

Effects of Strategic Intervention on Developing Reading and Reading Comprehension Skills of the Learners

Ajay Kumar Swain^{1*} and Jayamala Sethi^{**}

^{*}Senior Teacher Educator, DIET, Cuttack, Odisha

^{**}DIET, Rayagada, Bissam, Cuttack, Odisha

Email: ^{*}drajaykuswain@gmail.com and ^{**}jayamalasethi@gmail.com

Abstract- *The National Achievement Survey (NAS) was carried out all over the country on 13th November 2017 to assess the learning level of students in classes- III, V and VIII in Government and Government aided schools. Low performance is one of the reasons which are called psychological dropout. Students' low performance in language hinders them to comprehend the higher-class competency in Language. Hence, the investigator conducted the study entitled "Effects of Strategic Intervention on Developing Reading and Reading Comprehension Skills of the Learners". This study was carried out with two specific objectives like to identify the status of the Cuttack district in respect of the State Report card and to evolve strategies to improve the level of learning achievement of class viii students in the first language Odia. A survey- cum-experimental method was adopted to conduct this study. 40 students were selected randomly to conduct this study. Data was collected using the tool like achievement tests through pre-test and post-test procedures. The intervention period was one month. The post-test result was better than Pre-test. It proved that remedial learning package had a positive effect on enhancing the achievement level.*

Keywords: Effect, Activity, Achievement, Remedial, Package, Investigator, Pre-test, Post-test.

Introduction

The National Achievement Survey (NAS) was carried out in all over the country On the National Achievement Survey (NAS) was carried out all over the country on 13th November 2017 to assess the learning level of students in classes- III, V and VIII in Government and Government aided schools. In the survey approximately 22 Lakh students from 1, 10,000 schools across 701 districts in all 36 states/UTs in the country participated. The test items were based on Learning Outcomes which were recently incorporated in the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009 after being amended on 20th February, 2017 by Govt. of India. The survey tools used multiple test booklets with 45 questions in class- III and V related to Language, Mathematics and EVS and 60 questions in class- VIII in Language, Mathematics, Sciences, and Social Sciences. Along with test items, questionnaires pertaining to students, teachers, and schools were also used. NAS is basically a school-based survey on assessment of learners' achievement in a representative

sample of children who are enrolled in government and government-aided schools to assess the wider variety of skills which are based on Learning Outcomes in class wise and subject wise. It is remarkable for its special characteristics that the survey was conducted all over the country at a time in a single day with the uniqueness of test questions which creates an indelible history in the world. NAS 2017 was conducted which gave a picture of the performance of learners based on the indicators. Many factors influence the achievement of the learners. They are viz; class and subject, school management, social groups.

Salient Features of NAS 2017

- NAS, 2017 was conducted in the whole country at a time in a single day.
- Uniqueness of Question items all over India. (Uniqueness of day, timing, and question items)
- Test items are based on class-wise and subject-wise Learning Outcomes.
- First time in this survey District wise Report cards published within a short period.

Class wise Analysis of District Report Cards in Language

Concerning the NAS District Report Card of Cuttack district 171 schools participated in this survey. The number of schools included in classes III, V and VIII was 60, 60 and 51 respectively. The participation of students in all categories, class-wise average performance of students in language, range of performance of students correctly, and class-wise lowest performing of Learning Outcomes were analyzed and interpreted in the following tables.

Table-1: Class wise students' participation in Language of Cuttack district

| Class | Total no. of student's participation | Boys (%) | Girls (%) | Rural (%) | Urban (%) | SC (%) | ST (%) | OBC (%) | GEN (%) | Govt (%) | Govt Aided (%) |
|-------|--------------------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------|--------|---------|---------|----------|----------------|
| III | 889 | 48.93 | 51.07 | 85.15 | 14.85 | 23.4 | 12.15 | 50.51 | 13.95 | 98.88 | 1.12 |
| V | 1021 | 50.54 | 49.46 | 85.60 | 14.40 | 27.33 | 10.77 | 49.56 | 12.34 | 97.65 | 2.35 |
| VIII | 1312 | 49.62 | 50.38 | 80.49 | 19.51 | 27.29 | 4.12 | 51.37 | 17.23 | 81.71 | 18.29 |

The above table shows that the participation of girl students in Class-III and VIII is higher than boys whereas boys' participation in Class- V is higher than girls. The participation of students in the OBC category is more than in other categories. The participation of rural schools is higher

than in urban schools. The participation of govt. schools were more than government aided schools.

