TEACHER MEDIATION AND INTERSUBJECTIVITY: A STUDY OF LEARNING IN A PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM
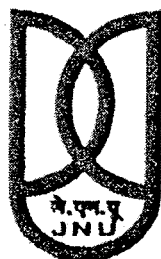
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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation titled, **"Teacher Mediation and Intersubjectivity: A Study of Learning in a Preschool Classroom"** is original to the best of my knowledge and is submitted in partial fulfillment for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy. This work has not been submitted so far, in part or in full, by me or anybody else for any degree of this University or any other University.

Prachi Vashishtha

We recommend for this dissertation to be placed before the examiner for evaluation and award of **M.Phil Degree of Jawaharlal Nehru University.**

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Abstract

Abstract

This study was undertaken to investigate the role of teacher's mediation in establishing intersubjectivity in the preschool classroom. Additionally, it explores the psycho-semiotic environment of the preschool classroom to provide a comprehensive understanding of the concept of intersubjectivity. The sample comprised of one of the preschools in Delhi (Santa Maria Integrated learning environment). The study was carried out in the prep classes of the school. The age range of children in prep was 5+. The main tools for data collection were observations, interviews and field notes. Data were analyzed through the technique of discourse analyses.

Intersubjectivity can be viewed as a mutual sharing of ideas and understanding which is essential for learning to take place. The important components of teacher mediating behaviour that facilitated establishment of intersubjectivity emerging from the analyses of the data are affective involvements, use of motivational strategies, coordination of resources with primacy given to experience and not expertise, joint attention and joint regard.

The major functions of language in the classroom emerged to be monologic as well as dialogic. Former one for sharing of cultural meanings, while the latter for generating new ideas and meanings. The use of bilingual instructions by the teacher was a common strategy to create a mutual ground for sharing through promoting joint intention and attention. The teacher was effectively able to relate children's everyday experiences to introduce them to the elementary aspects of scientific knowledge, thus creating grounds to prepare them for formal schooling.

Story-telling was regarded as the most important activity to relate with the young children. Efforts to promote shared understanding were made by encouraging children to participate through relating, reasoning, predicting the future course of events, enacting the stories. Children's participation was mostly teacher regulated, leaving little space for children to intervene by directing the teacher's attention, making associations, inquiring and negotiation.

The curriculum involved the mix of structured and unstructured learning experiences but sometimes the activities were little more structured and familiar to promote the creation of the zone of proximal development. Therefore, teacher's mediation sometimes hindered the process of establishment of intersubjectivity by providing minimal spaces for children to negotiate and direct their own learning and also by not encouraging peer interaction in the class. Spaces for child's mediation were mostly available in peer collaboration during play. Therefore, the classroom practices represented a blend of cultural, conventional and progressive values. This also depicts the teacher's ideas regarding the structuring of teaching-learning environment where efforts were made to link learning at school with child's experiences at home. Though, more freedom was given to children than a typical conventional classroom, but not enough to promote a learner-centric approach to learning.

Chapter-1

Introduction

Chapter 1

Introduction

Children are active participants in understanding their world, building on genetic and sociocultural constraints and resources (Rogoff, 1990, p.37).

The study attempts to investigate the role of teacher's mediation in establishing intersubjectivity or a shared ground for communication that helps to promote learning in a preschool classroom. An effort is also made to explore the psycho-semiotic environment of the classroom, in order to, gain a comprehensive understanding of intersubjectivity and its related constructs.

Teacher's role is crucial in creating a classroom culture by structuring the environment and designing meaningful teaching- learning contexts for children. Intersubjectivity refers to the shared understanding achieved during the course of social interaction that facilitates learning to occur. In a classroom context, when intersubjectivity occurs between a teacher and a child, learning is reciprocal; the child can affect the teacher's behaviour just as the teacher's behaviour can affect the child's. Therefore, the most effective concept related to the quality of communication that, from a sociocultural perspective, fosters development is intersubjectivity. To achieve true collaboration and to communicate effectively, both the partners must adjust to the perspective of the other. In a classroom situation, this is facilitated, if a teacher is responsive to the needs and interests of children and plans developmentally-appropriate contexts for learning by translating her insights in the way that are within children's grasp. As partners in interaction negotiate, the fusion of reference creates a platform for subsequent joint action and further development.

Many researchers in the field of psychology and child development are calling for research that takes into account the complexity of classroom interactions and their impact on children's learning. Accompanying these calls for more ecological validity

in the study of learning is a reconceptualization of learning as a fundamentally social activity (Harre & Gillet, 1994; Lave & Wenger, 1991), where social interaction and collaboration have important role to play. From this view, social interaction is not just a "setting for learning," but "the way learning takes place" (Packer, 1993, p.262). It seems that to study learning from this perspective, the unit of analysis shifts from the level of individual knowledge structures to the level of systems of activity of which children are a part (Newman, Griffin, & Cole, 1989; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991). These interfunctional systems coordinate individual mental activity and the use of resources in pursuit of a jointly established task. In a classroom context, this system comprised of a teacher, learners and tools mediating the teaching- learning process. The key processes by which joint activity results in cognitive change involve the coordination of distributed resources for thinking. Teacher's role as a facilitator and mediator is important in coordinating these resources for teaching-learning process to occur effectively. Shared ground can be established by sensitive planning of relevant experiences, helping children to make connections between the known and the new. To the extent that these coordinations result in the establishment of shared understanding, opportunities for cognitive change are created. This shared focus can be referred to as intersubjectivity.

Co- construction of knowledge

Piaget, representing the cognitive constructivist views, highlighted individual construction of knowledge through interaction in the physical world. He stressed the primacy of individual cognitive development as a relatively solitary act apart from the social context (Russell, 1993). Piaget did not believe that knowledge could be imposed on a reinforced child. According to him children actively construct knowledge as they manipulate and explore their world. On the other hand, social constructivists, such as Vygotsky (1978) and Wertsch (1991), emphasized the primacy of social interaction as the driving force and prerequisite to individuals' cognitive development through internalization of ideas encountered in the sociocultural milieu. Moving in the opposite direction from Piaget, social constructivists maintain that interaction in the collective is a necessary precondition for engaging in self-regulation. Self-regulation as a process is achieved when individuals are able to find their authentic voice during problem solving by using the

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mediational tool of language. Vygotsky (1978) emphasized the role of adult or more competent peer in children's learning as he believed that isolated learning cannot lead to cognitive development. He gives importance to the interactions of thought, language and culture at one level and role of adults or more knowledgeable members of a society in scaffolding or assisting children's understanding at another level. Therefore, he firmly maintained that social interaction is a prerequisite to learning and cognitive development. That is, knowledge is co-constructed and learning always involves more than one person. This implies that shared understanding is crucial for learning to occur. This idea is the crux of Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning.

Vygotsky argued that in order to determine the nature and path of development it is essential to examine the social environment where the development occurs (Tudge, 1992). He stated that learning awakens in children variety of internal developmental processes that can operate only when they interact with more competent people in the environment and in cooperation with their peers (Vygotsky, 1978). He stressed that children develop in a social matrix that is formed by their relationships and interactions with others. The social environment is a major contributor to the cognition of children because of the open area of communication that exists, that allows them to express and negotiate ideas as well as contributes to each other's understanding. Through joint activities with more mature members of society, children come to master activities and think in ways that have meaning in their culture. Thus, the social cognition model asserts that culture is the primary determinant of individual development. Therefore, a child's learning environment is affected in ways large and small by the culture– in which he or she is enmeshed. The focus here is on emerging phenomena of cultural construction– the conceptual structures emerge from the flow of everyday interaction between persons, between person and environment, and are guided by social institutions (family, schools, media, etc.).

With these considerations as background, it is quite clear that for Vygotskians, the social world does have primacy over the individual in a very special sense. It is asserted that society is the bearer of the cultural heritage without which the development of mind is impossible. According to Bronfenbrenner's (1995) ecological model, the social system in which child is embedded channels her overall

development. He emphasizes the importance of children's environments and their interactions with various members of the culture. This approach views the child as developing within a complex system of relationships affected by multiple levels of the surrounding environment, from immediate settings of family and school to broad cultural values and programs.

Based on Vygotsky's ideas, another approach, situated learning theory, posits that learning is unintentional and situated within authentic activity, context, and culture (Lave & Wenger, 1991). According to it knowledge needs to be presented in authentic contexts- settings and situations that would normally involve that knowledge. Social interaction and collaboration are essential components of situated learning- learners become involved in a "community of practice" which embodies certain beliefs and behaviours to be acquired. As a beginner or novice moves from periphery of a community to its centre, he or she becomes more active and engaged within the culture and eventually assumes the role of an expert. It is not to say that the process of becoming socialized can be reduced to mere learning or that there is no room for active construction in it. It is to say however, that social processes give rise to individual processes and that both are essentially mediated by artefacts.

The Primacy of Cultural Mediation

Culture makes two sorts of contributions to a child's development. First through culture children acquire much of the content of their thinking, that is, their knowledge. Second, the surrounding culture provides a child with the processes or means of their thinking, what Vygotskians call the tools of intellectual adaptation. In short, according to the social cognition learning model, culture teaches children both what to think and how to think. Language is the primary form of interaction through which adults transmit to the child the rich body of knowledge that exists in the culture. As learning progresses the child's own language comes to serve as her primary tool of intellectual adaptation (Langford, 2005). Eventually, the children can use the internal language to direct their own behaviour. Language was the form of mediation that preoccupied Vygotsky above many others, but when speaking about signs, or psychological tools, he had a more extensive set of mediational means in mind, that included a set of 'various systems of counting; mnemonic techniques; algebraic symbol systems; works of art; writing; schemes, diagrams, maps, and mechanical drawings; all sorts of

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conventional signs, and so on' (1978, p.137). In this view then, the development of mind is the interweaving of biological development of the human body and the appropriation of the cultural heritage which exists in the present to coordinate people with each other and the physical world (Cole, 1996). Higher mental functions are by definitions, culturally mediated; they involve not a 'direct' action on the world, but an indirect action, one that takes a bit of material matter used previously and incorporates it as an aspect of action. The sociocultural situatedness of the mediated action provides a link between cultural, historical and institutional setting, on the one hand, and the mental functioning of the individual on the other (Wertsch & Vandenberg, 1994).

Assisted Learning: Scaffolding and Zone of Proximal Development

By interacting with more skilled partners, children learn about the objects, people, and events in their everyday experience and about the symbolic system in their community that is used to label and categorise these experiences. The processes that support this learning include scaffolding, guided participation, and shared attention. The concept of "scaffolding," was first used by Vygotsky and Luria in reference to how adults introduce children to cultural means (cited in Van der Veer & Valsiner, 1991, p. 226) and was later popularized by Bruner (1978) as a metaphor for a mother's verbal efforts to maintain conversation with a child and, indirectly, to promote language acquisition. The metaphor of scaffolding has been extended in educational psychology to refer to the process by which parents, caretakers, teachers, or more expert partners-help someone less skilled to solve a problem. Scaffolding (Bruner, 1985) refers to a changing quality of support over a course of teaching session. Adults who offer an effective scaffold adjust the assistance they provide to fit the child's current level of performance when the child has little notion of how to proceed, the adult uses direct instruction, breaking the task down into manageable units. As the child's competence increases, effective scaffolders, gradually and sensitively withdraw support, turning over responsibility to the child. Scaffolding captures the form of teaching- learning interaction that occurs as children work on school-like task, such as puzzles, model building, picture matching, and later, academic assignments. It also apply to the other contexts that are just as vital for

cognitive development such as play or everyday activities, during which adults usually support children's efforts without deliberately instructing (Berk, 2002).

To account for children's diverse opportunities to learn through involvement with others, Rogoff (1990, 1994) suggests the term guided participation, a broader concept than scaffolding. It calls attention to both adult and child contributions to a cooperative dialogue, without specifying the precise features of communication. He described the process of guided participation, in which children participate in loosely, or formally structured on-going routines and activities guided by other, more competent, members of the culture (Rogoff, Mistry, Goncu, Mosier, 1993). Thus children learn through their social interactions with more competent members of the culture, who provide guidance and scaffolding in various culturally relevant activities. In many cultures, parents or older siblings scaffold children's play, guiding them to learn more about some aspect of play (e.g., the concept of turn taking) or the world at large (e.g. using money to buy goods). Schools have much to learn by examining the informal pedagogy of everyday life. When true teaching is found in schools, it observes the same principles that teaching exhibits in informal settings like home or community (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).

Tharpe and Gallimore (1988) utilized Vygotsky's ideas to stress the need for education to move towards a more collaborartive role between students and teachers. They argued that teaching must be redefined as "assisted performance," where teachers assist the children by providing structure and assistance in their work. Assisted performance also occurs between children when they participate in experiences together by providing information to each other that increases understanding of the activity. This concept is related to Vygotsky's (1978) term of working in the zone of proximal development. The zone of proximal development can be defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86). Researchers in the Vygotskian tradition argued that development is most likely to occur when two participants differ in terms of their initial level of competence about some skill or task, work collaboratively on it, and arrive at shared understanding. The key concept for researchers who utilize a

Vygotskian perspective is the "zone of proximal development", for collaboration to lead to development, interactions should be within the less competent partner's zone of proximal development. Vygotsky (1978) basically regarded the zone of proximal development as that area of development into which a child can be led in the course of interaction with a more competent partner. The zone of proximal development is not some clear-cut space that exists independently of the process of joint activity itself. Rather, it is the difference between what the child can accomplish independently and what he or she can achieve in conjunction with another more competent person like teacher. Stremmel & Fu (1993) refer to the "teaching-learning context" where "a child and adult collaborate in negotiating and constructing a desired learning activity through conversational interactions" (p. 339). Basically, teaching learning go hand in hand within a social context. This can be called teaching in the zone of proximal development. The zone is thus something that is created in the very course of social interaction.

Teacher Mediation

Vygotskian theory stipulates that the development of the child's higher mental processes depends on the presence of mediating agents in the child's interaction with the environment. Vygotsky (1978) himself primarily emphasized symbolic tools – mediators appropriated by children in the context of particular sociocultural activities, the most important he considered to be formal education. Some mediational concepts like scaffolding (Wood, 1999) or apprenticeship (Rogoff, 1990) appeared as a result of direct assimilation of Vygotskian ideas; others such as Feuerstein's (1990) mediated learning experience have been developed independently and only later acquired new meaning in the context of sociocultural theory . There can be two types of mediation, one human and the other symbolic (Kozulin 2003). Approaches focusing on both human and symbolic mediators generally try to answer such questions, what kind of involvement by the adult is effective in promoting child's/ children's learning? How children's learning can be made effective by the introduction of symbolic tools- mediators?

The role of human mediator is defined in Vygotsky's (1978) theory through the notion that each psychological function appears twice in development, once in the form of actual interaction with the people, and then as an internalized form of this

function. There can be different forms of adult mediation, from the adult's presence, which provides the child with a secure learning environment, to encouragement, challenge, and feedback (Schaffer, 1996).With parents or teachers, children engage in many different kinds of contexts of conversation such as exchanging information, disciplining, socializing, and showing feelings. In a classroom context, one distinctive feature of the teacher-child interaction is the teacher's potential control over the child. Adults are mature individuals with expertise and experience. When interacting with children, these characteristics allow them to assume the dominant role and deliberately manage the shared activity (Daiute & Dalton, 1993). In problem solving, teachers not only know more mature and sophisticated strategies, but also know how and when to use them (Rogoff, 1990). It is experienced that children's encounter with objects and especially artefacts is much more social than is generally recognized. These encounters are social in the much deeper sense as many if not most of the objects with which children interact are artefacts that adults/ teachers have designed and the purpose of an artefact can only be discerned through adult mediation or instruction that establishes what it is for or what "we" do with it (Tomasello, 1999). This involves intersubjectivity to attain the intentional sense of such interaction .The importance of human mediator is also reflected in Vygotsky's (1978) concept of ZPD as it asserts that a child performs at a higher developmental level of abstraction and performance with a knowledgeable and skilled partner than she would achieve independently. *

Studies investigated children's involvement in shared thinking with varying teacher's support and children's later performance on the categorization task. It was found that children who received minimal support for determining the categorization system categorized fewer items correctly, when later asked to sort some of the same and some new items, than children with whom the adult had articulated the categorization system or children whom the adult had induced to determine the categorization system (Goncu & Rogoff, 1998). Piaget (1964) stated that children benefit from their collaborations with a teacher if the teacher relates to children as an equal rather than as an authority figure, suggesting that shared thinking between children and adults requires that the partners assume equal responsibility-as peers may-in the process. However, equal responsibility for decisions or dialogue may be only one type of shared thinking (Rogoff, 1998). Other distributions of responsibility, including

leadership by a teacher with close attention by a child as well as leadership by a child with the support of a teacher, may well involve important shared thinking that under varying circumstances may be as helpful for learning as the symmetrical type of shared thinking.

Wood et al. (1976, p. 98) found that teachers engage in the following activities while scaffolding their students: recruitment of the child's interest, reduction in degrees of freedom, direction maintenance, marking of critical features in the task, frustration control, and demonstration of idealized solutions. Similarly, Tharp (1993) lists modeling, feedback, contingency management, instructing, questioning, cognitive structuring, and task structuring as effective means of assisting student performance. Palincsar (1993, p. 45) observed teachers successfully supporting their students during literacy instruction by linking students' previous contributions to new knowledge arising in the text, requesting that students elaborate on their ideas, restoring direction to the discussion, and reworking students' contributions so that they are integrated into the discussion. Moll and Whitmore (1993) ascribe to the teacher the roles of guide and supporter, active participant, evaluator, and facilitator. Some other texts focus on the techniques of scaffolding as various forms of adult mediating support: demonstration; dividing a task into simpler steps; providing guidelines; keeping attention focused (McDevitt & Ormrod, 2002) as well as providing examples and questioning (Eggen & Kauchak, 1999). Breaking content into manageable pieces also seems to be a common feature of scaffolding that has been emphasised in the texts (Berk, 2002; Eggen & Kauchak, 1999; McDevitt & Ormrod, 2002; Krause et al., 2003).

In discussing the specific nature of what adults do in the zone of proximal development, Rogoff et al. (1984) asserts that the adult emphasizes the coordination of distributed resources for thinking. To the extent that these coordinations result in shared understanding, opportunities for cognitive change are created. From the study of Bliss, Askew, & Macrae (1996) on scaffolding, it can be concluded that whereas approval, encouragement, structuration, and organization of learners' work are related to the type of mediation, more localized scaffolds such as the facilitation of the "first step" or provision of hints are related to the technique of mediation. One significant finding of this study was, however, the low level of effective spontaneous mediation

among teachers. The teachers either avoided the mediational approach altogether, using instead directive teaching strategies, or were unsuccessful in their mediational attempts.

Studies inspired by Vygotskian ideas of human mediation seem to be mostly data-driven. They start with empirical data on parent-or-teacher-child interaction and attempt to identify the significant elements of human mediation. On the other hand, studies inspired by Feuerstein's (1990) theory of mediated learning experience are theory driven. He postulated that the most important criteria for mediated learning experience are intentionality and reciprocity of interaction, its transcendent character i.e., having significance beyond a here-and-now situation, and the mediation of meaning.

Vygotsky's theory (1978) made an important distinction between experiences produced by the immediate contact of the individual with environmental stimuli and experiences shaped by interactions mediated by symbolic tools. Symbolic mediators include signs, symbols, writing, formulae, and diagrams. Cognitive development and learning, according to Vygotsky, essentially depend on the child's mastery of symbolic mediators, their appropriation and internalization in the form of inner psychological tools. Research on the understanding and use of symbols in early childhood (Deloach, 1995) concludes that one cannot take it for granted that children will detect a symbolic relation, no matter how obvious it appears to adults. The acquisition of symbolic relationships requires guided experience; it does not appear spontaneously. Here we are actually touching upon relationships that exist between symbolic and human aspects of mediation. Symbols may remain useless unless their meaning as cognitive tools is properly mediated to the child. Therefore, the role of a teacher is important as by their very nature symbolic mediators have the capacity to become ,cognitive tools. Mediation of meaning is an essential moment in the acquisition of psychological tools, because symbolic tools derive their meaning only from the cultural conventions that engendered them. Symbolic tools (e.g. letters, codes, mathematical signs) have no meaning outside the cultural convention that infuses them with meaning and purpose. The sociocultural theory suggests that the style of human mediation cannot be properly comprehended unless the role of available symbolic mediators is acknowledged. In a classroom context, both human

and symbolic mediators play crucial role in creating a common ground for communication, where a teacher facilitates children's learning by helping them to discern the role and purpose of symbolic mediators. The common ground for interaction serves as a basis for the establishment of intersubjectivity that is crucial for learning to take place.

Intersubjectivity and learning

Intersubjectivity is the process whereby two participants who begin a task with different understandings arrive at shared understanding, (Newson & Newson, 1975). It creates a common ground for communication, as each partner adjusts to the perspective of the other. They communicate their ideas and knowledge both verbally and non- verbally at a level that is eventually understood by all of the individuals involved (Goncu, 1993). The important transmission of social meanings and information between the collaborating partners allow them to share their perspectives together in a comfortable and nurturing environment. It is observed that children often increase their understanding by relating what they are learning to what they already know. This bridging between the known and the new in interaction presumes intersubjectivity. Adults try to promote it when they translate their own insights in ways that are within the child's grasp. As the child stretches to understand the interpretation, she is drawn into a more mature approach to the situation (Rogoff, 1998).

According to Vygotsky (1978) and others (Bretherton, 1991; Rogoff, 1990), an important aspect of the learning process within the social realm is to establish and maintain an understanding of "where the other person is coming from" or what is typically referred to as intersubjectivity. Bretherton (1991) refers to intersubjectivity as an "interfacing of minds' that involves an intuitive monitoring of one's own perspective as well as the listener's perspective. Clark and Brennan (1991) extend intersubjectivity further and propose that in order to establish and maintain a common understanding in communication, participants engage in "grounding." They define grounding by using the metaphor of musicians playing a duet together, which involves "a coordination of process [that cannot be achieved] without a vast amount of shared information or common ground — that is mutual knowledge, mutual beliefs, and mutual assumptions" (p.127). Therefore, by establishing intersubjectivity social

partners build a joint level of understanding that allows them to achieve common goal. Establishing and maintaining intersubjectivity is not necessarily a conscious process, but rather an intuitive process in which people naturally engage when interacting with one another. Furthermore, the processes through which intersubjectivity is achieved depend on the nature and goal of the activity in which participants are engaged (Granados, 2000).

Acording to Tudge (1992), the term intersubjectivity is based on the view that individuals come to a task, problem, or conversation with their own subjective ways of making sense of it. If they then discuss their differing viewpoints, shared understanding may be attained. In other words, in the course of communication, participants may arrive at some mutually agreed-upon, or intersubjective, understanding. Scholars may argue that if partners already have the same understanding of a task (share the same subjective sense of it), the situation is little different from exploring the problem alone or working independently on the task; development is less likely to occur than if they have different initial understandings. On the other hand, an initial difference in understanding may not lead to development if one partner simply agrees with the other with no attempt to understand the other's viewpoint-in which case intersubjectivity would not have been attained. Similarly, one would not expect development to occur if the gap or difference in the understanding between the participants were too great to allow for shared understanding. A critical element of Vygotsky's theory is that the more competent thinking or performance displayed by the child in the collaborative process itself should be internalized or "appropriated" (Leontiev, 1981; Rogoff, 1990) for use in subsequent individual performance. As Vygotsky wrote with reference to the results of interaction between a teacher and child, when the child subsequently solves a problem independently, "he continues to act in collaboration, even though the teacher is not standing near him. . . . This help-this aspect of collaboration- is invisibly present. It is contained in what looks from the outside like the child's independent solution of the problem" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 216). In other words, the intersubjective understanding gained in the course of collaboration becomes the child's own (though socially derived) subjective understanding, an understanding that incorporates shared understanding previously established (Tudge, 1992). Wertsch (1979) has proposed that, in the transition from interpsychological to intrapsychological functioning, the

learner moves through stages of other-regulation to complete self-regulation, the stage when he or she is capable of independent problem solving. Therefore, the structure of ZPD is intersubjective but asymmetric. As to the former, an individual must engage in joint attention with at least one other; by discounting their differences and thereby functionally deriving a shared definition of situation, they have intersubjectivity and prospects for on -line growth. As to the latter, one of the persons must be more competent in the task at hand and so lead the other beyond the actual level of growth. Both intersubjectivity and asymmetry can be constructed and maintained by language (Frawley, 1997).

Vygotsky (1978) believed that teaching learning is best when it proceeds ahead of development because it awakens and rouses to life the functions that are in the stage of maturing. These functions lie in the ZPD and can be created for any domain of skill. Assistance is best offered in interactional contexts where there is the possibility of generating joint performance where scaffolding can occur. Thus for intellectual growth to occur, interactions need to operate within a ZPD framework, that is, within the context of scaffolded mediated assistance. Crucial to this type of assistance is semiotic mediation, with language as the main semiotic tool of mediation. By means of language and the exercise of certain fundamental scaffolding behaviours, participants in the interactions achieve a state of intersubjectivity (Rommetveit, 1985).

Components of Intersubjectivity

Researches reveal that humans possess a unique capacity to share as well as to understand others's mental states. The mental states involve not only beliefs, but all forms of consciousness such as emotions, desires, attention and intentions. According to Stern (1985) representing the mental states of others can also be termed as intersubjectivity. In the philosophical and psychological debate this capacity is commonly known as "theory of mind" (Premack and Woodruff, 1978). But theory of mind basically deals with understanding the beliefs of others which can be as regarded as only one of the aspects of intersubjectivity. For (Gardenfors, 2003), the important components of intersubjectivity are:

- *Representing the emotions of others*: At this level one can, for example, understand that someone else is in pain. This is what is also termed as empathy.

⊚ *Representing the attention of others:* This means that one can understand what someone else is looking at.

⊚ *Representing the intentions of others:* This capacity involves above all, being able to understand the objective that may lie behind another individual's behavior.

○ *Representing the beliefs and knowledge of others:* This means that among other things, that one can understand that others don't know the same things as you do. This ability is also known as theory of mind (Premack & Woodruff, 1978).

The capacity for intersubjectivity is present early, in parent- child mutual gaze, exchange of emotional signals, and imitation. Much of the early research on intersubjectivity was conducted by Trevarthen (1980). He noted that even 1-month old infants acted differently when they interacted with their mothers than when they interacted with objects. This suggested him that any description of human interaction and its role in development could not be reduced to accounts that were nonsocial in nature. Trevarthen (1980) distinguished between primary and secondary intersubjectivity. Whereas, primary intersubjectivity is interpersonal and involves the coordination of the attention of the partners to one another, secondary intersubjectivity involves the coordination of three aspects of experience: the child, the adult, and an object or event of mutual interest. An example of secondary intersubjectivity occurs during joint picture-book reading when an adult and child are both looking at a page in a book. Both exhibit behaviours that specify, support, and encourage their joint object engagement, such as pointing at certain images on the page. Mother may also scaffold the child's further development by introducing the names or labels of objects represented on the page. Such behaviours help the child to learn the label of the objects depicted as well as the concept of a label. There are two ways in which secondary intersubjectivity uses developmental attentional skills to support acquisition of knowledge. One occurs when an adult and child coordinate and share their attention to an object or event in the world. This is called joint attention (Tomasello et al., 2005). The other occurs when infants direct their attention toward an adult in an effort to ascertain information about the environment they are uncertain. This is called social referencing (Gauvain, 2001). Both of these social processes rely on achievement of intersubjectivity to facilitate learning and development. Results from studies on joint attention and social referencing indicate that infant socialization of the basic skill of attention follows a similar course across cultural communities in

many ways. Attention is instrumental to learning and acquiring knowledge. More experienced social partners, especially primary caregivers, throughout the world use this emerging cognitive capability in ways that direct the infant's attention to important information and resources in his or her unique developmental context. Thus, it is not surprising that despite much similarity across cultural groups, this process also differs in ways that reflect the practices and values of the social and cultural community in which development occurs. Research indicates that the early use and management of attention is influenced substantially by social experience. Children with limited ability to engage in shared attention, which is one characteristic of the psychological disturbance autism, have difficulty engaging with others and thereby learning many important things about the world in which they live (Gauvain, 2001; Tomasello et al. 2005). This suggests that children come to understand features of the world including themselves, the thoughts, and feelings of others and the conventional use and value of objects and events, in social situation as more experienced partners mediate by direct their attention toward the resources and information in their environment.

