important pedagogical tool. However, opinions were divided on whether stories could play a similarly important role in teaching Sciences and Mathematics as compared to Social Sciences and languages. This needed further debate to arrive at a consensus. Finally, the workshop concluded with the recitation of poems by two participating teachers. These poems had a deep underlying message that life is itself like a story.

Feedback and Further Direction

Participants expressed the need to organize more such workshops in future. They commented that they had enjoyed the process of story writing, and it was not as difficult as they had thought it would be. Moreover, teachers also saw it as one of the most powerful pedagogical tools for language teaching, and dealing with multiple concepts at different levels. Another misconception which was busted was regarding the age appropriateness for using story telling as a pedagogical tool. Before the workshop, most of the teachers were of the view that story telling as a tool could only be used for children at the primary level. However, after the workshop, this idea changed when they saw that it had been conducted with and for children of classes IX and X.

"It has been said that next to hunger and thirst, our most basic human need is for storytelling." –Khalil Gibran

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A Short Report of the English Language Capacity Building Workshop

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The English capacity building workshop comprised 21 participants, 10 facilitators, 9 Hindi co-development participants and 9 English co-development participants. It commenced with a recapitulation of the topics and reflections from the previous workshop during which an insightful summary of ideas and concepts on the nature of language, language acquisition, reading strategies and the concept of reading emerged. The context setting was done by recapitulating the learnings from the previous workshops and introducing the topics of the forthcoming interaction.

Kamleshji introduced the topics for the current workshop. He reiterated that in continuation with the previous workshops, we would explore the different perspectives on literacy, reading and writing, and their relevance in the classroom.

The first session was on the "Origins of Writing". In this session, the participants explored how man must have created symbols for communication through many interesting experiential activities. This gave the participants a sense of the journey of the written word from early man's symbolic pictographic representations of thought to the present day alphabetic and syllabic systems. This was

followed by insightful discussions regarding the difference between writing systems and writing symbols. There was an inconclusive discussion on whether a child's journey from picture writing to conventional writing recreates the journey of evolution of writing. The participants were curious to know more about the origins of writing. In the feedback session, they clarified their doubts on syllabic and alphabetic writing, the discovery of symbolic representation by man, the evolution from pictograph to ideograph and the politics of the development of writing systems.

In the second session, the participants explored many different perspectives on literacy. They discussed at length the distance between functional perspective of literacy and the sociological and critical pedagogy perspective. The participants appreciated how texts could be explored through critical literacy perspectives, and many examples emerged where elementary level students could analyse and comment upon their situation either by questioning the text or through critical interpretation. The participants saw the texts with all their layers of meanings; they saw the connection between the text, the world and the child's identity; they examined the effect of social stratification and power, and the intention of the author. Some of the questions that arose out of this session included: What is the connection and difference between education and literacy? Should education and literacy be seen in binaries? Is literacy only a skill? Where do aesthetics and literary language fit in the critical literacy paradigm?

In the third session, the participants explored the reading-writing relationship through an innovative task of 'transforming' stories. This task was much appreciated. The participants realized that reading and writing were interconnected. They also explored the relationship between reading, writing and learning. This led to reflections about the underlying processes which inform reading and writing. These were further categorized under linguistic, cognitive, discourse and critical processes. There ensued a discussion on whether critical thinking can be introduced at the initial level. The session concluded with an analysis of children's writing, an enriching discussion on classroom processes that enhance learning through reading and writing, and the participation of children in democratic processes through reading and writing. Participants expressed their desire to know more about critical processes in reading and writing. Two books were recommended for further reading: *Reading the Word and the World* and *Teachers as Cultural Workers*, both by Paolo Friere. Some of the questions that emerged from this session included: What is the connection between reading, writing and learning? What do we mean when we say that writing concretizes our experience? What is the role of the teacher in the classroom in process writing?

