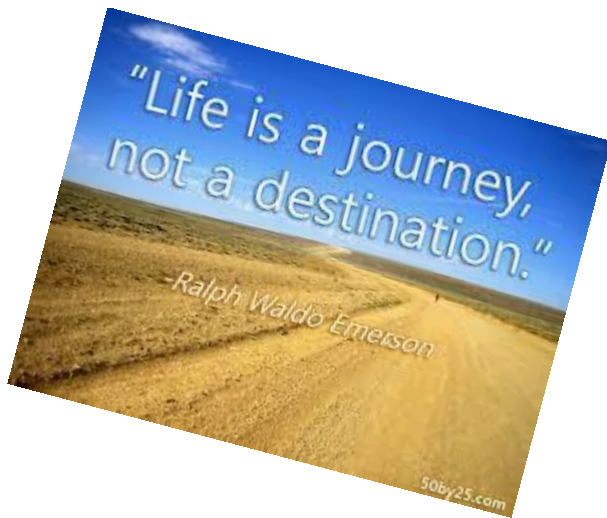




SUNILA KHOLA

PGDLT (2017 -2018)

My Journey as a learner



**I LOVE WHO I HAVE
BEEN, BUT I REALLY
LOVE WHO I AM
BECOMING.**

 Quotling.com

I had been working earlier but since the last seven years I had been at home, confined myself to family and kids. Even though I was very happy, it seemed as if I had stopped growing. At times felt the urge to do something for myself. I wanted to spread my wings again and learn to fly. I came across the advertisement for IAAT in the newspaper, something just struck. I went for the orientation session and I really liked everything about the program. That's how I began my journey on a new road.

My journey as a learner started in Junga, HP where we had gone for the five-day retreat. Each day presented its own adventures. The learning and teaching was planned in such a manner that it was full of fun as well. **Reflecting on how's and whys, I was able to dive deeper within myself and thus with each activity that I did there, I unravelled a new me, discovering new chapters.** Now, I strongly believe "Everything is possible", but I should be ready to take a step.

We did some activities in groups as well and learnt a lot from each other. I have come to know that how different people bring their perspectives and views and how together we can build one understanding.

Once back from the retreat, the theory classes started for us. We started with perspective on education, teaching of language and maths. We also kept on having our MINDFUL PERSONAL LEADERSHIP sessions. I started seeing everything with a different lens. What is real education? I came to know that it is not only the mental aspect that needs to be considered. The physical, spiritual also needs to be developed parallelly. I learnt how a child actually learns language. Though I enjoyed maths during my school days, I never had the understanding I developed here. I realized the importance of context in building the clarity and understanding among the children.

The MINDFUL PERSONAL LEADERSHIP classes and the reflections have helped me to reconnect with my own self, enabling me to discover my strengths and weaknesses. Also showing me ways to become stronger and more confident. Every day has something to give and I have kept my hands open to grasp it.

There are various ways through which learning happens. We started with the classroom practice during the month of July. I am a resident teacher of grade 6. The first step was to do **observation**. For me observation was just a simple word 'seeing'. But it such a powerful tool we have with us. I observed how unique each child is, how the children work together in groups, how they learn from their peers and what each one brings to the class.

After observing the teachers, I have established that the teachers are facilitators here. They share knowledge and the children are constructing their own knowledge. The children have the freedom to express. The children are able to exercise their fundamental right in a true sense. Learning is a lifelong process, it never stops. **Learning in groups** for the children and the facilitators is one of the best ways. It opens up various perspectives for us to explore. If you are in doubt or you are struck, there are others to help you out and you start seeing the same thing from different angles. The teachers work in cohesion, have their planning meetings, they allocate the work amongst themselves. There is always a lot to learn from each other – you have to observe, actively listen and participate.

The children do self-correction of their work. This not only builds values of honesty but responsibility as well. They also have morning meetings where work is done to develop the essential values as empathy, perseverance, mindfulness, respect etc and to make them more aware of their social surroundings.

The children are encouraged to ask questions and participate in the class. The classroom culture is built in a manner where each child feels free to ask. **Questioning** by the teacher as well as the children helps the teacher to gauge how well the children have understood, if there are any misconceptions. This develops their critical thinking skills and also deepens their understanding.

We were also introduced to the Child Development course. We studied at what stage what body changes happen and how it impacts the mental, physical and emotional development of a child. We also learnt the important theories on learning by Vygotsky & Piaget. This course was an eye opener as now I am able to understand a child better in class as well as my own child. I learnt a new strategy 'Jigsaw' for learning together in a group. This could be easily applied to intensive readings.

From observation, we moved onto classroom teaching. It was very challenging in the beginning. But with time and practice, I have become more confident and now having less butterflies in my stomach. I discovered that I am comfortable teaching modules, maths. I need to still explore English and expedition more.

I have come to know the intricate details that need to be added while planning a lesson. One has to be clear in mind, why you are teaching a particular lesson and how you are going to execute it. The children should be able to achieve the maximum output. The teaching pedagogy of science and social science, relevance of social science in our daily lives.

I enjoyed the MINDFUL PERSONAL LEADERSHIP sessions the most, have touched me deep inside. I have started understanding everyone more, realizing where they are coming from and empathising. I have also seen changes in myself. I have become a better and stronger human being. Though at times it seems very challenging to come out of your comfort zone, I keep pushing myself.

It has been an exciting and exhilarating journey so far. I have started seeing the spark in myself, the ambition to do something purposeful and meaningful. My learning journey resumed again from the first day at IAAT and it will continue forever.....

Educational Philosophy

During our course "Perspectives on Education" in IAAT, our faculty Deepti mam exposed us to the teachings by various philosophers. I am particularly inspired by the below teachings.

