

Teacher Training Session 1

On Friday 29th October I held the first training session with 5 teachers. Asha was also present to help with any language problems: though most of the teachers can understand simple English, they cannot express themselves very well.

After working through the games, activities and songs the teachers were asked to choose two which they thought were suitable for the children in their classes. Subsequently they were asked to prepare these activities for Monday. Asha felt that they should be able to do this without any further demonstration from me in the classes.

On Monday I observed the activities in the 5 classes and was very pleased to see the teachers working well with the ideas and the children also responding positively.

- One teacher had expanded on the 'Colours song' by asking the children to draw the appropriate coloured boxes in their copybooks and write the colours next to them.
- The two action songs were popular and I saw 5 very excited little fish waiting to be gobbled up by the teacher shark!
- The activity for teaching the times tables had just been introduced in one class that I visited and so not all of the children quite understood what was expected of them. The teacher concerned had not been able to work with the children on Saturday because she was at the Jeevan Teacher Training. She had worked with the Word Snake and made a very impressive snake that was 14 words long.
- A teacher in the pre-nursery class had chosen Bingo, but the game proved too difficult for most of her group. However, she did well with the 'Colours song'

New Play Material

On Monday Pierre, Asha and I went shopping in the I.P. Mall, near the railway station. I have €100 to spend, money that was raised by 3 enthusiastic children at Atalanta Primary School where I worked as an English native speaker up until July of this year. We bought educational games, puzzles and play equipment.

On Tuesday I visited a local shop selling educational toys and bought some more material. This shop is an outlet for the Kiran Centre, which is in a village not far from Varanasi. The Kiran is a 'Centre for education and rehabilitation of children and youngsters with different abilities': see www.kiravillage.org. The puzzles and play equipment are good quality wooden products.

Teacher Training Session 2

On Thursday 4th November I held a short training session reviewing how the activities from the previous training had worked in practice, with the teachers explaining what they had done (3 teachers from the first training were unable to attend, but 4 new teachers were present).

I wanted to familiarise the teachers with the new material I had bought, and so I distributed most of the new items among the teachers and asked them to consider 3 questions:

- What is the game/puzzle/activity?
- Which class(es) can use this material?
- Which skills can the children practise/learn with this material?

In turn the teachers spoke about what they had been given and answered the questions, with some translation help from Anita.

I had hoped to speak about how to integrate the material into their lessons, but decided enough was enough for one day. It was a bit like asking Dutch teachers to work on Christmas Eve – Friday 5th is Diwali and the teachers had really only come in to catch up on paperwork before the holiday weekend.



Diwali, the festival of light, sees the houses lit up with fairy lights and candles, both inside and out, and fireworks fill the night sky from sunset until late in the night. I was very lucky to be able to celebrate Diwali both with the hostel girls and my host family.

I have played the Lotto game with some of the hostel girls. They soon learned how to play and enjoyed it very much.



The next two weeks

I am in particular keen to start working with the pre-nursery class (3/4 year olds), children who at present have no play material or space to play. Now that the weather is getting cooler, it may be possible to take the group up onto the roof and set up the new material there. Storage is also a problem, but I hope that can be resolved either by purchasing a suitable cupboard, which can be placed in the hall downstairs, or by making use of an existing cupboard in the pre-nursery.

Cool! flash cards

The flash cards have now all been laminated – a bit of haggling got the initial Rs. 8 per card down to Rs. 6 – but I am still looking for a suitable storage/indexing system. The related training session will hopefully follow soon.

Jeevan Teacher Training

There is a two week break in the training as Kati got married on Thursday. She has asked me to prepare a TPR type activity for the next session, which will be on 20th November.

The building work is progressing well on the site of the new school.