

The background of the entire page is a repeating pattern of overlapping diamond shapes. The diamonds are filled with various shades of teal and green, creating a textured, geometric effect. The colors transition from a darker teal at the top to a lighter, more vibrant green at the bottom.

Effective Teaching and Learning Using Story Telling as a Tool for Children

**"Effective Teaching
and Learning
Using Story Telling as a Tool for Children"**

Organised by ASTI and HYO Port Klang

On the 8th of June 2015

Conducted by Ms Malavika PC.

Report prepared by ASTI R&D Department

Background

ASTI was approached by Magicbird publishing with the upcoming visit of an accomplished artist (and children books illustrator) from India, Ms Malavika PC. ASTI decided to use the opportunity to organise a workshop for teachers. ASTI teamed up with HYO-Klang to organise a workshop for Tamil school teachers called "Effective Teaching and Learning Using Story Telling as a Tool for Children". It was conducted from 3pm until 5:30pm at HYO Port Klang seminar room at Taman Seri Andalas, Klang. It was conducted free of charge for the teachers. The event was sponsored by Mr Sukumaran for the Klang city council.

Introduction

We believe that teaching can be made effective and meaningful depending on the methodology used. The learning experience of the child is very much dependant on the ability of the teacher to capture the imagination of the child. Story-telling is one way of making the taught subject to be more appealing to the students. It can help them remember facts better since the information is contextualised within the wider story being told.

The workshop was very well-received as our survey will show. We also noticed that teachers are very keen on attending interesting workshops which can help them be better teachers. We believe that a workshop such as this that explores creative methods of delivering the lesson should be conducted more for teachers.

Objectives of the Workshop

- to introduce teachers to alternative and innovative methods of teaching
- to use story-telling as a tool in to prepare the lesson plans in order to facilitate the students to better understand their syllabus
- to run the workshop as a pilot to gauge its effectiveness, with the view to introduce the programme to the rest of Malaysia
- to further develop the availability of various tools and methods that can be used by teachers across the country.

The Workshop

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Ms Malavika then talked about "Why we have problems trying to make the child understand?". She used the example of the 2 chairs in front of her. Most people would only see the chair as an object to sit on. A creative person would see more. She said that we can use these chairs to teach geography (where it is from, how it's made, who made it, etc.), history (when was chairs first used, who sat on a chair in the 'olden' days i.e. kings, noblemen, etc), economics (who produced - by whom, which country, who sold, what materials used, profits made, etc.), mathematics (2 chairs - 2 plus 2, 2 times 2, number of legs in a chair, number of leg is 2 chairs etc.).

The ability of using everyday objects as a tool to teach is dependent on the creativity of the teacher. It also requires courage, to think 'out of the norm'. It also entail the teacher to take the extra step to be able to prepare her innovative lesson plans in advance. This active use of the teacher's creativity will also help the teacher build her own capacity for creativity and make the profession more alive via constant improvement and evolution.

It is important to note that teachers have their own reality - the tensions of schools, lessons, making exam sheets, etc. Just like adults who face stress at work, so do children. We often forget that we were once children ourselves. Just like we have problem getting up for work, children also have problem getting up for school, just like we have problems with our boss, children may have problems with teachers, just like we have problems with our colleagues, children have problems with their school mates, etc. For us to emphasise with the child, we have to 'revive' the child in us. Empathy is an integral trait of all good teachers.

Ms Malavika said "today I would be doing some simple exercises". She continued "you will imagine yourself as a child today". We will not let logic get in the way of our creativity. If you do not understand some of the workshop contents, remember that your students will have the same problems. So it is important to stay engaged even if we do not understand all that is being taught. She asked the teachers to actively participate and be involved in the process to maximise their experience for the next couple of hours to come. The workshop was divided into 2 sections.

Workshop No 1: OONGA Story Copy Exercise



The participants were divided into groups. Ms Malavika set up a scenario for the first workshop. She asked the participants to imagine that there was a tribe called the "OONGA" people. The participants were given a sheet with 'new' writings never seen before. This was to be the language of the people of OONGA. They were asked to look at the writing, and were then asked to re-write their story, i.e. they were asked to copy the written text of the unknown alphabets.

After the exercise, each group was asked to share their experience. Some of them are as below:

Group 1

- Interesting but difficult to copy.
- It felt like drawing.
- We felt 'angry' and waiting to finish.

Group 2

- We felt like we were thinking freely.

Group 3

- "I could see patterns in the writing."