Krishnamurti's work on "Education and the Significance of Life"

- Begin with the immediate
- the spirit of individual freedom and intelligence should pervade
- the responsibility of the educator – the right education lies in our own hands
- Integration of the separate entities that make up an individual

Aurobindo's three principles of true teaching

- Nothing can be taught
- Mind has to be consulted in its own growth
- Work from the near to the far

The Mother's philosophy –

- The education of a human being should begin at birth and continue throughout his life.
- Education to be complete must have five principal aspects corresponding to the five principal activities of the human being: the physical, the vital, the mental, the psychic and the spiritual

Tagore's - It is absolutely necessary for the child's mental health and development that they love.

What I feel

Earlier I used to believe that education was going to school, getting good marks, developing a life skill so that you are able to stand on your own feet. Then when I grew up and started seeing people around me, I started perceiving education differently. My grandparents, who were deprived of schooling but they were able to read, write, understand any people in a manner far better than any other person, able to make decisions for themselves and their children. Were they not educated? One question kept coming to my mind a number of times - **what is real education?** Do formal schools only impart education?

And when Deepti mam asked us to write the answer for the question for which I had been trying to look the answer, I finally found my answer.

"There are different philosophies on education and mine is an amalgamation. It is just not getting marks in school but developing the overall personality of a child. Now, to me real or true education is the one that does not restrict individual thinking. A child is allowed to seek and grow without any forced impositions. The facilitator acts as a guide, only showing ways of acquiring knowledge, ways of identifying one's strengths and talents. He/she should understand that there should be no expectation of getting their dreams/parents fulfilled by the child. Each child has his/her own mind, thus should not hamper the development but should let the child dream and bloom. A facilitator should also understand a child's abilities and capacity and explore his full potential. His/her work is to offer knowledge in various ways, the experiences, impressions that lasts a lifetime. An educator working from near to far on all the different entities, be it physical, mental, social, spiritual will enable us to become an integrated human being. The child will thus be nurtured and nourished from all aspects. "

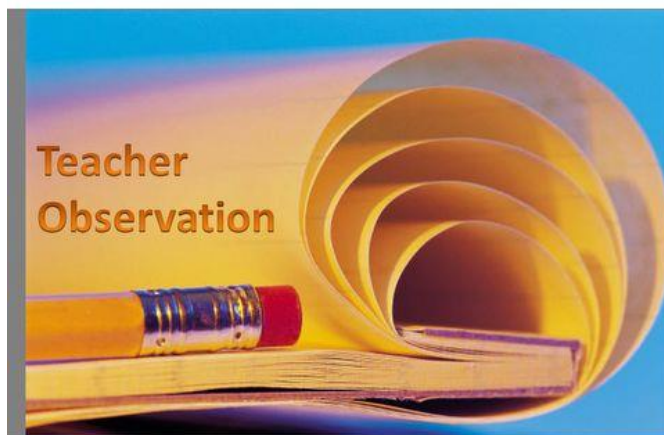
After coming to IAAT, I am here to become an integrated human being. Through the MPL sessions and reflections, I will be able to understand myself better and work upon myself.

Me as an Observer

What is observation?

According to me, the word observation just had a literal meaning "seeing". After going through the module on observation, I realized the power this tool has. Now observation is "seeing the details" with an open mind, no prior judgements and no misconceptions. Like a lesson plan, we should be having a clear purpose and objective in our mind for doing the observation. The process of observation requires to focus and notice even the minutest details.

In the classroom, observations helped me in developing an understanding of my children in terms of their learning level, natural disposition, responses, interactions, interests. Since it helps in gauging the learning/understanding level, it impacts the lesson planning. I can think of how I can execute the plan in a manner that maximum number of children understand the concept. Also add the strategy for the differential learning. There may be a few who will still require some help. After observing my CT and teachers, it helped me in evolving my teaching. A teacher leaves a very deep impact on the children. I have begun to understand observing is not only seeing and listening. All senses have to be active. It is about gaining insights to how learning happens, it is also about learning from others, and developing your own values and practices, reflecting. Observing enables you to do things, give feedback etc.



I took the module classes for the 'Separation of substances". Observation was at every moment. I gave them a worksheet to answer, I was observing whether the children were able to understand the concept or not. Once everyone had finished, discussed with the whole class. Responses were taken from children and if it differed from the expected response, the children were questioned. On the basis of how the class went, I took a recap the next day of what we had done in the previous class. Once the chapter was finished, I took their notebooks for correction. The work ethics sheet also needed to be marked. It listed various parameters like active participation, attentiveness, follows class norms etc. I have learnt that the teacher has to be observant at all times.

I went to observe the nursery class during their playtime.



The two boys A, B were playing with blocks and trying to make something. They saw me in the class and then told me 'hum to sports bhi karte hain'. Then one girl came and told me 'mam maine haircut karwaya hai'. Then she told me to look at her haircut. I told her that she is looking very nice.

The ring is lying on the carpet. One boy C comes and starts playing with the ring. The other two, A and B too then wants to play with the ring.

One more girl joins A, B and C and starts saying 'isse hulla hoo karte hain'.

Then C comes to me and says 'Mam, kya hum isse khel sakte hain.'. I told him, yes, they can.

Some children were silently making their designs with the rangometry pieces.

The two girls were playing with the blocks. They told me, 'mam I have made a flute. The other one said, 'I am making a train.' I was sitting on a child's chair. He told me that 'mam, this is my seat.' After few minutes, the play time was going to be over. So, they started winding up. They started putting all the blocks in the blocks bowl and rangometry pieces in the rangometry bowl and put it on the shelf.

The children were talking with each other. I could see, there is a lot of I when they interact with each other. They want to show what they can do. As per Child development stage, the sociability rises among the 2-5-year olds. The social development proceeds in a three-step sequence. It begins with non-social activity. Then it shifts to parallel play, in which a child plays near other children with similar materials but does not try to influence their behaviour. Then it is associative play in which children engage in separate activities, but they exchange toys and comments on another's behaviour. I observed the non-social, parallel as well as associative play among the nursery class children.