Although much of the developmental research on primary intersubjectivity has concentrated on its emergence in infancy, intersubjectivity remains central to communication throughout life. Much developmental change occurs in the ways in which children engage in this process beyond infancy (Gauvain, 2001). Later language facilitates it. As conversational skills improve, preschoolers increasingly seek others' help and direct that assistance to ensure it is beneficial (Bruner, 1972). One of the important contexts where intersubjectivity is evident is social interaction, when children engage in play. Children share socially constructed meanings and understandings in play. Between ages 3 and 5, children increasingly strive for intersubjectivity in dialogues with peers, as when they affirm a playmate's message, add new ideas and contribute to ongoing play to sustain. Goncu (1993) observed 3-year and 4 1/2-year old children during pretend play. He found that older children agreed more with their partners on the roles they each played and on the rules and themes of the play. Older children also maintained the play interaction longer than younger children. These observations suggest that over the preschool years children's ability to take perspective of another and use this to establish shared meaning continues to develop.

Establishment of Intersubjectivity

In the psychological literature, intersubjectivity is usually referred to in three sequential moments of joint activity: the beginning, the intermediate and the end. The beginning moment is about having common backgrounds that participants are engaged in before joining the communication. From this point of view intersubjectivity preexists or should be established before a specific joint activity and is precondition of any meaningful communication (Rogoff, 1990). The immediate moment of intersubjectivity is about creating a common ground of engagement among the participants who are directly involved in the joint activity. Here, intersubjectivity is defined in terms of mutual and engagement in participants' definitions of the situation (i.e. their perceptions and understandings of the situation) and sensitivitity to each other's perspectives of the ongoing joint act. The end moment is about a common outcome of the joint activity, what is learned in the activity by all the participants. In this moment, intersubjectivity is defined as updated common background such as a child learning from a caregiver how to consider and perform a task (Wertsch, 1984). Therefore, it can be assumed that there are different levels or layers of intersubjectivity that lead to the meaningful interaction among the partners.

Different researchers emphasize different moments of intersubjectivity in joint activity. Wells and Chang-Wells (1992) were primarily interested in the preconditions of joint classroom activity, in having a common background and channel of communication by the participants. Wertsch (1979) concentrated on the intermediate and end moments of intersubjectivity in joint activity by looking at the growing commonality of participants' definitions of the situation and the outcome of guidance as the child becomes independent problem solver during sessions where a mother helped a 2-year old boy work a puzzle. Piaget's theory of perspective taking defined intersubjectivity as an outcome of sociocognitive conflict resolution (Rogoff, 1990), focusing on the end moment- intersubjectivity as outcome of the joint activity.

It appears that the phenomenon of intersubjectivity is not only the basis and derivative of the joint activity but also the social glue of different sociocultural activities. For example, a 4 –year old child joining a pretend play with her classmates has already

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been engaged in general scripts of the pretend play with their conventional metacommunicative rules separating fictitious and real world as in many diverse sociocultural practices that can be available material for pretend play (e.g., books, computers, technologies), people establish intersubjectivity without direct contact with each other. This function of intersubjectivity as the social glue of sociocultural activities makes possible the development of communicative discourses, languages and finally cultures constitute the global social and cultural and historical fabric of the human world. Corsaro and Rizzo (1988) also emphasized the fact that children's participation in interactional routines with adults contributes to their acquisition of language and understanding of culture. Social interaction with people who are more expert in the use of the material and conceptual tools of the society is thus an important "cultural amplifier" to extend children's cognitive processes (Cole & Griffin, 1980). The formal institutions of society and the informal interactions of its members are thus central to the process of development. In order to understand learning and development, it is important to attend to the role played by such influences as schooling, toys, etc. and more importantly the formal and informal instruction provided by adults and peers expert in the activity.

Intersubjectivity as coordination: consensus and space for respectful disagreement

In research on intersubjectivity, several threads of investigation can be identified. One thread emphasizes the communal and common nature of intersubjectivity as developing common or similar sense in a joint sociocultural activity (Cole, 1991). Researchers following this thread often focus on different aspects of the activity that participants have in common: attention, understanding, or communicational. The notion of intersubjectivity as having in common is based on special consensus-based activities (Matusov, 1996). However, not all joint activities are consensus-based and consensus is not always a desired outcome. Even in consensus-based learning activities, the teacher has an important surplus of pedagogical goals focusing on guiding the students that transcend the joint learning activities. This non-consensual nature of teaching, guidance and learning activities requires a second approach to the notion of intersubjectivity where there is a need' to give importance to respectful disagreements.

Disagreements and misunderstandings coming from participants' diverse concerns need to be expected and acknowledged (valued) as points of growth and learning rather than hurriedly resolved or avoided (Matusov, 1996). Intersubjectivity has been defined as a state of overlapping individual "subjectivities" (Rommetviet, 1979, 1985). Piaget's ideas on intersubjectivity are based on his concept of cognitive decentering through perspective taking. According to the notion of perspective taking, an individual in joint activity has to deal with not only his/her perspective on problem solving but also with the perspectives of the other participants as well. The new approach to intersubjectivity does not reject the existing research but rather raises new questions and provides different explanations. The traditional approach based on the notion of "sharing" seems to limit the researcher to study only consensus-oriented activities and to focus on processes of unification of the participants subjectivities (Smolka, De Goes, & Pino, 1995). Unlike this approach the new approaches allows the researcher to study any joint activity-consensus and non-consensus oriented (such as conflicts, disputes, fights, etc.) and on how the participants coordinate their contributions in the joint activity through agreements and disagreements. It is experienced that in many cases sociocultural activity is constituted by a diversity of individual actions, and the reconcilliations of these individual actions is not only undesired but can sometimes destroy the activity. The question that may arise here is that how can the diversity of individual actions unite people in the activity? This can be also applied to a classroom situation. To address this question it is necessary to shift the focus from the level of individual action to the level of participatory contribution i.e. how individual contributions are coordinated with each other during the activity.According to this approach "to share subjectivities" means that all participants hold the same vision of activity in terms of what and how to act, so that they can act as one individual. It may also be referred as the unification of individual viewpoints. However, it is impossible to achieve a complete overlap of psychological perceptions of a situation despite the commonality of the participants' biological equipment, cultural history, and experience of physical surroundings because of the process that constitutes the individual experience (Matusov, 1996).

Vygotsky believed that collaboration was only likely to be successful to the extent to which intersubjectivity was attained by the collaborating partners (Tudge & Winterhoof, 1993). Intersubjectivity is constructed when interacting individuals

understand and adopt each other's perspectives. This is done through constant communication and reciprocation of each other's ideas. In a sense, the children come to a "cooperative understanding" within the interaction (Rogoff &Tudge, 1999). They negotiate their ideas and experiences and use their knowledge of the situation to contribute to the interaction. Trust between interacting partners is important in the formation of intersubjectivity as well as their combined faith in the mutually shared world in which they are in when they are interacting (Rommetviet, 1979).

These aspects of the interaction increase the bond and therefore, the understanding between the interacting individuals. Thus, to study intersubjecivity in a holistic manner, misunderstandings, conflicts, divergent perspectives, opposition of ideas, resistance to communication, and other disharmonious instances should not be viewed as failed attempts of intersubjectivity but as special forms of intersubjectivity (Smolka, De Goes, and Pino, 1995). This view is also supported by the social psychologists who studied group dynamics and conflict resolution (Deutsch, 1973).

Intersubjectivity and child-child interaction: Peer Collaboration and Play

In a classroom situation, a teacher can also mediate children's learning by providing space and active opportunities for peer collaboration and play as they serve as important contexts for establishment of intersubjectivity, thereby, promoting learning. This can be effectively done by incorporating joint/ collaborative activities as well as small group activities as part of a classroom curriculum.

Peer Collaboration

Vygotsky (1978) stressed the facilitating impact of interacting with peers who vary in expertise. Moreover, according to Vygotsky, peer conflict can contribute to heightened understanding, but only insofar as partners resolve their disagreements and move toward a joint, intersubjective view of the situation. Consistent with Vygotsky's view, researchers observing the dynamics of peer collaboration have found that conflict and disagreement are not as crucial for development as the extent to which peers resolve differences of opinion, engage in joint decision making, and work toward common goals (Kobayashi, 1994; Kruger, 1993; Tudge, 1992; Tudge & Rogoff, 1987). When cooperation and sharing of ideas do not occur, then cognitive

gains are typically not observed (Gauvain & Rogoff, 1989; Tudge, 1989). For example, in a study of fifth graders solving math problems cooperatively, partners were more likely to move toward correct strategies if they clearly explained and considered each other's ideas. A child could propose a correct strategy, but without partner's acceptance it tended to be abandoned (Ellis, Klahr, & Siegler, 1994).

A wealth of applied research in classrooms is enriching our understanding of contextual factors that foster peer collaboration and gains in development. For example, studies of mixed-age grouping reveal that when academic performance differs between mixed- and single-age classrooms, it favours the mixed-age arrangement. Self-esteem and attitudes toward school are also more positive, perhaps because mixed-age grouping decreases competition and increases harmony in the classroom (Jensen & Green, 1993; Pratt, 1986).

Children can attain intersubjectivity in their collaborations in at least three different ways. They can attain it by converging different meanings until all of the children agree and attain a shared understandings of the task; when one child assumes the view of the other child; or when the children mutually shift between the two views and come to a joint understanding (Stremmel &Fu,1993). Intersubjectivity between children during their collaborations enhances the experience and allows the children to communicate on a shared level. Kantor (1992) observed that as a peer culture was established in a preschool classroom, the children became "in tune" with the process of social interaction within the classroom. They did this by reading situational cues in the classroom environment, monitoring their own behaviour in anticipation of other's reactions, and coordinating their ideas with those of others.

Children's culture continues to play a key role in their interactions, thereby affecting the zone of proximal development. Children transmit their understanding of their culture and use the contributions of others to better understand that culture in the context of the collective or group. Constant communication allows children to coordinate and expand ideas, introduce and explain themes, and produce behaviour appropriate to the situation. With a high level of understanding, children can participate in reciprocal involvement with different.people in their culture.

Children's Play

Both Piaget (1962) and Vygotsky (1962) believed that play is an excellent tool for children's cognitive development. Bruner (1972) also considered play as a significant force in the development of tool use and problem solving. Moreover, Vygotsky (1978) emphasized that the enactment of imaginary situations and social rules during play (for example, children focusing on the roles and rules of the classroom as they play school) strengthens understanding of social norms; the ability to think before acting; and, consequently, self-regulation. According to Vygotsky (1987) children's play is a unique and broadly influential zone of proximal development in which children advance themselves as they try out a wide variety of challenging skills. Playing with a more sophisticated partner such as adult or more skilled child, will enhance the child's skills and encourage more complex play (Howes & Unger, 1989). Ideas are the field where children play out their individual subjectivities, and whether expressing antagonism to one another's ideas and plans, suggesting an alternative, or overlapping facts, new meanings come from collaboration.

Play with agemates requires joint, responsive engagement to support development. Intersubjectivity among peer playmates, in the form of extensions and affirmations of one another's messages, increases substantially during the preschool years (Goncu, 1993). Interestingly, preschoolers have greater difficulty establishing a cooperative, shared framework in non-play problem solving (Azmitia & Perlmutter, 1989; Gauvain & Rogoff, 1989). As in the adult-child context, the child engaged in play with peers is, in Vygotsky's words, "a head taller than himself" -advanced in comparison to other contexts.

In a sociodramatic play episode, play partners are involved in negotiating the sequence of events, characters portrayed and objects used to reach a common goal of enacting a pretend scenario. Shared pretend play as a collaborative activity implies the construction of shared meanings underlying the necessary coordinations between participants. Thus, pretend play is also considered an important area for the study of mutual understanding or intersubjectiviy and negotiation among preschool aged children (Verba, 1993a, 1993b). Vygotsky's (1978) major educational message for the preschool years was to provide many socially rich, meaningful activities in children's ZPD and a wealth of opportunities for play. Research also suggests that early

childhood curricula should provide opportunities for children to interact with peers, caregivers and aspects in their environment, and to engage in active rather than passive activities (Katz, 1987).

Components of Mediating behaviour and Intersubjectivity

Linguistic transactions

...... talking is a way of doing – of acting on others (and through them, on our shared environments and in the process, constrcting society (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999 pp.523-524).

The most apparent way by which people interact and share information in social interaction is through the use of language. An essential means through which a knowledgeable member of the culture can assist instruction for a learner is dialogue. The dialogue itself becomes the means through which the external, social plane is internalized to guide the child's own thinking (Cazden, 1983;Palincsar, 1986; Wertsch & Stone, 1985); the transformed dialogue is referred to as "inner speech" (Vygotsky,1986). Bakhtin (1981, 1986), whose ideas extend Vygotsky's, suggests that inner speech is modeled upon social discourse; inner speech consists of dialogues conducted with imagined audiences drawn from the many voices a person has encountered.

A social constructivist perspective of learning and development (Rogoff, 1986; Vygotsky, 1978, 1986; Wertsch, 1985) provides a framework for understanding the role of dialogue in learning. Three key tenets of this perspective are that: (a) knowledge and knowing have their origins in social interaction (Bruffee, 1984; Mead, 1934; Wittgenstein, 1953) (b) learning proceeds from the interpsychological plane (between individuals) to the intrapsychological plane (within an individual) with the assistance of knowledgeable members of the culture (Vygotsky, 1978), and (c) language mediates experience, transforming mental functions (Vygotsky, 1986; Wertsch, 1985).

Language plays an important role in shaping the child's view of the world. It is claimed that, for Vygotsky, the child does not learn to understand the objective world,

but learns a socially transmitted picture of the world. It is the peculiar nature of the culture in which child is embedded that transmits a particular conception of the world to the child (Langford, 2005). Since learning is assumed to occur on the interpsychological level first, and because the individual is constantly assimilating others' words, establishing communication between speakers is central. The concept of intersubjectivity plays a role in explaining how the transfer from the interpsychological plane to the intrapsychological plane occurs (Wertsch, 1985). Rommetveit suggests that "communication aims at transcendence of the private worlds of the participants" (1979, p. 94) and that through negotiation speakers can create a "temporarily shared social reality" (1979, p. 10); this temporary, shared reality is intersubjectivity. Establishing intersubjectivity is not merely the novice matching the schema of the expert; rather, through negotiation, the shared reality may be transformative for both participants. Establishing a match between partners contributes to the construction of joint problem solving (Rogoff, 1990).

Socially rich contexts seem to foster private speech, since children who have more access to social partners (siblings, peers or adults) – talk to themselves more (Berk, 1992). Vygotsky (1978) argued that instruction plays an important role in children's learning. He further claimed that instruction is good only when it proceeds ahead of development. Then, it awakens to life an entire set of functions which are in the stage of maturing, which lie in the zone of proximal development. Thought and language are coupled as twin aspects of cognition in the zone of proximal development, as activity is 'languaged', and consequently drives individual learning and development. In this way collaborative activity becomes individual through interaction. This is the basis of Vygotsky's (1978) notion of internalisation. Lave and Wenger (1996) warn that regarding learning as the process of internalisation can be highly problematic as the individual notion or view is often left unexamined. They assert that in such a view, the nature of the learner, of the world and their relations tend to be left unexplored. Instead, they use the idea of participation to describe the way in which person becomes a member of a sociocultural community through engagement in social practices. According to this view learning is the integral part of all social practices.

Lotman (1988) proposed that there are two functions of utterance or text through which linguistic transactions occur namely monologic and dialogic. These two functions can be applied to understand the nature of classroom discourse and interaction. The first, which might be called monologic (Wertsch, 1991), assumes a coincidence of speaker's meaning and listener's interpretation. This can be regarded as a state of perfect intersubjectivity. The limitation of this function is that it does not call for a responding utterance that offers an alternative perspective. In its second function, on the other hand, language serves to generate or create new meanings. This means that classroom interactions are not simply the passive links to convey some constant information by the teacher to the learners, rather the linguistic transactions serve as thinking device. Thus, the function of language can be truly dialogic when there is the possibility for active responsiveness (Wertsch, 1991). According to this approach learners are not passive recipients of information, rather they actively participate in the process of co-construction of knowledge.

Conversation analysis, which focuses on the "machinery, the rules, and the structures that produce and constitute" the orderliness of social action (Psathas, 1995), is one way to examine talk-in-interaction during everyday situations. It is observed that turn-taking is fundamental to conversations since (1) it builds a motivation for listening, (2) it controls the understanding of utterance, and (3) it requires that participants display their understanding of the others turn's in conversation (Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974). Turns of talk that fall into the practice of organization of repairs are interactional elements that contribute and sustain socially shared cognition by letting participants address speaking, hearing, and understanding problems (Schegloff, 1991, Schegoff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977). Clark and Shaeffer (1989) also analyze turn-in-talk and suggest that participants produce contributions to discourse for the purpose of achieving common ground. Consequently, turn-taking constitutes the core of intersubjectivity, consisting in the mutual co-ordination and sequencing of more or less spontaneous behaviours and actions in time. Since turn-taking is repetitive and rhythmic, it provides the agents with a rough strategy for chunking their interaction on-line (Trevarthen & Aitken 2001). This increases the participants' chances of successfully moderating their behaviour in response to each other. As a result, the interaction can acquire the dialogic form that is typical of intentional communication.

Hence, turn-taking also represents the very foundation of creative, two-way communication.

Understanding and sharing Intentions

According to Tomasello (1993) reading intentions and interacting with others are intimately related. Conversation is an inherently collaborative activity in which the joint goal is to reorient the listener's intentions and attention so that they align with those of the speaker, and joint intentions serve to do that through various kinds of collaborative acts. Joint attention leads to the understanding of others as intentional agents, which is a chief component of social cognition (Tomasello, 2005). For instance, the teacher collaborates by expressing his communicative intentions in ways that are potentially comprehensible by the learner, even clarifying (helping) when necessary; and the learner attempts at comprehension by following the speaker's attention- directing signals, making appropriate and relevant inferences, and asking for clarification when needed. Learning symbols (like linguistic symbols) thus involves role-reversal imitation (using symbols toward others the way they have used them toward you), and it also involves taking shared perspectives on things and learning that people can choose to attend to things and construe them in many different ways as needed (Clark, 1996). When individuals who understand one another as intentional agents interact socially, one or another form of shared intentionality may potentially emerge. It basically refers to collaborative interactions in which participants have a shared goal and coordinated action roles for pursuing that shared goal (Searle, 1983). Joint cooperative activities have three essential characteristics. Firstly, the interactions are mutually responsive to one another. Secondly, there is a shared goal and thirdly the participants coordinate their plans of action and intentions someway down the hierarchy- which requires that both the participants understand both roles of the interaction (role reversal) and so can at least potentially help the other with his if needed. The key motivational substrate required for collaboration is the motivation to share feelings, experiences, and activities with other persons (Tomasello, Carpenter, Call, Behne & Moll, 2005).

Affective Involvement

Vygotsky's (1978) assertion that cognitive development is embedded in the context of social relationships has become a widely held belief (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Newman, Griffin, & Cole, 1989; Rogoff, 1990; Wertsch, 1985). In this view of cognition, interaction with others is the core of intellectual development: As Rogoff writes, "Understanding happens between people; it can't be attributed to one individual or the other" (1990, p. 67). This suggests that the process of cognitive growth is inherently relational in nature. The very notion of the co-construction of mind implies a high degree of interpersonal connection between the individuals working together in the process. This emphasis on meaningful interpersonal connection could imply that affective factors play a central role in intellectual growth and development. However, the literature has focused on the more strictly cognitive aspects of the process, leaving the affective nature of teaching-learning interactions unexplored (Berk & Winsler 1995; Dean, 1994; Packer, 1993; Stone, 1993). This is in direct contradiction to Vygotsky's own views on the matter (Newman & Holzman, 1993; Wertsch, 1985). Already-documented descriptions of constructs closely linked to intersubjectivity such as the zone of proximal development, guided participation, scaffolding, and the like, argue the importance of interpersonal character of the co-construction of knowledge that involves the caring encounters between child and adult or more competent peer (Goldstein, 1999). According to Rogoff (1990) there is more to intersubjectivity than mere thinking. For Rogoff thinking, feeling and emotions are all part of it. It appears that in a classroom situation, the teacher and learners need to connect to each other within caring encounters in order to work productively. One of the aspects of intersubjective relationship is representing the emotions of others. It is often called empathy. This is closely related to what Lidz (1991) regarded as joint regard when he points at teacher's ability to perceive reality through the child's eye. Berk and Winster (1995) suggest that teachers must be sensitive to the abilities, interests, cultural values and practices that children bring to the learning situation. Children's engagement with a task and their willingness to challenge themselves are increased immensely when collaboration with the adult is pleasant, warm and responsive. According to Rommetviet (1974) mutual trust between the partners is essential for the establishment of intersujectivity.

Noddings (1984) captures and conveys the joyful quality of teaching and the pleasures of being intimately involved with a child's growth and learning. According to

Noddings (1984) teacher has two important responsibilities. First is to stretch the student's world by presenting an effective selection of that world with which she is in contact and second is to work cooperatively with the student in his struggle toward competence in that world. It seems that Noddings (1984) ideas are quite similar to Vygotsky's notion of learning in the zone of proximal development. He believes that the teacher must view things through the eyes of her student in order to teach them. This aspect is crucial for promoting learning through establishing intersubjectivity in the classroom context. Similarly, Rogoff and Werstch (1984) also pointed out that it is imperative for the adult to make efforts to translate their insights into the ways that are within child's grasp.

An interaction in the ZPD is both intellectually rewarding and emotionally satisfying for the adult and the child involved. Adults and children are motivated to enter into teaching-learning encounters by the pleasure, the growth, and the interpersonal connection they provide. To establish intersubjectivity in a classroom context, the teacher must begin the caring learning encounter with engrossment and reciprocity. The caring adult must respond to the child in a way that emphasizes "the uniqueness of human encounters" (Nodding, 1984, p 5), acting not by some fixed rule but by acceptance, affection and joint regard. Therefore, the role of a teacher who can be an effective scaffolder, mediating children's learning through motivating strategies, guiding the child within the zone of proximal development is crucial.

Teacher mediation, intersubjectivity and learning

The teaching- learning contexts are formed through complex interplay of human and symbolic mediators that together structure these contexts. In a classroom situation, the teacher serves as a human mediator as she assists children to discern the use and purpose of symbolic artefacts through various intersubjective/interpersonal encounters. These contexts include classroom discourses and other meaningful experiences such as art and craft, music, drama and play. Effective teacher mediation involves planning of rich and relevant experiences for children by addressing their needs and interests, challenging them within their zone of proximal development. Shared understanding based on common focus of attention and common goal, between a teacher and children is crucial for intersubjectivity and in turn, for learning to occur.

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In its minimal form, intersubjectivity implies that conversational participants share a materially present referent, such as a physical object or display of some kind. At other levels, intersubjectivity is achieved through shared presuppositions, resulting from local negotiations of meaning, past activity together, or the possession of cultural or disciplinary knowledge (Empson, 1999). Intersubjectivity begins with shared reference and moves toward shared meaning (Resnick, 1991; Wertsch, 1985). This can be applied to a classroom context where a teacher mediates children's learning by coordinating the locally available resources in order to create a shared ground for interaction. Joint reference of objects, events, and other people provides opportunities for children to participate in the process of negotiating meaning as the partners interpret information in the environment or determine what is important about it (Gauvain, 2001).

The growth of understanding can be defined as the creation of greater intersubjectivity with more knowledgeable others. It is "often a product of what the child is not told at all-but yet is forced to assume in order to make sense of what is heard" (Wertsch, 1985, p. 183; Lerman, 1996). Creating and maintaining intersubjectivity involves continued, reciprocal efforts by teachers as well as students to make sense of what each other is doing and actually conveying. Participants interpret each other's actions in terms of their own understanding and act accordingly, as if a speaker has a particular concept or goal in mind (Newman et al., 1989). This looseness of meaning, or ability to communicate despite varying interpretations, is an essential motivator of cognitive change. The result is a negotiation of meaning that can subsequently serve as the basis for other interactions (Wenger, 1998). In the classroom learning, intersubjectivity enters as a mediating agency essential to the negotiative process (Clarke, 1997).

Scaffolding as a form of mediation has been used most successfully in reciprocal teaching of reading (Brown & Palincsar, 1989) and can be characterized as the gradual transfer of thinking resources from teacher to student. Responsibility for accomplishing a task is shared between a child and a more knowledgeable other who manages then solution strategy (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). The more knowledgeable other has a goal structure in mind for completion of a task that is the basis for assistance. In successful scaffolding, the student appropriates the teacher's goals and

resources to solve the task. This is facilitated as a teacher mediates to create a ground for joint intention/ joint attention. A condition of cognitive change in scaffolded interaction is that the student takes on increasingly more responsibility for deciding which aspects of the task should be attended to (Rogoff, 1990; Wertsch, 1985). This indicates that both the learner and the teacher have the shared responsibility as far as teaching – learning process is concerned. This idea is similar to the educational philosophy of community of learners which stems from a sociocultural perspective to learning and development. In such a community, the student and the teacher both possess collaboratively shared responsibility and ownership for guidance and learning, where students are responsible for learning how to manage their learning and the teacher has responsibility for guiding the students (Cole, 1990, Rogoff, 1994). In an educational community shared focus can be attained if learners, teachers and content are related intersubjectively.

Learning is not simply transferred from the more knowledgeable other to the learner, nor is it a process of the learner "discovering" the "right." It is a process of, Cazden (1988) quotes Bruner, "go[ing] beyond the information given" (p. 108).The development of children's higher mental processes is directly shaped both by the knowledge systems, tools, structures, and practices of the sociocultural milieu in which they are learning and growing and by the immediate interactions occurring in their zone of proximal development (ZPD), the interpersonal space where learning and development take place (Berk & Winsler, 1995; Martin, 1992; Moll, 1990; Moll & Greenberg, 1990). Thus, the process of mediation involving both human and symbolic mediators is crucial for establishing shared focus or intersubjectivity which is important for learning to occur. This establishes a clear relationship between mediation, intersubjectivity and learning. Vygotsky described work in the ZPD as a "unique form of cooperation between the child and the adult that is the central element of the educational process" (1978, p. 169). The teacher and the learner interact to create the zone through the very process of intersubjectivity. Rogoff (1986, pp. 32-33) writes

"In order to communicate successfully, the adult and child must find a common ground of knowledge and skills. Otherwise the two people would be unable to share a common reference point, and understanding would not occur. This effort toward

understanding ...draws the child into a model of the problem that is more mature yet understandable through links with what the child already knows."

According to Vygotsky (1978) the experience in educational activity is an important force that guides the development of genuine concepts in children. He distinguished between the genuine or "scientific" concepts, learned as a result of schooling and the "everyday" or spontaneous concepts learned by the child elsewhere. The former are different as they are marked by the absence of a system. Here the child's attention is always focused on the object being represented and not on the thought that grasps it. On the other hand, in case of the "scientific" concepts, they are mediated through other concepts with their internal, hierarchical system of relationship. For example, with the development of scientific concepts, a child not only can use words such as " table", " chair", and " furniture", but can operate on statements involving logical reasoning such as " All tables are furniture". Hence the emphasis has shifted away from those aspects of linguistic organization that involve contextualization to the capacity of entering into decontexualized relationship (Wertsch, 1985). For Vygotsky (1978) the development of scientific concepts has great significance for the evolution of higher mental processes because these concepts necessarily involve conscious realization and voluntary control. In contrast to earlier, context- bound forms of functioning supported by everyday concepts, the decontextualization inherent in scientific concepts makes possible these properties of higher mental processes. According to Hedegaard (1998), the integration of subject matter knowledge and everyday knowledge is important for children's conceptual development.

According to Vygotsky (1978), language is the most important tool for mediation. Cazden (1988) states that classroom language should be related to the child's experiences, used to negotiate shared meaning and understanding, and should be used to achieve cognitive engagement. She emphasizes the need for the teacher to be skilled in improvisation. Clay (1998) states, "Just as the listener tunes in to a speaker, so a teacher must observe, listen to and tune in to a learner" (p. 13). Young children come to school in the early years with their own contexts and stories—those that they bring from their homes. These beliefs imply that one of the teacher's primary roles in instruction is to serve as a strategist and negotiator. She must determine the child's context (and functional developmental level) and negotiate a plan for facilitating the

child's discovery of how the knowledge that she brings to the classroom can be utilized (and extended in the child's zone of proximal development) within the functions of the classroom context—in other words, how the child's context can become a part of the classroom context and how the classroom context can become a part of the child's context in designing the learning that could occur.

It is also found that sometimes there are problems in achieving intersubjectivity in a large classroom (Matusav, 1999) due to lack of shared focus in classroom activities or due to a lack of space for student's respectful disagreements with each other. Not only do students vary in intellect and motivation, they also vary in how they process information, in perception. According to learning style researchers, extroverts want to work ideas publicly while introverts want time to think about ideas alone. Some students want concrete facts and deadlines while some want choice and freedom to work. Respect for the learner and acceptance of individual differences is significant in addressing all these varying needs in the classroom, regardless of the style of teaching. Effective instruction requires intersubjectivity—willingness to allow the children's context to permeate the classroom context.