The fourth session dealt with different approaches to writing. The participants were engaged in a discussion on the four models of writing and a review of these models in the understanding of the normative and ideological nature of texts. This discussion then led to an experiential exercise on product and process writing. The participants realized as a result of the exercise that there cannot be any binary divisions, and both approaches have their own importance. However, in schools, process writing needs to be encouraged as it is a constructive process. This is also because divergent thoughts (of the marginalized) need to be voiced and not silenced. The reading reviewed the four models of writing, and placed them in the perspective of how texts represent certain norms which usually belong to a dominant ideology. Thus, it was concluded that texts are not neutral, they mirror society. Some of the questions that came up during the course of this session were:

- Is the choice of approach a personal choice?
- Do some people write better through the product approach?
- Does the process approach not deal with grammatical accuracy?

The fifth session was on cohesion and coherence, and its relevance in writing. The participants found this session new and informative since many of them had not looked at writing so closely. They also realized that there is a close connection between analysis of cohesive devices and assessment. There was a debate on how cohesive texts may not necessarily be coherent. There was a vibrant discussion around coherence at the level of thought and structure. Some questions that emerged during this session were:

- Does coherence depend on the author or the reader?
- What is the connection between coherence and comprehension?

The sixth session was on genre. It was an interesting session, and gave rise to many debates about the difference between genre and style, and the classification of genres. The participants discussed various categories for classification, and found a lot of overlap between the categories. This led to a discussion on the historical, social and cultural evolution of genres. There was a lot of dissatisfaction with the fact that canonical genres were now being eroded; the participants wished that genres could be defined. Some questions that came to the fore during this session were:

- What are the boundaries between genres?
- If we say that genres are constantly evolving, does the death of the author become the death of a genre?
- There are some canonical genres, Is there a need to describe them.
- Can a text be written in all genres?

- Should we remove the word 'standard' from our dictionary?

The final session took the participants into the classroom. Classroom observations were analysed, and observations were made on classroom language, attitude of the teacher, pedagogy and resources. These observations were further analysed while exploring different types of texts from language textbooks. The classroom pedagogy that emerged took into consideration linguistic, cognitive, sociological and critical perspectives on reading and writing.

On the whole, the participants gave a positive feedback for the workshop. They appreciated the depth of content and the interesting ways in which it had been explored, the participatory mode of the workshop, the discussions and pointed questions that followed and the holistic viewpoints of the facilitators which revealed the strong conceptual underpinnings of the workshop. Some constructive suggestions that stemmed from the workshop included: objectives of the session or an introduction of the session needs to be given, the readings need to be explored deeper and for this more time is required many perspectives have been examined, but we need to evolve a common foundation perspective. Many participants suggested some topics for further research.

Summary

This workshop was successful in achieving its objectives and was better organized than the previous capacity building workshop. The concepts discussed were explored in depth. A wide range of topics were explored, ranging from the origin of writing to critical literacy. The various paradigms and approaches to literacy provided connections between the sessions, and built a multifaceted understanding. We also discussed perspectives on texts and literary texts. Finally, the concepts were tried out in the classroom from the perspective of the teacher.

Prior to the workshop, we believed that reading and writing were two different skills, but through

the discussions in the session, we understood the relationship between them. We have now begun to understand the processes underlying them. In the session on approaches to literacy we realized that we needed to read books by Bama and ZitkalaSa. The discussion on genre was very interesting. The discussion on coherence and cohesion brought out some new points which will be useful in the classroom both from the point of view of teaching as well as assessment. The observations sheets of classroom practices opened up multiple avenues for discussion which led to rich interactions with the participants.

We realized that although we had examined capacity building from various perspectives, we were not clear about their position and stand on any issue. We also need to have a common consensus. We need to discuss the objectives or introduce the session at the beginning so that participants develop an interest. Also, a bibliography of the works pertaining to the session should be circulated to everybody. Moreover, the readings of both codev groups should be made available to the entire language group.

All the facilitators were very open, thus allowing for good facilitation. The discussions were very sharp and engaging. The connections between sessions were well established. The workshop was well structured, yet there was enough flexibility for discussion. Flexibility in reading, presentation and discussion allowed for better understanding of concepts. As the number of participants small, everybody had plenty of opportunities to voice their views.

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No paper should exceed 2500 words including references and the bio-note of the contributor. The bio-note should not exceed 25 words.

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