Student Profile

Purpose/ Rationale of choice:

It was the first day of observation. There was a vacant chair in a crew. There were 5 children sitting in that crew. She, Ana really struck me. She was very quiet, seen talking to very few children. She was doing her work very sincerely. Over the days, I observed that she sometimes needed to be pushed to participate in the class. Then we were told about this assignment, I chose her as I wanted to know more about her, why she hardly smiles and laughs, talks so little, looks far more mature than her age. I wanted to explore the child in her.

Profile:

Physical Presence, Gesture & Disposition:

Ana is a well built, dusky girl always wearing lower and t shirt. She is almost feet 3 inches tall, tall for her age. Her hair is always tied in a pony. Her face expressions portray her to be a very calm child. She used to hardly smile or laugh. She is focused and completes her work in the class. She used to rarely participate in the class for answering to the questions. But over a period of time, has started participating more. She seems to have become more confident. Ana always looks very calm and sombre. I have hardly seen her getting up from her desk to chat with the other girls in the class. Lately, I have seen her fidgeting with two pieces of Velcro in the class. She rubs both of them together.

Activities and Interests:

She plays all the sports in physical education very energetically. I have seen her playing football. Last game they were playing was cricket. In performing arts, she has taken vocals. The children were practicing the song, "We don't talk anymore". I saw that she was moving her head and feet. It looked like she was really enjoying the song. Since she is a big fan of Selena Gomez and this song features her, may be that is the reason why Ana looked so happy.

One day, I got a chance to talk to her during the snack break. She was reading a book. I asked her, "Is she fond of reading" She told me, she likes reading books. This book she had taken the other day from the library and she was almost on the verge of finishing the book. That really intrigued me. I got more curious to know more about her, wanted to see how she does in all the subjects. Later came to know that she has a collection of almost 1000 books at her home. I have observed that she looks forward to reading program period (library) and always picks up books of high Lexile.

In Visual Arts, they are doing weaving. I went to this class twice for observation. She has partnered with her friend Cc, were talking about the books they read "Harry Potter". They were also talking about their siblings. I asked her about hers. She told me that she was the only child. May be that is the reason why she is so engrossed in herself and does not like to interact more.

As per her portfolio, she is also fond of animals, books, tennis, table tennis, badminton, travelling, animal imitation and reading. She is also fond of English movies. In the after school, she has taken swimming. While doing narrative writing in class, Ana shared her piece. She told that she was afraid of deep water but she has now overcome her fear.

Relationship with Children and Adults: Ana generally speaks in English with her peers and teachers. She has one or two friends from the fifth grade in the other sections too. In the class, she is hardly seen talking to the teachers. She only speaks when there is a need. Her both parents are software engineers and at home she converses in Hindi only with her grandparents.

Ways of Learning and Thinking: Ana is very attentive and focused. In one of the module periods, the teacher made different crews as per the child's understanding level. Ana finished her reading. The other children were not able to understand much. I asked her if she could explain to rest of her team members. She told me that at least they all should try it first and then if still they are not able to, she would. This shows that she tries before giving up.

She needs to work on the feedback given by the teachers. She is meeting the standards in mostly all the subjects except Hindi where she is progressing. Ana is very organized, and also meticulous about her portfolio, all subject sheets, assessments neatly in place, index cards all filled. On seeing her work, I can say that she has the content knowledge, draws the diagrams well.

Teacher's View: As per the discussion with class teachers, she has previous knowledge of the lessons, would have read them at home. Also has active listening skills. She knows the lessons and speaks only when is required. She was earlier pushed to respond/give answers in the class. Now she has started raising her hand on her own to give the answers. Maybe it was lack of confidence earlier. She was also part of the Nursery admissions, where she was to tell the parents about the school. She also follows the classroom norms and protocols.

The class VI students had the SLFC (Student Led Family Conference). According to the teachers, Ana had put in lot of efforts for her SLFC script as well as presentation and this could be seen during her practice with the class teacher. For the expedition, "Geography that shapes us", the children had prepared the report as the culmination product. The report was reviewed by an external faculty. Ana presented the introduction of the expedition report really well. In the class assembly, she was part of all the songs. She was also part of the Nursery admissions, where she was to inform the parents about the school as well as give them a tour. She was also part of Yujan.

Parent's View: There was no conversation with her parents. As per the note by her parents in the portfolio, they have mentioned that Ana has a passion for reading/creativity. And she should spend more time in keeping up the pace with school and understand new concepts.

Way Forward: I started going to my resident class from the month of July. Observations over a period of three months i.e. in September, I realized Ana has started opening up more, become more confident. As she is very articulate, she should continue to express openly the way she has started. with the same spirit, smile and laugh more often. Her works shows thinking, but she should also start working more on the teacher's feedback.

I really appreciate the effort by the teachers. Ana used to rarely participate in the class for answering to the questions. But over a period of time, by continuous push and encouragement, she has started raising hand on her own and thus has become more participative. She is showing more confidence as well.



My approach to subjects

Teaching of Mathematics

Prior to learning the teaching of maths in IAAT, numbers were just numbers and I did not understand completely the relevance of context in a subject like mathematics. I had always loved maths in school and had scored good marks but I think did not understand it so well as explained by Shaji from Jodo Gyan.

Developing the number sense, order and quantity in children through matku story and the dice games is fun for children. The children are able to learn the concepts so easily.

The concepts of addition, multiplication and division, each was introduced in the form of a story. The Ganit mala was used. Then moved to the number line where the child learnt the forward/backward jumps and then moved to abstraction where the child could do these operations mentally. I learnt how we could do transition from the concrete experiences and move toward abstraction.

We were also introduced to different types of word problems. The context as well as the numbers we take while formulating these word problems is very important. Fraction value $\frac{1}{2}$ was introduced with a story. Understanding the concept of whole and its various parts was very easy as we were provided with the rangometry kit and we were able to visualise it clearly. The class on geometry was also amazing, different 3 d shapes were built with the help of straws and connectors.

