

CONNECTING LITERATURE TO READING IN MUKTANGAN

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Connecting Literature to Reading in Muktangan

Abstract

The Muktangan's teacher education programme endeavours to produce teachers with skills to engage students as active learners in a developmentally appropriate curriculum. Teachers play a significant role in nurturing a lifelong appreciation for reading and learning among students.

This paper discusses the importance of skill development and capacity building among library faculty in schools and highlights Muktangan's initiative toward pre-service and in-service training of trainee teachers and school faculty in capacity building at Muktangan mentored schools.

Promoting reading among children is one of the important activities performed by these librarians and the Library Training Program also trains librarians on how to promote reading and language skills among children. Muktangan libraries highlight the need to train librarians in promoting reading among children by using various methods like storytelling, creating a word wall, reading aloud, and forming a literary circle. The published literature shows that the purpose of reading depends upon the need of the children.

1. Introduction

'*Learning and Growing Together*' highlights the many ways Muktangan has developed from its humble beginnings with every stakeholder – teachers, students, trainees, faculty, parents and management, growing in concert and learning from one another.

A very strong library system exists at nine locations of Muktangan in Mumbai. The librarians appointed at these libraries are involved in managing the libraries as well as interact with children through promotion of reading

One of the main focus of Muktangan Library training programs for librarians is to promote reading among children through various activities. Reading Promotion strategies form a crucial part of the 3year Library Training Modules. Various activities are conducted to train librarians for promoting reading among children.

2. Role of Libraries in Promoting Reading Habits

Library plays a key role in individual's life and also forms a crucial and integral part of 'Reading' by building up a useful collection of resources, both print and audio visual resources and by supporting classroom teachers in promoting 'Children's Reading Abilities'. It also enables their "Reference reading

skills.” Providing good Library services also forms a vital link in Reading Promotion for which Muktangan has thus built up a valuable collection of Children’s Literature in their libraries.

2.1. Objective

The present paper explores reading promotion programs adopted by Muktangan librarians in promoting reading and literacy among school children of various age groups and connecting Reading with Children’s Literature available at Muktangan in the best possible way.

Reading aloud and in literature circles, a wide range and genre of books with comprehension expression and passion can build lifelong interest in reading among children. Alongside building critical thinking skills and reflection can be engendered.

Detailed documentation maintained by the libraries were referred to write this article.

For promoting reading, various activities are conducted at Muktangan libraries.

A wide range of picture and storybooks are chosen for children to read at different levels and ages. Librarians are trained and equipped to read aloud with enunciation, correct pronunciation and expression with and to children. Selected books are introduced through chat, picture talk or using predictive skills. These books are then read and discussed to bring connection to real life issues and connections. Audio books and books read by the author are also explored. Activities like deconstructing the book, retelling of the stories and doing character sketches or writing a book report are conducted in promotion of reading. For younger children emphasis is given to listening and speaking skills. Children are encouraged to express their connection to the book through art and craft.

These activities support librarians/teachers in promoting children’s ‘Reading ability’ in Muktangan schools by developing among children

- Developing reading skills.
- Exposure to different genres and authors.
- Creating thinking skills.
- Creating a warm, secure library space.
- Building their vocabulary.
- Building their self-reflection.

3. Connecting Children’s Literature to READING: A Case Study of Muktangan libraries’

Recognising the need to connect Children’s Literature to READING across all its seven schools, Muktangan libraries have a structured Reading Promotion Program and various tools and strategies to develop reading and comprehension skills are used during Library sessions. Some popular and proven ways to enable Reading adopted by us are storytelling, creating word walls, and literature circles. Conventions of using information texts among a host of other strategies to promote reading among students is also a notable feature of our Reading Programme.

3.1. Reading Promotion Program at Muktangan Libraries

Muktangan has varied Library Programs catering to all levels of students. The Library sessions are held thrice or four times a week for stds 1-10 and these sessions are based on Muktangan’s Active Constructivist methods.

A structured Reading Promotion Program has been developed to encourage and motivate children which aims at cultivating a Lifelong Reading Culture amongst them.

3.1.1. Children's Interest in Reading is Sustained Through Stories by:

- ◆ Reading aloud
- ◆ Making Connections
- ◆ Story Extension Activities

Reading Aloud can be done by various interesting ways

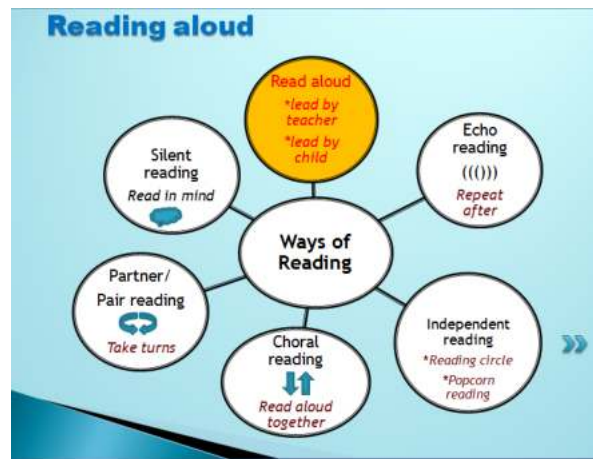


Figure.1

3.1.2. Read aloud sessions are done step by step to enhance the child's interest and enthusiasm for listening and Reading.

▶ **Step 1**

Pre-Reading: It helps children to get connect with the story and it automatically helps to build curiosity among the child about the story.