From the above discussion it is clear that Vygotsky's sociocultural approach to learning offers new visions of teaching and learning- ones that emphasize the importance of social context and collaboration. Piagetian and Vygotskian classrooms have some features in common, such as opportunities for active participation and acceptance of individual differences in cognitive development. However, Vygotskian classroom would go beyond independent discovery learning (Berk, 1996). Teachers mediate and guide children's learning with explanations, demonstrations, and verbal prompts, carefully tailoring their efforts to each child's zone of proximal development. Assisted discovery is also fostered by peer collaboration. Such collaboration will create opportunities for children with varying abilities and interests to work together, teaching and learning from one another.

Theoretical Framework of the Study

Contextualism asserts that elements cannot be analyzed out of context because, once they are taken out of context, the elements no longer have any meaning (Goldhaber, 2000). From a Vygotskian perspective, we cannot abstract from context and

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separately investigate the universal aspects of the child's development, but only children's development within particular social contexts. According to social constructivist's perspectives, people construct knowledge as an attempt to make sense of or interpret their experiences throughout the process of social exchange (Schwandt, 1994). Vygotsky (1978) suggested the social context affects cognitive activity at two levels: First, sociocultural history provides tools for cognitive activity and practices that facilitate reaching appropriate solutions to problems. Second, the immediate social interactional context structures individual cognitive activity. Based on social-cultural constructions, Vygotsky (1978) proposed that higher mental functions appear first on the social level, between people, and later on the individual level, inside the child. In accordance with a Vygotskian perspective, for instance, childhood understanding of mind is at first interpsychological, that is, available only interactively in collaborative dialogues with adult/ teacher, and becomes intrapsychological, or established in the child's conception, only later. It seems very likely that, in various fashions, teacher in a classroom situation help scaffold children's conceptions and guide them into increasingly articulate expression (Bartsch & Wellman, 1995, p. 148). Rogoff (1998) highlights, central to Vygotsky's theory is the idea that children's participation in cultural activities with the adult guidance or mediation allows children to "internalize" their community's tools for thinking (p. 684). According to Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development (ZPD)" (1978, p. 84), efforts to understand individual cognitive development must consider the social roots of both the tools for thinking that children are learning to use and the social interactions with more competent others that guide children in their use. Thus, learning and development are viewed as socially mediated processes- dependent on the support that teachers or adults provide as children try novel tasks. Therefore, in a classroom context, the role of a teacher becomes important in scaffolding children's learning by creating a shared ground for interaction. The establishment of intersubjectivity is central for learning to occur, where intersubjectivity can be simply regarded as mutual understanding between people in communication.

Rationale and statement of the problem

The interplay between social and cognitive factors is more evident in social contexts. Observing children and exploring how they make sense of everyday interactions and

experiences is crucial to creating an ecologically valid description of development revealing new insights into the role of social interaction in children's learning. This study will enable one to explore linkages between teacher's mediation, intersubjectivity and learning in a preschool classroom. It will contribute to the model of learning where relationships and connections are as important as subject disciplines. The concept can also be modified to fit the needs of educators as a reflective tool for analysis of their own pedagogical practices and processes. The research will thus, contribute to educators in the field of early childhood education in designing a sensitive instructional program for young children that can match their developmental needs. Also since there is not much research in this area in India, the study will open avenues in the field of child development and developmental psychology. Therefore, in order to understand the nature of collaboration and learning in a preschool classroom, it would be interesting to study how teacher's mediation leads to intersubjectivity facilitating learning among children. This study is guided by the following objectives.

- To examine the psycho-semiotic environment of the preschool classroom.
- To investigate how teacher mediation leads to attainment of intersubjectivity in various interactive contexts and how it facilitates children's learning?

Chapter-2

Method

Chapter 2

Method

The study was undertaken to explore the role of teacher mediation in establishing intersubjectivity and how it facilitated learning among children in a preschool classroom. It was also considered important to investigate the psycho-semiotic environment of the preschool so that a comprehensive understanding of intersubjectivity and the related concepts may be assembled.

Sample

The sample of the study comprised of one of the preschools in Delhi, Santa Maria Integrated learning environment. This school was selected due to its integrated set-up with a play-way approach to learning. Such a set-up enables one to see multiple contact points being established between the children and teacher. The school is located in Vasant Kunj area of South Delhi. The school had three classes – nursery, KG and prep. For the purpose of the study, the researcher focused on the prep classes in the school. The age range of children in prep was 5+. The researcher specifically observed one of the prep classes.

The school was selected on the basis of convenience sampling. The school authorities

(Principal of the senior school, Ms Anie Koshie and principal of the preschool, Ms Beena Dua) were informed about the purpose of the study. Thereafter, it was selected on the basis of their willingness to participate. For the purpose of this study, specific children were not chosen. Instead, all children in a classroom were taken into account during the main observation period. This basically adhered to the idea that the study was flexible and flowed with the path of the children and teacher in the classroom. Initially, the children regarded me as a second teacher as they were used to having two teachers in their class, and subsequently as the researcher interacted with them,

the typical barrier between the teacher and student faded away and they became more open and comfortable in my presence. The decision to use qualitative research comes from the nature of the study. Qualitative researchers benefit from using open-ended methods for performing research such as observations, informal interviews, audio-recording of the classroom discourses and field notes.

Setting

The study took place in one of the prep classrooms at Santa Maria integrated learning environment. The philosophy of the school is grounded in play-way approach to learning and creating opportunities for children to engage in social interaction. This idea is embedded in social constructivist theory. This is a view that knowledge and understanding are constructed through social relationships. The teachers and assistants at the school were sensitive to the needs of the young children and displayed affection when dealing with them. The main role of the teacher was to direct and guide the children in the activities while the main role of the children was to express ideas through interactions with peers, teachers, parents and the environment. Learning among children used to occur continuously through observation, imitation, repetition, sharing of ideas and negotiation. The school embraced the parent-child relationship, as it was regarded that no one knows the child better than the parents. Teachers at the school used to maintain close contact between home and school.

It was observed that the responses of the children in the class were recorded by the teachers on the regular basis and documentation was regarded as a useful tool for guiding emerging curriculum in the classroom and for showing the child's growth and development. Portfolios give the parents, children and teachers the opportunity to revisit experiences and explorations that the child has had in the classroom. The careful observation and documentation of children's daily activities in the classroom made visible traces of their experience and learning. The philosophy of the school was reflected in the school's notion of teacher as researcher and teacher-child rapport formation as the basis of all learning as reported by the principal of the school.

The tools for Data Collection

The data in the present study comes from multiple sources such as transcripts of classroom talk, observation, interviews of teachers, and classroom artefacts such as work samples, worksheets and curriculum documents. However, multiple sources of data do not merely provide contextual background for potential readers; rather these sources are helpful in understanding process of semiosis- in -motion. Nevertheless, transcripts of the classroom talk form the main source of the data.

The main tools for data collection comprised of active observation, informal interview of four prep teachers, audio-recording and field notes. The data was collected keeping in mind the various objectives of the study. The questions in the interview basically included the following areas

- Mediating role of adult (teacher) in assisting children's learning
- Role of social interaction (classroom talk) in learning
- Classroom environment (physical and affective) conducive for learning
- Structuring of learning environment
- Introducing a new concept in the class
- Strategies used by the teacher to establish the common ground for learning

Procedure of data collection

First of all, I approached the principal of the school, Ms Dua and acquainted her with the purpose of the study and the kind of work I was interested in doing. She gave a positive response and asked me to seek the permission of the principal of the main branch of the school (St. Mary's). The principal of the main school, Ms. Koshie readily accepted the request after inquiring about the purpose and objectives of the study, and granted permission to conduct the study in her school. The period for data collection was around 2 months. The data collection began in early March and was completed in the first week of May. These 2 months gave me enough time to understand the day to day dynamics and functioning of the school. The school timings were 9: 00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. I used to be in the school for the entire time period each day. I was introduced to the children as a teacher but later as the interaction developed; the typical boundaries between the teacher and the students became

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blurred but the researcher always remained adult for the children. The initial rapport formation was facilitated as the researcher used to commute to the school by the school bus along with the children and teachers. I was not a passive observer in the classroom rather acted more like a second teacher and in the absence of the class teacher also used to take the class. Helping the teacher in documenting the responses of the children, in providing support children during independent activities, clarifying their doubts and repeating instructions for the child/ children related to a particular task, taking them out for their music class and so on provided an opportunity to understand the classroom interaction better. According to Marshall & Rossman (1989) "immersion in the setting allows the researcher to hear, see, and begin to experience reality as the participants do" (p.79). The researcher spent a considerable amount of time observing and collecting field notes based on her placement in the setting. Children were observed in several situations; working alone, working in small groups, working with a teacher, working with several different kinds of materials. According to Goodwin & Goodwin (1996), "the researcher in the complete observer-role has the advantages of detachment, considerable objectivity, and little personal risk" (p.132). The researcher is not in the way of the children interacting and in no way inhibits, prevents or encourages the children to act in a way that they may not normally. Conversely, disadvantages of complete-observer role include no interactions with the participants and potential misunderstanding of what is being observed (Goodwin & Goodwin, 1996). Because of the disadvantages of the complete observer role, the technique of active observation was used for data collection. There are other methods such as observation, interactions with children and teachers and audio recording which were also used in the process of data collection.

Data Analyses

The data from the classroom observation and recorded discourses were analyzed qualitatively primarily using the discourse analyses technique. This method helpful is in understanding how social reality is constructed through language. Language is used for a variety of functions and its use has a variety of consequences. The basic theoretical thrust of discourse analyses is the argument that people talk fulfils many functions and has varying effects. In the present study the aim is to identify and analyse how intersubjectivity is established and maintained through the classroom

talk/ discourse and its effects on learning. The analyses procedure was guided by the research questions namely:
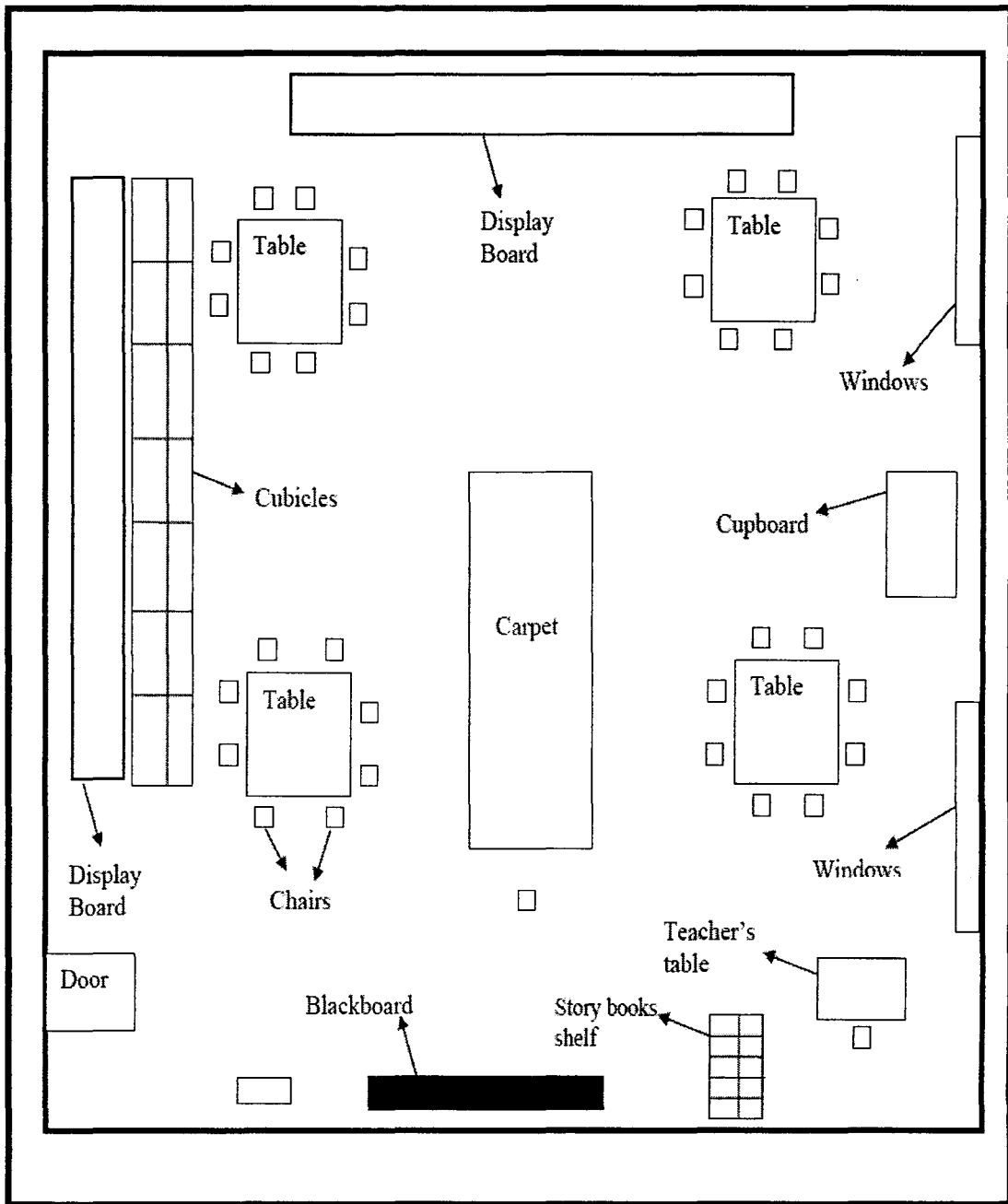
- How children and teachers attain intersubjectivity in various interactive contexts in the preschool classroom?
- What is the role of teacher in the establishment of intersubjectivity?
- How attainment of intersubjectivity facilitates teaching- learning process?

Chapter-3

Results

Display Board

Table

Windows

Table

Cubicles

Cupboard

Carpet

Table

Table

Display Board

Chairs

Windows

Door

Teacher's table

Blackboard

Story books shelf

Physical Setting of the Classroom

Chapter 3

Results

This chapter provides a comprehensive view on the nature of learning in the preschool classroom with special focus on the role of teacher in mediating children's learning by establishing shared ground for communication or intersubjectivity. It is realized that psycho-semiotic environment and teacher's affective involvement play important role in establishing shared understanding in a preschool context. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part basically focuses on the psycho-semiotic environment, involving the physical and affective components of the preschool classroom. It reflects the organization and structuring of the classroom activities and experiences. The second part deals with the responses and ideas of teachers regarding the structuring of teaching-learning context and role of adult mediation in children's learning. The third part deals with the analysis of the few excerpts of classroom discourses exploring the nature of teacher-child interaction. Throughout, the role of teacher's mediation in facilitating children's learning is identified and acknowledged. All these aspects together provide a comprehensive picture about the nature of relationships that existed in the classroom.

Part I: Psycho-semiotic milieu of the classroom

a. Physical setting

The classroom was rich with space and clearly defined organization of instructional material and furnishings. Most of the wall display area was utilized to display children's art and craft work and charts made by the teacher. The children's art and craft was regularly replaced sending out the powerful message to children and their parents that their work is appreciated. There were various other charts that included wild animals, pet animals, water creatures, body parts, colours, shapes. In all, the classroom had a print-rich environment consisting of number cards hanging on a

string on one side, small cards with alphabets, list of words ending from "an" (e.g. pan), "at" (e.g. cat), "og" (e.g. log), "ot" (e.g. pot). Besides, there were charts with poems written on them and also in the form of flash cards which were arranged in a sequence that together represented a story. These charts were often used by the teachers while narrating a story or reciting a poem and she refers to these charts when talking about different animals, shapes or colours.

On one side of the classroom, there were small cubicles where children used to keep their belongings like bags and bottles. Other large-sized cubicles were used as storage places for keeping play material like blocks, puzzles, shapes, clay, kitchen sets, different kinds of small manipulative toys and dramatic play props like face masks, old *duppattas,* puppets. The props were generally used by the children during their pretend play activities. A small shelf was placed near the blackboard where various story books with colourful pictures and words in large font size were arranged. It was observed these story books were generally used by the teacher while narrating the stories to the children. It was observed that the furnishings including tables, chairs, and shelves were child-friendly in terms of safety and their accessibility. The classroom had a good ventilation system with the provision of both artificial and natural light. The class was not divided into different activity centres and there was also not enough space and material for that purpose. Free play was encouraged each day for sometime, where the teacher used to allow children to play for about 15 minutes before the school gets over. During this time the children were free to play with the material of their choice (blocks, clay, shapes, puzzles). The teacher used to intervene by asking them questions regarding their activities like what they are making or doing, providing hints/ clues if the child is finding difficultly in solving a puzzle, helping them to resolve their conflicts by making them share the toys, blocks, shapes or other material with peers. Not much freedom was given to children to play in between the structured teaching/ learning activities. It was observed that the children always used to find their ways to engage in play even during such activities, especially if the teacher was busy doing something or in case children finished the work assigned to them by the teacher earlier. It was observed that many a times children were so much involved and engaged in their play activities that they even ignored the teacher's instructions to put back the play material and return to their places.

The teacher-child ratio was 1:30. The seating arrangement was such that the teacher and children both were able to see each other clearly. There were four square tables and eight children sat around each of them on low height chairs, two on each side. The teacher's desk was situated in a corner. The position of the teacher was not fixed; she used to change her position depending on the activity. She usually used to stand in the centre of the classroom while teaching or talking to the children. During the story-telling or discussion time, children were made to sit on a carpet in the centre of the classroom and the teacher used to sit on a low height stool. In case of children, working independently during the structured activity time, the teacher used to move from one table to other, observing them as they work, repeating and clarifying instructions, providing them with the required assistance and constant feedback.

The outdoor setting comprised of an open space in the centre surrounded by the classes. On one side of the ground there was a muddy area where various rides were there for children like sea-saw, slides, climbers, tunnels. There was also a small wooden hut with a door and windows in which the children can enter, sit and play. The environment was natural with variety of plants and trees surrounding the school campus. The school also had a well- maintained kitchen garden. The children were introduced to the names of the different trees, fruits and vegetables in the campus during the nature walk sessions. The learning used to happen in these contexts through such activities as making children taste the leave of the *neem* tree to introduce the concept of "bitter" or lemon to introduce the "sour" taste. The children were even made to walk barefoot in order to identify different surfaces (concrete, grass, marble, mud) and to develop concepts such as smooth and rough / wet and dry. In this way the relationship between the indoor and outdoor environment was established by coordinating the various resources available in the school. In one instance, while doing number concept with children, the teacher asked them to go out and collect five mulberries each. It was observed that the children were enjoying this activity as they were counting and collecting the mulberries lying under the mulberry tree. It was a fun activity for children as they got an opportunity to move out of the classroom and it also broke the monotony of learning by sitting at one place. It gave them a sense of achievement and opportunity for self- correction as the teacher made each one of them to count the mulberries that she/ he had collected and appreciated their efforts. Similarly, once the teacher asked the children to collect two leaves each from outside.

In this way they not only learnt number concept but when they compared their leaves with their peers, they automatically learned that leaves come in different shapes, sizes and colours. It was realized that learning becomes more stimulating and meaningful for children when the teacher designs activities where they get freedom to explore, experiment and construct their own knowledge in the social context. Such activities promoted shared understanding through sharing of similar experience.

It was observed that spaces, neither indoor nor outdoor (except a small wooden hut) were designed to promote pretend play among children, but the children always used to find spaces and material to engage in such a play. They were seen playing and building different structures in the mud. The girls used to enjoy becoming mothers or teachers by wearing *duppatas* in the form of a *saari*. Children were often, observed, wearing animal face masks and pretending to be animals by making different kinds of sounds and movements. It was realized that the dramatic play props were quite limited in number and variety, therefore not accessible to all the children interested to play a particular game. Such play activities of children were most common during the recess time.

Outside the classrooms, in the corridor, a large aquarium was placed with number of small and big, colourful fishes. The children used to stand close to it observing different fishes, following them as they moved here and there, up and down, while discussing about their various features like colour, shape and size. The outdoor space was friendly and peaceful offering children with small nooks and corners, animals (rabbits, guinea pigs), birds (ducks, turkeys) plants, trees, toys and rides. Altogether, the outdoor space was safe and barrier free for children to move about, play and explore.

b. Affective Environment

In the busy milieu, where the ideas used to pass with ease, there was always a perpetual hum in the classrooms. The teacher had to remind children several times in a day, to sit quietly but the continuous sharing of ideas and experiences was very much part of the classroom culture. For the uninformed observer, the sharing might have appeared chaotic. The room was lively with small heads bobbing up and down telling a story or gazing upon the partner's work. It was observed that in such an

environment learning used to occur continuously through observation, imitation, repetition, sharing of experiences and ideas. While sharing of ideas and awareness of another's views doesn't always mean agreement, perhaps, intersubjectivity whether joint, overlapping or a co-action also functions to negotiate in the diverse or unusual. It was experienced that while engaged in any activity children peeked at the idiosyncracies of others, in order to make connection in experience. In this kind of polycentric collaboration, where plethora of ideas used to travel, they not only get a chance to observe and learn from each other but also to see one's own self amidst others leading to greater accommodation and adaptation.

The role of the teacher as a mediator and facilitator was crucial. According to one of the teachers in the school, at preschool age child looks up to the teacher for many things as she said ".... at school, even small things like tying the child's shoe lace, buttoning his shirt can help him bond with the teacher". It was often observed that children in the school used to approach the teachers for such assistance, asking them to tie their shoe lace or to open their tiffin boxes and bottles. The teacher in the school used to make sure that each child has finished his food before going out to play during the recess time. Sometimes she herself was seen feeding the child. Such caring encounters, in a subtle way sends out a message of trust and acceptance, creating an environment where children can feel secure and comfortable. The use of bilingual instructions (*Hindi* and English) by the teachers and giving freedom to children to speak to in their home language (*Hindi*) was another important feature that reflected sensitivity on the part of adults towards child readiness to learn. As reported by the principal of the school "....giving children freedom to express themselves in their home language is important because initially the aim is to make them more expressive so that they can have trust in us and they can feel more comfortable." Personalizing the pedagogical spaces i.e. making children feel at home in the classroom is most crucial for young children (NCF-2005, Position Paper, National Focus Group on Early Childhood and Education).

The day used to begin with the morning assembly where the children were made to sing and move along with the teachers. They used to imitate the actions and follow the movements of the teachers creating a kind of synchrony. Every teacher in the school was observed twisting and turning, hopping and jumping together with the children

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creating a very stimulating environment. Teachers and children used to wish each other in a very rhyming fashion by singing "Good morning to you, good morning to you, good morning, good morning, I am glad to see you". It was noted that such collaborative experiences were effective in promoting positive feelings leading to a kind of bonding between the teacher and children. When the children used to reach the classroom after assembly, sometimes they were made to sing first few lines of the prayer *"Om jai jagdish hare"*, wishing each other by saying *"namaste"*. Coming from the similar cultural backgrounds, children were easily able to relate to such experiences in school. It appeared that the larger goal of such activities was to create linkages between the children's experience at school and outside the school. As one teacher reported that "Children at this age are profoundly influenced by their family and cultural practices and therefore in order to make learning meaningful some kind of linkage between the practices at school and home is required".

The children were encouraged to share their experiences at home with the teacher and their peers, especially after a weekend or holidays. The affective bond between the teacher and children was formed as the teacher called each child by his/ her name and by listening to the child's story patiently. It was observed that the teacher used to make sure that every child in the class gets an opportunity to say whatever he/ she wishes to, and she even used to stimulate children to speak in the class by asking them simple questions. The aim was to make them more confident and expressive. It was observed that shared understanding emerged in the classroom over a period of time as children were encouraged to take turns while sharing their experiences. For instance the teacher asked about their weekend experiences as she said "Okay, *ab sab* one by one *batainge ki* Sunday *ko kya kiya. Pehle* ma'am *bataingee aur fhir aap* ma'am *ko bataoge ki* aapne *kya kiya"*. By sharing her own experiences and childhood stories, the teacher used to create a shared experiential world in the class, facilitating children to make linkages and connections. This was important for promoting shared attention and intention.

Sensitization exercise, where one by one each child was blind folded and was made to recognize any other child of the class (randomly selected) by touching and exploring his/ her different features was found to be interesting. Through such activities relationships were fostered between children by providing them spaces to know each

other more closely by identifying the unique features such as hair style or height of their classmate. The interesting part was that the teacher and the researcher also participated in the activity along with the children. It was observed that children were excited to know that their teacher can identify them by simply touching and feeling them. Another activity which the teacher was observed doing in the class was to make children feel relaxed by asking them to close their eyes once they were back after an hour long recess time. The teacher used to massage each child's back/ shoulders for a minute or two by going on his/her respective place. Such experiences of tactile stimulation, even in the form of a hug or a pat at the back played important role in promoting affective involvements. They not only develop trust in the teacher but also make the child feel accepted and secure.

It was observed that though at one hand, attempts were made to establish proximity with children through affective involvement; while on the other hand, the position of a teacher as an authority figure was also clearly evident. Most of the activities were structured and at the same time, teacher initiated and teacher directed. Structuring occurred through the teacher's choice of activities in which children had access to engage in, including conversations, story-telling and even play. There was flexibility as far as teaching style or strategies were concerned. The prep teachers in the school believed that a particular structure is essential in order to provide a framework for curriculum transaction to occur in the class. At the same time, they also regarded flexibility or freedom within a structure important for a teacher to carry out the activities in her own way. The children's movement from one place to another was not encouraged in the presence of teacher. Talking with peers was also not much promoted, during the structured teaching-learning situations. During the discussion sessions, the teacher used to nominate the child to speak, although conscious attempts were made to include all the children in the discussion by listening to them patiently and incorporating their views. Teacher's greater linguistic rights were evident from the more number of turns that she used to take in any such interaction. The children were often reminded to pay attention by not engaging in talk with peers. Also, socially appropriate ways of behaviour including how to walk, talk and eat were communicated to the children in the class during various interactive contexts. In this way, the notion of a "good" child as someone who respects and listens carefully to the teacher, does not talk much with other children in the presence of a teacher or when

the teacher is speaking, speaks when his/ her turn comes, who does not fight with other children and lives in harmony with others, was constantly communicated. Therefore, a child's environment at school can be envisaged as multi-layered, ranging from aspects of the physical world, structured events and interpersonal interactions, prescribed by general educational goals, to the subjective environment, the school as experienced by the child (Jones, 1995).

Curriculum

A supportive learning environment was created through the interaction of the indoor and outdoor physical environment, the instructional materials, furnishings, interpersonal relationships and daily routines. The learning environment in the school accommodated planned and unplanned, as well as structured and unstructured experiences. Structured activities such as reading, story-telling, worksheet activity and lunch include the routines that provide stability and familiarity necessary for young children, as well as learning activities integrating the content areas and having specific goals planned by the adults. A mixture of routine and variation was an effective way to promote understanding among children by helping them to make connections and scaffolding their learning through techniques like probing, giving hints or prompting, sharing of experiences and giving examples. In response to the question, how a new concept is introduced to the children in the class, the teacher reported "I always begin with what the child already know so that the child can make simple connections, I also share my own experiences with children". Such interactions used to facilitate the practice of widely acknowledged curricular principles of moving from "known to unknown", from "concrete to abstract" and from "local to global" (National Curriculum Framework -2005, p 6).

The usual daily timetable was structured to include time for children to engage in individual activities and classroom discussions with either a teacher or teacher's assistance. It was observed that the curriculum lacked the child-initiated and child-directed activities, including small group activities. On every Wednesday, during the recess time, there used to be a meeting where teacher, school principal and the counsellor used to share their experiences and concerns related to children. In one of the meetings, the counsellor stressed the point that learning in young children is integrated and interdisciplinary in nature and cannot be fragmented into narrowly

defined areas. Another important point made by her was that teachers should not force the child to speak in English. The counsellor further stressed to allow the child to speak in whatever language he/ she likes to speak, as she said "*Usse* English *mein bolne ke liye mat kaho, pehle usse bolne toh do*". She favoured the idea that the preschool curriculum should not be structured, and that enough freedom as well as opportunities for free play should be given to young children. The researcher personally found these discussions quite fruitful for teachers in the school, in making them reflect on the nature of child's development and their own pedagogical practices.

From the observations, it was found that curriculum for preschoolers cannot be rigid in the form of a syllabus; rather it is created each day through relationship of children with the environment, material and people around them. Also, learning cannot be compartmentalised into strictly specific domains as it occurs in an integrated fashion. As mentioned in the NCF-2005, "The curriculum is the sum total of all the experiences available to the child, and cannot be reduced to a syllabus. It has to be constructed to suit the child's requirements in different contexts, and should be in tune with the age, needs, and abilities of the child; it requires full involvement of the teacher, both in building it and in transacting it in the classroom......"

The curriculum in the school involved activities for the all round development of children including reading time, story-telling sessions, drawing and colouring, music and movement, classroom discussions, including outdoor play and physical activities.