As a resident teacher of grade 6, I was blessed to see the introduction of decimals and integers in my class. These two concepts were also introduced in the form of a story to the children. The decimal kit helped them in visualise the decimal numbers up to three decimal places. In the lesson on integers, Ganit Mala was used to make them understand the concept of positive and negative net wealth position, cash and loan. I could see how the children were able to connect with the concept and easily relate it with the real-life situations. It helped in deepening their understanding and increasing their retention level. I still always see an excitement and eagerness in the children's eyes to learn maths.

Reflection - We had a visit planned to the Jodo Gyan school in Delhi. We observed all the classes there from nanhe tare to neela aasman. The young children were able to quickly grasp the order and the quantity aspect of numbers. They had multigrade classrooms. I observed how every child was given the freedom to express his/her opinion, how the senior ensured that the younger kids learnt from each other. The teachers had instilled the love for learning in them and there was no fear but only joy to be seen in the young minds.

Teaching of Language

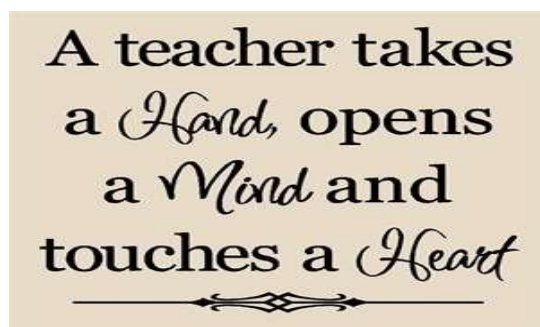
Language is not only a means for communication but also a medium to think, feel and react to things. Initially, a young baby expresses the emotions or needs by crying and the body movements. Then in order to meet his needs, gradually starts picking words from the language spoken at home, the mother tongue. In order for any language to be developed, experiences should be provided to the children. I saw how my daughter started speaking early as living in a joint family, she had so many people to talk to her.

The child needs to be immersed, where in exposure is provided in the form of oral, written, print etc. The teacher needs to instil the love for learning in the children.

As per the book "The Child's Language and the teacher" the author rightly says, the language shapes the child's personality and the overall development because the child lives and grows up in the environment that language creates. To this environment, the teacher makes a significant contribution. If the teacher is sensitive to the various functions of language (stated by Halliday) in the child's life, she will be able to respond to the child's intellectual and emotional needs. The teacher's responses to the language used by the child on different occasions are extremely important. If the responses show that the teacher understands the child's aim in using language in a certain way, such responses will enhance the child's use of language in that mode. On the contrary, if the teacher's responses are based on pre-conceived ideas about what is appropriate or correct, such responses will obstruct the child's independence of expression and communication. By using language to explain or inquire, the teachers create an environment in which the importance of explanation and inquiry is understood. The children are free to ask anything.

If you get into the habit of listening to children's talk carefully, you will soon be able to distinguish these and several other functions. You will also see that these functions involve the use and development of intellectual skills such as analytical and reasoning skills.

How have I developed as a teacher?



How did you begin your practice, what were the initial challenges, how did you overcome those?

I am a resident of class VI G, started going for the classroom practice from the month of July. Initially, we were to do note down our observations. There was so much that I wanted to know - how teaching and learning happens, what is the relationship between the students and the teachers, what kind of language functions are being used by the students and teachers, the student and classroom culture. I

was trying to establish a connection between the theories we had learnt in IAAT and the actual classroom.

I noticed that each and every teacher is different, the teaching methods vary, the class management strategies differ. Each of them bringing something very special inside the classroom. I was apprehensive, how will I be as a teacher?

I started by getting to know the children's name, interacting with them as and when getting a chance and also acknowledging and accepting that I will be part of this class during my IAAT course. Then we were informed that towards July end, we were to take a morning circle or morning meeting and this would be observed by our TE. I thought of doing morning circle where we would be playing a game. It was the first time I felt like a teacher but then I was a little nervous of facing the whole class. The students were not listening and I was not able to make them quiet. I realized that day that these were the challenges for me. I started overcoming these by becoming more participative in every way I could and building a rapport with the children.

What were your successes? What made them happen?

I started involving myself more, moved in the classroom to see the children's work, what they were doing. The children started approaching me for their problems. They would ask if me if they got stuck, and I would help them. Also started co-teaching Maths with my CT. This way we started building a relationship with each other. It brought joy to me and I enjoyed going to the classroom. It felt like having climbed on the first rung of the ladder. The teachers also started including me in all the things be it distribution, to collection, to displaying charts on the board. Now, I have become more comfortable in taking lessons, the only hitch being class management at times.

How has your mindset and approach changed through these months?

I used to think teaching is still almost done in a conventional manner. The teacher imparts the knowledge through text book and the children are required to master the subject. BUT I am grateful that my belief is shattered. Theories by Sri Aurobindo, Krishnamurthy, The Mother have really inspired me. I have seen how knowledge is constructed together and both the teacher and the students are learning together. Nothing is imposed on them; the children have the right to express and explain their view/opinion. How eliciting the information/answers is crucial than giving answers to the children. The contexts are built as per their age to explain the concepts, enabling them to build connections and construct their knowledge.

Textbooks are just referred for refence and other study material is also explored. How through expedition, where science and social science are merged together, the interdisciplinary approach is revived. The students are encouraged to participate in class discussions and also to ask questions so that they develop their critical thinking skills. They are required to work in groups so that they become aware of the different perspectives/ viewpoints and also develop the skills of planning, coordination, cooperation and teamwork and inclusion.

A teacher is a facilitator who plays such a vital role in the overall development of a child.

What role did extensive classroom experience played in it?

