

CLUSTER'S STUDIO: A PLATFORM TO SHOWCASE STUDENT'S TALENT

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Shri Maulik Patel joined the Lodra Primary School as a primary teacher in 2007. He was soon made a Cluster Resource Coordinator; after working for three years, he went back to teaching in Indiranagar Primary School in village Sandera. He once again became a CRC coordinator in 2017. Mr Patel was posted at CRC in Zazam, which is situated at the India-Pakistan border area. His job was to teach children the basics of technology as there was no other resource who could do it. Here, he had initiated a concept of one TV, one teacher in every classroom.

During his visits to the schools, Shri Patel noticed that only the bright students of the class were encouraged to answer and the slow and average students were mostly ignored. He understood that not all children could be

academically inclined and those who were not good at studies could be apt at some other curricular subjects. He found certain children arriving at the school early to unlock the classrooms or tending to the school garden during their free time. However, the capabilities and work of such children were never acknowledged or honoured.

While thinking about possible solutions to this problem he wondered if there could be some platform where the talents of such students could be showcased and appreciated. He came up with the idea to have a studio in the school where all students could be encouraged to showcase their talents. This would help the schools to tap into their hidden capabilities and use them to build their confidence. He also wanted the villagers to be present to encourage the children. He



Video Broadcast of Students from School Office

discussed his idea with the school administration, teachers and principals and won their support. He therefore initiated the Cluster Studio where the work of each and every student could be recognized.

To show the BISAG programmes, he needed TV sets in the classrooms. In the village people were very poor and it was very difficult to get monetary help from them for new TV sets. He asked for and received donations in the form of old TV sets which he installed in the classrooms. The donor's name was written on each TV set. This way eight of the 13 schools managed to have a TV set in each classroom. Now he had the TV sets he needed for the studio.

From e-waste, he managed to find old cameras and lights. A studio-like set up was arranged in the principal's room. With the help of the local cable operator he also obtained a modulator to maintain the necessary waves for broadcast and also allow for the addition of more channels. The cabling of the entire system was done with normal cables.

BISAG was added since the state government telecast programs for classes 5-8 on it. Five modulators in a series were fixed.

With this, whenever a child is positioned in front of the camera, he/she is visible on the TV installed in every classroom. The children are excited and want to contribute. So the school announced that children should come forward to showcase their skills in story-telling, drawing, singing songs, playing musical instruments, making clay or paper toys, good handwriting, describing tours, giving information on gardening, cricket commentary, etc. They were given the liberty to showcase any activity of their choice through the studio.



Students watching the broadcast in the classroom

In the beginning, a few children hesitated or were shy to face the camera but gradually they were inspired and impressed by other children who freely presented their skills. When the children see their friends teaching or sharing

knowledge, they easily and quickly pick up skills through peer learning.

Later Shri Patel and some teachers developed a collection of picture messages that appear in social media and created a DVD of photo albums. In this DVD they arranged a medley of all the poems in four languages as the background score. During recess time every TV in every classroom is left on. Several children stay back to watch these and learn from the activities on display. Children belonging to classes 2-4 were able to pick up poems recited by students in higher classes. The key was to develop listening skills.



TV in the classroom

The timetable of the syllabus on Vande Gujarat was put up in every classroom. Through use of modulators, every classroom could watch the Vande Gujarat channel that corresponded to their class. This was the best way to use the materials provided by the government.

In May 2017, training for about 178 mathematics teachers of Class 3-5 of the entire cluster was delivered through the studio. The children who wanted to appear on TV wanted their performance to be perfect and they went out of the way to improve their diction and pronunciation. This project also helped them enrich their basic language skills. It also helped the schools to encourage a varied set of skills in the children.

After the Corona outbreak, the studio was connected to the Internet; using Microsoft Teams, the schools are now engaging the children in learning from the safety of their own homes through their mobile phones. The teachers come to the studio and position themselves in front of the camera and talk to the children through this arrangement. They not only educate seamlessly but also engage children in psychological counselling in these tough times. Shri Patel is in talks with the village's local cable operator to arrange for broadcast through the TV channels instead of using mobiles.

Although this project has been implemented in all the schools of the cluster, five schools use

it actively. These schools include Kamliwada Primary School, Mota Ramanda Primary School, Diorda Primary School, Hajipur Primary School and Runi Primary School.

To encourage the children, their hoardings (10 feet by 15 feet) are put up on the wall of a school which is strategically located on the highway.

When Shri Patel took over as CRC coordinator, there were eight schools: two had A grade, three had B grade and three had C grade in Gunotsav. Later, the number of schools went up to 13. Today, all the schools have A grades. During the last 3 years, 85 children attending private schools have joined these government-run schools.

Without a doubt, most parents are overwhelmed to see their children live on TV. They are also happy that the children are able to showcase and build on their skills even if they don't show outstanding academic performance.

Now, even the people in the village have made it a habit to inquire which child had appeared on TV. Even during social gatherings, parents feel

proud to tell their relatives and friends that their children have appeared on TV in the school.

Shri Patel mentions that it is very difficult to evaluate this project in tangible terms or documents. However, its success can be seen in the growth of students' self-confidence and their improved ability to express themselves. Today some students of the school have their own YouTube channels and they even record their own songs.

More information and demonstration of our experiment in the video format is available on YouTube



QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. How can children be encouraged to overcome their shyness and present their ideas to the class?
2. What activities can be done to develop hearing skills in children?
3. What extracurricular activities can be done to bring out the dormant powers in children?

QUESTIONS FOR TRAINEES

1. What activities should be given to enrich the knowledge of language in children?
2. What will you do to help your children remember the subject easily?
3. What can you do to help children learn through peer learning in the classroom?