Music and movement

Music and movement were regarded as essential components of play-way approach to learning in school and that by integrating music learning can become more joyful for young children. The day in the school used to begin with the children singing and moving along with the teachers. There used to be a music class for children twice a week but music in different forms was very much part of the overall teaching/ learning process in the classroom. This was done by incorporating various poems and songs in the curriculum. There were poems and songs related to different areas of the curriculum content like songs for teaching number concepts, days of a week, fruits and vegetables, animal and animal products, colours, shapes, sense organs and their

functions. The songs were selected by the music teacher, keeping in mind the age and interest of the young children. There were songs in both Hindi and English. Most of them were with a high language and cognitive value in simple day-to-day language involving repetitive patterns with enough scope for enacting them out. The music teacher used to teach the songs in accordance to the concept going-on in the class. This was an effective strategy as it helped children to relate well by making connections in experience. It was observed that repetition was very important while teaching songs to young children. In the music class, the children were made to learn and each line of the song by pronouncing each word along with the actions, by repeating them several times. Then, they were made to sing the same along with the music. It was noticed that children used to enjoy singing repetitive portions of the song together in a high pitch. The music teacher reported that "Sometimes the children are not able to understand the meaning of certain words or sentences but when they sing along with the actions they start making connections and relations". In the music class intersubjectivity was established by getting along with others, matching words and actions through imitating and observing each other.

Story- telling

Story- telling activity was the integral part of daily classroom routine. It was observed that almost every new concept was weaved into the story to make it more comprehensible for children. The teacher while narrating the story used to paint the sequences of the story for children, by sticking white sheets on the blackboard. According to her "...this is a very interesting way to promote joint attention, the children really concentrate and relate well as they see each character been drawn in front of their eyes and they are so attentive that sometimes they point out, in case there is a mismatch between what I say and what I draw". It was observed that this generated interest among children by establishing joint understanding as they were able to relate easily to what the teacher actually wanted to convey. Joint attention and intention during story- telling sessions were maintained through use of strategies like making children predict, project and enact in between. Story-telling sessions were excellent contexts to learn about emotions as children were often made to represent the emotions of others (characters in the story) by enacting them out. Intersubjectivity was evident as the children were able to coordinate well through

their responses with the ideas conveyed of the teacher. According to Tomasello et al. (2005), an even stronger form of intersubjectivity is to achieve joint intention. This involves that a child can understand the plans of somebody else and coordinates its own intention with the goals of other. Stories with little magic, fantasy and suspense were selected to promote and maintain children's interest.

Drawing and Colouring

Special emphasis was placed on drawing and colouring as a medium of self-expression in the class. The pre-reading/ writing skills were also promoted through drawing activities. During the reading time, children were asked to recall the names of different objects starting with a particular sound, and then, the pictures of these objects were drawn on the blackboard by the teacher. Joint attention was established by the coordinated efforts of both the teacher and children. The emphasis was placed on recognizing sounds and not on teaching of alphabets. For instance, sound "p" was introduced as the children recalled the words starting with sound "p" (like pencil, pin, pot, paper, *paani, patang*) and then the teacher drew the pictures of these words on the board. It shows how the shared understanding was established through collaborative efforts of the participants. The children were encouraged to speak as the teacher generally used to accept their different responses and coordinate their different ideas.

The teachers did not expect any kind of perfection in the drawings of children; rather their drawings were seen as a medium of symbolic representation of their understanding and imagination. The teacher tried to delve deeper into these drawings without being judgemental. This provided space for children's free expression and negotiations, where they were allowed to colour clouds in green or red, leaves with black or whatever colour they feel like. Contexts for one-to-one interaction were created as the teacher labels children's drawing along with them. This way the drawings that children used to make were seen through their eyes. Looking at things from child's perspective can be seen as teacher's ability to maintain joint regard. Besides, stories with themes like sharing, friendship, cleanliness were selected to promote the development of social skills in children.

Children were provided spaces to reflect on their emotions by expressing them through drawing. For instance, children were asked to draw "when do they feel

happy", "when do they feel sad", "when do they feel angry" and "what make them fearful". The joint regard was promoted as the teacher relate to the children by labelling their drawings along with them. Such contexts were also important for the teacher to identify each child's emotional needs.

The intersubjectivity established during the collaborative experiences such as story-telling or poem reciting sessions was extended in the independent activities like drawing of story/ poem impressions and worksheets. It was observed that after a story was narrated or a song/poem was taught to children, they were asked to draw whatever they liked about it. The finished products were occasions for teacher to engage in one-to-one interaction with each child and to record her responses. The responses of the children used to mimic their understanding established during story-telling sessions. One of the interesting observations was that some of the children used to maintain the same sequence of incidences or events in their drawings as narrated by the teacher. One can actually see how the ideas get translated into pictures and symbols. This reflects that how the joint understanding established during the course of story-telling session was extended in the later activity. It was observed that these activities were not independent in the true sense. While the children used to draw and colour, joint understanding get established through the process of constant negotiation and sharing- from ideas to crayons as observed in one of the instances.

1) Arnav: Tree *mein* orange colour *kyun kar diya*? Tree orange *thodi hota hai*

2) Dhruv: *Kyunki ye* orange *ka* tree *hai*

3) Arnav: *Arre* orange tree *pura* orange *thodi hota hai, usme* green leaves *bhi toh hoti hai*

(Dhruv then took green crayon and colour the tree green over orange).

In the above excerpt, the child named Arnav inquires the other child about the choice of colour he has made as he uses orange crayon to colour the tree (turn1). The other child responds by providing the reason for doing so as he says that he is making an orange tree (turn 2). Then, Arnav negotiates by directing the attention of the other child (turn3) by telling him that the orange tree also have green leaves. This shows

how learning occurs through peer interaction and exchange of ideas. Through the communication that existed in child-child interactions, children expressed and negotiated ideas that contributed to each other's understanding. The ideas that the children verbally as well as physically expressed during such interactions acted as communicators in the learning process. Their questions, answers, and explanations formed teaching strategies that they used to support each other's participation as well as extend their individual drawings. It was observed that sometimes it was difficult for children to draw some characters. In such situations children used to visualize the character through each other's eyes. In one instance, the teacher narrated the story about the camel and the tree to the children without using any prop or picture. It was observed that two girls, Sarah and Aditi were finding it difficult to draw the picture of camel and were sharing their ideas about the camel, gazing into each other's sheet. The researcher talked to the two children

R: Drawing *karna achcha lagta hai?*

Aditi: Haan

R: *Kya kabhi- kabhi* difficult *hota hai, mushkil hota hai?*

Aditi: Ummh.....camel *banana mushkil hota hai, bahut mushkil hai.*

R: Camel *banane mein mushkil hota hai?*

Aditi: *Wo bahut bada hota hai na, uska* neck *bahut bada hota hai, uska* hump *bhi hota hai aur usse banana bahut mushkil hota hai .*

Sarah: *Maine dekha tha wo* horse *jaisa hota hai*

R: Ok, *tree banana mushkil hai?*

Aditi: *Nahi wo toh bahut easy hota hai*

Sarah: *Usme toh bus upar* green colour *karna hota hai aur neeche* brown.

This conversation does not tell why and how the children share meanings but discloses particulars: that both find drawing is difficult at times. These reflections, verbalized in the conversation were part of the larger ongoing exchange between the two. In the above conversation the two not only listen to each other's responses, answering the researcher but also following the other's reflective remarks. The construction of meaning from another's idea was the rhythm of the preschool

classroom. What the researcher observed during the drawing experiences were a child's ideas, interspersed with fragments of another's, the hurly-burly of activity as one idea rubbed up against another.

"Lets Talk" Activities

In order to make children express themselves through talk, children were given different situations each day to respond to and their responses were recorded by the teacher. Words used to allow children to imagine and anticipate what might happen in the strange circumstances or future. The basic objective of this activity was to allow them to relate to the given situation by projecting themselves beyond their immediate life and restricted past. Some of the situations that were given by the teachers in the prep classes were like: If it's very cold one night and you don't have clothes to wear, what will you do? Or what will you do if one day a monkey enters your class and takes away you bag?

In one of the classes, the teacher asked that "Suppose one day a fairy comes when you are sleeping at night and take away your legs, then what will happen, what will you do?" Some of the responses given by children were:

- *Mein chal nahi paunga, khel nahi paunga aur* school *bhi nahi aa paunga*
- *Mein shoes nahi pehan paunga*
- *Mein prayer karungee, bhagwan naye paer de denge*
- *Mein dande se chalunga*
- *Mummy se boloongee shop se naye paer le aao*
- *Mein market se naye bijli wale paer le loonga*
- *Mein uudkar chala karoongi*
- *Mummy pooja kar lengi fhir mere paer vapas aa jaenge*
- *Mein haath mein joote pahen loonga aur haath se chal loonga*
- *Mein* rocket *loonga, usse apne peeche laga loonga aur udd jaonga*

This example reveals how intersubjectivity was established in the classroom as children were able to relate by projecting into the given situation, making connections in their experience. Though each child provided an independent response based on his/ her understanding and experience but children were also exposed to ideas of each

other. Such activities were regarded important not only because they were helpful for the teacher to read the child's mind but also as they sometimes revealed information about their family beliefs and practices. The importance given to the religious activities at home was reflected in the child's response as she said "Mummy *pooja kar lengi fhir mere paer vapas aa jaenge"*. This way it helped the teacher to connect easily with the child and his/her experiences outside the school. Somehow, it was felt that the responses of the children were not used by the teacher to generate further discussion in the classroom. Little more probing and prompting could have created the contexts for creativity to evolve leading to the growth in understanding of young children.

One of the interesting ways to make children learn about the appropriate social behaviour was to provide them with different open ended situations or ask them to choose the appropriate alternative. For instance, if a child is sitting on a ride and you also want to sit on the same ride what will you do? This promoted reflective and reasoning skills in children as the children applied their everyday experiences and current knowledge to relate to the given situation. Another activity aimed at promoting verbal skills in children was "story- mapping", where the teacher (T) initiated the story by telling the first few lines and then, each child was asked to add on to the previous information, forming linkages. For instance,

T: One day it was raining and raining, ma'am *ko kahi se awaaz aayee,* one small doggie was doing coo-coo, coo-coo, ma'am looked here and there *par* ma'am *ko koi bhi nahi dikhayee diya ..... fhir kya hua?* Geetika tell me *fhir kya hua?*

Geetika: *Fhir* doggie *ne aapko pakadh liya aur aap bhagne lage*

T: *Fhir* doggie *ne* ma'am *ko pakadh liya aur fhir ma'am bhagne lagi, fhir kya hua?*

Harshita: *Fhir aap chup gayee par* doggie *ne aapko dekh liya*

T: *Fhir*

Kritika: *Fhir* doggie *aapke peeche- peeche aane laga*

T: *Fhir,* doggie ma'am *ke peeche- peeche aane laga, uske baad kya hota hai?*

Harshit: *Aap jaldi se apne ghar mein ghus. gayee par* doggie *window se ander aa jata hai*

T: Ma'am *bhag rahi thi aur* doggie *peeche- peeche aa raha tha, fhir* ma'am *jaldi se apne ghar mein ghus gayee par* doggie window *se* jump *karke ander aa gaya.....fhir kya hua*?

It is evident from the above example how mutual understanding and sharing of ideas took place as the teacher filled the gaps in between by repetition and making connections between different ideas expressed by children to give a coherent picture to children. It was really an interesting activity as each participant contributed by creating a web of meaning, where the ideas of one were linked to that of the other. It was observed that such an effort to help children create their own stories helps them think, speak and create appropriate dialogues. Again, the aim was to involve each child in the activity and using interpersonal or intersubjective resources to create a rich context for children's learning.

Worksheets

Worksheets were designed by the teachers in accordance to the curriculum. The children were made to work independently in order to reflect and make associations with what they have learnt earlier. It was observed that the use of private speech was quite common when children worked on the worksheets. Through planning of appropriate worksheets the teacher used to relate to the children in an intersubjective manner. There were worksheets related to various concepts such relational typologies (big/ small, many/ few, near/ far), shapes, matching the related objects (like toothbrush and toothpaste) drawing the missing part, identifying sweet and bad smells, etc. It was observed that the worksheets lacked creativity and were not challenging enough to promote children's learning within the zone of proximal development (For instance, in case of worksheet with match the objects, the activity was made too simple by arranging the related objects opposite to one another. The random arrangement of objects could have created a little challenge for children). As discussed earlier children in the classroom were always affected by the presence of each other. Even when they used to work independently, they peeped into each other's sheets, expressed their ideas and commented on each other's work. Social psychologists documented 'social facilitation' phenomena: the presence of others can lead to arousal which in turn increases the rate of performance on a well practiced solitary task. This aspect of learning was quite evident in the preschool classroom activities.

Curriculum transaction

Three main phases or steps have been identified in the transaction of curriculum in the classroom namely initiation (introduction or orientation), collaboration (negotiation) and integration (closure).

Initiation: The orientation used to function in a range of ways in the classroom including

- establishing the concept or the topic
- engaging learners' interest
- probing existing construal or ideas about the topic
- beginning to construct shared understanding

Due to the nature of these functions, it was observed that the teacher usually used to make use of learners' existing understanding as starting point as they used to bring their everyday or related experiences about the area introduced.

Collaboration / Negotiation

The collaboration or negotiation part was experienced as the lengthiest phase as it generally involved number of activities to achieve the pedagogic goals. This stage was observed to be quite sensitive to the interest and age of the learners. The activities were designed in a manner that the same concept was found to be embedded in different forms like teaching the shape concept through showing different shapes, nature walk, games, riddles, poem and worksheets. Sometimes, it was felt that many of the concepts and the related activities introduced were more or less familiar to children and it was easy to for children to make connections. The teacher and learners in this phase were found to be more actively involved in establishing joint meaning. At the same time, it was realized that interaction during this phase was more often teacher directed.

Integration

The last phase of closure was more like an integration of different ideas to construct a lucid understanding of the concept where the learners make public their new or

reconstrued understandings. With the help of these phases, one can get an idea about how the learner gains increasing control over the area or concept in focus through joint activity (with teacher and peers). This was finally evident through the production of classroom artefacts or work samples like worksheets or drawings.

The Documentation/ Assessment process

Assessment of young children was an ongoing process which included identifying, collecting, describing, interpreting and applying classroom-based evidence of early learning in order to make informed instructional decisions. This evidence included records of children's conversations, their drawings and constructions, as well as photographs of and anecdotal notes describing their behaviours.

Documentation, focused on identifying, collecting and describing the evidence of learning in an objective, non-judgemental manner. Teachers used to take the time to identify the learning goals, collect records of language and work samples, carefully describing and reviewing the evidence with colleagues. However, beyond documentation, the evidence was also connected back to the learning goals and, based on these findings, new curriculum strategies used to be developed or designed and new questions about the child's learning were posed.

According to the teachers in the school, children show remarkable development in the talking and listening outcomes from the beginning of the session till the end. This was even communicated by the parents to the teachers and was evident from the children's work samples and documentation of their responses. The table below shows summary of the general pattern of development in child's talking and listening skills based on researcher's interactions with teachers and her own observation.

Table No. 3.1- Table representing the children's development of talking and listening skills

	Early stage	Stage 1	Stage2
Talking and listening	Communicates with peers and **known adults** in **informal** situations and in **some structured** activities dealing **briefly** with familiar topics.	Communicates with different people for a **variety** of purposes on both **familiar** and **introduced topics** in **spontaneous** and **structured** classroom activities. Attempts to make connection between familiar and new.	Communicates in **informal** and **formal** classroom activities in school and **social** situations for an **increasing range** of purposes on a **variety** of topics across the curriculum and attempts to deal with more **complex** and **challenging** topics.
Skills and strategies	Demonstrates **basic** skills of classroom and group interaction, makes **brief** oral presentations on some **familiar** topics and listens with **reasonable** attentiveness	Interacts in more **extended** way with less teacher intervention, speaks **confidently** and listens **effectively**	Interacts **effectively** , adopting **range** of roles, uses **variety** of media and uses various listening and grasping strategies for different situations

As observed from the table the early stage tends to minimize differences between everyday and school context (*in informal situations, on.......familiar topics*). This is in contrast to the later stages characterized by greater complexity (*spontaneous and structured classroom activities ...effectively, formal classroom activity*). Likewise the earlier part feature graduated lexis such as *brief* and *some* while development is signalled by the items such as *emerging, increasing, more challenging*. In the initial stage competency is made possible with teacher assistance and guidance. As the child moves from familiar to new, concrete to abstract areas he/she begins to work more critically and independently by focusing on the specific aspects of the problem with less teacher intervention and assistance. This also explains the need for scaffolding by the adult to promote confidence and competence among children.
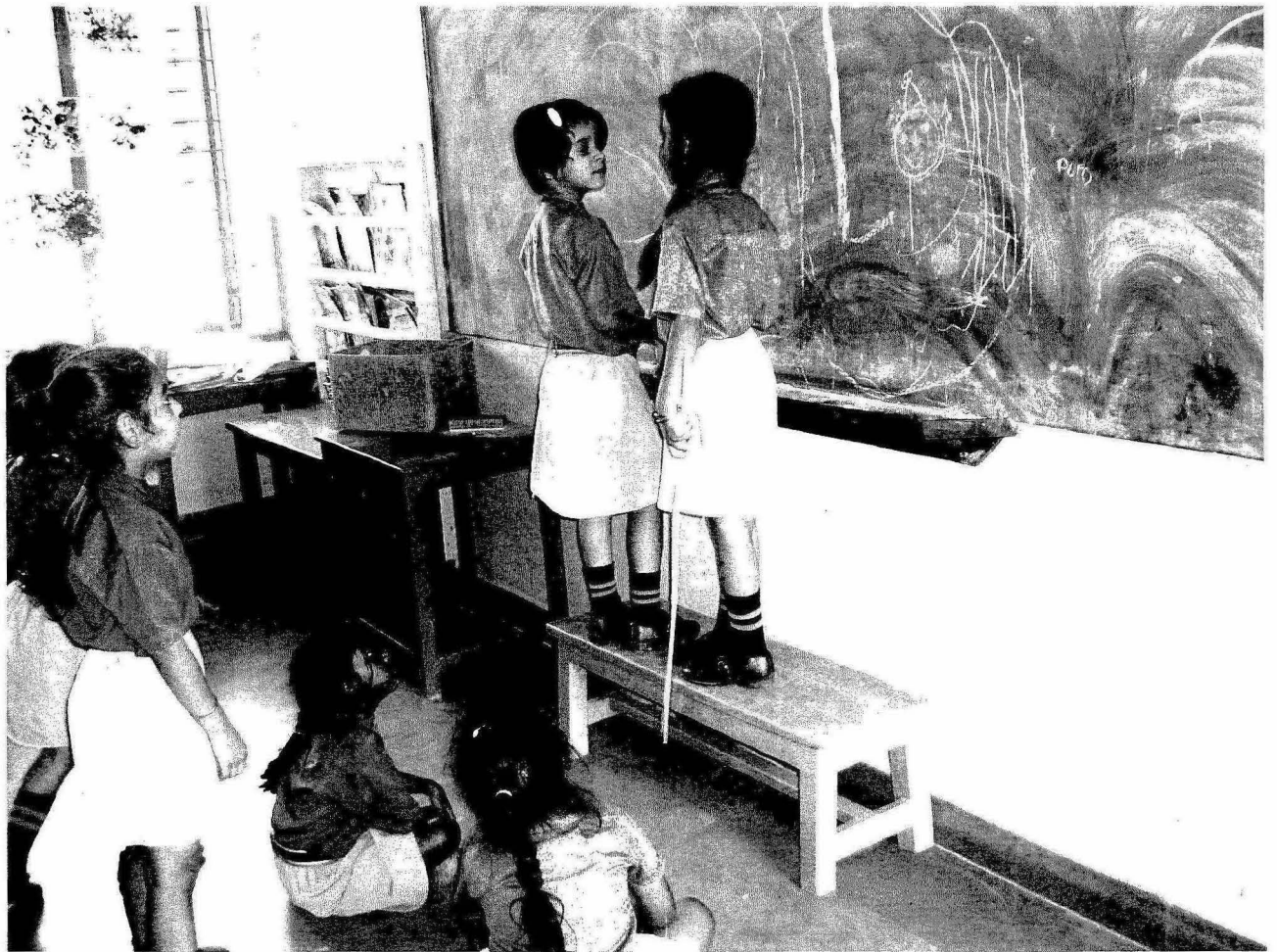
A careful documentation of children's responses used to serve as a tool for teachers to increase their understanding of developmental trends in children, needs and interests of each child and enhanced the teacher's ability to reflect on the instructional program. It was regarded crucial to match the instructional program and learning goals with the child's current level of development and readiness to learn. This aspect is also seen crucial and prerequisite for establishing a common ground for learning in the classroom context.

Peer Interaction

The children in the school studied have been involved in various types of play. The most common was pretend play. The boys were generally seen pretending to be some animal or an alien character while girls as a teacher or a mother. Within these play experiences, the children shared their knowledge about the role they were playing as well as negotiated the possible actions that can be performed. One of the important features of their play was its rule-based nature. In one instance, a child pretending to be a mother followed the rules of the parental behaviour as she said "*Chalo ab sab so jao, subah school jana hai na, nahi toh* teacher *gussa karengi*". It was experienced that the frequent acting out of feelings in make- believe, used to make it an excellent context for early learning about emotions. These interactions gave them the opportunity to maintain intersubjectivity through collaboration in the play scenarios. They acted both as teachers and learners who tacitly structured communication through the exchange of their knowledge and ideas. Vygotsky (1978) regarded make-believe as a unique, broadly influential zone of proximal development in which children advance themselves as they try out a wide variety of challenging skills.

Intersubjectivity in this way, created a liminal space where one child's meaning was linked to another. One can see innovation arising from this liminal space. It was experienced that children's play was fluid, introducing their favourite characters (e.g. *Krrish*) demonstrating a particular talent like flying or battling crocodiles. The characters used to emerge from each child's consciousness and were accepted by the other. Storylines used to overlap; the other's experiences were sometimes accepted and sometimes rejected, meanings were adjusted through negotiation and modification. It can be visualized as a rope woven from many strands. The children were actually inseparable.

In one instance, some of the wild animals were placed on the table in the class. Sawmte and James approached the table and began to manipulate the animals. Then Sawmte said "*Ye dekho, mein* lion *hoon, jungle ka raja, mujhse sab darte hain*" and he then produced the roaring sound. James immediately shifted his attention from his play to Sawmte's actions and imitated him and produced the similar sound. Sawmte then pointed towards the animals placed on the table and stated "*Mein sabko kha jaonga.*" James watched him manipulating the animals and said "*Sawmte,* lion *sabko kha sakta hai,* giraffe *ko bhi*?" Sawmte replied "*Haan, vo jungle ka raja hota hain, sab usse darte hain.*" James then asserted "*Mein nahi darta, mein usse mar sakta hoon*" He then moved towards Sawmte in a motion and making a noise as if an animal was hopping and acted as lion attacking other animals. The day before their teacher, Ms Dua asked them a very interesting question which was like "Which animal they want to become and why? Every one was given a chance to reply and Sawmte replied that he wanted to become a lion as he said " Ma'am *mein* lion *banoonga kyunki wo jungle ka raja hota hai*" and the same idea was reflected in his play too. Thus, it was interesting to observe how the themes of the classroom discussions were extended in their play activities.

Sawmte and James observed each other's actions while playing with the animals as well as shared ideas with each other verbally and physically. They moved back and forth from teacher to learner during this collaboration by attending each other's behaviours. Though Sawmte appeared to be the main teacher, roles actually shifted and were negotiated through reciprocal involvement. The children supported each other throughout this process as they explored the process of the lion eating other animals.

In the preschool classroom block building, clay making and pretend play were some of activities where children participated in collaborative interactions. In these interactions, children used various types of communicative strategies and support to establish intersubjectivity. They even expressed their ideas and skills and shared them with each other. Each of the interactions provided the children involved with an opportunity to co-construct a teaching- learning context, in which they acted as either a teacher or a learner or both concurrently within their peer culture as they expressed and shared these concepts.

The collaborative experiences were reciprocal and mutually beneficial to the children involved and each child's experience was enhanced by another child's participation in the same process. This represents the value of the experience to the children; the obvious contribution to the children's cognitive understanding. It represents how it is possible to share ideas and experience with each other while at the same time taking in and attempting to understand new information. At the same time it also expresses how to participate equally in an interaction regardless of prior experience and knowledge because of one's position in a peer culture that is framed or created by reciprocation and mutual involvement and experience.

The careful observation, imitation, directions, questions, answers, and idea swapping allowed children to work within the "zone of proximal development." Each interaction appeared beneficial to every child involved, though the benefit was different for each one. Some came away from the interactions with an entire new set of skills or ideas, while others had knowledge added to their cognitive and social repertoire. For instance, it was observed that some of the children standing near the aquarium outside their class and talking to each other. Two of them were tapping on it with their hand. One of them said *"Aise mat karo ye tut jayega."* The other one said" *Aur saari* fishes *bahar aakar hamhe kha jayengi."* The one tapping on it said *"Arre* fishes *khati thodi hai".* Then the boy who started the conversation added, *"Haan, khati thodi hain, wo bahar aayengi toh mar jayengi."* Listening and observation enters the children's cognitive repertoire and often gives them an idea of their own that can lead to more sharing of ideas. In one instance, 4 children were playing in the mud during the lunch time. The researcher was standing close to them in order to observe them playing. The children were busy playing, exchanging ideas and information.

1) Apratim: *Aaj* ma'am *ka* birthday *hoga*

2) Ishpreet: Ma'am *aaj aapka* birthday *hai* (Child informs the researcher)

3) Researcher: *Thik hai? Aap kya bana rahe ho?*

4) Aditi: *Hum* cake *banaige, thik hai?*

(The other children accepted the idea)

5) Ishpreet: *Ye* chocolate *cake hai kyunki ye* brown colour *ka hai*

6) Sarah: *Nahi,* ma'am *ne bola hai ki* chocolate *khane se keede lag jate hai*

7) Ishpreet: *Per ye to* cake *hai,* ma'am *ne* toffee *wali* chocolate *khane se bola tha*

9) Sarah: Kritika *na meri* bus *mein jati hai, kal wo mere ghar aayee thi*

10) Aditi: *Ye dekho maine* cake *par* candles *laga di* (She collects some thin wooden sticks lying in the mud and then the children together put them on the cake)

11) Apratim: Ma'am *aao* cake *katne* (He gives the researcher a wooden stick to be used as a knife)

(The researcher cuts the cake .The children clap and sing the birthday song)

12) Sarah: Ma'am *isse khana mat*

13) Researcher: *Kyun?*

14) Sarah: *Arre isse khate thodi hain, ye toh nakli ka* cake *hai, isse bus jhooti- mooti mein khate hain*

15)Apratim: *Ye toh mitti ka* cake *hai*

In the above extract, the children create a pretend play situation while they play in the mud. Intersubjectivity was created as they make connections through sharing of and acceptance of ideas (turn 4). Turns 5, 6, 7 reveal how children show disagreement and resolve the same by finding a common ground for negotiation. It can be seen that shared ground for communication or intersubjectivity is somehow broken as the child starts off-topic conversation (turn 8), but it is soon established again in turn 9 when another girl directed the attention of other children as she tell them that she is putting candles on the cake. The excerpt clearly reveals how they relate to each other by expanding and building- on each other ideas (turn 12, 14, 15).

Observations of the play behaviour of children revealed the spaces and strategies created by them to establish intersubjectivity by sharing the common themes and roles associated to them. It was observed that these spaces were created more often outside the classroom where the children used to establish common ground for communication as they introduce new elements to the ongoing conversation, sometimes extending while at others building-on by adding new information. Sharing in these contexts occurred through acceptance, ·rejection or modification of the partner's idea. Joint regard was established as they used to collaboratively negotiate

their understandings of the common themes through sharing of feelings, experiences and activities

Exploring ideas about classroom talk and learning

Teachers were asked to comment on the relationship between social interaction and learning. The teachers in the school identified interaction as a key ingredient in effective learning and gave much importance to oral language and classroom talk in learning. One of the teachers reported that "Classroom talk is a tool for communication and for learning, to ask questions, for clarification not just from me, from each other as well". According to one teacher, "Teacher-child rapport formation is the basis of all learning that happens in children. The teacher should be able to relate to the child, thereby, giving him the confidence to speak freely and listen attentively". She also added that classroom discussions are equally important as each child must get a chance to speak his mind thereby encouraging him to think independently and also freedom to speak in the language in which the child is comfortable, for e.g. Hindi is important.