The extensive classroom experience did play a major role. I learnt the power Observation has in understanding a child's disposition, their learning pattern, their subjects of strengths and areas of improvement. How not only content but context and connections are also important. your rapport with the children is also important. This helped me in doing the lesson planning. I could find enormous opportunities to explore my potential as a developing teacher.

What role did mentoring play in it?

Mentoring plays an important role. The mentors guided me in becoming a better educator each day, helping me in becoming independent. The observation cycles helped me in getting to know myself better, making me aware of my areas of improvement. The mentor giving me feedback was valuable. Mentors helped me in kind of standing still in the sea.

What kind of practitioner do you envision yourself growing up to be?

I envision myself growing up to be a continuous learner and a facilitator. Building the student and classroom culture and constructing knowledge together. And applying all the best teaching methods/practices and following a child centric education.

My learning about Classroom Culture

Teachers and students shape the classroom culture based on shared visions, goals, purposes and practices. It is influenced by the teacher's knowledge, skill and disposition towards teaching and learning, connecting to students and their families.

The classroom should be a happy place for the children and the students and teachers work collaboratively towards achieving this goal.

It is very important to first define and then build the classroom culture. During the beginning of the new session, the teacher and the students come up with the norms/values they would like to follow. The students have prepared the charts listing the values and the norms (ATL, BTL) and these have been displayed on the board. ATL – Listening to a speaker, Active Listening/Participation, being polite, respect, what is said in a circle stays in a circle, maintain voice level. BTL – No interrupting, no spreading rumours, no moving around, no commentary on someone's feeling, No bully/teasing.

The teacher lays emphasis on active listening and complete focus. The students are thus able to maximize their learning. Roles and Responsibilities (e.g. distributors, collectors, line in charge etc.) in the class are clearly defined and children identified for each. The children feel a sense of duty for their role.

There is a culture target and learning target for each class and these are shared with the children.

Sometimes, once the lesson has been conducted, the teacher asks the children to frame the learning target.

There is no teaching from the textbook or dictating the answers. There is learning through dialogue.

There is a culture of participation and collective thinking. Classes are interactive, with the teacher probing the children most of the time. I read about exploratory talk in my MINDFUL PERSONAL

LEADERSHIP class, teachers in my class VI G encourage the students to do critical thinking, ask valid questions. Each student is motivated to participate actively in the discussion. When the students raise their hand to answer to teacher's question or they have to ask something, most of them wait patiently for their turn. But there are a few who don't even raise hand and start speaking out of turn. The teacher then reminds that they have to be patient and not impulsive. They should wait for their turn. There are some students who will raise their hand every time, but the teacher ensures that she gives chance to everyone (inclusion). She also insists on hearing from a student who remains very quiet. When the teacher and the students are discussing something, there are a few who are fidgeting, doodling and not actively listening. The teacher then tells them that they should be completely attentive, listen to others and not disturb the whole class.

In the morning, the teacher asks them to place their resources in the respective places. The teacher is grooming them towards becoming responsible citizens. When sometimes, a child or two gets late for the period after lunch, the teacher very politely asks them reason for coming late. She tells them that they should be self-disciplined and respect time. In a very subtle way, the teacher is making the child absorb these values.

In my class there are 30 students, there are 6 crews. The teacher while forming the crews ensure that boy girl ratio is maintained, most of them are not friends before and also have differential ability of learning. The crews are formed by the teacher with due consideration to the strengths and weaknesses of each child, and children are paired in a way best suited to their overall development.

The teacher is taking lot of efforts to build the students understanding. The individual potential and as well as of the crew is fully explored. The teachers are well prepared, I have seen the lesson plans. The lesson plans have a rationale, the learning objective and outcome. There is a "Why" for everything. The teachers use different teaching practices and learning techniques.

The crew members write their own tasks and then discuss amongst themselves. Even though sometimes they disagree whose inputs needs to be considered but then after thinking through reach a consensus. They are able to see multiple perspectives and learn from each other. This makes them understand the importance of team work, which is accomplished through cooperation and collaboration.

The children check their work, own up mistakes and do self-corrections. They sometimes do corrections for their peers as well. Honesty thus comes out as an important quality in them.

Not only the mental aspect of the child is explored, emphasis is also laid on the physical, social, and the spiritual aspects. The norms and the practices around these different parameters shape the classroom culture.

SDMC & Village Expedition

We were informed that we would be going to the SDMC primary school for four days. We were clueless about what was going to happen. The plan unfolded day by day.

It was a big school with a playground. The school was very neat and tidy. Since it was a government school, I was amazed to see how well maintained it was. On the first day, the details about the school, its history, the association of organisations like Tech Mahindra, IAAT was shared with us.

We then formed 3 different groups and went for the observation of a classroom. I went to observe class IV and V. They are multi-grade, they sit together. The classroom had made use of the space efficiently, they had displayed the work done by children, classroom protocols, a birthday chart, corridor tags etc. The class also displayed small paper slips listing in both Hindi and the corresponding English word for khidki, pankha, darwaja etc. The books are in Hindi but English is also introduced to them.

There are different communities nearby from where the children are coming to study in this school. Our group was required to visit the Moti Lal Nehru camp to know about the people living there, their living conditions, their views on education.

On the first day, a lady, parent of a kid going to the SDMC school, showed us the whole area. The houses are pukka houses, are small, mostly one rooms. However, there are some people who have built a room on the first floor as well. I peeked inside the house to see how it looked like. It was cleaned and organised properly. We spoke to one girl, she was studying in class XII in KV JNU. We asked her if she has any difficulty, she told that her elder brother is sometimes able to help her, otherwise she takes help from the teachers. Some of the ladies were doing the household chores, some washing clothes and some doing utensils in their one room house itself. The gents had mostly gone to earn. Some of the ladies are also working as house help in order to sustain their living. We could also see few children roaming around, they had not gone to school that day. There were few young children also, we asked their parents about their schooling. The details of the SDMC primary school were given so that they could enrol them. There was an Aanganwadi, but it was locked.

