to make the children understand a lesson. But I learnt that beginning a day with enthusiasm and channelizing children's energy by making them sing and dance also does wonders. It sets up a positive and energetic mood and helps in classroom proceedings. Once they started listening to me, I could start teaching them and handle multiple grades. To handle multiple grades, I first taught the senior classes – class III and II and assigned them some work and then attended to class I. This prevented the seniors from calling out answers while I taught the juniors.

I took the children to sea-side and nearby fields. It was the first time the students went out from school. Even though these children are used to playing in the beach and working in the fields, a field trip was a new experience for them. When we took them to these places and showed them different trees, plants and shells they were excited and learned a lot. I felt that such visits organized for providing experiential learning open up new dimensions on learning in the students' life.

### **Way forward**

I have got new ideas from Teachers' Circle like using drawing to teach vocabulary and using craft in primary classes. I want to try these methods in my class in the coming year and I hope I will get new ideas from other teachers next year as well.