Focusing on the role of adult in children's learning one teacher said that the teacher can become the part of the children's group, sit with them and work 'hands on' along with the child. Children learn well by observing adults. Imitation was also observed to be a common strategy of learning in the classroom. Imitation and learning are sometimes regarded as purely mechanical processes. But recently psychologists have shown that a person can imitate only that which is within her developmental level, promoting it as one of the important way of learning

Exploring ideas about optimum environment for learning

The teachers in the school claimed that the child friendly environment is most favourable for learning to take place in young children but they had their own ideas regarding what do they actually meant by "child- friendly environment". As stated by one of the teachers "An environment where a child is given enough freedom to explore the surroundings and play material is essential. This helps him to do things on his own, hence learning takes place without too many instructions from the teacher. Self-directed learning helps in the growth of child's mental abilities." She considers

learning as a sensory experience that happens through interaction with the environment and experiencing things around him. This resonates with Piagetian notions of child development. According to another teacher "Learning would be maximum when the child is free to interact with the teachers and peers and is not scared to ask or express himself". She also added that though discussions should be open but the teacher needs to assist children to take care of the learning outcome. This idea is quite close to Vygotskian notion of scaffolding, guided participation indicating the role of social interaction in learning.

Teaching strategies to establish intersubjectivity

Teachers in the school unanimously supported the idea that at preschool level children learn and grasp very well if any new concept is introduced through stories or role play. According to one of the teachers "The toughest of concept can be simplified if it is told through a story, of course, if the story is substantiated with audio-visual aids the results can be all the more effective."

The teachers in the school believed that while dealing with preschoolers the major challenge is to be able to come down to their level. As stated by one of the teachers "You have to bring yourself down, I mean mentally, to the level of the child and usually I talk about my own childhood like 'When I was a baby like you all ...' in order to, relate to children and at the same time, to incorporate any new concept being introduced." Similarly, one teacher reported "The biggest challenge is always to be able to come down to their age. "The sun is very-very big" the teacher might tell. "How big? Bigger than this classroom?" the child may ask absolutely bewildered. Similarly, if the teacher tells that the sun has nine planets going around it, the child might look bored... he does not understand planet, he does not understand earth. But if the teacher tells the child that one day there was a big bang in the sky, god did that and then came the sun, lonely friendless. He had no friends so god told him, "I will give you a friend to play with", and so sun's friend Mercury came, though Mercury was very small, he loved to go around the sun, they played together and so on. Children love stories; they need to be told stories by getting down at their level. To make them even more effective, they can be painted or drawn on the board. This way the child actually sees each character being drawn in front of his eyes. While telling

stories, children should also be involved. For instance, while talking about an elephant, they can be made to trumpet like him, sway their arms like trunk".

For one of the prep teachers in the school the concepts taught should be age-appropriate and should always be coupled with hands on activity. Working with a small group of children and use of concrete material was also regarded important. Teachers used to feel that new concepts should be introduced in the morning hours as children are most receptive at this time of the day.

For teachers in the school children at this age learn best through concrete material which they can touch and feel. Also material should be large-sized and colourful. One teacher said "Any new concept if given the flavour of a game i.e if introduced in the form of a game helps the children to internalize the concept easily as they are more excited and attentive and they love to participate actively. Also in this way they motivate each other and reinforcement in the form of 'clapping' by the children if a child answers or performs something, works really well...I have observed that appreciation works like a magic wand to motivate them."

Need for structuring the learning environment

The teachers of the prep classes in the school unanimously believed that a framework or a structure is required for effective teaching/ learning process to take place. According to one of the teachers "We cannot work without a structure, without a curriculum, it is absolutely necessary, otherwise everything will become haphazard". One teacher stated that "Structure is required because too much of freedom cannot be given to children. After here they will go to big school, how will they cope up then?" Yet another teacher expressed her concern as she said "...school counselor says don't give homework, don't do reading-writing work, let children play all the time, but they have to go to class I next year, it will be difficult for them to manage there. Even parents ask us what our child is learning in school". At the same time teachers also felt that freedom is important but freedom within a structure that is flexibility is essential for them to be innovative and creative. As one teacher remarked that "...the good part is that school allows us to work in a flexible manner, it provides lots of freedom to adopt our own style and way of teaching". This aspect was also observed as not all the teachers teaching a particular class, adopt the same style of teaching,

there was flexibility as far as teaching methods were concerned even when the topic was same.

Classroom Discourses

Close attention to the classroom discourse is an important means of understanding schooling as social activity. In this study, because the relationship between the interpersonal and experiential is of interest, the classroom discourses will provide glimpses of how teachers and learners make sense of classroom experiences. Also as the major focus for the research is on the role of interpersonal / intersubjective resources in the construction of learning, classroom discourses are important to consider. The discourses are analysed in the following section by subjecting them to discourse analyses. The tables provide the components of adult mediating behaviour that emerged from the analyses of the discourses.

Context: The children have just come back from their music class. Some of them are drinking water from their bottles, some talking and moving here and there, some just standing at their places. Then the teacher asks them to settle down. Teacher notices Naina as plays with her ping-pong ball.

Excerpt 1

1) T: Naina, please come here with what you have (Naina, with a ping-pong ball in her hand, approaches teacher)

2) Neha: Naina *ye kaha se mila?*

3) Naina: Mama *ne dilwaya hai* shop *se. Mein isse rub bhi kar sakti hoon*, umm, *aur*

   khel bhi sakti hoon

4) T: Uh hum

5) Naina: Ma'am *dekho ye do- do* colour *ki hai*, pink aur..... aur yellow (Directing the attention)

6) T: Uh hum, interesting. Okay, *ye* rough *hai ya* smooth? Is it rough or smooth?

7) Naina : Smooth and it's.....and it's......and it's soft

8) T: Okay, can you name some of the other things that are soft to touch?

9) Pratham: Bag

10) T: Bag?

11) Pratham: (Showing his bag) Ma'am *dekho mera* bag *chunne mein* soft *hai* (Directing the teacher's attention)

12) T: Yes, Pratham *ka bag* soft *hai kyunki usme* fur *laga hai aur fur bahut* soft *hota hai.*

13) Pratham: *Mera* soft *hai.*

14) T: But see naina's bag. Is it soft?

15) Naina: *Mera toh* soft *nahi hai* (Naina touches her bag)

16) T: Okay, *aur kya soft* hota *hai?* Think and tell me.

17) Priyansh: Ma'am *mera* pillow *jispe mein sota hun wo* soft *hai*

18) T: Very good Priyansh

19) T: Priya go and touch something soft in the class

20) Priya: (She touches the cotton ball placed on the shelf)

21) T: Yes, very good Priya, now touch something hard.

22) Priya: (She touches the duster)

23) T: Okay, very good

24) T: Why don't you go around and let children touch both of them (cotton ball and wooden duster), soft and hard. Okay? (Priya takes them round).

25) T: Press it and see which one is soft and which is hard. Okay, which one is light, *kaunsa* light *hai?*

26) Priya: *Ye* light *hai* (Touches the cotton ball)

27) T: It's light

28) T: *Sabko chukar dehne do,* may be they could touch it and hold it to see whether it's heavy or light.

Table No. 3.2

Components of teacher's mediating behaviour	Turns in which they are used	Frequency
Intentionality	1	1
Sharing of experience	3	3
Stimulation	6, 8, 14, 25, 28	5
Negotiation	8-12	1
Positive Reinforcement	8, 18, 21, 23	4
Focus on specific Information	8, 12, 14, 16, 25, 28	6
Coordinating the resources	1, 14, 19, 21	4
Elaboration	12	1

In the first part of the excerpt, the teacher initiates the discourse by pointing towards the referent that the child was having (ping-pong ball) (turn1). It is a clear example of intentionality where the teacher makes a conscious attempt to influence the child's attention from the simple play to academic discourse. Another child, Neha takes the discourse forward by inquiring, where she gets that ball from (turn2). Then, the child expresses her perspective on the referent from the point of her everyday experience (turn 3) making associations and sharing her experience about the ball. The teacher takes an intelligent turn and uses the situation to introduce the dualistic typologies or relational concepts (smooth/ rough) [turn6]. The child introduces a new typology (soft) in the ongoing discourse which takes it further. Throughout the discourse the focus is on providing the specific information to the children (the goal is to talk about relational concept)to maintain joint attention by not deviating from the main track of the discussion (turn 8, 14, 16, 21, 25, 28). This intentionality is maintained throughout by providing children constant stimulation and motivation to participate. The ZPD is created through questions and answers, probing and prompting (turn 6, 8, 14 and16), negotiation and compromise (turn 8-12) and elaboration (turn12 and 20). The teacher attempts to broaden children's understanding as she attempts to provide hands-on-experience (turn 22, 24). Common ground is maintained as the children make connections (turn 11, 17), bridging the gap between what they already know and what they are capable of understanding at the point.

Young children come to school in the early years with their own contexts and stories—those that they bring from their homes. These beliefs imply that one of the teacher's primary roles in instruction is to serve as a strategist and negotiator. She must determine the child's context (and functional developmental level) and negotiate a plan for facilitating the child's discovery of how the knowledge that she brings to the classroom can be utilized (and extended in the child's zone of proximal development) within the functions of the classroom context—in other words, how the child's context can become a part of the classroom context and how the classroom context can become a part of the child's context in designing the learning that could occur.

The children's responses are generally limited to answering the questions posed by the teacher. The conversation is teacher initiated and teacher directed. In between, the children calls for the teacher's attention by showing her something they have noticed (turn 5, turn 11). Also the children take clues from the teacher and try to respond to the questions by making connections and associations (turn 11, 17).

Excerpt 2

Context: Children are engaged in different kinds of activities during the free play session. A boy, Karan is busy solving a zig- saw puzzle as the teacher watches him.

1) Karan: Yaha kya aayega (Child is talking to himself [private speech], he tries to insert a piece in the wrong place as the teacher watches)

2) T: Yes Karan very good, you are doing well. Now think, *yahan par kya hota hai*? (Points to the bottom of the puzzle)

3) Karan : Ummh shoes

4) T: Shoes is okay, *par* shoes *toh yahan par hain nahi, aapko kahin* shoes *dikh rahen hain?*

5) Karan: (Nods his head)

6 T: *Hum* shoes *pehente kaha hain? Kis* body part *mein pehente hain?*

7) Karan: *Paer* (Looks for a piece resembling the feet but tries the wrong one)

8) Teacher: *Ab dhyan se dekho Kaunsa* piece *hamare paer jaisa dikh raha hai? Dhoondo jaldi se* (Pointing again to the bottom of the puzzle)

9) Karan: *Ye wala* (Looks at the teacher)

10) Teacher: *Laga kar dekho.*

11) Karan: (Tries it, and it fits; then attempts another piece and looks at the teacher)

12) Teacher: Turn it, put it straight, *usse sidha lagao* (Gestures to show him)

13) Karan: (Puts in several more pieces. The teacher watches)

Table No. 3.3

Components of teacher's mediating behaviour	Turns in which they are used	Frequency
Motivation	2	1
Stimulation	2, 6, 8, 10	4
Negotiation	4	1
Positive Reinforcement	2	1
Focus on specific information	6	1

In the first part of the above excerpt the child is busy solving the puzzle, making use of private speech to direct his own attention as the teacher watches him (turn1).The teacher intervenes and motivates the child by providing him positive reinforcement (turn 2). The teacher keeps the puzzle within the zone of proximal development- at a manageable level of difficulty- by questioning, prompting and also at times suggesting strategies (turns 2, 6, 8, 10). Within the zone, interaction between the child and the teacher constantly adjusts to fit Karan's changing competencies and the teacher insights into what will best help him to learn. This is a clear example of scaffolding where the teacher adjusts her support according to the child's current level of performance on the task and gradually withdraws her assistance as the child becomes more competent. It was often observed that eventually, children take the language of these dialogues through the process of internalization, make it part of their private speech, and use this speech to organize their thinking and behaviour in the future.

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From the classroom observation it seems that when a teacher enters the zone of proximal development with a student, she brings with her a mature and sophisticated understanding of the task or activity presented to the student. She generally knows the "correct" answer to the question asked, as well as several possible routes to arrive at that answer. The teacher also brings with her a desire to lead the child to certain predetermined outcomes. Once the teacher-student pair is involved in their work in the zone, the teacher takes the lead in determining the student's needs, selecting appropriate strategies and offering relevant advice and support (Rogoff, 1990) to assist the student in reaching the outcome the teacher holds in mind.

Excerpt 3

Context: The teacher places a good number of plastic blocks in the centre of each table around which the children sit. The children become quite excited by seeing these blocks on their tables. Then she motivates the children to participate and pay attention by introducing the activity in the form of a game.

1) T: Okay, now look here. Today we will play one game. All of you want to play a game? Yes

2) C: (Children together) Yes

3) T: Okay. Take two blocks each, two blocks, take two blocks each

4) T: Now take two more, take two more and tell me how many are they? Mukul you tell me how many blocks do you have?

5) Mukul: ummh....two

6) T: I said first take two blocks and then take two more... more *matlab jyada, do jyada le lo, do pehle se hai, do aur le lo, do aur le lo*. Yes. Now, count and tell me how many?

7) Mukul: One, two, two, three, four, ma'am four.

8) T: Four?

9) Mukul: Yes (nodded his head)

10) T: Okay, V good Mukul. Clap for Mukul

11) T: Now take away one. Take away one, take away one means *ek vaapas rakh do... ek nikal do*. Now how many are left? Vanshika you tell me?

12) Vanshika: Ma'am *ek nikalna hai*?

13) T: Yes, *ek vaapas rakh do*. Now quickly count and tell me

14) Vanshika: Three

15) T: Very Good, Vanshika

16) T: Now take 2 more

Table No. 3.4

Categories	Turns in which they are used	Frequency
Motivation	1	1
Stimulation	3, 4, 11	3
Elaboration	6	1
Positive Reinforcement	10, 15	2
Focus on specific information	3,4, 6, 11	4
Repetition	3, 4, 6, 11	4

In the first part of the excerpt the teacher motivates the children to pay attention by introducing the activity in the form of a game (turn1). The extract clearly reveals that repetition of instructions and focus on specific information (turns 3, 4, 6, and 11) play important role in teaching young children. The teacher makes use of Hindi words/ terms (turns 11, 6) to make the instructions more clear for the children. She first gives instructions, then asks question and nominates the child to respond. Intentionality or conscious attempt to make the children learn is maintained by putting extra emphasis on the terms like "take" and "take away" which are crucial for understanding the concept of addition and subtraction. Joint regard is established through the use of bilingual instructions by the teacher as the instructions are given in both Hindi and English language. This also shows teacher's sensitivity towards the young child's readiness to learn a particular language by introducing it along with their home language The affective component of adult mediation in children's learning is reflected as the teacher instead of rejecting the child's response repeats herself to make the child understand (turn 6). The teacher positively reinforced the child for giving the "correct" response by making other children clap for him and by providing verbal praise indicating that the child has made a positive change (turn 10, 15). This serves as a motivational strategy to promote children's expression in the class.

Excerpt 4

Context: In the story telling session, the teacher asks one of the children to narrate the story. Then she selects one girl to narrate a story for all other children in the class.

1) T: Today ma'am is not going to tell you a story. *Aaj aap* ma'am *ko* story *sunaoge. Pehle kaun sunaiga?* Ok, Yashvi *sunaigee.*

2) Yashvi: *Ek baar ek* girl *hoti hai, uske pass ek* golden ball *hoti hai*

3) T: Yes, good, once there was a girl who had a golden ball. Then what happened Yashvi?

4) C1: *Uski* ball pond *mein gir jati hai.*

5) T: Oh Really! *uski* ball pond *mein gir jati hain, fhir ?*

6) Pratham: Dua ma'am *mein bataun? Mujhe pata hai.*

7) T: No Pratham, *kiska* chance *hai* story *sunane ka*? You should not speak out of turn. Yes Yashvi, *fhir kya hota hai?*

8) Yashvi: *Tab na ek* frog *uski* ball *nikalta hai.*

9) T: Frog *ne* ball *kaise nikali hogi?*

10) Himanshu: Swimming *karke*

11) T: Very good, frog *toh* pond *mein rehta hai na, toh usse toh* swimmng *aati thi*

12) T: Swimming *kaise karte hai? Karke dikhao*

13) Children: Children do the action with their hands.

14) T: Very good, *lagta hai sabko aati hain* swimming *karni.* Ok, now Yashvi will tell *uske aage kya hota hai. Jab* frog ball water *se nikal kar* girl *ko deta hai to kya hota hai?*

15) Yashvi:*Fhir* frog *kehta hai* promise *karo ki mere saath* dinner *karogi aur mere saath sougee,......toh wo* promise *kar leti hain.*

16) T: *Jab kisi se* promise *karte hain to usse pura karte hain.* Okay?

17) C4: Yes ma'am *kyunki* promise breaker is a shoemaker

18) T: Right

Table No. 3.5

Categories of teacher's mediating behaviour	Turns in which they are used	Frequency
Intentionality	1, 9,12	3
Stimulation	5, 9, 12, 14	4
Positive Reinforcement	11,14, 18	3
Focus on specific information	11, 16	2
Repetition	3, 5, 14	3

In the first part of the extract, the teacher nominates one of the girls to narrate the story (turn1) in the class. It clearly shows teacher's intentionality to make children more confident by giving them opportunity to speak in front of their peers. Then the child starts narrating the story (turn 2). The teacher further motivates the child by repeating what she says and by stimulating her to speak further (turn 3). The teacher constantly motivates the child by providing positive reinforcement and encouragement (turn 11, 14, 18). The teacher's intentionality to maintain and sustain children's interest is evident as she tries to involve them by probing and asking them to enact (turn 9-12) in between. This can also be seen as a strategy employed by the teacher to attain joint attention. The teacher tries to fill in the gaps by repeating the parts of the story (turn 3, 5, 14) and constantly probing and prompting (turn 3, 14) the child while she speaks, in order to, provide a more coherent picture for the other children.

Context: In the story telling session as the teacher introduces the name of the story to the children, she tries to use the situation to discuss about the importance of brushing the teeth.

Excerpt 5

1) T: Do you all want to listen to a story, "Bubble has a toothache"?

2) Children: Yes

3) T: Okay, first tell me, do you brush your teeth everyday?

4) Children: Yes ma'am

5) T: *Jab bahut saari* sweets *khate hain aur* brush *nahi karte to kya hota hai?*

6) Geetika: Ma'am *keede aa jate hain*

7) T: Yes....*kabhi- kabhi raat ko* mamma *kehti hai* brush *karlo aur aap kehte ho neend aa rahi hain aur aap aise hi so jate ho toh kya hota hai, pata hai? Dheere dheere aap ke muh mein keede aa jaate hain aur jo muh mein* sweets *laga hota hai na usse khate hain aur aapke* teeth *mein* hole *kar dete hain*

(Children listen attentively)

8) C1: Ma'am *mein* sweets *nahi khata*

9) C2: Ma'am *mein roz* brush *karta hoon*

10) T: Okay, *Jaldi se* mamma *banker dikhao, kaise bolti hain* mamma? *Kaun banker dikhaega?* Priya *jaldi se* mamma *banker batao.*

11) Priya: Brush *karo. Keede lag jayenge, fhir daant mein dard hoga* (in an aggressive tone)

12) T: Ok, *Jab daant mein dard hota hain toh* barber *ke pass jate ho?*

13) Children: No

14) T: Tailor *ke pass jate ho?*

15) Children: No

16) T: *Fhir kiske pass jate ho?*

17) Abhishek: Dentist

18) T: Very good Abhishek, clap for Abhishek.

19) T: *Jab* medicine *chahiye hoti hain toh kahan jate ho?*

20) Aryan: Doctor

21) T: Ummh....No

22) Pratham: Chemist

23) T: Yes, good, chemist *ke pass.*

24) Aryan: Ma'am medicine *batata toh* doctor *hi hai na?*

25) T: Yes Aryan, medicine doctor *hi batata hai, pehle* doctor *ke pass jate hain aur* medicines *lene* chemist *ke pass.* Okay?

Table No. 3.6

Components of teacher's mediating behaviour	Turns in which they are used	Frequency
Motivation	1	1
Stimulation	3, 5, 10, 12, 14, 19	6
Negotiation	25	1
Positive Reinforcement	18,23	2
Elaboration	7	1
Joint regard	25	1

In the first part of the extract the teacher motivates the children by showing them the story book and telling them the name of the story that she has planned for them (turn1), but she soon turns it into a discussion on importance of brushing the teeth. First she asks children whether they brush their teeth everyday or not (turn3) and then she asks them the consequence of not brushing the teeth. She tries to create the zone of proximal development as she elaborates the response given by the child (turn7). She sustains the children's interest in the discussion by asking them to enact their mothers. This is an attempt to create a common platform for interaction through relating the classroom knowledge with the child's everyday experience at home. She further stimulates children's thinking by asking them question and providing them with incorrect alternatives to respond to (turn 12-16). This is like scaffolding their learning by use of prompts enabling them to move towards the response. Through prompting the teacher tries to push the children to reach the appropriate response. In the later part of the excerpt the shared ground for communication establishes as the child tries to negotiate the difference between his and the teacher's thinking by providing reason for his response (turn 24-25) and the teacher accepts his perspective by elaborating it little further. This shows how joint regard get establish as the teacher tries to look at things from child's perspective, integrating his understanding to provide him a broader or more elaborate understanding (turn 25).

Excerpt 6

Context: In the story telling class, the teacher tries to establish joint attention by introducing the story to the children. She further fascinates them by revealing the "magic element" of the story.

1) T: Today we will listen to a very nice story, *aaj* ma'am *aapko* magic *wali* story *sunaengee* "Mitha and her magic shoes", *aapko sunnee hai?*

2) Children: Yes

3) T: Magic *kaise karte hain?*

   (Some children raise their hands)

4) T: Yes Hardik.

5) Hardik: *Ek* stick *lekar ghumate hain*

6) T: Okay…*aur kaun bataega?*

7) Geetika: *Pehle apni topi lete hain aur haath uske ander ghumate hain*

8) T: *Fhir kya hota hai? Jadu hota hai? Ab* Mukul *bataiga*

9) Mukul: *Fhir bolte hain abra ka dabra gilli-gilli cho*

10) T: Okay, *ek* stick *lete hain, ek topi lete hain, fhir* stick *ko topi ke ander ghumate hain aur bolte hain abra ka dabra gilli-gilli cho*

11) Priyansh: *Fhir kya hota hai?*

12) Geetika: *Fhir topi mein se* rabbit *nikalta hain*

13) T: Okay, *ghar jakar apni- apni* hat *se jadu karna aur dekhna ki* rabbit *nikalta hain ya nahi.*

14) T: Now look here, what do you see in this picture?

15) Children: Girl

16) Tanya: *Aur* shoes

17) T: Yes, the name of the story is "Mitha and her magic shoes"

18) T: *Ek ladki thi uska naam* Mitha *tha, wo good girl thi, par uske pass* shoes *nahi the, usse* school *jana tha par* shoes *nahi the, socho uske pass* shoes *kyun nahi the?*

19) Kalpana: *Uski* mummy *ne dilwaye nahi the*

20) T: *Ho sakta hai…. Aur kya ho sakta hai?*

21) Pratham: *Uske* shoes *fhut gaye the*

22) T: Okay…good….. Mitha *ke pass* shoes *nahi the toh usse kaisa lag raha hoga?*

23) T: Jishnu tell me Mitha *kaisa feel kar rahi thi?*

24) Jishnu: Sad

25) T: Sad face *banaker dikhao*

(Children display sad expression on their faces)

26) T: Very good

27) T: *Jab wo* school *ja rahi thi toh raaste mein pata hai usse kya mila?* Magic shoes..... *usse* magic shoes *mile, usme* wings *lage the*.... Magic shoes *waha par kisne rakhe the?* Raise your hands

(Children raise their hands)

28) T: Yes Pratham

29) Pratham: *Uski mummy ne*

30) T: Okay...yes Raghavi you tell

31) Raghavi: Fairy *ne*.... ma'am white *wali* fairy *ne*

32) T: Yes, very good. Fairy *ne* Mitha *ke liye* magic shoes *kyun rakhe the?*

33) Geetika: *Kyunki* Mitha good girl *thi*

34) T: Very good, *wo* good girl *thi kyunki wo bado ki baat maanti thi, kabhi kisi se ladhai nahi karti thi. Jo* good children *hote hain unhe sab pyar karte hain,* ma'am *bhi pyar karti hai. Jaise aap* good children *ho toh aapko* ma'am *pyar karti hain.*

35) T: *Jab* Mitha *ko* magic shoes *mile toh* Mitha *ko kaisa lag raha tha?*

36) Aryan: *Wo khush ho gayee*

37) T: Very good, *wo* happy *ho gayee*

38) T: *Fhir kya bola* Mitha *ne?* Yes Aditi Mitha *banker dikhao*

39) Aditi: Wow! Magic shoes, *mein inhe pahen leti hoon*

40) T: Mitha was thinking *ki mein paheno ya nahi.* Think *kaise karte hai?*

(Children do the action by putting their index finger on their forehead)

41) T:*Fhir* Mitha *ko* idea *aaya ki* shoes *pahen leti hoon.*

42) Geetika: Ma'am *kisi aur ke* shoes *nahi lene chahiye na?*

43) T: Haan, *par wo toh* white fairy *ne* Mitha *ke liye he rakhe the isliye* Mitha *unhe pahen leti hai*

44) T: Shoes *mein* wings lage *the. Jab* Mitha *ne* shoes *pehne toh kya hua?* (She raises the book to show the picture to the children)

45) Children: Mitha *udne lagi*

46) Sahil: *Mitha* happy *thi kyunki usse majja aa raha tha, kyunki wo uud rahi thi*

47) T: Yes...*chalo sab udke dikhao.* Close your eyes *aur socho ki aap uud rahe ho.* Close your eyes quickly, *jaldi se sab close karo.* Okay, now tell me, *batao* sky *mein aapko kya- kya dikh raha hai?* One by one tell me. (Teacher asks 4-5 children)

48) Jishnu: Ballon

49) T: Okay...ballon ....*aur*

50) Apratim: Aeroplane

51) T: Ummmh

52) Shaheen: Birds

53) T: Birds, okay and

54) Aryan: Ma'am *patang*

55) T: Okay *patang,* kite yes

56) Sarah: *Mujhe baadal dikh rahe hain*

57) T: Okay tell me *aap kaha jaoge agar aapko wings wale shoes millege?*

58) C1: America

59) C2: Bombay

60) C3: India Gate

(Other children start taking names of different places)

61) Shaheen: *Mein chidiya ki tarah uud jaogi*

62) T: Good...okay now open your eyes. *Jab* Mitha *ke* friends *ne usse dekha toh wo* jealous feel *karne lage... matlab wo* angry *ho gaye, wo gussa ho gaye.* Mitha *ke* friends *banker dikhao, gussa hokar dikhao.*

(Children display anger on their faces)

63) T: Mitha *ne kaha* "Don't be angry, *gussa mat ho, mein sabko* shoes *pehenne ka* chance *doongee".*

64) T: *Fhir kya kiya uske* friends *ne*? (Shows the picture from the book)

65) Shaheen: *Sab ladne lage*

66) T: Yes, *sab junglee bachcho ki tarah* behave *karne lage, bad children ke jaise koi idhar se* shoes *khichne laga, Koi udhar se aur* Mitha *ke* shoes *fhut gaye.*

67) T: *Fhir* Meetha *ko kaisa lag raha tha?*

68) Priya: Mitha *roone lagi thi*

69) T: *Kaise?* Cry and show me.

70) Priya: (No response)

71) T: Priya *jaldi se* Mitha *banker dikhao*

72) Priya: Oooh oooh (She pretends to cry by putting her hands on her eyes)

73) Geetika: *Wo roo rahi thi kyunki wo* sad *thi uske* shoes *fhuth gaye the*

74) T: Mitha *ke* friends *ne ganda kaam kiya tha ya achcha?*

75) Children: *Ganda*

76) Aryan: *Wo junglee bachche the*

77) T: *Jab hum koi galat kaam karte hai toh kya kehte hain?*

78) Sarah: Sorry

79) T: Yes, very good. Mitha *ke* friends *ne bhi usse* sorry *kaha. Unhune kaha* "We are sorry, *ab kabhi hum aisa ganda kaam nahi karengen.*"

80) T: Mitha *ne kaha* "Its okay, *koi baat nahi*", *aur fhir sab* happy *ho gaye.*

Table No. 3.7

Components of teacher's mediating behaviour	Turns in which they are used	Frequency
Motivation	1, 3, 6, 8, 14, 27, 37, 69, 74	9
Stimulation	3,8,18,34,37,43,57, 64, 67, 71, 77	11
Negotiation	42	1
Positive Reinforcement	6, 26, 31, 34, 36, 79	6
Elaboration	33, 42, 66	3

Focus of specific information	62, 69	2
Association	12	1
Sharing of experience	5, 7, 9, 12	4
Acceptance	29	1
Affective involvement	33	1
Intentionality	71	1

In the first part of the excerpt, the teacher motivates the children to engage in joint attention by introducing them to the story. The name of the story seems to be attractive for the children as it has the word magic in it. The teacher further motivates them by asking them how to do magic. She intentionally incorporates this element to involve all children in the activity as the way activity is introduced, determines the children's attitude towards learning and therefore, their involvement. The children make connections in their past and current experiences to explain by expanding and building on each other's ideas (turn 5-12). The teacher further sustains interest and stimulates children's attention by asking them to read the picture and to tell what they see in the picture (turn 14). The teacher seeks the constant involvement of children by asking them to imagine, predict, anticipate and reason (turns 19, 20, 27, 32, 38). There is an attempt to make children empathize by representing the emotions of characters in the story (turns 23, 35, 38, 64, 71). At the same time the teacher promotes active participation of the children by asking them to project and enact like the characters in the story by placing themselves at their position. Here, the teacher also helps the children to relate by making them empathize with the characters, asking them how they feel at a particular moment (turn 23, 35). In this way she also makes it a context for children to learn and talk about emotions. The teacher elaborates the response given by the child incorporating the notion of a "good child" and the expected behaviour (turn 34, 66) asking them to evaluate a particular kind of behaviour (turn 74). The teacher also shows the attitude of acceptance and affective involvement to the children by telling them that she loves them (turn 33). The teacher uses it as a context to talk about the norms for appropriate social behaviour.

