

## Showcasing Innovative Practices in Language Teaching in a Delhi Government School

*Sarita Batra and Vijay Kumar*

*“Learn a new language and get a new soul”—a Czech Proverb*

The Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalaya (RPVV) Shalimar Bagh is based on the vision of the Delhi Government to impart specialized education to children in different fields of their choice. This school is transforming into Dr. B.R. Ambedkar School of Specialized Education. The school has good infrastructure, science labs, Atal Tinkering Lab, Astronomy Lab, Language lab, SST Lab, Geography Lab, Computer Lab, Home Science Lab, resource-rich library, medical room, resource room, playground, etc. The school has a beautiful environment with many trees and flowers. The belief is that such a lovely environment helps in the holistic growth of children and augments the teaching-learning process.

Children attending the school are from the lower strata of society. Their parents are migrant labourers, fruit and vegetable sellers, drivers, street vendors, etc. The parents want their children to get quality education in a secure and safe environment. Hence, they help children prepare to take the competitive entrance exam for admission to this school.

Like children, most of the teachers also belong to neighbouring states. This confluence of diversity between teachers and children helps break barriers and inhibitions. Teachers are postgraduates with BEd or MEd. They are well trained in their respective subjects. They are selected through a selection process by experts in different fields, and the main criterion is a good command of the subject they will teach. The teachers who are motivated and interested in exploring innovation in the teaching of their subjects get selected.

## **Multilingual Ambience of School Turns Out to be a Blessing in Disguise for Language Teaching-Learning**

Children born and brought up in Delhi converse fluently in Hindi and can comprehend the conversations in a regional language. The school sees multilinguality as an asset, and teachers use them as an effective pedagogical tool. The school environment brims with respect for all languages, including “English or Hindi”. The language pedagogy adopted in school is holistic in its approach as the nature of language is whole. Language deals with Natural Science, Mathematics, Social Science, Music, Sports, Culture, History—you name any subject—and literature. One purpose of language is to facilitate and reinforce the learning of different subjects and comprehend subject-specific jargon and difficult concepts.

### **Some Innovations in Language Teaching**

Working as TGT English, Monika Kaushik has been practising innovative practices with music, dance, rhythm and chanting. Music has a universal appeal connecting all cultures and languages. She uses popular songs in English and gives her students freedom to sing aloud along with tapping their feet in sync, thus improving the pronunciation and confidence in becoming articulate with the language. She had been mindfully selecting songs that help students learn to focus on adjectives, verbs, tenses and other aspects of grammar. She has broken the monotony of an English classroom where students do not easily open up due to inhibitions, lack of confidence and hesitation in speaking English. She also keeps track of the learning outcomes because of this pedagogy.

Anand Jha, working as PGT English, said many methods helped him develop his pedagogy, one being ‘sharing their own story’. He asked students to share their stories with the class. This practice proved to be a miracle. Students enjoyed the activity and gained confidence. They also contributed to the text by imagining the diverse possible situations in the text, analysing them critically, and explaining them to the class through presentations. In the course of presentations, other students who were a part of the audience were encouraged to ask tricky and relevant questions. Listening to questions and framing suitable answers are beneficial to all. Sometimes, students are asked to write a poem or prepare a report. Jha says students’ feedback and the changes in their

attitude and confidence levels reassure him that his method works. He adds that some students of grade twelve had done exceptionally well in ALS (Assessment of Listening and Speaking).

Sanjiv Kumar Mishra, a TGT Hindi, while teaching the poem '*Vriksh ki Hatya*' (*Death of a Tree*) by Kunwar Narayan, used various techniques to make students understand the poem joyfully. He conducted multiple activities using posters and slips. He took children outside the classroom under the shadow of a tree and asked children to interact with the tree an activity known as '*vriksh-chatra samwad*' (*Tree-Student Conversation*). He also used the school library in this process. Mishra shares his pleasure in teaching by associating the poem '*Vriksh ki Hatya*' with festival, culture and environment.

Shesh Kumar Jha TGT Sanskrit uses songs and stories (*Katha*) for teaching Sanskrit. He makes Sanskrit an exciting subject for children through different examples and instances. They become well-versed with difficult words, and content becomes easier to understand. He claims that this strategy has worked.

