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Readiness: Ready, Set, Learn

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Abstract: *Readiness is important when it comes to learning. Because a ready child, a ready school and a ready family can help in creating the successful learning experiences for a child (UNICEF, 2012). It is to bridge the transition from one class to another by utilizing the initial days of the new session. Haryana Government introduced Class Readiness Programme (CRP) in the year 2013 to create readiness for learning among the students. This programme is being run during the initial days of a new session aimed at equipping the schools to address various curricular issues faced by the students in addition to creating readiness among the students through various activity-based learning experiences.*

The paper reflects on the findings from the evaluative study of Class Readiness Programme (CRP). The data analysis revealed the impact of CRP and also reported various intervening factors hindering the achievement of CRP objectives. The programme emerged to be successful in creating readiness among the students but with certain challenges like infrastructure, parental support, teacher preparedness and prevalent evaluation practices.

Key Words: *Readiness, Class Readiness, Science learning, Class Readiness Programme (CRP), Activity-based learning*

1. INTRODUCTION :

Providing access to education is of utmost importance but providing meaningful and quality education is equally important. For retaining the child in school, their interest in education is indispensable. A child actively interacts with their physical and social surrounding. These interactions contribute a major part in their learnings throughout their life. A large part of this learning happens outside the school as they spend more time outside the school with their parents, family, friends and society. Hence, interactions within the school and interactions outside the school are to be monitored and sometimes needs to be moderated.

Carl Roger says that the process of learning is more important than the outcomes of the learning process, further emphasizing that more observation and exploration opportunities should be provided to children to enhance their learning. “Learning becomes life, and a very vital life at that. The student is on his way, sometimes excitedly, sometimes reluctantly, to becoming a learning, changing being.” Powel (2010) described learning process in context of readiness, children are perpetually ready to learn we need to create rich and varied opportunities for them. We need to achieve adjustment, create readiness for learning, provide necessary resources and make them learn the pre-requisite skills prior to entering the next level.

“The adjustment period may last until a pupil is able to show they can cope by making appropriate responses to the demands of a new environment. Researchers have described coping in different ways but mostly imply some form of reorientation between a child’s perception of a situation and the abilities they bring to the situation” (Ward, 2001).

Every time a child is transiting from one class to another they are required to cope with the new environment, new curricular expectations and new set of activities. Coping is essential, but its absence creates a sense of bewilderness and a sense of entrapment among the children (Cotterell, 1982). Readiness programme assists children in adjustment with the new environment and ensures the achievement of requisite levels of learning.

Class Readiness Programme (CRP)

Class Readiness Programme was first introduced by Haryana state in the year 2013 with the aim of creating readiness among the students. This programme is run during the initial months of a new academic session. The objectives of this programme were:

- To increase the strength of the students in class.

- To know each child.
  - His/her minimum level of learning (MLL)
  - His/her strengths and weaknesses
  - His/her particular interests
  - What motivates him/her
- To adjust in the new environment.
  - To make children familiar with their new classroom environment
  - To relate new syllabus with the old one
- Balance between available resource and requirements
- Assessment of Human Resource and other infrastructure at school. (Directorate of School Education, Haryana)

The programme aimed at addressing the issues like lack of motivation and interest, improving the attendance of students during the initial days of the session by way of using innovative and interesting pedagogies in the class.

2. Objective :

This paper aims at presenting the findings from the study and review the class readiness programme (CRP) implementation practices.