The children were able to relate to the characters in the story and the emotions experienced by them. Intersubjectivity was established between the author of the story and the children through the teacher as they were able to relate to the happenings in the story. While narrating the story the teacher asked many questions to sustain their

Table No.3.8

Components of teacher's mediating behaviour	Turns in which they are used	Frequency
Motivation	1	1
Stimulation	2, 4, 6, 9,11,13, 15, 19 22, 24,25	11
Negotiation	37, 41	2
Positive Reinforcement	15,18, 21, 26, 27, 32	6
Responsivity	37, 39, 41	3
Intentionality	11,13	2
Focus on specific information	1,23,32	1
Empathy/ Acceptance	30, 31	2

The teacher initiates the classroom discourse by raising the question and also by answering the same to provide specific information to the children (turn1). She also motivates the children to participate in the further discussion by telling them that they will all be making a tree in the classroom. Then she involves the children by asking a question about what all we get from the trees (turn2) The teacher accepts all the responses given by the children, prompting and elaborating where necessary, in order to maintain the discussion within the child's ZPD. Then the teacher coordinates the resources available in the class (table and chair) to enrich the discussion on the topic-what all things we get from the trees (turn 9). The teacher intentionally tries to shift the attention of the girl who was playing with her pencil to the ongoing discussion by directing a question towards her (turn11). When the child was not able to answer, the teacher tries to establish joint regard by again coordinating the classroom resource to provide concrete experience to the child as she asks "Achcha ye pencil kiski bani hai" (turn 13). The child then responds by making connections (turn 14). The teacher weaves the discussion in such a manner that the response of the previous question becomes the base for the next (turn 13-16). In turn 19, the teacher attempts to create the ZPD for the children as she stretches the conversation from the more familiar aspect of the discussion towards the less familiar in order provide specific information. The fact that trees give Oxygen is something not known to all the children in the class and only one child responded promptly (turn 20) and same happens when the teacher asks about carbon dioxide (turn 22- 25). Thus, it reveals how fellow learners are very important resources to promote learning in the classroom

attention and interest like asking them to imagine and predict what will happen after a particular point in the story. She made them think about the possible alternatives (stimulate their thinking and imaginative power).Later the teacher made children enact the whole story in the class.

After this the children were given drawing sheets. The activity planned for them was "story impression" where they were asked to draw whatever they liked about the story. After they finished drawing, the teacher asked each child to describe what he/she has drawn and then she wrote each child's responses on his/her sheet. It was observed that children imitate each other's responses, adding their own idea to the previous response; sometimes some of them provide very unusual and interesting responses. Such activities provide ample opportunities for children to learn by exposing them to different ideas and perspectives. Thus, it was observed that each activity is repeated in a variety of ways to understand how each child has constructed his knowledge in the shared classroom context as each child has different way of expression. Also at this age repetition plays an important role in leaning as it provides confidence to the child to work independently.

During the story- telling activity was considered to be one of the most effective ways to make children learn any concept by the teachers. It was observed that shared understanding and joint attention during story- telling sessions were attained in the classroom by making use of several strategies such as picture reading, reasoning, projecting, predicting, relating and enacting the stories.

Excerpt 7

Context: After the assembly the teachers and children together planted some trees in the campus with the help of the school gardener. Then they move to their respective classes.

1) T: *Aaj aapko pata hai humne* trees *kyun lagaye the? Kyunki aaj* World's Earth Day *hai. Aaj humne* four trees plant *kiye the-* mango, jamun, imlee aur mulberry. Right? *Abhi hum* class *mein ek* tree *banaige aur sab milkar usme* colour *karengein.*

2) T: First tell me trees *hamein kya dete hain*?

3) Ridhima: Fruits

4) T: Yes, fruits *dete hain. Aur?*

5) Gracica: Mango, banana

6) T: Mango and banana *bhi* fruits *hi hain*, trees *humein* fruits *dete hain, aur kya dete hain*?

7) Divyanshu: Vegetables

8) T: Okay, fruits and vegetables.

9) T: *Aur jo ye* table *aur* chair *hain ye kiske bane hain*?

10) Divya: Wood

11) T: Naina, *aur* wood *se kya banta hai?* (Naina was playing with her pencil)

12) Naina: (No response)

13) T: *Achcha ye* pencil *kiski bani hai?*

14) Naina: Ummh wood

15) T: Very good *aur* wood *kahan se milta hai*?

16) Naina: Trees

17) Avneet: *Aur* trees *hamein chaya bhi dete hain*

18) T: Yes, very good, trees *hamein* shade *bhi dete hain*

19) T: *Aur ek bahut zarori cheez dete hain* trees, *jo hamein* breathe *karne ke liye chahiye.* Think *kya dete hai?*

20) Arnav: Oxygen

21) T: Excellent, very good Arnav

22) T: *Jab hum* breathe *karte hain toh kaunsi* air *chodte hain*

23) Neha: *Gandi*

24) T: *Gandi* air *ka naam kya hai*?

25) Bhavneet: Carbon dioxide

26) T: Clap for her, very good

23) T: Carbon-dioxide *gandi hawa hoti hain aur pędh usse lekar hamare liye* oxygen *dete hain. Aur* trees *ke* friends *hote hain* clouds, birds and animals. *Agar* trees *nahi honge toh* clouds rain *nahi denge,* birds chirping *nahi karengi,* peacock dance *nahi karenge. Toh hamari* earth *kaisi lagegi, achchee lagegi?*

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24) Children: *Nahi*

25) T: *Toh hamein kya karna chahiye?*

26) Amilia: *Pedh lagane chahiye*

27) T: Very good, *hamein khoob saare* trees *lagane chahiyen jisse hamari* earth beautiful *lage*

28) T: Now see this side, *ye kya hai?* (Shows the globe to the children)

29) Tanya: Ball

30) T: Yes, *ye* ball *jaisa hai*, right, *par ye kya hai?*

31) Aditi: Earth

32) T: Very good, *isse* globe *kehte hain* and see *ye hamari* country *hain, hamara* India *aur* India *ke ander hum kahan rehte hain?*

33) Aashi: Delhi

34) T: Yes, *hum* Delhi *mein rehte hain.*

35) T: Earth *mein jyada kya hain?* See this blue area *ye paani hai, bahut saara paani hai aur thoda sa* land *hai.* See *kitna saara paani hai.*

36) Aditi: *Itna saara paani hain toh dikhta kyun nahi?*

37) T: Ummh, *kyunki hum* Delhi *mein rehte hain aur* Delhi *ke aas- pass itna paani nahi hain. Aap* south *mein jaaoge toh paani dikhega.*

38) Tanya: Ma'am sun *kahan hain?*

39) T: *Wo* earth *se bahut dor hain*

40) Tanya: *Hum* sun *ko* touch *karengien toh jal jayenge?*

41) T: Sun *bahut dor hain hum uss tak nahi ja sakte*

42) Tanya: *Par* rocket *se ja sakte hain.*

43) T: (no response)

context as the teacher incorporates child's responses to give a coherent description of the concept (turn 23). The teacher motivates the children by providing positive reinforcement (turn 21, 26). The teacher tries to stimulate the learning by showing the globe to the children (which one of the teachers brought from her home) [turn 28]. Instead of simply talking about "the earth", which is difficult for young children to visualize as such, she tries to incorporate concrete experience for the children by making use of the available resource. The aim of the teacher here is to simply expose the children to something new (globe). Another interesting thing is that the teacher introduces it in the same way as children visualize it (ball and earth) by accepting the children's responses and by just adding an extra information that it is known as globe (turn 32). The teacher uses the globe to make children understand that the earth has more water as represented by the blue area and less of land. The child resolves her doubt related to what the teacher said by negotiating and inquiring (turn36) as she asks that if earth has so much of water why is it not visible. The teacher responds briefly to his question (turn 37) and it is not clear whether the child really understand what the teacher said. It is important that with the presentation of new information, there needs to be opportunities for discussion which is actually lacking in this case. Then another child raises some questions (turn 38, 40) to which the teacher gives quick replies (turn 39, 41). Teacher's response doesn't seem very satisfactory to the child and she negotiates the difference between her own and teacher's understanding by answering to herself using her own logic. It is observed that the teacher attempts to create ZPD in the class but somehow fails to stretch it to a point where learning occurs through establishment of intersubjectivity.

Teacher –child interaction

The components of teacher's mediating behaviour as emerged from the analysis appears to be overlapping categories and closely related to one another. From the analysis of classroom discourses, it is quite clear that caring encounters were the very bases of adult-child interaction in the preschool classroom. This aspect of interaction was evident throughout from the planning of developmentally appropriate activities and experiences to the structuring of stimulating and motivating environment for young children. The affective component was also reflected by creating spaces for children to express themselves and through acceptance of different responses of

children. It was also evident from the receptive tone of interaction and positive feedback to motivate children to participate. The shared focus was maintained through coordination of different available resources by providing rich and concrete experiences.

Constant motivation and stimulation were other important components of teacher's mediating behaviour in the class. Motivational strategies such as weaving of concepts in a story or introducing them in the form of a game were quite common, in order to; involve children in an ongoing activity or classroom discussion. Stimulating experiences were created as the teacher maintained the interaction within the children's grasp or level of understanding by providing familiarity and continuity. This was done by linking classroom experiences with the everyday knowledge of the children. Through constant questioning and answering, probing and prompting attempts were made to expose them to the peripheral aspects of scientific concepts. Positive reinforcement was another effective component to motivate young children by appreciating and accepting their ideas and responses.

Joint attention was maintained through the use of bilingual instructions and by giving children space to express themselves in their home language. Focusing on specific information, elaboration, repetition of instructions and sharing of experiences were some of the strategies to attain joint intention. The use of props or physically present referents to create a common ground for communication was another effective strategy to promote joint intention and attention.

Joint regard was regarded essential to promote mutual sharing of ideas and experiences and was maintained through looking at objects through child's eye. The designing of child-sensitive curriculum, keeping in mind the needs and interests of children appeared to be effective in promoting joint regard. Further, it was promoted by acknowledging the ideas and objects that the child brings to the teaching- learning situation.

As reported by the teachers in the school, story telling was regarded as one of the most effective ways to teach young children. It was even observed that in the preschool classroom almost any concept was weaved into a story in order to, make it

comprehensible and to motivate children to learn, Different strategies were used by the teacher to promote joint regard while narrating the story to the children.

Picture reading: One of the ways to promote classroom talk was to make children find things in the picture. For instance, asking them about what is happening in the picture or what do they see in the particular picture.

Reasoning: This level of response was concerned with the children's emerging ability to attribute reasons or causes. It was observed that teacher used to accept whatever reason the child attributes to any event in the story. Of course, she used to give her own reasoning afterwards.

Projecting: Sometimes teacher used to ask children to relate to the character by placing themselves in that position. The purpose was to encourage children to project themselves into imaginary situation. In this way children were also made to empathize with the characters. It was a common practice to ask children about the feelings or emotions experienced by the character in a particular situation. While listening to a story, children used to respond to the story by associating themselves with the characters and events described in the story. When a child is asked about the feelings of a character in the story, he imagines himself/herself to be that character. This aspect of interaction was effective in promoting intersubjectivity as representing the emotions of the other is regarded as one of the important component of intersubjectivity.

Predicting: The children were also asked to predict the future course of events was generally done to sustain their interests and attention.

Relating: Teacher in the classroom used to ask such questions that make children think of something in their own lives that is similar to the situation in the story. The children were made to relate to the events in the story by helping them to make associations and connections with their own lives.

Enacting the stories: Stories and drama are closely related, and often the teacher can move from one to the other with great success (Krishna Kumar, 2000). According to him a child who is listening attentively to a story is silently taking the different roles

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depicted in the story. In drama children have to look at things from someone else's perspective and have to find words and gestures appropriate to an imagined situation or character what is actually initially learnt through social interaction under the guidance of adults or experts. It was experienced that this aspect of learning was practiced in a very limited manner and also in a very structured manner. The teacher used to attempt to incorporate drama by asking children to enact in between the stories but it actually lacked the kind of movement, rhythm and fun required to make it an effective context for self-expression and learning. The sensitive teacher can easily incorporate meaningful digressions and suggest "swaying like a tree" or "running like a deer" or "imitating mother when she is angry" into the learning. These components were no doubt part of the routine classroom learning, but in a very restricted form as the children were not made to move freely while they performed these actions. They were made to do the actions simply by sitting at their places.

From the above findings it appears that the classroom activities were mostly teacher initiated and teacher guided with limited spaces for children to mediate. This does not underestimate the role played by the teachers or adults in providing caring encounters by designing the meaningful experiences for young children as they involve lot of sensitivity on the part of the teacher. In the classroom context child mediation was limited to responding the questions of the teacher. This is also evident from the number of turns taken by each during the classroom discourse. There were some activities like "let's talk" designed to promote talk among children but it was observed that there too children's responses were limited to single sentence. The extracts demonstrate clearly how the social roles allocated to the teacher and students in the culture are reproduced at the micro level of the classroom. The authority of the teacher is reflected in her greater linguistic rights; she talks more frequently. In contrast, the children's responses/ utterances in the extract are generally restricted in quantity and kind. Their contributions tend to single words/ single sentence in response to the teacher's questions. Further discussions based on children's responses were not the regular feature of the classroom. The spaces for child-mediation used to exist more outside the classroom, especially, during children's play. Some of the important components of child mediating behaviour both inside and outside the classroom are given below.

Expansion: The children used to mediate by introducing new elements to the ongoing conversation or play episode. Contributing to the ongoing shared play/ conversation by adding new information to a partner's idea, expressed in the previous turn or to one' own previously expressed idea were other ways of creating a ground for shared understanding. In excerpt 6, it can be seen how children build-on by contributing to the ongoing conversation as they share their ideas about magic.

Agreement/ disagreement: It was often observed that children while playing used to accept or reject the peer's ideas. Sometimes the child used to reject the partner's idea and revise the same by modifying it. Children also used to negotiate or resolve any disagreement by finding an agreeable ground to solve the conflict. Disagreements were more common in the company of peers when children used to play. Disagreement with the teacher was not observed in the preschool classroom.

To direct other's attention and activities: It was often observed that while working or playing together the children used to direct their partner's attention and activities. Many a times they used to repeat their actions and sometimes even asked for direct attention. They expected their partner to show interest in what has attracted their own attention. Such attempts to attain joint attention are grounded in the child's belief that others would like to see or hear about what he/ she has noticed or experienced. Sometimes the children used to play with car toys and motor bikes producing sounds of their movements repetitively, pretending to move them at a very high speed to attract the attention of their peers. For example in classroom extract no.1 the child directed the attention of the teacher when she said "Ma'am *dekho ye do- do* colour *ki hai*, pink *aur….. aur* yellow".

In one instance, one of the girls while playing with blocks directed the attention of other children by saying "*Yahan dekho maine kitna bada tower banaya*". It was observed that other children also joined the play and helped the girl by holding the model straight and joining more blocks to it. Then they worked in collaboration towards the common goal of joining more blocks to it in order to increase its height. One of them suggested to lay it down on the ground to increase its height while the other child rejected the previous idea and suggested that they can add more blocks at the top by standing on the stool.

In one of the other instances the children were playing with the shapes. A girl made a human face by arranging two small circles as eyes, small triangle as nose and semicircle as mouth on a larger circle as she said "Ma'am *dekho maine* happy face *banaya hai*". The teacher replied "Very nice, *ab isse sad bana do*". The child looked little confused. Then the teacher prompted by pointing towards the semicircle "*Iss* semicircle *ko kaise rakhoge ki ye* face sad *lagne lage*?" The child quickly turned the semicircle upside down and looked towards the teacher with a smile on her face. The teacher appreciated her by saying "Ummh, good".

Directing one's own activities: It was noticed that children sometimes used to direct their own actions by the use of language. Private speech was often used by the children when engaged in some serious activity. It was observed that such private commentary helped children to maintain their interest in it. Children were seen engaged in self talk while working with blocks, clay, puzzles and also while making drawings or doing a worksheet. In excerpt 2 (turn1), the child was busy solving the puzzle, talking to himself in order to direct his own attention.

Observation: It was a common practice of children in the school to observe other children and peep into each others worksheets. Sometimes they used to imitate or incorporate the other's ideas and actions in their own behaviour while at others prefer to remain apart.

Associating and making connections: The children used to make sense in the class by making associations with their experiences outside the school, sharing them with others. In classroom discourse no.1 (turn 3), the child shared her experience about the referent by making associations as she said "Mamma *ne dilwaya hai* shop *se, mein isse rub bhi kar sakti hoon*, umm, *aur khel bhi sakti hoon*".

Negotiation: One of the ways through which children used to resolve their doubt or uncertainties in the class was through inquiring and negotiation. For instance, in classroom discourse no. 7 (turn 35, 36) when the teacher told the children that earth has more amount of water and less of land area. The child was little confused and asked " *Itna saara paani hai toh dikhta kyun nahi*"

Reasoning: It was observed that children during the classroom discussions gave their own reasons and logics which were different from that of adults and the teacher used to establish the joint regard by looking at the things from the child's perspective in order to make sense out of it. For instance when the teacher told the children that one should always keep the promise, the child intervene by giving his own logic

T: *Jab kisi se* promise *karte hain to usse pura karte hain.* Okay?

C4: Yes ma'am *kyunki* promise breaker is a shoemaker

T: Right

It is realised that intersubjectivity can be attained when both the partners in interaction mutually support each other as an interactionist model implies that the behaviour of one (the child or the adult) is partially determined by the behavior of the other: There are no simple one-way actions but instead negotiations within a bidirectional situation. In this interpretation, the situation definition must be shared by the participants and is the object of a negotiation through different levels of intersubjectivity (Wertsch, 1984). Creating and maintaining intersubjectivity involved continued, reciprocal efforts by teachers as well as children to make sense of what each other was doing and saying.

Chapter-4

Discussion

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Discussion

The psycho-semiotic environment of the classroom comprised of both physical as well as affective aspects of the child's environment. It ranged from the rich classroom display and other learning material to the seating arrangement and the quality of interpersonal interactions. The interplay between these factors constitutes the child's environment in the school. These components of interaction served as means to mediate children's learning in the classroom. It was observed that at preschool level, the most important function was to provide rich and diverse experiences to children that are meaningful and relevant to their lives. Therefore, in order to examine how shared understanding leads to intersubjectivity and learning in a preschool classroom context, psycho-semiotic environment of the classroom and the role of teacher's mediation were regarded important factors to be considered. Vygotsky (1978) focuses on the structure of cultural environments and how children are adapted for specific types of interaction and learning within these environments. School is also a part of the culture. When the teacher designs the learning environment of the children she has certain goals in mind that reflects her own notions about child's development and learning. As Vygotsky (1978) stated that consciousness is constructed through a subject's interactions with the world and development cannot be separated from its social and cultural context. This led to the idea that we can only understand mental processes if we understand the social interaction and tools and signs that mediate them. The role of the teacher in the school was to create contexts in which children gain mastery over the cultural tools and the key means for doing that was through mediation. From a Vygotskian perspective mediation is at the heart of children's learning (Werstch, 1985). It was realized that language was the most important tool for mediation. It was through language that the teacher made children aware of various other psychological tools like alphabets, numbers and other conventional signs and symbols (such as norms of socially acceptable behaviour). Therefore, teacher's role was important in exposing these tools to children in the classroom through meaningfully designed interactive contexts. As Werstch (1985) states that

individuals have access to psychological tools by virtue of being part of a sociocultural milieu.

Functions of language in the class

Most of the transactions in school took place through linguistic interaction. These interactions determined the quality of the psycho-semiotic environment of the child in school. The teachers made these interactions meaningful for children through sensitive and careful planning. The children were provided with various contexts to explore, investigate and experiment in the company of others (adults and peers), through variety of experiences in number of structured and unstructured contexts. The children were helped to connect classroom discourses to their everyday experiences through making connections and association, sharing of ideas and experiences.

It was observed that in the school, the children interacted mainly with three kinds of objects and artefacts namely natural objects (such as trees, plants, animals, water, mud, sand), material artefacts (artefacts prefashioned in some way by adults) like toys, clay, blocks, globe, puppets, shapes, puzzles, charts, picture cards, number and letter cards, and symbolic artefacts (like speech, gestures, facial expression). The interaction of children with these artefacts was much more social than is actually recognized as many of these artefacts were designed by the teachers with certain objectives in mind. The purpose was to expose children to a variety of rich experiences in order to, stimulate learning. Also, interactions with the teacher and sometimes peers played important role in discerning the meaning and purpose of many of these artefacts e.g. the teacher introduced children with the globe or stethoscope in the class. Cole (1997) while talking of culture as a mediating variable asserts that it is through these artefacts that the culture influences development. Thus these artefacts provide a ground for teacher's mediation when we talk of mediation from activity theory perspective.

Cultural meanings and beliefs were sometimes reflected in the way the teacher used to communicate the notion of a "good boy" / "good girl" in the class especially during class discussions and story telling-sessions as *the one who respects and listens attentively to the adults and teachers, who does not speak to other children when the teacher is telling something, who maintains harmony with other children, who speaks at his/ her turn, who does his/ her work neatly* (extract 6, turn 34). Besides, the rules

for "appropriate" social behaviour were also constantly communicated by directing children about how to walk, talk, eat and speak properly, with emphasis on the use of words like "sorry", "thank you", "excuse me". Many of the stories and classroom discussions also revolved around the social themes like "One should keep the promise", "friendship" and "sharing". In this way, children were made accustomed to the socially appropriate ways of acting, thinking, and valuing and also accepted ways of communicating their feelings and thoughts about their experiences. Besides, celebrating various festivals and incorporating the same into the classroom discussions or singing 'Om jai jagdish' or wishing each other by saying "namaste" were some of the ways to bring the cultural practices and beliefs with which the child used to interact outside the school, into the classroom. This was done to bridge the gap between the child's experiences at home and in school. Together, these form the cultural resources that were regarded important for them to master in order to become full members of their community. This aspect of classroom interaction can be seen as closely associated with monologic function of language as proposed by Lotman (1988) which is regarded important for passing cultural meanings, thereby, preserving continuity and stability of beliefs and values within a culture. As these interactions involved reference to the everyday life of the children they found it easy to relate with them. There was a mutual sharing of intersubjective plane as both the parties in interaction (the teacher and children) belonged to the same cultural background. However, it was observed that monologic aspect of language was authoritative and not open to many questions or alternatives. Basically, this aspect of language was used in providing specific information to young children.

Along with the monologic form of instruction, dialogic aspect of language was also the regular feature of the classroom interaction. In fact, it was observed that dialogic aspect of the linguistic transaction used to emerge from the monologic form of instruction. In extract 7 (turn1), the teacher started the discussion by providing information to the children that they had planted the trees on that day as it was "World's Earth Day". Here, the function of language was monologic as the purpose was to provide specific information to the learners. At the same time, this information was further extended to generate a dialogue by creating spaces for child's mediation. The teacher stretched the discussion by inquiring from children about the importance of trees. The general pattern of interaction was such that the teacher used to ask a

question, then a student was nominated to answer, and then the feedback was provided in the form of a positive reinforcement (verbal praise or clapping) to motivate the child. It was observed that not all the children in the class were always aware of every question that the teacher asked. In this way, the child who responded to a teacher's question served as a learning resource for fellow learners. The children not only used to give responses to the teacher's questions in the class but also mediate in the classroom discourse through various means like directing the teacher's attention, reasoning, inquiring and negotiating.

It was observed that in order to generate a dialogue in the class, the teacher generally used to begin, with what the children were already aware of and tried to construct a more cohesive and comprehensive picture from the scattered information provided by the children in the discussion. Thus, by building-on the information obtained from the children, the knowledge was co-constructed. As observed in excerpt 7 (turn 23), the teacher by building-on the children's responses, provided them with an understanding of how the earth would look like without trees. In this way, meanings were jointly constructed. The joint construction of meaning was evident from the child's response when she said "Pedh lagane chahiye" (turn 26) in response to the teacher's question of what should be done to make the earth beautiful.

It was experienced that sometimes, the new meanings were not generated from the classroom discussions. This does not mean that the interactions were not beneficial for children. This was basically due to the reason that the topics of classroom discussions were quite familiar to the children. Also, sometimes the teacher was not able to stretch the discussion or child's query in a manner so as to activate the child's zone of proximal development. For instance, in the example discussed above (excerpt 7), she tried to provide some challenge by showing children the 'globe' and by informing them that the earth has more water and less of land but she was not able to do the same optimally. At the same time, the teacher was not able to satisfy the child by her response when he asked "Itna saara pani hai toh dikhta kyun nahin?".

This seems to be an attempt from the teacher's part to guide the child's movement from everyday concept to scientific concepts. But the level of elaboration and attempt to involve children was very minimal as she hurriedly and briefly replied to the questions asked by children (turn 38-42).

As observed in the classroom, the linguistic transactions used to take place in the form of three-part exchange. This form of classroom interaction is known as Initiation-Response-Evaluation (I-R-E) (Mehan, 1979). The teacher creatively used to involve children through several strategies like probing and prompting (excerpt 6, turn 3-10) asking children to give reason (turn 32-33), predict (turn 44-45), imagine (turn 47), project and enact (turn 22-25). Joint attention was promoted as the teacher tried to involve each child in the discussion. This was evident when the teacher directed the question towards the child who was not paying attention to the ongoing discussion in the class (excerpt 7, turn11).

To involve whole of the class in discussions most of the time the topics selected were found to be more or less familiar to the group. This was done in order to promote generic discourse and for discussion to be more orderly, and ideally progressive. It was observed that the attempt on part of the teacher, most of time was to run the classroom discourse in initiation-response-feedback cycle. The attempt was to create an atmosphere of collaborative learning which was marked by positive reinforcement and joint regard. The teacher always used to accept the different responses given by students, trying to see reality through their eyes. In such a setting each learner was like a resource for the other and growth in understanding occurred as children were able to relate to the topic under discussion by making connections with their everyday experiences. For instance, in excerpt 5, the topic (importance of brushing teeth) was generic and intersubjectivity was established as a result of fusion of reference. In the long term, the greatest benefit of collaborative knowledge building is the reciprocal development of understanding between individuals and the group. As Vygotsky (1981) noted, "the individual develops into what he/she is through what he/she produces for others" and it is in the effort to formulate our ideas for others that we most effectively clarify them for ourselves. But, as Bakhtin (1986) argued, the effort to fully comprehend the utterance of another also involves uptake and an active, if only incipient, movement toward a response. The response given by any child during the course of interaction was seen to be beneficial for others assisting them to make connections in experience, thereby contributing to the ongoing discourse. As Vygotsky (1978.) noted that simply listening to a talk can also be an extended form of cooperation to an adult or a peer. Meaning was created in the classroom context through listening to others as well as responding. According to Wells (1999), it is

both in the act of 'saying' and also in that of responding to 'what is said', individuals actively participate in the building of a common understanding and simultaneously extend and refine their own (Wells, 1999). The teacher's role was to select and prepare the activities in order to introduce them in ways to create some challenge for the learners but it was realized that somehow, the growth in children's understanding was not always visible. This was due to the structured learning environment and familiarity of children coming from more or less similar family backgrounds with most of the activities and themes/ topics of classroom discussions. It was observed that sometimes activities lacked the challenge required to move beyond the current level of development. It is not to say that all activities lacked the innovation and creativity as some of them were found to be very interesting and stimulating for young children, for e.g. giving different situations for children to respond to or drawing of story impressions. Somewhere, it was also felt that the responses given by the children in these activities were not used optimally to generate extended discussions by stretching them within the child's zone of the proximal development.