Group 4

- Was difficult to write without understanding - i.e. without context.

Group 5

- Made me wonder what the story is?
- Made me ask if this language is real?
- I could see a dialogue in it.

Group 6

- "I could see the language as a picture."
- It seemed like the cursive writing of Tamil.

Group 7

- Almost like training for cursive writing. New writing practice.
- Needed patience to write something I could not understand.

Group 8

- Was very nice and new.
- We can still attend to something and get the job done even if we find it difficult to understand.

Ms Malavika then added and spoke about "Context". we may say "I do not understand why we are writing" or "I do not understand the context". We as teachers know the full content of our subject (syllabus, the lesson, etc). But this is not the case with young students who do not know anything yet - they are learning without context. The students do not understand why they learn maths, science, geography, etc. This exercise is to emphasise this fact and perhaps to understand why sometimes the students do not understand what we are trying to teach.

Workshop No 2: The "Oonga" Story

The participants were then given another sheet. This sheet had a picture of the hero of the story that the group were asked to create. So the first sheet is the narration and sheet 2 was the illustration of the story. Now they had to figure out where to put the full stop, explanation mark, etc, on the first sheet of paper. To do this, they needed to think of the story, then tell the larger group the story BUT using the "Oonga" language. She said there was no need to have any logic in the story. It could be crazy? The participants were tasked to write the story based on the 2 sheets given to them, whilst being happy and having fun.



Each group were then asked to tell their story in this 'new' language to the other groups, whilst showing the 2 sheets (the first sheet is the narration, the second is a picture of the main protagonist of the story). No 2 sheets given to any of the groups were identical. Each group was given different types of sheets of paper. After the story was told, the other participants in the other groups were asked to guess what was the story being told.

Some examples of the story created were:

Story 1 by Group 1

What people understood from the story told by Group 1 was that: It was a story of a bird which got sick. Then an ambulance came and saved the bird.

The actual story told by Group 1, as explained by Group 1 was that it was a story of 2 birds which were joined at the stomach. One of the birds fell in love. So an ambulance came and they were brought to hospital to get the stomach separated so that they could be individuals again. But tragically only one bird survived.



Story 2 by Group 2

What people understood from the story told by Group 2 was that: It was a story of a cat. It got hungry and stole a chicken from a kitchen. However the cat got sad jumping up and down since it did not get any KFC chicken!

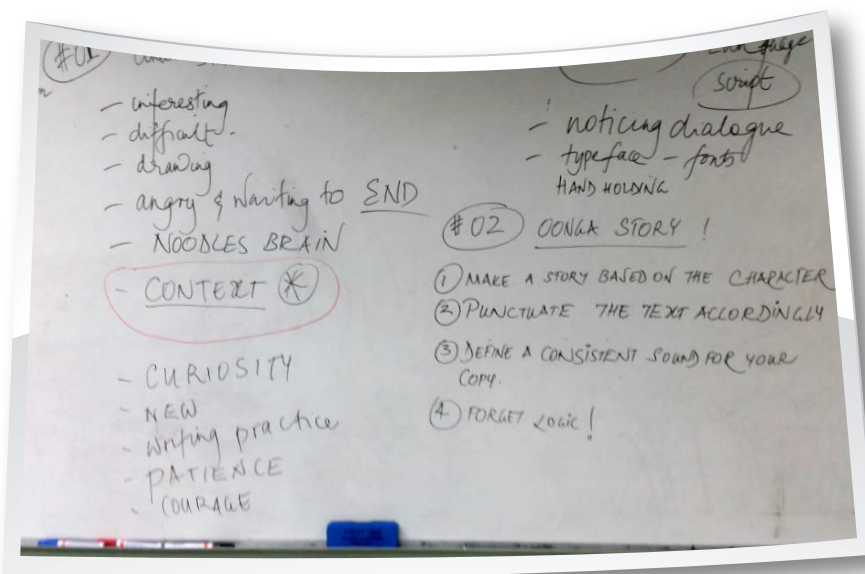
The actual story told by Group 2 was: Once there was a hungry cat. It went to look for food in a kitchen. It found a chicken being cooked. The cat put its face in the oven and got its whiskers burnt. The oven was hot, and the cat started to jump up and down in pain.

After all the stories were told, the participants were asked how they felt. The participants said, among others:

- Very interesting.
- Our minds work well when we are happy.
- Classes can be interesting with a happy atmosphere to keep the energy high for learning.
- Creativity is important when teaching and we are all capable of using it.