3. Discussion:

The programme activities are reported to stimulate interest and enquiry among students by providing them the hands-on learning opportunities and freedom expression. It promotes certain life skills like communication, leadership, decision making, cooperation and collaboration. It also promotes critical thinking and logical reasoning among the students. Students reported better concept clarity and long-term retention of the learning during such activities which helped them in grasping the concepts of science. Students are actively engaged with the learning process through programme activities, promoting their adjustment with the new environment. As enjoyment is the precursor for learning, so students should be provided with the stimulating, engaging and enjoyable learning tasks during the classroom teaching-learning activities (Grinell, 1988). CRP activities provide constructivist learning environment where student gets engaged with the various interesting and hands-on learning opportunities. These activities promote the interaction among the students and teachers (Devi & Devi, 2011). Such interactions are important for promoting interpersonal relations among the peer group and provides a healthy emotional climate in the class. Communication with the children should be the focused during the classroom activities, instead of the communication about the children (Rens at al., 2017). The constructive class environment gave impetus to the knowledge construction processes during the CRP activities. The achievement level of the students was found to be improved. Providing age-appropriate structured and contextual learning tasks promotes better adjustment, boosts the learning outcomes and improves the level of academic achievements (Ngware et al., 2018). The activities promoted the teacher-student and student-student interactions creating positive learning environment in the class.

Science classes and the related tasks should focus on the knowledge construction processes rather than the products of science (Moormann & Upmeier, 2010). The students should be provided the opportunity to enquire, explore and problem-solving, the requisites for developing scientific skills. Initially, the focus should be on enquiry, explorations and problem solving rather than the content information (Yeany, 1975). CRP activities provides such opportunities through demonstrations, experimentations, improvisations and field visits. These activities also links the previous learnings with the new learnings during the initial days of the new session. This provides a buffer period for the students while they are still familiarizing with the new class environment and new subject areas. Further, the findings reflect that these activities are helping students in achieving a smooth transition from primary school stage to secondary school stage. The positive results of this readiness programme would extend and be beneficial for other educational initiatives as well (Gormley & Gayer, 2005).

The programme implementation practices faced certain challenges like lack of funds and resources, supporting material and infrastructure, non-cooperative attitude of parents, lack of motivation and low attendance of students, lack of teacher training, shortage of time, lack of syllabus integration and non-uniformity in evaluation practices under this programme. It was suggested by the respondents that there should be an orientation programme for both students and their parents informing them about the purpose of this programme. Home environment is equally important as the classroom environment (Wicket, 2019; UNICEF, 2012; Howard & Johnson, 2004). Teacher preparedness plays a crucial role for the successful implementation of an educational programme (UNICEF, 2012). Teachers should be provided regular training pertaining to the implementation of the programme. There should be provision for funds for conducting

the programme activities in the schools. More implementation flexibility should be given to the teachers so that they can customize the activities as per their class. Also, it was emphasized the programme duration should be increased and should be integrated with the whole session, this would help the teachers in integrating more areas from the syllabus in the CRP activities. There was discrepancy in the pre and post-testing. Huge disparity was found in pre and post-testing, it desired for the availability of some readiness indicators so that uniform evaluation can be done and the results can be compared (Chandra, 2017). Some readiness checklist should be provided to the schools to bring-in the uniformity in the evaluation. CRP implementation practices should also be evaluated regularly to monitor its implementation practices.

4. Conclusion:

Learning readiness needs to be created at the very onset of a learning process as this in association with the class climate, affects the activeness of the learners positively (Anggresta et al., 2020). It helps in acknowledging the fact that the children face certain challenges at different stages of learning and they need some form of assistance to overcome such challenges to move further. Class Readiness Programme (CRP) has been introduced to assist students during their transition from one class to another. CRP through its activities creates readiness by motivating students for learning. It equips them with the ability to adjust with the new environment. It promotes cooperation and collaboration among students for learning, this prepares them for self-learning, peer learning and group learning tasks. All the stakeholders including parents and students should be actively involved in the process to make an initiative successful. Teacher training for the implementation of CRP activities should be organized regularly so that the teachers would get the required support in terms of the implementation practices. Programme activities if integrated with the regular curriculum would provide more time and scope for teachers and students to cover more content areas. CRP has made a remarkable contribution in the teaching-learning process during the initial days of a new class. It has been successful in bringing back the students in learning spirit and made learning enjoyable for them. It provides them the time zone to prepare for acquiring the new knowledge while connecting with their previous learnings, adjustment with the new environment, to get acquainted with the expectations from them and to connect with their peers and teachers.

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