### **A Case Study of Inclusive Education in Language Teaching**

Harish Kumar, a Special Education Teacher, cites an example of Krish. He says, *Krish joined this school in the sixth grade attending the special education services for Speech and Language Disability (S&LD). He has speech problems like fluency, hesitation, blocks, repetition and pauses. He also stutters. Due to his different abilities, his language communication is poor compared to his peer group.* Harish Kumar's goal was to enable the student to improve his communication abilities. He chooses the strategies according to the student's needs and uses them in inclusive classrooms with the help of his colleagues. The strategies are connected to IEP (Individualized Educational Plan). They are related to the child's ability to carry out routine activities to achieve social and community autonomy. Krish's interest in communication increased, and he expressed his desire and needs. He counselled parents and other family members to address the child's communication disorder. The strategy also ensured the conditions for achieving academic, professional and social engagements. Krish was referred to a government hospital for professional speech therapy. Currently, Krish is in the ninth grade, and his communication skill has improved. He is enjoying an inclusive education setting.

The school had tried to create an informal space for peer interactions through which children can open up with their friends and converse in their languages. One such space is the midday meal corner. Here children interact with each other freely, cherishing appetising midday meals. During summer vacations before Covid-19, the school organized the Communicative English Programme (CEP) in collaboration with the British Council and Trinity College London. The programme helped improve children's communicative skills in the English language.

These innovative pedagogies have yielded positive results.

The use of latest technology like Information and Communication Technology, Multimedia, Kyan, Whiteboard, etc. has also facilitated this process. Hybrid teaching (Online and Offline) has become a reality now. There are many challenges ahead that we need to meet. Through teamwork and support of the latest research, there is hope that these innovations will help realize the ultimate vision of language teaching.

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## Call for Papers LLT 24 (July 2023)

*Language and Language Teaching* (LLT) is a peer-reviewed journal published biannually in English in January and July. It focuses on the theory and practice of language learning and teaching in multilingual contexts. Submissions are invited for the July 2023, Issue 24 of LLT, which shall be a Special Issue on *The Language(s) of Education in India*.

### Concept Note

According to the 2011 Census, the literacy rate of India, with a population of more than 121 crores, is 74.04%. The total number of persons speaking a Second Language is more than 31.49 crores (27.27 crores i.e. 86.59% of these being literate) while those speaking a Third Language is more than 8.60 crores (with more than 8.21 crores i.e. 95.47% being literate). What do these numbers tell us about literacy in India? In which language(s) did the literate of our country receive their education? What are the 'other' languages in which formal education is not provided, and what is their status? A vastly heterogeneous and multilingual country like India *has* to grapple with the question of language of education, opportunity, and development. Colonialism left India with English as its boon and bane. The Three Language Formula formulated in 1968 by the Ministry of Education brought its own problems and prospects. The New Education Policy—with its thrust on multilingual education and pedagogy focusing on local languages “until at least Grade 5, but preferably till Grade 8 and beyond”—has brought the debate on ‘home language / mother tongue / local language / regional language’ to the forefront.

LLT invites papers centred around these issues. They could focus on the following issues:

1. English as a colonial legacy: Macaulay's *Minute*, Elphinstone's *Minute*, Woods' *Dispatch* and beyond
2. Administrative Perspectives: The Three Language Formula and beyond
3. Constitutional Provisions for Language / Language of Education
4. New Education Policy and the Multilingual State

5. Endangered Languages and the Need for Revitalization through Language of Education
6. The Language(s) of School/Higher Education/Technology and Technical Education
7. Socio-Cognitive Advantages of Multilingual Education
8. Content Area Literacy and Knowledge Construction

*Last date for submission: 15 January 2023*

### **Guidelines for Submission**

The upper word limit for an article (including the abstract, keywords, references, and a short bio-note) is 3000 words. Papers must be submitted as a word document in MS Office 7. If any special fonts are used, the paper must be accompanied by the special fonts. Only black and white figures are printed. Please send only jpeg files.

The word limit for book reviews and reports is 1500 words.

*The bio-note of each contributor should not exceed 30 words.*

For the LLT style sheet regarding submissions, please check:

<https://llt.org.in/guidelines/>

All submissions must be original and should not have been submitted for publication anywhere else. A statement to this effect must be sent along with the article. *Language and Language Teaching* will not entertain any plagiarized manuscript. The contributor should attach plagiarism report of the article with their submission.

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