Table-2: Average performance of students in Language (%)

| Classes | Overall | Boys (%) | Girls (%) | Rural (%) | Urban (%) | SC(%) | ST(%) | OBC(%) | GEN(%) |
|---------|---------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|-------|--------|--------|
| III | 75.06 | 76.23 | 73.94 | 75.43 | 72.93 | 72.95 | 74.14 | 76.59 | 76.87 |
| V | 64.15 | 63.44 | 64.87 | 64.98 | 59.18 | 64.87 | 57.39 | 65.93 | 61.27 |
| VIII | 62.02 | 61.62 | 62.42 | 61.97 | 62.24 | 60.24 | 51.23 | 62.54 | 65.87 |

The above table shows about the overall learning levels of the students and performance levels on the basis of gender, location and social group. The overall average performance is gradually decreased from class- III to class- VIII. In gender wise, the average scores were decreased from class- III to class- VIII. In area, the rural school students scored better than the urban school in class III and V. But in class VIII, the urban students did better than rural students. In classes III and VIII, General students scored better where as OBC students scored better in class V.

Table- 3: Range of performance of students who answered correctly (%)

| Classes | Below 30% | 30%- 50% | 50%- 75% | Above 75% |
|---------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| III | 3.04 | 7.54 | 29.36 | 60.07 |
| V | 6.07 | 18.02 | 44.76 | 31.15 |
| VIII | 7.32 | 17.45 | 50.53 | 24.70 |

From the above table it shows that in class III, 3.04% students gave the correct answer of below 30 % of questions. Similarly, in class- V and VIII, 6.07% and 7.32% students gave the correct answer of below 30 % questions respectively. 60.07% students gave above 75% questions correctly. 44.76% and 50.53% students gave 50%-75% questions correctly in class V and VIII.

From class III to class VIII the performance level of students in particular competencies/ LOs was gradually decreased. The above discussion shows that there must be some problems and issues in the low achievement of language. These are Socioeconomic status, language spoken at home, irregularity, illiteracy and ignorance of parents, attractive classroom learning, unhealthy school atmosphere, and location (urban/rural) of the schools etc. are treated as main causes of quality education.

The rationale of the Study

As per the district report card, the students in class VIII secured lowest percentage of marks in first language which compels the researcher to do something for the larger benefit of the students in the concerned subject. The reason of selecting class VIII was this is the terminal elementary class which will bring them to the fold of secondary education and so their deficiency should be clear in the subject before joining class IX. Low performance is one of the reasons which are called psychological dropout. Students' low performance in language hinders them to comprehend the higher-class competency in Language. Hence, the investigator conducted the study entitled as **"Effects of Strategic Intervention on Developing Reading and Reading Comprehension Skills of the Learners"**.

Objectives of the Study

- a. To identify the status of Cuttack district in respect of S the tate Report card.
- b. To evolve strategies to improve the level of learning achievement of class viii students in the first language Odia.

Delimitation of the Study

The study was confined to class- viii students and concerning low performing of Los in first language Odia i.e. L813, read textual/ non-textual materials with comprehension and identifies the details, characters, main idea, and sequence of ideas and events while reading.

Methodology of the Study

The study was a survey-cum-experimental method.

- **Design:** It was a single group pre-test and post-test design.
- **Sample:** 40 numbers of students from class viii of Government girls high school, Banki, Cuttack was selected purposively for the study.