▶ **Step 2**

Reading: It helps to develop children's critical thinking in a way they will fully involve in storytelling.

▶ **Step 3**

Post Reading: It helps children to come up with creative ideas.

Pre –Reading & Post Reading Activities are basically Story Extension Activities. Story extension activities are simply activities, designed for children to participate in, based on the story which has just been read. They are fun activities which may involve art, music, science, technology, cooking, language or even maths! The key to story extension activities is that they are based on the story.

3.1.3. Making Connections

Connections are links that readers can make between the text they are reading and things they already know about and they help to understand the text better and also helps the reader to use one's own background knowledge and prior experiences while reading.

Three types of connections are

- **Text to Self** – These are connections that readers make between the text (what you are reading) and their own past experiences and/or background knowledge.
- **Text to Text** – These are connections that readers make between the text they are reading and other texts the reader has read before. Other kinds of texts might include books, poems, scripts, songs, or anything written. You could even include movies or television shows that you have seen before.
- **Text to World**- These are connections that readers make between the text and the bigger issues, events, or concerns of society. To make these types of connections the reader must think about what is going on in the world around them.

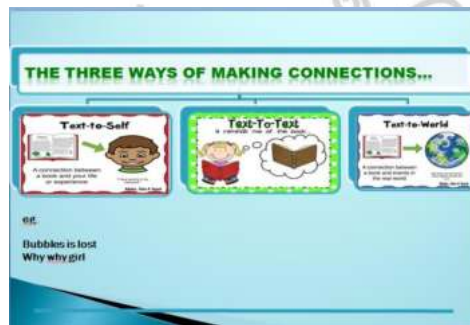


Figure .2

3.1.4. Some Novel Reading Promotion Projects in Mukhtangan Libraries

- **Reading circle time**
Babayan, Mr. Fantastic Fox, A city of Liverpool, Gandhiji's Gems, are some of the interesting fiction/non-fiction which children enjoyed reading, analyzing, discussing and presenting to an audience
- **Author Visits**
National and International visitors are regularly invited to take special sessions with children
- **Volunteer Initiatives**
Skilled volunteers including NGOS from various parts of Mumbai visit Mukhtangan Libraries and conduct various reading promotion activities with children. for e.g. Pratham, an NGO trained Mukhtangan librarians on how to do story weaving through online reading. Volunteers from all spheres of life are a regular feature in Mukhtangan and especially involved with multiple library activities

3.1.5. Promoting Reading in the Digital Age

Libraries can develop pages that allows user to read stories online which can play a major role in developing reading habits among young readers at early age by providing text in e-form. Pratham's Digital Story Reading program' is one such initiative. Libraries can also provide Syllabus based Online Interactive Sessions for children

3.1.6. Outcomes of Reading Promotion Programs

These programs support librarians in promoting children's 'Reading ability' in Muktangnan schools by developing among children

- Reading skills.
- Creative thinking and analytical skills.
- Vocabulary building
- Exposure to different authors.
- Self-reflection

4. Muktangnan Outreach Programs

4.1. Annual Workshops Outreach

Muktangan conducts a series of annual training workshops on all curricular subjects in the school for educators and librarians of schools, NGOs and other academic organisations. They are aimed at improving the routine processes of 'teaching-learning' and generating synergy across the school. The workshops are designed by Muktangan faculty. The Library module of these series workshops are designed by and conducted by the Library faculty and focus on Library Organization, Library Usage skills & Reading Promotion

4.2. Rural & Urban Institutions Outreach

Muktangan is the Knowledge partner for **Anganwadi and Zilla Parishad Schools** in Maharashtra and works in partnership with **Learning Space Foundation (LSF)** Objectives of the Library module are to train facilitators of **LSF** in basic Library organization skills and promoting Reading in children of the ZP schools they teach in. Muktangan helps in -

- Purchase and Collection of Dual Language Books
- Creating simple storybooks
- Sharing resources with Muktangan
- Connecting schools with book sellers and publishers
- Organizing and training

4.3. ACOTE Outreach Program

- ▶ The 'Active Constructivism Oriented Teacher Education – **ACOTE**' a program based on **Muktangan Pedagogy and** approved by Govt. of Maharashtra (MSCERT) is a 2 year project aimed at **training 10 D. Ed. College Principals, Teacher Educators and Student Teachers (D.Ed trainees)** . Muktangan Education Resource Centre **MERC** serves as a **hub** for this educational model

4.3.1. Library Module of the ACOTE Program

Muktangan library faculties are entrusted with training D.Ed.teacher trainees in setting up libraries, and teaching specific skills required for using a library. Topics being covered during the training workshops vary from school to school. The type of library training solely depends on the needs of the individual school and topics are designed finalised after assessing their individual needs. A general outline of topics that are included into the training programme are:

- Understanding the role of libraries in schools.
- Introduction to library collection building.
- Organising a school library.
- Reading promotion in schools through effective use of library resources.

Additionally, Muktangan library faculty are involved in setting up reading corners and libraries in some rural and urban areas of Maharashtra, where the need is urgent.

Objectives of this program are building an effective library collection, organizing and maintaining the library resources and promoting reading through efficient use of the resources

5. Conclusion

With internet, reading among children is reducing. Various programs conducted at Muktangan is an effort towards making children read. The librarians of Muktangan have developed in-depth and structured lesson plans for their Reading promotion programs. These programs not only enhance reading among children, but also encourages librarians to develop various strategies to inculcate skills in children that will promote lifelong reading among them. These programs and lessons can be adopted by other school librarians for promoting reading in their schools.



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