Ms Malavika added that as an illustrator, when we put the picture next to the text, it helps us to think better. It helps to awake our imagination. When we teach, we should also use diagrams and pictures, arrows to show flow, etc. We use different languages when teaching and to vary our tone, etc. When we tell stories, we become 'loose' and happy. It is important to be happy in the classroom and create an atmosphere of happiness to promote openness. We learn better when we are 'open'.

Due to lack of time, the session ended with workshop 2.



Evaluation

We conducted a survey to find out the effectiveness of the workshop. A total of 36 respondents answered the survey given to them. Below are the results:

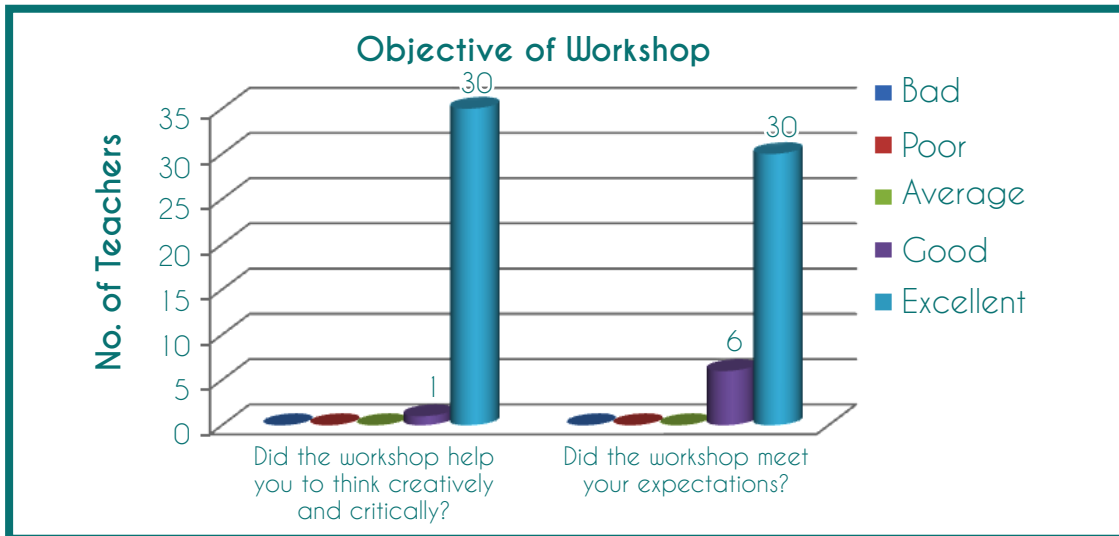


Figure 1: Objective of Workshop

The first series of questions was to gauge if the workshop was able to meet one of its objectives. Story-telling is a creative way of teaching people to be more creative and critical in their thinking. Overwhelming response (97%) gave this question the highest score. In addition, 30 out of 36 respondents said that the workshop exceeded their expectations. Thus we conclude that the workshop has had a positive impact on the participants who attended it.