They have electricity supply and proper water supply. In some of the households, I could see washing machines and air conditioners as well. Even though they had to adjust in a small house, they looked happy. And unlike any human being, they had their own aspirations.

On the second and the third day, we focussed on the specific questions we wanted to ask the community people.

We met a lady who was sitting outside her small shop sipping a cup of tea. We asked her a few questions that we had thought of:

How long they had been there? They had been living there since last 30 years. That time, there were only 10-12 kutchra houses, it was all a jungle. She had come here after her marriage. A few of them had moved out and had rented their home or sold it.

How many children did she have? She has four kids – two sons and two daughters. Are they all studying? Yes, they all go to school. The eldest one is in 12th this year. Then her two kids in 9th and the youngest one in 6th. We asked her what plans she has for her eldest one, the lady told us that the child will decide what she needs to do. They want their children to get educated so that they can stand on their feet and have a secured future. They also send their kids for tuition. People from IIT come every week to teach the children of the community. Earlier they used to teach in her room at the 1st floor, but since it started becoming cramped, they have now started coming to the temple area. It is a big open space. Do you want to study? At this age, she was around 45, what am I going to do? I have studied till class 5. Let my kids get educated and become what they want to.

People from which states and community have settled here? She told us it is mainly UP, Bihar. It is Hindus except 3-4 Muslim families.

What were the medical facilities available to them? The Safdarjung hospital was available for them. The doctors are very good there. But sometimes they have to wait a lot because of the long queues. They cannot go to the private doctors as they cannot afford the fee. In the camp itself, there are two doctors, sometimes they go to them also.

What about the toilets? There are public toilets available, but some homes have their own toilets as well.

What about the Garbage Disposal, Drains, Water Supply and Electricity? Every day the MCD people go there for the collection of the garbage. There is no shortage of water and electricity. The problem faced by them is the drainage, some part is the open drainage. It leads to breeding of mosquitoes as well. Some people are not aware of their responsibilities, they keep the garbage wherever they feel like.

Any conflicts with the other people? Yeah, sometimes minor tiffs. We resolve on our own. There is no Pradhan here.

On the same day, we interviewed Mayank, a 28-year-old man. We asked him about his education, what does he do, his family, any problems being faced?

He has his parents and brothers living here itself. But Since all of them had got married and have their own family, living in separate houses. He lost his earlier job six months back and was now a delivery man, was earning only 12000 Rs. He was telling had he studied, he would be having a better future today. He wants to give best education to his kids. His wife has also started working now, as a cook in the JNU campus. Since the JNU campus was nearby, some of people from the community are working there as cleaners, guards, peons etc. They had also got government quarters, they had shifted there.

We also heard that the students from nearby colleges came to buy drugs. Some of the boys from the community were involved in the drug business. This venture lured them as they could earn money easily.

We also distributed the pamphlets for the Bal Mela, inviting them to come with their kids. We met a lady from an NGO, whose work was to make them aware of cleanliness of their surroundings as well as family planning. She goes there every day and visit the families and speaks to them.

Whoever we spoke to, they were aware of the importance of hygiene, education in life. Irrespective of the gender, they wanted their children to get educated. Their kids were going to nearby schools SDMC, KV, Sarvodya. They wanted their children to do better in life.

Bal Mela

On the last day, the bal mela had been organised. The children had been invited to come along with their parents. The mela was planned by the IAAT RTs along with our teachers. We had decorated the whole school. We did all the preparations for the decoration and the various games. We painted giraffe, deer, monkey, lion on the chart papers and stuck it on the sheet. We made coloured paper flowers, lamps and also used them for decoration.

Since this community is in a city, the people living there have an advantage. After visiting there I realised that these people were aware "what is important in life? How important is education? How important is hygiene? How important is the size of the family, i.e. family planning" They were making efforts to provide the best education to their kids, sending them to school and also tuition if needed. They do not want the same life for their children, the kind of hardships they are facing. They try to provide the proper environment and exposure to their children. But the women are mostly illiterate,

they even want to get the elementary education so that they are able to make the informed choices for their kids. Illiteracy is a major barrier for their children.

After visiting the community and seeing their life, I hold my belief very strongly now that we can find happiness in small things itself. One should not complain and crib about material things. The community people are working towards their aspirations and dreams.

Junga

We all went for a four-day retreat to Junga in Himachal Pradesh. Right from the train journey from Delhi to Shimla and then from Shimla to Junga, I really had an amazing journey. We were 25 of us together, beginning our new journey who were sailing in the same boat. Junga was a beautiful place, having its own calmness. After a long time, I got a chance to connect with nature.

We stayed in tents. Each day, the activities were interspersed with theory. We did an activity and then reflected upon it. The reflections for these activities are listed chronologically.

The Hoopla was balance for me. How one should put the step properly so that I was not outside the hoopla rings. IN life also, a person should be balanced. During the pipe game, I realised that one should be focussed in life to reach their goal or objective. Also, should plan properly ahead and then plunge into action. We wasted the first few minutes without thinking through the proper strategy. If there is clarity of thoughts, one can definitely target towards achieving the goal.

When were told that we were going for rappelling, I was very excited. I was looking forward to another adventure. Since I had done it before (almost 10 years back), there were no fears and I was confident I would be able to do it this time as well. On listening to other people's conversation, how scared they were, I felt jittery for a few minutes. When I reached the top of the rock for me to get down, proper instructions by our instructor helped me to regain my self-confidence and belief and take the first step. Rest of the drop was easy for me. I was enjoying and I wanted to do it again. Our Educators had done it the other way around, their head facing towards the ground. I felt doing it myself. I wanted to challenge myself as it was something new for me. I realized that I can complete any task If I have the passion for it with strong grit and determination.