One of the important features of linguistic transactions in the class was use of bilingual instructions. This was evident throughout, in all classroom discussions and discourses. For instance, it can be clearly seen in excerpt 4, turn 14 (T: Very good, *lagta hai sabko aati hain* swimming *karni*. Ok, now Yashvi will tell *uske aage kya hota hai. Jab* frog ball water *se nikal kar girl ko deta hai to kya hota hai?)*. Bilingual instructions were used as a strategy to create the common ground for communication through promoting joint attention and intention. The children were also given freedom to speak and respond in *Hindi*, though conscious efforts were made to introduce English simultaneously. The whole idea was to start with the child's home language (*Hindi)* and to gradually introduce English. This aspect of language use also reflected the school's ideology that learning in young children should build on the experience and knowledge the child brings to the classroom. Initially, this promotes the environment of acceptance and trust for the child to make him/her feel confident to express.

Another important feature of language use in classroom was scaffolding children's learning while they worked on independent tasks. The assistance was provided through clarifications of doubts, repetition of instructions, provision of clues or hints

(excerpt 2). Children were seen engaged in private talks while working on the tasks like doing worksheets, playing with blocks or solving puzzles. As Vygotsky (1987) wrote with reference to the results of interaction between a teacher and child, when the child subsequently solves a problem independently, he continues to act in collaboration, even though the teacher is not standing near him. This aspect of collaboration- is invisibly present. It is contained in what looks from the outside like the child's independent solution of the problem" (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 216). In other words, the intersubjective understanding gained in the course of collaboration becomes the child's own (though socially derived) subjective understanding, an understanding that incorporates shared understanding previously established (Tudge, 1992).

Spaces for child mediation

Child's mediation was seen to be an important aspect of dialogic mode of interaction which promoted establishment of shared understanding leading to learning, but in the classroom it was very much controlled by the teacher. It was observed that sometimes children used to intervene in the classroom interactions by mediating through different means like careful listening and responding, directing the teacher's attention, directing one's own attention (excerpt 2, turn 1), making connections and associations, reasoning, inquiring and negotiation (excerpt 5, turn 24-25) It was realized that the questions raised by the children were not regarded as occasions for creating zone of proximal development, instead they were hurriedly replied. Therefore, there was limited space for child's negotiation in the class. The child-initiated and child-directed activities were generally confined to children's play (both individual and with peers) especially, and some classroom contexts child-child interactions used to occur. Even the music class was more or less structured with little space for children to experiment with different movements and sounds. The children used to mediate by directing the peer's attention to something he/ she found interesting, by introducing new elements to the ongoing discussion or play episode or building-on to the peer's idea, agreement and disagreement, compromise and negotiation. The zone of proximal development was formed through constant observation, imitation, direction, sharing of ideas and material. It was observed during these interactions, children used to act both as teachers and learners. In one instance

described in the result section (peer learning), two boys Sawmte and James observed each other's actions while playing with animal toys and shared ideas both verbally and physically. They moved back and forth from the role of the teacher to the learner. These were contexts of children's collaboration to foster each other's maturation of skills that were not yet developed. According to Tharpe & Gallimore (1988), in an environment where such kind of "natural teaching" occurs, children's minds, communication, and expressions are aroused and brought to life.

Components of Teacher's mediation

It is important to consider that the very bases of teacher-child interaction in the class were affective involvements and caring encounters between the teacher and the learner. This was considered important to provide the sense of security and trust to young children. This aspect was evident throughout from planning of meaningful contexts of learning to promoting them by sustaining and maintaining their interest through constant motivation, coordination of available resources, joint attention and joint regard as described in the later part of the chapter.

Affective involvements

As observed by the researcher that one of the most important feature of adult mediation in the preschool classroom was affective involvement evident in caring encounters between the adult and the child. Affective factors are considered important when we talk of learning from sociocultural perspective. These affective processes were thought to highlight the aspects of the process of co-constructing knowledge in a preschool situation where relationships are as important as curriculum content. From the findings it is evident that the whole idea of teaching and learning in preschool years is based on planning and designing of optimal activities for young children that are in line with their developmental needs. It is important to consider here that affective bonding with an adult is important psychological need of the children at this age as such relationships serves as a secure base for children to confidently explore their environment. As Swaminathan articulated in the position paper of the National Focus Group (NCF-2005) that the education of three to five- year olds should be based on " an understanding of the patterns of learning that define the essential nature of childhood". Caring encounters with adults that promote the feeling of security and

trust is the basis of learning at this age. This can also be articulated in the sense that while dealing with young children interrelational value of interaction takes precedence over interpsychological one. The major implication of this view of the knowledge-making process is the understanding and realization that affective involvements are a central part of intellectual growth and development. Researchers have suggested that teacher's caring attitude raises children's self-esteem and sense of belonging in the classroom (Charney, 1991; Dalton & Watson 1997) and creates an atmosphere of trust that enables children to take risks (McDermott, 1977). The research indicating that children learn through socially mediated experiences, itself possesses an inherent idea that caring relationships are a necessary and vital part of an intersubjective encounter. It was realized that uniting affect and intellect was seen as an effective strategy to promote learning by the teachers in the school. This was considered important to relate to the young children and their developmental needs, strengthening the learning experiences for them. The importance given to the role of affect in learning was reflected in the various activities planned for the children from the morning assembly to story telling sessions. Listening to them patiently by bending down to their level, holding them for a while, providing them tactile stimulation were some of the ways that led to the formation of affective bond between the teacher and children in the school. The use of child-directed speech (high pitch, sweet tone with emphasis on important words) and the use of bilingual instructions were other important aspects of caring encounters. This is also reflected in the words of the school principal, Ms. Dua, as she reported that *"Teacher- child rapport formation is the basis of all learning in the school"*.

It was observed in excerpt1 that the teacher negotiated the plan for facilitating the child's discovery as she utilized the knowledge that the child brings within the functions of the classroom. Here, the teacher used the referent (ping- pong ball) to talk about the relational concepts (soft/ hard, light/ heavy) with children. She coordinated the classroom resources to provide the real and concrete experiences to the children as at this age the child's thinking is guided by concrete, specific and local meanings. Sensitivity to the child's cultural values and practices was reflected in the freedom to speak in Hindi, celebration of different festivals, discussions about them and integrating the same into the curriculum. Sensitivity to the child's age and interest was also reflected in the teaching strategies of teachers. For instance, while teaching the

concept of "greater to (>)" or "lesser to (>)", the teacher made the children to visualize the open mouth of the crocodile to promote understanding and retention. It also includes sensitivity to child's readiness to learn by planning developmentally appropriate. It was experienced that in relation to interpsychological aspect; the interrelational aspect of interaction dominated the adult- child interaction in preschool as it was regarded crucial for learning to occur. These findings are in line to what Berk and Winsler hint at when they write about the importance of interpersonal relationship in their suggestion that teachers must "be sensitive to the knowledge, abilities, interests, attitudes, and cultural values and practices that children bring to learning situations" (1995, p. 131).

The common platform for mutual sharing of ideas was constructed through the use of sweet tone, receptive body language and responsive gestures of the teacher. According to Berk and Winsler (1995, p. 29) another important component of scaffolding concerns the emotional tone of the interaction. They emphasize that children's engagement with a task and willingness to challenge themselves are maximized when collaboration with the adult is pleasant, warm, and responsive. This is close to Rommetveit's (1974) idea on the importance of mutual trust in the process of intersubjectivity. As reported by the principal of the school "....*giving children freedom to express themselves in their home language is important because initially the aim is to make them more expressive so that they can have trust in us and they can feel more comfortable.*" The trust was also developed by bonding with children through doing small things like tying their shoe lace, buttoning their shirt or feeding them.

It was observed that in the classroom, a base for shared understanding was created by starting with what the child already knows, assisting him/her to make associations through questions and answers, probing and prompting, elaborating and highlighting what is important to notice, sharing of experiences as well as coordinating the local resources. In excerpt 2 it was observed that the teacher tried to establish the ZPD by assisting the child in solving the puzzle, adjusting her assistance to fit the child's changing competencies.

In Vygotskian terms learning occurs in the zone of proximal development (ZPD), the interpersonal space where learning and development take place (Berk & Winsler,

1995; Moll, 1990; Moll & Greenberg, 1990). According to this definition ZPD can be regarded as a socially mediated space- where one boundary of the zone, is set with adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable person- suggests that the ZPD is formed through relationship. The teacher and the learner interact to create the zone through a process known as intersubjectivity. As Rogoff (1986) writes that in order to communicate effectively, the adult and child must find a common ground of knowledge and skills. Otherwise the two people would be unable to share a common point of reference, and understanding would not occur. The effort to attain intersubjectivity creates a space that is little more mature yet understandable through links with what the child already knows. Thus, the construction of the zone was facilitated by the process of scaffolding.

Motivational strategies

The affective aspect of adult-child relationship was also reflected in the way teacher used to motivate and reinforce the children in the classroom. Motivating the children was regarded by the teacher important to make the learners participate in an activity or to pay attention to what she was talking about. The most important aspect was the way teacher used to introduce the topic to the children in order to hold their interest and attention. This was considered crucial as at this time the children make important decisions about their attitudes (interest/ disinterest) towards learning. The teacher used to initiate the discussion in the form of a story or a game. Also through the use of strategies like active listening, taking turns, using children's name, encouraging the child to continue by using receptive body language or positive feedback were some of the ways in which the teacher used to motivate the children to engage in an activity or a discussion. In case of excerpt 3, the teacher constantly motivated the child to continue through positive reinforcement. The motivation was maintained and sustained by adding elements like suspense, magic, fantasy, imagination and dramatization. In except 6, the teacher tried to incorporate all these elements effectively to motivate children's involvement in the story. Intersubjectivity was established through shared attention and intention as the children used to predict the future course of events, provide relevant reasons, negotiate differences in her/ his understanding, project themselves at the character's place. Such strategies were seen effective by the teacher as young children have low attention span and, therefore, in

order to direct their attention towards the ongoing activity, active participation and constant stimulation was required. According to Bruner (1960), interest in the material to be learned is the best stimulus to learning and according to him the motives for learning must be kept from going passive... they must be based as much as possible upon the arousal of interest, in what there is to be learned, and they must be kept broad and diverse in expression.

Motivation was also established through teacher's efforts to influence the children's actions by directing their attention, especially, in case of behaviour that was regarded disruptive or undesirable. Children sometimes used to get engage in off-topic conversations or individual play behaviour. The teacher used to get their attention back by directing a question towards them or by making them to repeat the instructions or asking the children to imagine and enact during the story-telling session. In excerpt 7, the teacher intentionally directed the question towards a girl who was playing with her pencil as she was talking. This is a good example to explain how the teacher re-established intersubjectivity or shared ground for communication which was broken temporarily during the course of interaction (turn 11 to 15). According to Vygotsky (1978) the teacher should have maximum impact on the students, rather than learners directing their own learning. This of course, does not negate the active role of learners in their own development.

A stimulating and challenging environment was created by maintaining the activities within the limits of the child's ZPD. The teacher used to stimulate the child to move beyond her/ his current level of performance by helping her to make connections. This was done by assisting the child to relate the new information with what he/she already knew i.e. the teacher used to stimulate the child to make associations to the related past and everyday experiences, expanding her/his learning base. This involved making efforts to keep the interaction going, engage the child's attention, inhibit impulsive behaviour, and maintain goal orientation (e.g. asking questions in between, asking children to predict, pretend or enact). Vygotsky (1931) points out there can be no cognition without motivation. However, he made it clear that motivation leads much of development not cognition. The development of motivation pulls that of cognition along behind it (Vygotsky, 1931).

The children were encouraged by communicating to him/her either verbally and nonverbally that he/she has done something good or has progressed in some way. The child was often reinforced by giving positive comments indicating that he/she has changed in a positive way. It was observed that the teacher never used to reject any of the responses of the children in order to avoid suppression of initiative. Instead the teacher used to repeat herself to make the child comprehend what she was trying to convey. Asking children same question several times by moulding it in different ways, in order to make sure that the child has understood the concept was important strategy to evaluate whether shared ground was attained or not. For instance, after revising the numbers from one to ten, the teacher asked the children to go out in the ground and collect five mulberries each. Therefore, interest of children was maintained by breaking the monotony of learning by sitting at one place and revising concepts in variety of ways. It was noted that the child was never labelled or compared with any other child. The teacher used to appreciate and motivate the child by showing his/ her work to other children (e.g. See, how beautifully Aditi has done her work/ See how neatly Sarah is colouring, you should all do it slowly and neatly). Continuous feedback was provided for different responses and activities of the children in the class. There were various strategies that the teacher used for supporting the more desired activities and discouraging the less desirable ones in the class. The most important was through communicating the idea about the "good boy" or "good girl" (as someone who talks less, who listens attentively, and who doesn't speak out of turn) to the children through classroom discussions and story- telling sessions. This was also done by giving children child's hypothetical situations to reflect upon and react to and by providing different alternatives where children were made to evaluate each alternative and its consequence. For instance, if you have to go outside and somebody is standing at the door, then will you push her and move out or will you say excuse me please? If a child is sitting on some ride and you also want to sit on the same ride then what will you do?

Thus, in this way the adult translated their insights in ways that were within the child's grasp. As the child made attempts to relate to the adult he/ she was drawn into a more mature understanding and approach to the situation.

Joint Attention/ intention

It was observed that the teacher used to structure the activities in a manner to promote shared attention in the class. It was promoted by making experiences more relevant and real for children. It was noted that shared activities and practices in school were often structured by shared symbolic artefacts and the most important one was language. It was a general practice in school to provide bilingual instructions (in Hindi and English) to children. This made classroom interaction more comprehensible for young children. It also provided them space to express and mediate in the classroom interactions with subjective experiences of their own world. It was also observed that substantiating what was verbally told with real and concrete experiences facilitated the emergence of joint attention. In this way, an attempt was made to bridge the gap and make it convenient for the children to relate to what the teacher was actually trying to convey. The use of locally available resources including classroom display material, story books, black board, picture cards, small number cards and alphabet cards served as the symbolic mediators and made process of learning more effective. It was observed that teacher's mediation in the classroom using these symbolic mediators helped in promoting the joint intentionality which in turn, leads to establishment of intersubjectivity. In excerpt 3, the teacher was teaching the concept of addition and subtraction to children by making use of blocks. Children were actually following the instructions of the teacher by listening carefully to what she was saying and then acting accordingly. For instance, in turn 6 (I said first take two blocks and then take two more... more *matlab jyada, do jyada le lo, do pehle se hai, do aur le lo, do aur le lo,* take two more. Yes. Now, count and tell me how many?), it was observed that repetition and use of bilingual instructions with emphasis on important words, use of high pitch resulted in the emergence of joint attention.

In this way, children were actually 'learning by doing'. The child was able to see that taking away one block from four would leave her with three. Thus providing hands-on-experience was an effective way to enrich the children's learning experience through joint intentionality. Similarly, in excerpt 1, the shared attention was gained by the presence of a material referent (ball). As Empson (1999) points out that in its minimal form, intersubjectivity implies that conversational participants share a

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materially present referent, such as a physical object or display of some kind. Intersubjectivity begins with shared reference and moves toward shared meaning (Resnick, 1991; Wertsch, 1985). Even during pretend play activities shared attention used to emerge by use of material referent and then by sharing of feelings and experiences associated with a particular role like mother or teacher. As according to Tomasello, Carpenter, Call, Behne, & Moll (2005), the key motivational substrate required for collaboration is the motivation to share feelings, experiences and activities with other persons.

Joint regard

The common ground for communication was established as the teacher used to promote joint regard. Joint regard refers to the teacher's ability to place herself at the child's position i.e. trying to see the activity through the child's eyes. At the same time, it also involves the child's ability to relate to the adult. It involved looking at an object that has been brought into focus by the child. It was observed that the teacher never used to reject the response of the child, looking at it from child's perspective. It basically refers to the individual's ability to feel with the other. This was even experienced during the drawing and colouring activities in the class when the teacher accepted whatever labels the child gave to his/ her drawings. The finished art works of children were opportunities for one-to-one conversation as the teacher used to label the drawings along with each child. Joint regard was promoted in the classroom by making children empathize with the characters during the story telling session making them to relate with the events and characters by picture- reading, predicting, projecting and enacting between the story-telling sessions. Intersubjectivity was visible as the children effectively used to relate to the stories and discussions clearly following the ideas communicated by the teacher. Use of bilingual instructions and providing children freedom to express themselves in their home language (Hindi) were other important aspects of relating to children by establishing shared focus of reference and understanding through joint regard.

Responsivity on the part of adult is regarded important to establish joint regard. It can be defined as the teacher's ability to read and understand child's actions and responses and to respond accordingly. It can be compared to a well coordinated dance between two partners who are in tune to one another. For instance, while narrating the

story, "Mitha and her magic shoes", the teacher used the word "jealous" but from the facial expressions of the children the teacher quickly understood that children were not familiar with this emotional term so she then replaced the word (jealous) by another emotion term "angry" to explain the situation. This component of adult mediation involves constant adaptation of the learning situation and teaching strategies in accordance to the child's age and interest. Use of sweet tone with emphasis on important words, elaborating and highlighting for the child what was important to notice reflected the teacher's effort to promote joint regard. It was also enhanced by use of high pitch and repetition when pointing towards something important, assisting children to relate by giving examples from everyday life of children. In excerpt 5, the teacher discussed about the importance of brushing one's teeth everyday by relating it to the children's everyday home experience as she asked them to enact like their mothers (turn10).

Constant sharing of ideas and experiences was the rhythm of the preschool classroom. Joint regard was maintained through creating a shared experiential world. The teacher used to share her own/ personal experiences with the children, giving them opportunities for expression. The children were encouraged to share their ideas and experiences so that they are exposed to different realities and learn to coordinate and accept different views creating a shared experiential world. This promotes shared thinking among the participants. For instance, using "we" to talk about the experiences. This is similar to Noddings (1984) ideas as he asserts that a teacher has two important responsibilities. First is to stretch the student's world by presenting an effective selection of that world with which she is in contact and then to work cooperatively with the student in his struggle toward competence in that world.

Coordination of resources

The teacher used to coordinate the locally available resources to provide the real and concrete experiences to children. It involved the use of classroom props, incorporating media like painting a story or adding little magic and suspense to make teaching/ learning more interesting for young learners. Judicious use of available resources was made by maintaining relationship between the indoor and outdoor environment. For instance, while teaching number concept, the teacher asked children to go out and collect five mulberries each. Children enjoyed the activity as the teacher not only tried

to break the monotony of learning by simply sitting at one place but also provided hands-on-experience by making children construct their own knowledge. In another instance, the teacher made each child to bring two leaves each from outside. In this way the children not only revised the number concept but when they compared their leaves with that of others, they automatically learned that leaves come in different shapes, sizes and colours. Making children move bare feet in the campus to experience different surfaces like grass, mud, concrete and marble, in order to make them understand the concept of smooth and rough texture was another good example of promoting learning by doing. Similarly, showing children globe when talking about the earth or making them hear their heartbeats using stethoscope in order to orient them about the heart and its function or even showing them the sample of X-ray when making them aware about the bones in the human body were some of the ways in which learning contexts were organized and created for children. It was realized that learning becomes more relevant and interesting for young children by providing them concrete experiences. It is important to consider here that one of the prime objectives of preschool education is to bridge the gap between the everyday world of the child and the world of scientific concepts i.e. school. In the present study as evident from the above examples, it was observed that the teacher tried to expose children to the peripheral aspects of scientific concepts. Such exposures without delving deeper into the nitty-gritty of the concepts were regarded beneficial for the young children as they were still in the phase of exploring and discovering their environment with the help of adults. This movement from everyday concepts towards the basics of scientific concepts was considered important to prepare children for the formal schooling. For Vygotsky (1978) the development of scientific concepts has great significance for the evolution of higher mental processes because these concepts necessarily involve conscious realization and voluntary control. In contrast to earlier, context- bound forms of functioning supported by everyday concepts, the decontextualization inherent in scientific concepts makes possible these properties of higher mental processes. Although, the aim in the preschool classroom was just to introduce them to the elementary level of these concepts. As Lampert (1986) also argues that learners need to be treated as sense-makers rather than rememberers and forgetters. They need to see connections between what they are supposed to be learning in school and things they care about understanding outside of school.

Classroom display also used to stimulate children's learning by providing the print rich environment. The classroom displays were consciously designed and organized to promote development of pre-literacy skills among children as they consciously or unconsciously imbibe many aspects of their surroundings by simply observing them. The intention was to stimulate the visual senses of the children as it was believed that initially even letters and words are like pictures for the child. Many of the picture charts were also used by the teacher while narrating a story or when making children distinguish between wild and domestic animals, different colours or shapes. The seating arrangement (circular) of children and that of the teacher was such that it facilitated shared attention and intention as both the teacher and children were able to see each other and can coordinate by maintaining eye contact.

In the classroom the main focus was to expose the child to a variety of experiences without expecting expertise or perfection. Activities and experiences were designed to cater all aspects of development by providing rich, multiple experiences to the children. For instance, the concept about the importance of trees was emphasized through different activities – nature walk, planting of trees, story telling, classroom discussion, story impression through drawing, singing songs related to trees in the music class, making a tree in the classroom (where children were asked to colour the paper leaves and then the leaves were joined together to form a tree). By creating linkages between various activities the child do in the school and providing multiple experiences for children teachers used to provide enough scope for children to make sense and express themselves through variety of media. In this way, the teachers also accepted the individual differences in ability and interest of children.

Coordinating the resources also involved integration of different ideas and objects that children used to bring to the school, regarding each child as a resource for fellow children. In except no.1 the teacher revised the relational concepts (hard/ soft, heavy / light) by initiating the discussion using the ping- pong ball that the child was carrying. Thus, it was experienced that productive classroom discussions were not simply restricted to pre-planned occasions or activities and just as valuable was those that used to arise spontaneously from a student's activities or from the resources that he/she brings from home. Being alert to the potential of such occasions was regarded clearly an equally important aspect of teaching that seeks to promote dialogue as the

means to increasing understanding. Similarly, in excerpt no. 6, the teacher started the story, "Mitha and her magic shoes", by incorporating the children's ideas about magic in the discussion. The coordination of resources was promoted to provide a more clear and comprehensive view of things to the young children.

Role of teacher, intersubjectivity and space for children's negotiation

While reviewing the whole process of adult-child interaction it was realized that learning and development in young children is integrated and that knowledge is constructed through relationships in various contexts. The children in the preschool age are still in a phase of exploring so many different mediums, interacting with variety of people, exchanging and sharing ideas, manipulating materials around them. They are flexible and integrative in their learning.

One of the most important components of teacher's mediation that used to guide the teaching- learning process in the classroom was affective component of teacher's mediation. This component used to facilitate every aspect of child's interaction and learning in school. It was observed that when dealing with young children the interrelational value of interaction takes precedence over the interpsychological one. It was experienced that intersubjectivity or shared ground of communication cannot be effectively established if the adults are cold, distant or insensitive to the developmental needs of children. Therefore, knowledge of child development in conjunction with teacher's ability to create meaningful dialogues is important to promote shared ground for communication and learning among children. It was observed that the use of bilingual instructions, sweet tone, receptive body language, child-friendly gestures provided the environment of acceptance for children promoting positive feelings towards school and learning. The important components of teacher's mediation and support in the classroom included the use of several motivational strategies involving constant stimulation and positive reinforcement, coordination of locally available resources, facilitating the promotion of joint attention and joint regard.

The establishment of intersubjectivity in the class was visible through child's mediation as the teacher used to provide spaces for them to mediate by probing and prompting them, making them imagine and predict, project and enact, reflect, relate

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and reason. This also involves the development of elements of empathy as the children used to place themselves at someone else's position, looking at things from other's perspective. Thus the cognitive aspect of learning was promoted through building-on emotional expression of children. The children's active role in their own learning was reflected through the way they mediate by directing the teacher's attention, making simple associations, reasoning, inquiring and negotiating. At the same time, it is important to consider that the opportunities for child mediation and clarification of doubts were minimal during these teacher-initiated and teacher-guided contexts of learning.

This can be rather seen as hindering some aspects of intersubjectivity to develop in the classroom as new meanings or growth in understanding was not always generated. It is important to notice that child-child interactions which are equally important for promoting intersubjectivity were not promoted during the structured classroom activities and discussions. Drama was used in the class especially during the story telling sessions but in a very restricted manner. It is realized that it could have been effectively used to enrich the classroom interactions by dividing children into small groups, asking children to create their own stories and then enact the same, involving more of movements and dialogues. Similarly, the different situations given to the children to respond to during the "let's talk" activities could have become more meaningful by asking children to respond through dramatization.

It is also very important to consider that at times children also need freedom from undue adult restraint, spaces to move around freely in the class, to initiate and to take initiative through working in small group activities, testing the known ideas in the light of new ones. Scaffolding by the teacher is of course important depending on the need and current level of performance of the child. Somehow, these aspects were lacking in the class observed. Also, many of the activities in the class were quite familiar for the children. It is important to consider that though familiarity in activities and experiences is vital to provide sense of security, stability and consistency to the children and also to make them feel at home but at the same time some challenge is important for the growth in understanding to emerge. Since children in the class were more or less from similar family backgrounds, many of the activities and experiences at school were quite close to their everyday home experiences. There was no attempt

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on part of the teacher to create an environment so that child could move from these familiar experiences to the more novel one. The intention is not to say that activities should be absolutely novel but the same activities can be done in a more innovative fashion involving more of participation and dialogue from children's side for growth in the local understanding of the group to emerge. Though familiar experiences used to facilitate the process of making associations establishing shared understanding but somehow lacked innovation and novelty. Children were able to relate, predict, project but the creation of zone of proximal development was limited as the teacher was sometimes not able to challenge the potential development of the children. Many a times, the teacher tried to establish the zone but she was not able to do it optimally. It was felt that the focus was more on the already ripened functions of development rather than targeting and challenging those that are in the process of ripening. Instructions that are directed at the level of completed development can, of course, increase the knowledge base, but will have minimal effect upon the child's cognitive ability. Instruction directed beyond the proximal level will tend to be incomprehensible to the learner and thus will affect neither knowledge nor cognitive ability. The most effective teaching is therefore somewhat, but not too much, in advance of development.

Chapter-5

Conclusion

sustain children's interest and through consistent efforts to promote joint attention and joint regard.

Implications of the study

One contribution of the present study has been the investigation of multiple ways in which the teacher facilitates the establishment of common ground for communication in a preschool classroom, thereby, facilitating learning. The study promotes the understanding of learning as not simply remembering but as a joint collaborative activity where affective encounters play an important role. These aspects can be incorporated as a part of teachers training package, providing insights in to the ways of creating a shared ground for relating to young children by promoting learning-in-relationships.

Sometimes, excessive adult mediation could also be a potential source of stress and difficulty for a growing child, who may be socialized for a self-effacing approach to others, especially elders on one hand, and the demand for confidence and outspokenness on the other. It is important to realize that preschoolers need freedom from undue adult restraints along with opportunities for exploration, investigation and some amount of challenge for growth in their understanding to take place. The findings of this study make an important contribution towards understanding the developmental needs of young children that can be kept in mind while planning a sensitive instructional or curriculum program for young children.

The findings can serve as a tool for early childhood educators to reflect on their own pedagogical practices and processes with an appeal that children's play and peer collaboration (including music, movement, drama) should be regarded as excellent contexts for social, emotional and cognitive development. This will further facilitate children to relate and get along with others more easily.

Limitations and Recommendations for future research

In the classroom context various activity systems interact thus a holistic understanding of classroom learning should involve investigations of the mediation from both the learner and the teacher. The present focused entirely on the teacher's

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Chapter 5

Conclusion

The study was undertaken to investigate the role of teacher's mediation in establishing intersubjectivity in the preschool classroom. A special effort was made to explore the psycho-semiotic environment of the classroom. It was understood that investigations in the classroom dynamics, with special focus on the teacher's mediation and its role in establishing intersubjectivity in the classroom will add to the existing understanding of learning among preschoolers. It was considered that understanding grounds of intersubjectivity will provide insights into the ways of creating a shared ground for interaction that results in learning. This concept can also be modified to serve the needs of educators as a reflective tool for analysis of their own pedagogical practices and processes. Also, since there is not much existing research in India in the area of intersubjectivity and learning, the study will contribute in opening new avenues in the field of child development and developmental psychology. Taking this into cognizance the sample of the study comprised of a classroom of one of the private preschools of New Delhi. The analysis of the data collected through active observation, informal interviews of teachers and audio-recording of the classroom discourses provided a rich description of the classroom processes.

It was found that the psycho-semiotic environment of the preschool classroom comprised of both physical and affective components. The physical aspect involved rich classroom display, circular seating arrangement of children and other instructional or learning material. Affective component was reflected through the teacher's responsivity or sensitivity towards children's developmental needs and readiness to learn. Therefore, a common ground for interaction was found to be established in the classroom through the interplay of human and symbolic mediators. Intersubjectivity in the classroom was established by creating various contexts for children to express themselves through variety of developmentally-appropriate media (music, movement, drama, drawing and colouring). The teacher's role as a human

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mediator was found to be crucial throughout from planning of meaningful activities and experiences to the use of several strategies to sustain and maintain children's interest in an ongoing activity.