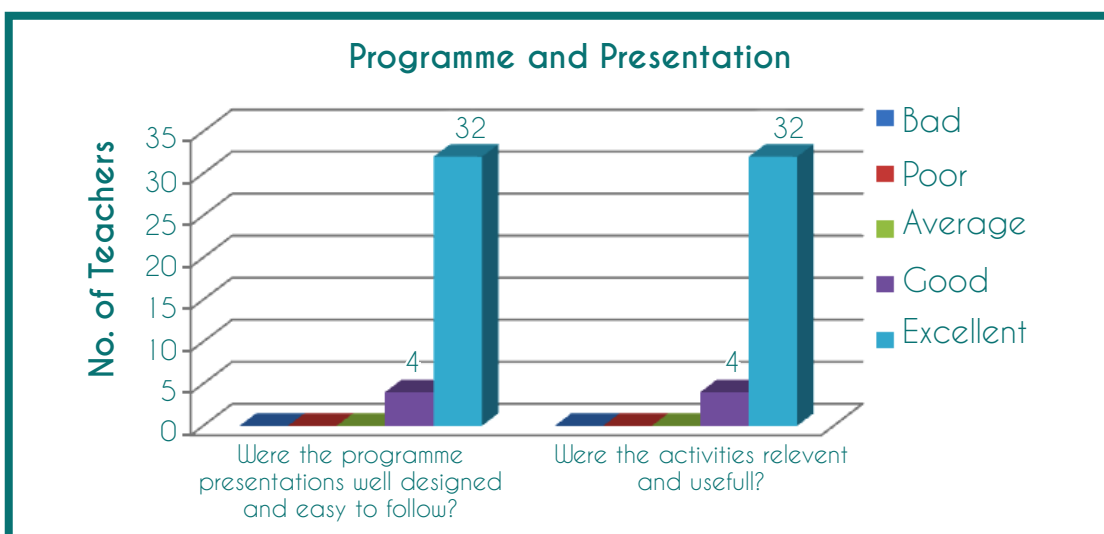


Figure 2: Programme and Presentation

The second couple of questions were to gauge the programme and presentation quality. A total of 32 out of 36 (89%) gave the highest mark for presentation and design, stating that it was well-designed and easy to follow. The same number also overwhelmingly agreed that the interactive nature, via the activities of the workshop, was very useful.

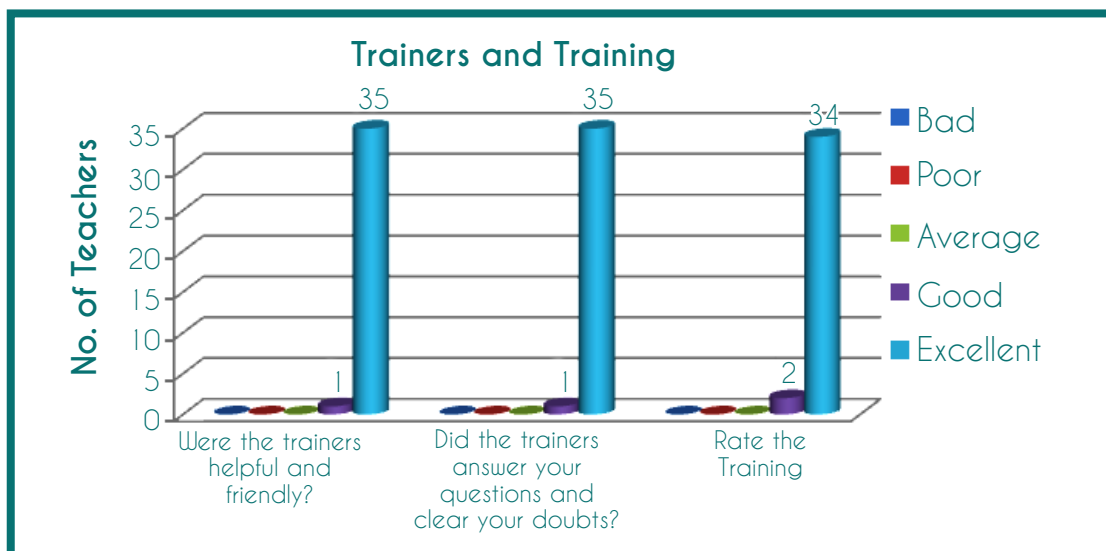


Figure 3: Trainers and Training

The third set of questions was designed to see the effectiveness of the trainer and the training in getting the message across. The questions on the trainer were tremendously positive with everyone except one giving the highest mark stating that the trainer was excellent. The trainer was very engaging and made the session a truly fun and happy one. Most of the participants were unhappy when the session was about to end and wished that it could go on longer. As for the training, 95% of the respondents rated the training as excellent. We noticed that the learning experience was fun, and we are confident that the retention of knowledge from the training would be maximum for all participants.