By doing FIRO-B, I came to know more about myself in terms of my needs of 'Inclusion, Control' Affection'. Terra –Terra was the most challenging activity. We were required to make a rope bridge. There was lot of confusion on how to go ahead. There were some technical terms like carabiner, reef knots etc. I had some views, but I was not loud enough for people to hear. I realised that I need to be more assertive. I realised the importance of group work and each person's contribution.

I am an adventurous person, brought up in an army environment. I was very excited. We started the walk. After a while, my bag started bothering my shoulders. I put it down a few times whenever we got a break. Afterwards things became easy and I completed. I realized if you really want to do something, in spite of all the hurdles in the way, you can.

It was completely dark and there in front of me was lying a bed of burning coals. Then I heard that we were supposed to walk on this bed. I do not know why but I was not scared at all. I realized I did not want to hold the instructor's hand while walking. I was very sure that I will be able to do it myself. I think I just had that faith on myself at that point of time.

The retreat was a wonderful experience, personally as well as professionally. I have started realising my fears and my strengths, Also, I have started understanding myself and people more, started looking at the different perspectives. I have understood the power of community. There is so much more going to come in this exciting IAAT journey. I will be able to know myself more and more. I do not want to hold myself back, continue going forward. A big thank you to all the facilitators who are guiding us and making our path easier.

Teaching of Social Science

- A) what is the nature of the subject?
- B) What does it mean to learn the subject? / what is the purpose of teaching the subject?
- C) What could be few approaches to teaching the subject?

Nature of the subject

Social Science is a branch of study which deals with human beings, their behavior, relationship and interdependency with each other and the environment. We live in a society, interact with individuals belonging to different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, adapt to various situations and circumstances, and also adhere to certain societal norms in order to lead a peaceful and productive life. This all comes under social science. Thus, social science as a subject incorporates a combination of different streams like – History, Geography, Cultural Studies, Economics, Political Science, Sociology, Psychology, Anthropology, etc. There is a need to achieve a shift in focus from utilitarianism to egalitarianism.

It lays the foundation for inculcating all the human values namely freedom, trust, mutual respect, respect for diversity, equality, respect for different opinions and perspectives and also building the 21st century skills namely analytical and critical thinking, collaboration and team work. This subjects also requires to build the inquiry skills as the sciences do. During the early years, we have themes and social science is integrated with science and taught together as one subject. It helps the children to understand their individuality and how they can coexist together. The teacher and the children co-construct knowledge together, making teaching and learning more interesting as well as enjoyable.

Purpose of teaching

The inclusion of Social Studies in the curriculum right from primary to secondary classes signifies the importance of the subject and the role it plays in a student's life.

The purpose of teaching social science is to understand and build relationships between the natural, social, physical, biological and cultural environment. A child is able to relate and connect to the real world by being exposed to reading about the people who influence or bring about a change, events, citizens, government, geographical features etc. The child is to be made curious and aware about environmental issues, social phenomena, starting with the family and moving on to wider spaces. In order to build the cognitive and psychomotor skills, engage the child in exploratory and hands-on activities.

The child is able to critically address gender concerns and issues of marginalisation and oppression with values of equality and justice, and respect for human dignity and rights. The children are able to appreciate the values enshrined in the Indian Constitution such as justice, liberty, equality and fraternity and the unity and integrity of the nation and the building of a socialist, secular and democratic society. These values would pave a way for the children to become good citizens and human beings. They would be able to respect the diverse culture, religion and also differences of opinion and perspectives.

While going through the course on Curriculum development, we saw how the social science subject progresses from nursery till grade 8. The child starts from learning about self then moving to family, community, society and nation. And then the neighbouring countries. The subject develops awareness about the social, cultural, physical and political environment, how the different societies

have evolved, important events that occurred in the past, how they have impacted the lives of the people. The children learn how society is structured, managed, and governed, and also factors affecting its transformation. The children understand the interrelationships and interdependency existing between human beings and nature and developing an overall understanding of their environment.

Approaches to teaching

The teaching of social sciences must adopt methods that promote creativity, aesthetics, and critical perspectives, and enable children to draw relationships between past and present. Problem solving, debates, dramatization and role play are strategies that could be employed. Teaching should utilize greater resources of audio-visual materials, including photographs, charts and maps, and replicas of archaeological and material cultures. Concepts should be clarified to the students through the lived experiences of individuals and communities. It has often been observed that cultural, social and class differences generate their own biases, prejudices and attitudes in classroom contexts. The approach to teaching therefore needs to be open-ended. Teachers should discuss different dimensions of social reality in the class, and work towards creating increasing self-awareness amongst themselves and in the learners. In order to make the process of learning participative there is a need to shift from mere imparting of information to debate and discussion. Different other protocols like Think Pair Share, Gallery Walk, reading with a Purpose, Chalk Talk, Jigsaw could be used in the classroom.

This approach to learning will keep both the learner and teacher alive to social realities and co-construction of knowledge together. In textbooks and in the classroom, the content, language, and images should be comprehensible, gender-sensitive, and critical of social hierarchies and inequalities of all kinds.

The notion of textbook be changed from being merely instructive to more suggestive and other teaching materials to be explored and used as reference by the teacher and the students and thus the teacher would be able to challenge herself while planning and also challenge the students by giving them projects.

As stated by the NCF 2005, the themes have been defined for the early years and primary, thus interdisciplinary approach is used. Concepts should be clarified to the students through the lived experiences of individuals and communities. But the teacher should ensure that she is not biased, prejudiced towards any cultural, social, and class differences in the classroom.

Teaching of Mathematics

- A) what is the nature of the subject?
- B) What does it mean to learn the subject? / what is the purpose of teaching the subject?
- C) What could be few approaches to teaching the subject?