Tools used

Pre-Test and Post-Test Questions, workbooks, self-learning materials, NAS report card. (Paralleled test by NAS was developed by the researcher)

The procedure of the Study

The mentioned LO was well analyzed which states the following; **"Read textual/ non-textual materials with comprehension and identifies the details, characters, main idea and sequence of ideas and events while reading"** as per the study. Then pre and post-achievement tests were developed which comprised the following aspects. These are;

- a. The question items were based on reading a paragraph, identifying the main ideas, characters, and arranging the ideas or thoughts in a sequence manner.
- b. Difficult level of questions was determined. More difficult and easier questions were deleted. Only average questions of the average category were accommodating in test items.

- c. Before preparing questions, a blueprint was designed. The question paper is attached in the annexure.

Based on the pre-test results, learning difficulties were identified and learners were divided into three categories viz. High Achievers, Medium Achievers, and Low Achievers. All the students were divided into four groups. In four groups two categories of students were clubbed for peer-supported learning under the guidance of the investigator. Each learning sessions evaluated instantly followed by remedial intervention.

Teaching Learning process continued for four weeks consecutively. A Remedial package was developed by the investigator with the help of colleagues and subject experts. During the internship programme the developed package was tried out for the purpose of standardization.

Analysis of Test Items

1. **Item No. 1:** This question focused to test the reading ability of the learners which are related to reading the paragraph with proper stress, pause and correct use of punctuation mark and locate specific information in the given text.
2. **Item no.2:** It aims to test the comprehension level of the student in relation to express the general idea and sub ideas of the text.
3. **Item No.3 and 4:** It aims to measure the ability of the learners in arranging the sentences in its proper sequence with words to form a story and paragraph (composition skill).
4. Suggest any two titles other than the original one.
5. Writing paragraph within 55 words using the key words.
6. Details about the test items, comprehension questions, synonym and antonym, express a group of words in one word, fill in the blanks, MCQs etc.

Action plan

About the Remedial Package: It consists of the following parts; such as

1. The first part deals with reading comprehension in respect of short stories, paragraphs, poems and some ethical notes.
2. Use of children's magazine, news papers cuttings, educational journals for children like JahnaMamu, Kunikatha, Shisu Raija, Meena Bajar, Amarisatya Odia magazine, Sunday Odia News papers, Ravivar Samaj, Chhutidina, Sambad, Prameya etc.
3. Use of Dictionary
4. The last part deals with the correct use of punctuation marks.

Classes were taken over a period of four weeks i.e one month using the remedial strategy/ package followed by practice activities.

Class Room Process

(a) Material No.- 1 (Reading Comprehension)

A paragraph in Xeroxed form was distributed among the students who sat in small groups each consisting of five in numbers. Out of the five students, two were low achievers, two were partial achievers and one was High achiever. The teacher gave instruction before conduct of activities in groups.

- Read the material silently
- First guess the meaning of the words underlined and choose from the words given

It was observed that few numbers of students could guess partly, maximum number of students could not guess the meaning of the difficult words at all.

Treatment: Choose the meaning of the words from the given multiple items. Discuss among your friends. The high achievers instructed to extend necessary help to the low and mediocre learners. It was seen that the slow learner and mediocre could do a little better than before.

(b) Material No. 2: A second passage in Xeroxed form was given to each group and the students were instructed to do the following activities.

- Mark the passage into segments to show breaks between the ideas.
- Guess the meaning of the underlined words using the clues given in the bracket.
- Sequence the sentences as per the paragraph/ text.
- Locate the specific information as given below the passage.
- Identify the sentence which expresses the gist of the paragraph./locate the main idea in the paragraph.

One passage from a prose lesson and one from the poetry lesson were dealt in the class. Then they were instructed to do as the investigator did in the example. The students were made familiar with use of dictionary and VMDT to comprehend the text easily.