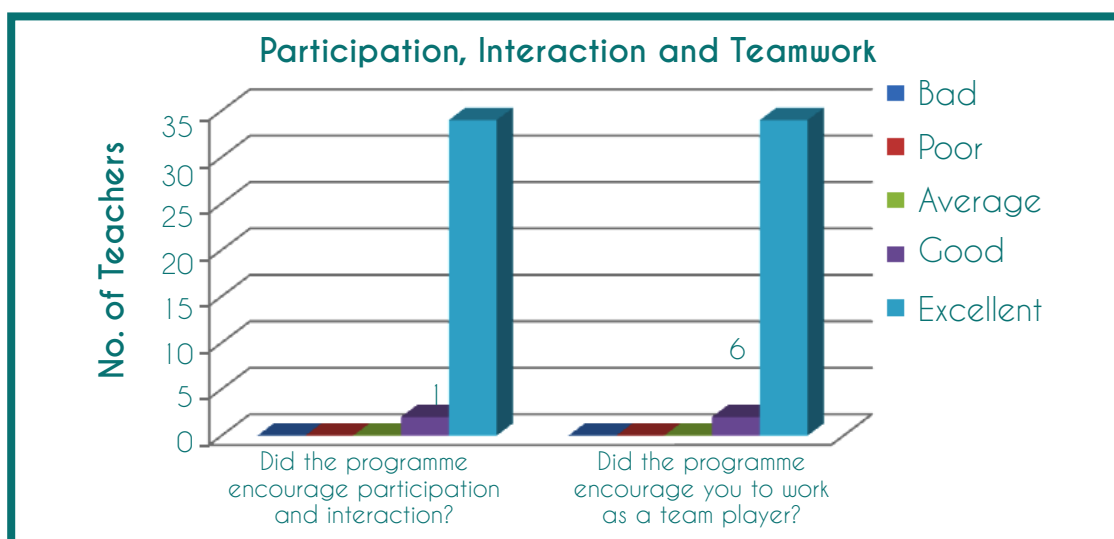


Figure 4: Participation, Interaction and Teamwork

The fourth set of questions was designed to give an indication of the training methodology. It is our belief that the best form of learning outputs comes from an interactive one with an emphasis on cooperative learning (compared to competitive). The above results overwhelmingly show that this objective has been achieved.

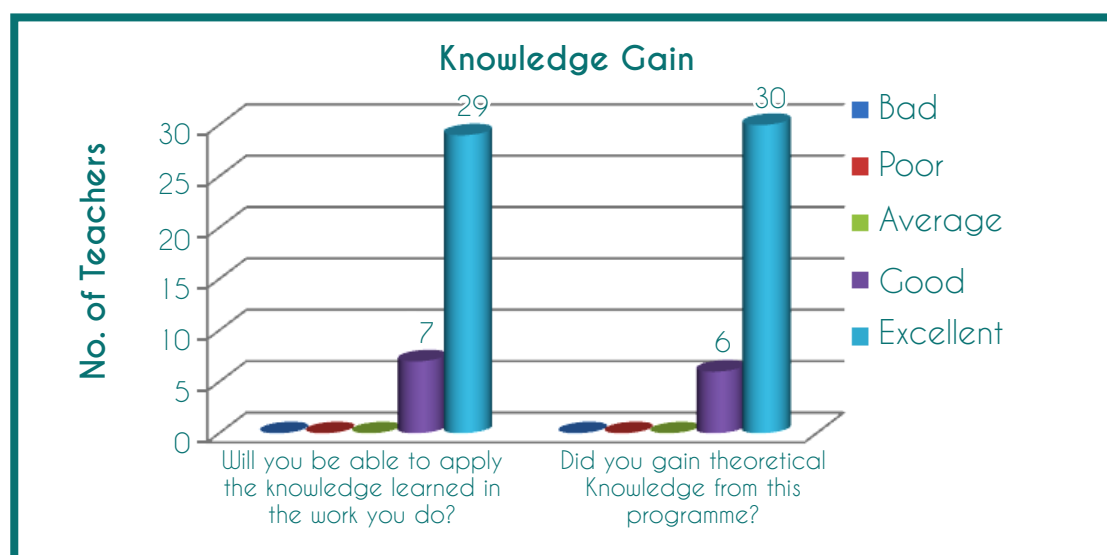


Figure 5: Knowledge Gain

It is important to note that the knowledge we learn should be able to be used for our daily activities and work. It is important that both theoretical and practical knowledge should be acquired from all such programmes. From the above result, we can see that all respondents said that they gained both practical and theoretical knowledge which they could use in their teaching.

The participants were also asked to give general comments of the event, below are some of them:

- Activities were great, even more activities recommended.
- Should be conducted in 3/2 days programs.
- Should give some simple notes for participants.
- More time for workshop needed - have longer sessions.
- Next time arrange more sessions.
- Excellent.
- More such programme should be introduced. Well done.
- Can be held in next term.
- Superb. Give more time for participants.
- "I got ideas to develop the children's multiple intelligent within them".
- Can conduct more programmes.
- Plan for a long term programme.
- More time. Thumbs up to the trainer.

Conclusion



Story-telling is an effective way to teach young people new things. It helps them contextualise things. It also creates an atmosphere of happiness in the class which helps the children learn better. The workshop was fun and the teachers and some HMs found the workshop very enlightening. They said that they would try to employ some of the methods they had learnt to their students.

The Next Step

From the very positive feedback that we have received, we believe a longer and comprehensive programme should be designed and conducted all across Malaysia.