Nature of the subject

Children often have fear/phobia and anxiety for mathematics. This fear leads to failure. As per NFG, by Class III or IV, many children start seeing themselves as unable to cope with the demands made by mathematics. In high school, among children who fail only in one or two subjects in year-end examinations and hence are detained, the maximum numbers fail in mathematics. This statistic pursues us right through to Class X, which is when the Indian state issues a certificate of education to a student. The largest numbers of Board Exam failures also happen in Mathematics.

The cause of fear among children may be due to the cumulative nature of the subject. For example, if a child struggles with decimals, then will definitely struggle with percentages. If struggles with percentages then would struggle with algebra. The other main reason is the extensive use of symbols. If the children fail to develop an understanding then boredom and dissociation develops. Social factors also affect the fear for maths, availability to upper caste, gender biases considered as a Masculine Domain.

Another major factor alienating this subject is the language used in the elementary grade text books. The language of mathematics is not connected in any manner to their everyday speech.

Purpose of teaching

While doing the curriculum mapping for maths from kg to grade 8, I observed how the progression takes place. Developing a pre-number sense in the nursery kids and then building onto the concept of perimeter and area of a polygon. And also, what all different skills are developed in a child. There are various reasons for teaching Mathematics as a subject to children.

They are listed below:

- Enable students the power to formulate and understand arguments and the capacity to see interrelations among concepts
- Scope includes many aspects of our life and our environment
- Mathematics provides new dimensions to thinking
- Language and Mathematics have a close relationship – children to be given opportunity to share ideas and experiences in their own words
- Students to be encouraged to read books in groups and formulate and express what they understand.
- To encourage to understand the difference between verification and proof
- Bridge a gap between the school, home and community
- Children should be perceived as participants in learning and not as receivers.

The following skills are developed in the children:

- Thinking, questioning, reasoning and problem-solving skills
- Critical thinking and logical argument and finding loopholes ability
- Estimation of quantities and approximating solutions
- Mental calculation ability
- Ability to arrive from concrete experiences to abstraction and be able to develop their own patterns
- Be able to create and formulate their own mathematical problems.
- Be able to reflect
- Communication - Precise and unambiguous use of language and rigour in formulation are important
- Comprehension
- Explaining methods and checking results
- Balanced mental, physical and intellectual skills to achieve personal well being
- Visualization, representation and handling of data
- Making connections, within mathematics, and between mathematics and other subjects of study

Approaches to teaching

- Some of the approaches to teaching could be applied across all the subjects. Co-construction of knowledge should happen by the teachers and students. Participatory/Interactive learning through thinking and reasoning. The textbooks should be appealing - illustration, language, cartoons, stories, descriptions and examples. Encourage the development of a culture of learning outside the classroom and interdisciplinary connections i.e. learning simultaneously with the themes of other subjects. Activities/exercises built around children's real-life experiences and from areas across the curriculum. The focus should be child centric learning.
- The children should be introduced to folk algorithms. These algorithms exist for not only mentally performing number operations, but also for measurement, estimation, understanding of shapes and aesthetics. These methods can enrich the child's perception of mathematics.
- Technology can greatly aid the process of mathematical exploration, and clever use of such aids can help engage students. Experimentation and exploration to be used at the secondary stage.
- Consolidate the mathematical concepts with child's prior experiences
- Easy to understand language
- Spiral sequencing of concepts
- Several strategies for solving a problem (Multiple correct solutions)
- Concrete to abstract – child be able to observe patterns to generalize them and develop their own patterns
- Experiential Learning cycle: Focus on observing, exploring and then defining rather than remembering definitions
- Constructing meaning about Mathematics
- A thumb rule of 140 periods, of 30-40 minutes each, per year
- Encouraging students to formulate new problems to strengthen their mathematical concepts and principles
- Sharing of stories and daily life experiences so that the children are able to build connections and see the different perspectives
- Contributions by women mathematicians needs to be highlighted in order to break the gender stereotype

LTW Reflection

Pre Lesson Observation Notes

Discussion:

This time we were to take the module lessons. RTs discussed the plan with the TE. The Module teachers had already provided the feedback. Before taking the first class, I had a Pre-Observation with the module teacher of my class. I discussed how I would conduct the class. She asked me what I would do for the children having difficulty in understanding and for those children who finish their task way ahead of time.

Before all the classes, I had a pre observation to discuss the strategy, and she would make her suggestions.

Feedback/ insights/ any changes you would make to the lesson based on the discussion:

Since we had already gone through various drafts of the plan, there were no major changes suggested by the module teacher.

What do I feel went well during LTW sessions:

What went well during the LTW was I confident about myself as well as the content. Since, I was to take the whole chapter "Separation of Substances", I could check and evaluate my performance.

The hardest thing for me was:

Class settle - I could manage the class, settle them in some of the classes and in some the module teacher had to intervene.

Also at one instance, the projector did not work and we could not show the video to the children. I explained the different methods but when I was explaining Threshing, the students did not understand and I asked the teacher to jump in.

In one class, I was giving them answers rather than eliciting from students. This happened as I had this in mind that we had to complete up to a certain point.

What could I possibly change/modify/focus in the next session:

- Elicit rather than give answers, ask probing questions.
- Frame the questions before hand,
- Devise new class management strategies
- For the questions in the presentation, space out time before hand, how much time needs to be given to the children for each question
- How to let them find answers to their questions, directing the question to other children.
- Ask questions to all the crews and devising strategy so that the whole class is engaged.
- As some students had got disengaged, whenever required, set the culture targets in the beginning.
- Learning Targets to be framed by the children and then written
- Model the good students

What aspects of your teaching approach will you look at changing in the future? How will you go about doing this?

Asking the right questions and eliciting.

What have you found useful/not so useful about the observation process? What issues or concerns do you have about the planning, observation or reflection process?

The observation process is helpful, it makes us aware of our strengths as well lets us know what areas we need to work upon. Our progression towards becoming a better educator. We also get inputs on the lesson plan, if there are any changes to be made in the plan. Suggestions on "how the class should be taken".

The other points that have crossed my mind while reflecting today...