(c) Material No.-3: Practice Activity

One paragraph followed by MCQs, how/why ques., Fill in the blanks

(d) Here a short paragraph/poem was given to the students and asked them to read it and suggest alternative title for the text/topic.

Teaching Learning process was continued for one month followed by different types of innovative learning materials, practice activities and evaluative activities. Then the post test was conducted.

Statistical Techniques used

't' test was computed for finding out significance of difference in mean scores between pre-test and post-test activities.

Results and Discussion

Table- 1

(Comparison of result of Pre-test & Post- test)

| Test | N | Mean | SD | t- value | Remark |
|-----------|----|-------|------|----------|--------|
| Pre-test | 40 | 8.92 | 1.72 | 13.15 | 0.01 |
| Post-test | | 14.47 | 2.07 | | |

The Mean value of pre-test is 8.92 while the mean value of post test is 14.47. The above table shows that there is increases of the post test mean score which is due to the effect of package which was transacted in right direction along with individualized instruction. The standard deviations of the pre-test and post-test stage were 1.72 and 2.07 respectively. The ‘t’ value is 13.15 which is significant at 0.01 level. It was proved that the adopted strategy had a positive effect on learners’ achievement in reading and reading comprehension in first language Odia. Their comprehension level was enhanced pertaining to four types of questions i.e. factual, inferential, evaluative and predictive.

Table-2

Comparison of results before and after intervention

| SL. No. | Indicators | Before Intervention | | After Intervention | |
|---------|---|---------------------|-------|--------------------|-------|
| | | N | % | N | % |
| 1 | Reading aloud with pause, stress and intonation | 40 | 35% | 40 | 65% |
| 2 | Reading with correct pronunciation | 40 | 37.5% | 40 | 55% |
| 3 | Sequentially arrange the ideas as in the text/ paragraph | 40 | 30% | 40 | 62.5% |
| 4 | Locate/ identify the central idea and sub ideas of the text | 40 | 25% | 40 | 60% |

The above table reflects that the performance of learners in Reading aloud with pause, stress and intonation, reading with correct pronunciation, sequentially arrange the ideas as in the text/

paragraph and Locate/ identify the central idea and sub ideas of the text were 35%, 37.5%, 30% and 25% respectively before intervention. After intervention, the performance of learners in Reading aloud with pause, stress and intonation, reading with correct pronunciation, sequentially arrange the ideas as in the text/ paragraph and Locate/ identify the central idea and sub ideas of the text were 65%, 55%, 62.5% and 60% respectively. It proved that the adopted strategies have positive effect on increasing achievement of the learners.

Findings of the Study

1. The average performance of Cuttack district is in second position as the district mean of class III-74, V-68 and VIII-54.
- The average performance of state in L304, L312, L504, L508 and L813 are 64, 59, 47, 53, and 50 where as average performance of Cuttack district in L304, L312, L504, L508 and L813 are 75.79, 73.59, 61.74, 65.35 and 62.02. So the performance of the district was better in comparison to the state.
- There is significant difference between the pre-test and post- test results. It proved that the strategies have positive effect to increase the achievement level of the learners.

Educational Implication and Suggestions

- In this study the remedial package provided that kind of scope like short stories, paragraphs, poems and some ethical notes, use of children's magazine, news papers cuttings, educational journals for children like JahnaMamu, Kunikatha, Shisu Raija, Meena Bajar, Amarisatya Odia magazine, Sunday Odia News papers, Ravivar Samaj, Chhutidina, Sambad, Prameya and Dictionary.
- Other schools can use this package to develop the achievement level of the learners.
- In other subjects such type of package can be developed with meticulous study.

Conclusion

Educationists view that if the results are not used to improve teaching and learning, such type of surveys are valueless and meaningless. In order to enhance the achievement level of students we have to go forward and apply all necessary ways to achieve the expected goals. We contribute ourselves wholeheartedly towards the learning of students. Thus, the call of the hour is to take corrective measures, implement the developed materials and do regular monitoring of the class room process to ensure the quality education.

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