Intersubjectivity in the classroom was established in multiple ways. Most important symbolic tool for establishing shared understanding was found to be language and the process of mediation mostly occurred through linguistic transactions. Both monologic and dialogic transactions were seen to help in the establishment of intersubjectivity in the classroom. Even though monologic aspect of linguistic transactions involved one-sided and authoritative communication, it promoted intersubjectivity due to sharing of the common cultural background by both the teacher and learners. On the other hand, shared understanding was created through the reciprocal exchanges between the teacher and students in dialogic interactions leading to co-construction of knowledge. Strategies like reasoning, relating, predicting and pretending were used by the teacher through involving children in the ongoing interactions. This helped in gaining joint understanding. Directing the teacher's attention, making associations, inquiring and negotiations were some of the ways in which preschool children were found to intervene the teaching-learning process. In the present study, it was found that the spaces for children's mediation were minimal and mostly teacher-regulated. This sometimes hindered the establishment of intersubjectivity rather than promoting it.

Use of bilingual instructions was another interesting feature of linguistic transactions in the classroom that facilitated the attainment of joint attention/ intention, thereby, intersubjectivity and learning. This showed sensitivity on the part of the teacher as it encouraged children to freely express themselves in their home language. This was one of the strategies to promote learning by relating to the children in the medium that was within their grasp. It was found that productive classroom discussions were not simply restricted to pre-planned occasions or activities and just as valuable were those that arose spontaneously from a learner's intervention. Story-telling was found to be the most important activity for building shared understanding in the classroom. According to teachers almost any concept can be weaved into a story as children always to find it easy to relate to them. Pre- literacy and pre- numeracy concepts were found to be embedded in multiple contexts like games, worksheets, drawing, nature walk, poems and stories.

Affective involvement was found to be the core of adult-child relationship in the school. The affective bond between the teacher and children was formed by making children feel at home through the use of sweet tone, tactile stimulation and receptive body language; scaffolding their learning by providing them the environment of familiarity and trust. Through such encounters the teacher used to help children to connect their everyday knowledge to the ongoing classroom discourse, creating a bridge between the known and the new. Therefore, everyday, familiar knowledge of the learners was used to expose them to the peripheral aspects of scientific concepts, expanding their knowledge base. This function also served as preparing children for formal schooling.

The children were motivated to participate in the classroom activities by introducing a concept in the form of a story or a game. Another important motivational strategy was positive reinforcement that further encouraged children to collaborate in an ongoing activity. Meaningful contexts for learning were created through coordination of locally available resources and ideas. This promoted learning by providing concrete, hands-on-experience to young children. It was found that primacy was given to experience and not expertise. The use of materially present referent such as a physical object or display of some kind by the teacher in the classroom interaction helped in the establishment of joint attention. It is regarded that intersubjectivity begins with shared reference and moves toward shared meaning (Wertsch, 1985). Repetition of information and use of bilingual instructions were other ways to promote joint intentionality and attention. As the teacher tried to perceive things from the child's eye it facilitated the establishment of joint regard. This was evident through the acceptance of different responses and reactions, creating spaces for one-to-one interaction through labelling children's work samples along with them. The important components of teacher- mediated behaviour comprised of promoting learning through motivational strategies, coordination of resources, joint attention and joint regard. The independent, structured activities like working on worksheets and drawing story/song impression explained how intersubjective understanding gained in the course of collaboration becomes the child's own subjective understanding, an understanding that incorporates shared understanding previously established.

It was experienced that child-child interaction served as contexts for growth of intersubjectivity and learning. Children were almost inseparable. They were found to connect with each other through constant observation, imitation, sharing of material and ideas, directing each other's attention, building-on each other's ideas, through negotiation, agreement and disagreement. Through the communication that exists in child-child interactions, children express and negotiate ideas that contribute to each other's understanding. A child simultaneously assumed the role of a learner and a teacher during such interactions. Peer collaboration and play were not much encouraged in the classroom but children always used to discover their ways to engage in such activities.

Teacher's sensitivity to the needs of the children and caring encounters were the bases of teacher- child interaction, but sometimes it was felt that activities were more or less familiar to the group and lacked the challenge required to promote learning within the child's zone of proximal development. The classroom practices depicted a blend of cultural, conventional and progressive values. It was found that the freedom given to children was relatively more than a conventional classroom but at the same time little less to promote the child- initiated and child- directed activities in the class. Many of the activities were found to be structured and even teachers in the school favoured such structuring.

Teacher's mediation plays a crucial role in structuring the psycho-semiotic environment of the preschool classroom which helps in creating a platform for joint level of understanding. In case of classroom learning, intersubjectivity enters as a mediating agency, essential to the negotiative process, whereby uncertainty is resolved and new knowings are constructed. It creates a common ground where each partner adjusts to the perspective of other. Mutual knowledge, mutual beliefs and mutual assumptions facilitate the coordination process if both the parties shared the similar cultural background (the teacher and learners in the present study). Effective instruction requires willingness to allow the children's context to permeate the classroom context. An effective means of accomplishing this goal is through the use of dialogue in learning. The intersubjective state is achieved more effectively through caring encounters between the teacher and children, use of motivational strategies to

part of it. Investigating various aspects of children's mediation in detail could have given more rounded understanding of classroom processes.

To attain an indepth understanding of the process of establishment of intersubjectivity in the preschool classroom, participant observation could have been a better choice but was not used due to time constraints. In this way, intervening by the researcher through the use of certain well-designed tasks for children could have helped in better understanding of the process.

Also, it was felt that the affective component was one of the most important aspects of teacher's mediating behaviour, facilitating the entire teaching- learning process in the preschool classroom and therefore, this aspect could have been further explored. Recognizing and exploring the role of caring encounters in learning among young children can guide the future research in this direction.

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Appendix

CURRICULUM FOR PREP

<u>Themes for the term for **Prep's** from April-May '07</u>

* Myself, colours, shapes, five senses.

I Physical and motor development

* Identifying shapes, colours around the environment.
* Freehand drawing of self.
* Identifying parts of the body and their functions.
* Balancing on the beam.
* Hand span measurement of self and friend.
* Tearing and pasting, printing with thumb impression.
* Plasticine and dough moulding- shapes, objects...
* Colouring neatly within the space.

III Language Development

* Talks about herself/himself-likes/dislikes (King/Queen activity).
* Draws self and describes oneself/mirror image talk.
* Narrating stories, recall, adding own dialogues and picture reading.
* Show and tell/recall activities.
* Theme related rhymes and songs.
* Phonetic sounds of letters done (with actions) s,a,t,p,i,n,c,k,e,h,r,m,o,l.. *
* Naming pictures with sounds done,
  eg- 'm' sound ☽ 🐛 🐦 🪣 <u>m</u>other, <u>m</u>onkey, <u>m</u>oney, <u>M</u>ickey <u>m</u>ouse.

III Cognitive Development

* Pre-number concepts- big, small, tall, short, fat, thin...
* Recognition of number from 1-10(number value).
* Sorting, pairing, and classifying (shapes, objects, colours).
* Making sets-
* Memory game, finding missing parts.
* Association of the letter parts to the picture, eg-

IV Social and emotional development

* Waiting and taking turns, keeping the classroom clean.
* Wishing elders, friends, and other social graces.
* Identifying emotions like sad, happy, and angry.
* Sharing things and food.
* Taking care of personal belongings, buttoning shirt, tying shoelaces.
* Washing hands before/after eating food and using napkins.
* Blind fold activity- Touching friends and identifying.
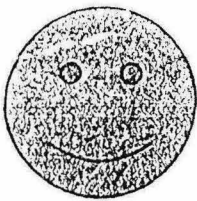
CURRICULAM FOR PREP
JUL AUG SEP

Theme :- My Family, My Home, Plants

Physical and Motor Developments

 # Out door activities will include-

* Throwing a ball at target.
* Walking on a line with hands raised up, with a bowl full of water (Balancing).
* Running Forward and Backward.
* Nature Walk – Barefoot, to feel different surfaces.
* Hand span measurements of family members/class mates.

 # Indoor activities will include-

* Vegetable printing, hand impression, paper crushing, pasting cut outs of shapes.
* Clay Modeling – making beads, painting and threading them.

Language development

* Talks about their family members, whom they like and why, talk about their favorite fruits, vegetables, articles in the house.
* Narrate stories in a sequence, picture conversation, dramatization of stories.
* Talk on " One Object Many Uses". Finding solutions to a given situation- example
    -If father is away and mother falls sick, what will you do?
* Phonetic sounds of letters to be done, example –
sound of 'g' as in-

g   grapes   gun   grass

* Reading simple three letter words and drawing the corresponding picture
    mat   top   egg

MY FAMILY.   MEHAK
                                    * PREP-A
MUMMY   DIDI   PAPA   Bhai
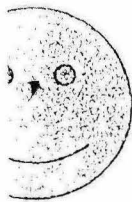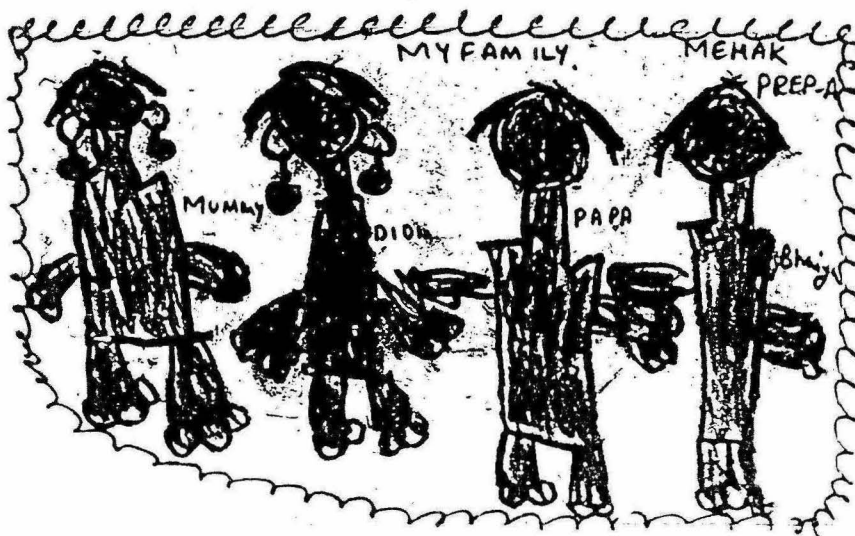
Cognitive Development
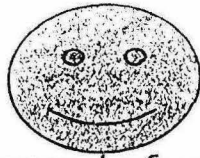
* Pre-number concepts — heavy light, in out, over under, few many, inside outside.
* Observing and identifying missing parts of a house, fruits, vegetables, trees etc.
* Number concepts 1 to 9.
* Problem solving, puzzles, sequencing, following a pattern, example

$$O\ \triangle\ \square\ /\ O\ \triangle\ \square\ /\ O\ \_\ \_\ \ldots$$

* Rhyming words- tell me a word that rhymes with e.g. hat...mat ...bat...rat.
* Identifying things seen in different parts of a house and their correct placement eg bucket — bathroom, plates-kitchen.
* Matching simple three letter words to the picture given

Social and Emotional development

* Working together to make Fruit chaat and Nimbu Pani.
* Celebrating Rakshabandhan, Independence Day and Teachers Day.
* Social Graces — use of please, sorry, excuse me, thank you, May I ...
* Inculcating healthy eating habits
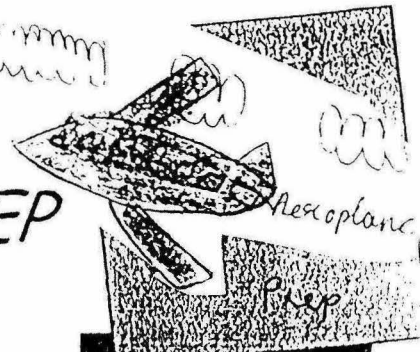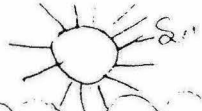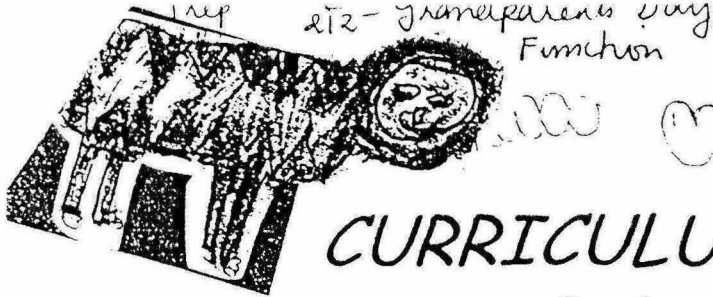
CURRICULUM FOR PREP

Themes for the term for Prep's for Oct, Nov, Dec'07
* Transport, helpers and seasons.
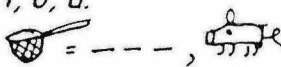
I Physical and motor development
* Traffic light game and role-play of different helpers.
* Paper pasting- (bus, diyas).
  Paper folding to make aeroplane, X-mas tree.
* Easy to make Diwali and Christmas Decorations and pot painting.
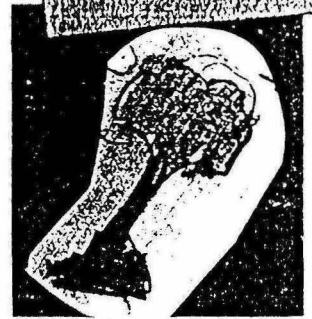
III Language Development
* Naming different modes of transports-road, rail, water and air.
* Talk on Diwali, Christmas and Guruparav (Guru Nanak Dev's Birthday) and Children's Day.
* Which is the fastest or the slowest transport, how they run- petrol/diesel.
* Reading three letter words with vowels-a, e, i, o, u.
* Naming pictures with corresponding words- = _ _ _ , _ _ _
* Reading and writing of simple sentences e.g. - The man is sad.
* Role- play of helpers and the tools they use.
* Discussion on change in weather, change in clothes we wear now.
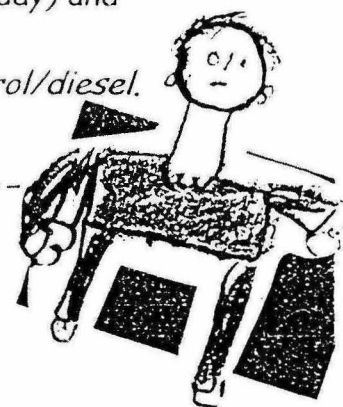
III Cognitive Development
* Recognition of numbers from 1-10. Concepts of more or less, few and many.
* Circle and colour the odd one out.
* What comes after.
* Quantify the numbers.
* Memory game.
* Join the dots to complete the picture.
* Nature walk related to numbers and letters.
* Mind mapping and problem solving.
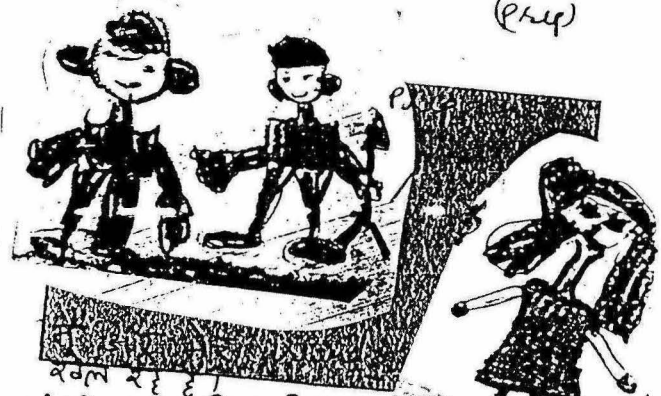
IV Social and emotional development
* Christmas, Grand Parents day , Diwali, Children's Day and Guru Parav Celebrations.
* Discussion of the importance of saving fuel.
* Safety rules.
* Social graces- use of words like Thank you, Sorry, May I, Excuse me.

AAP AUR HUM

Our newsletter
April-may-08

The new session began on 2ⁿᵈ April- '08 and has gradually gained momentum. The Nursery children have moved forward in the KG class and the KG children also took a step forward and moved into the Prep class.
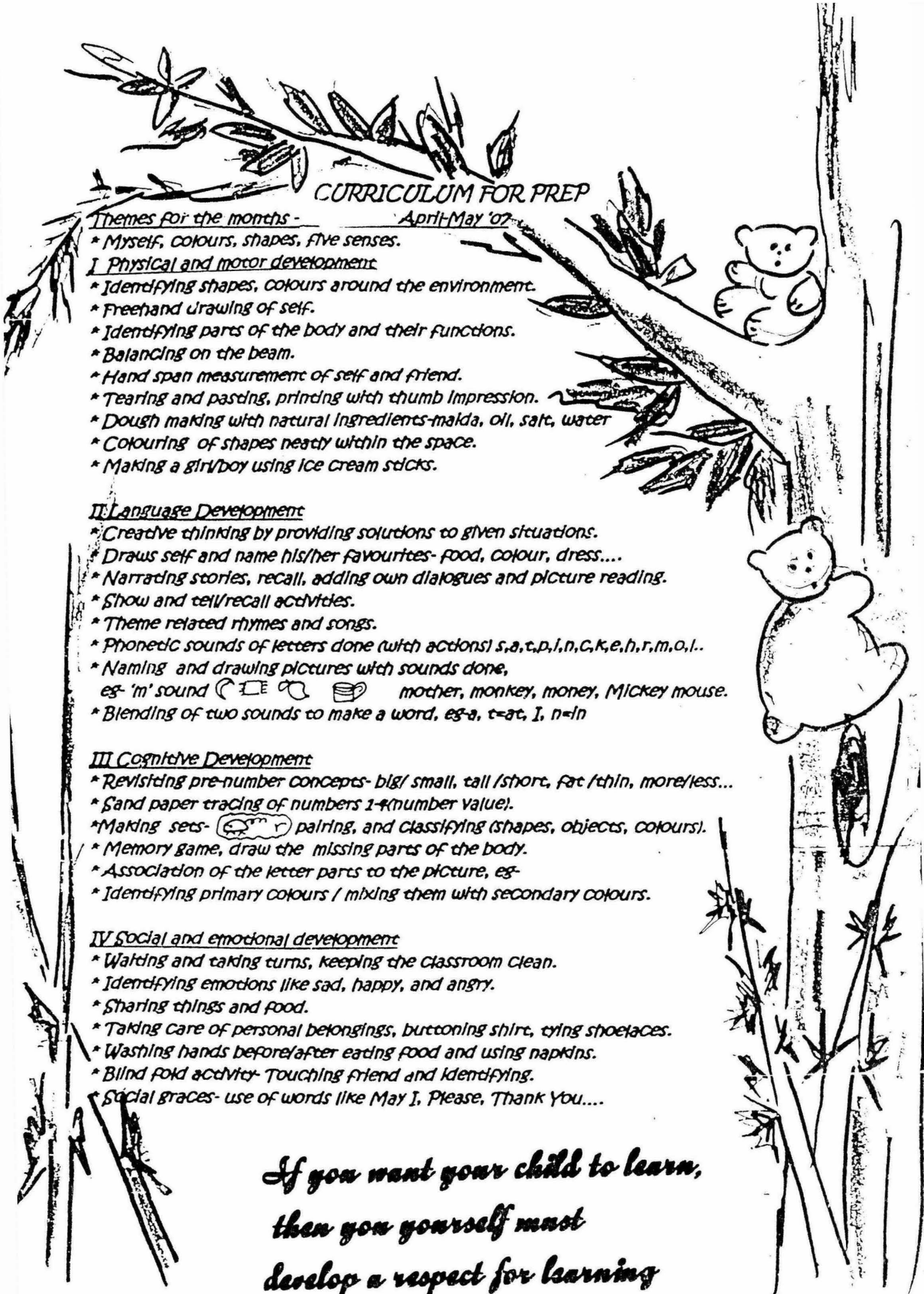
The new entrants to Santa Maria are largely settled and are enjoying the curriculum. The teachers are putting in a lot of effort towards making each day as interesting as possible. .

To give you an idea of what will be happening in the school in April- May, a brief outline of the activities is being sent for you. It is worth noting that these activities help the child in different areas of development. You may like to pursue some of these activities with your child during the summer vacations.

Mrs Beena Dua
Principal

Apprieciation is like a magic wand It can inspire a child to do anything
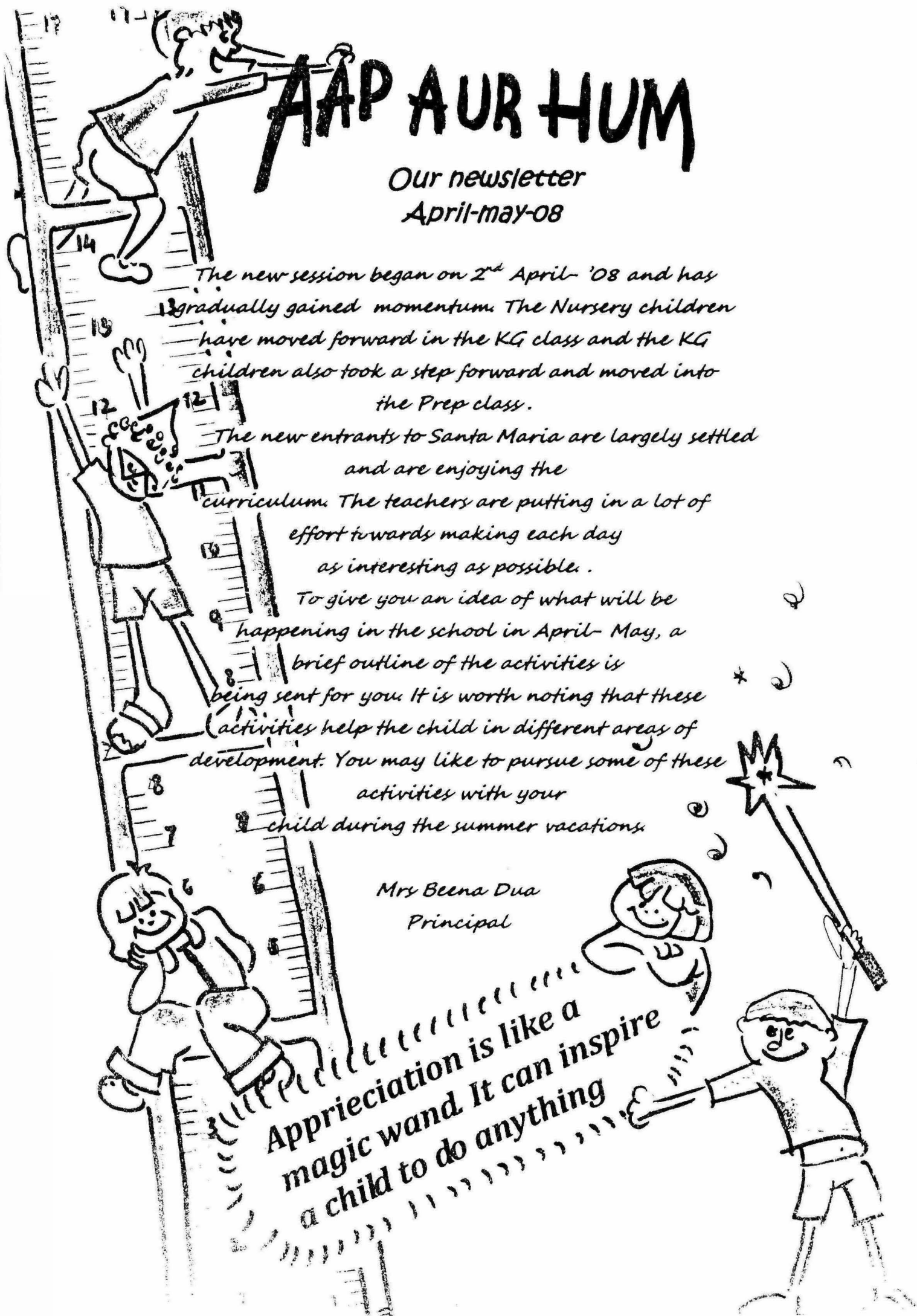
CURRICULUM FOR PREP
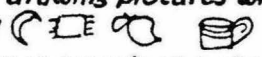
Themes for the months -   April-May '07
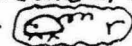
* Myself, colours, shapes, five senses.

I Physical and motor development

* Identifying shapes, colours around the environment.
* Freehand drawing of self.
* Identifying parts of the body and their functions.
* Balancing on the beam.
* Hand span measurement of self and friend.
* Tearing and pasting, printing with thumb impression.
* Dough making with natural ingredients-maida, oil, salt, water
* Colouring of shapes neatly within the space.
* Making a girl/boy using ice cream sticks.

II Language Development

* Creative thinking by providing solutions to given situations.
* Draws self and name his/her favourites- food, colour, dress....
* Narrating stories, recall, adding own dialogues and picture reading.
* Show and tell/recall activities.
* Theme related rhymes and songs.
* Phonetic sounds of letters done (with actions) s,a,t,p,i,n,c,k,e,h,r,m,o,l..
* Naming and drawing pictures with sounds done,
  eg- 'm' sound   mother, monkey, money, Mickey mouse.
* Blending of two sounds to make a word, eg-a, t=at, I, n=in

III Cognitive Development

* Revisiting pre-number concepts- big/ small, tall /short, fat /thin, more/less...
* Sand paper tracing of numbers 1-4(number value).
* Making sets-   pairing, and classifying (shapes, objects, colours).
* Memory game, draw the missing parts of the body.
* Association of the letter parts to the picture, eg-
* Identifying primary colours / mixing them with secondary colours.

IV Social and emotional development

* Waiting and taking turns, keeping the classroom clean.
* Identifying emotions like sad, happy, and angry.
* Sharing things and food.
* Taking care of personal belongings, buttoning shirt, tying shoelaces.
* Washing hands before/after eating food and using napkins.
* Blind fold activity- Touching friend and identifying.
* Social graces- use of words like May I, Please, Thank You....

If you want your child to learn,

then you yourself must

develop a respect for learning

CURRICULUM FOR KG

Themes for the months - April-May '07

Myself, colours, shapes, five senses.

I Physical and motor development

* I love outdoor games and drills.
* I jump, run, hop and balance to keep myself fit.
* I go for nature walks and do breathing exercises.
* I print colours on the paper with leaves, vegetables, cotton and sponge.
* I go for indoor free play to the toy room.
* I love doing free hand drawings. on myself.
* I learn to button myself, belt myself and put my shoes on.

II Language development

* I talk about my favorite toy/fruit (etc) during "Show and tell" activities.
* I name the parts of my body. And the function they perform.
* I recall the activities done by talking about them.
* I talk about the weather, month, day and the season.
* I listen /narrate stories during the "Story Time" and I do picture reading.
* I sing songs and recite poems related to themes.

III Social and emotional development

* I pose as King/Queen and talk about myself.
* I talk about my likes and dislikes and illustrate.
* I enjoy posing like animals.
* I I talk about my emotions that make me happy, sad or angry.

IV Cognitive development

* I observe animals, birds, flowers and I explore my surroundings..
* I identify shapes and colours around and match them with objects.
* I classify shapes and colours through "Gobbler Box" activity.

V Sensorial Development

* I refresh my senses by touching, tasting, smelling, listening and seeing.
* I touch rough and smooth surfaces and feel hard and soft objects.
* I listen to various sounds through sound boxes.
* I taste sweet, salty, sour and bitter to distinguish them.
* I smell various articles to differentiate.t
* I blindfold to listen to the bell and run in that direction, and also hit a ball hanging with a stick while I don't see it.
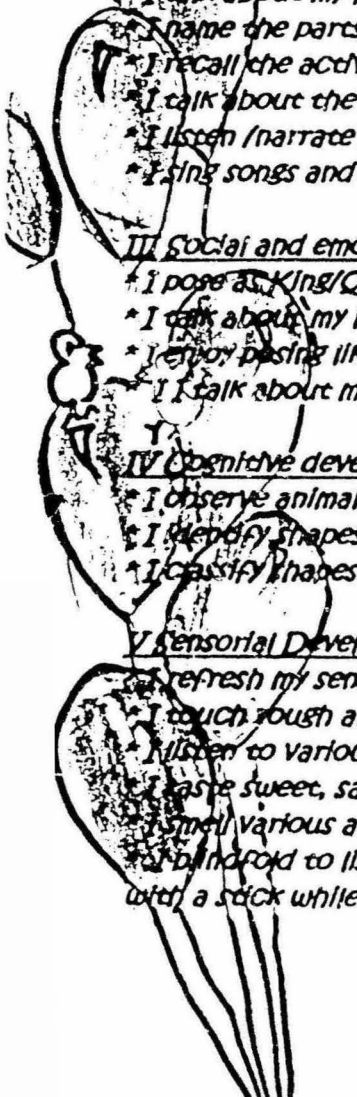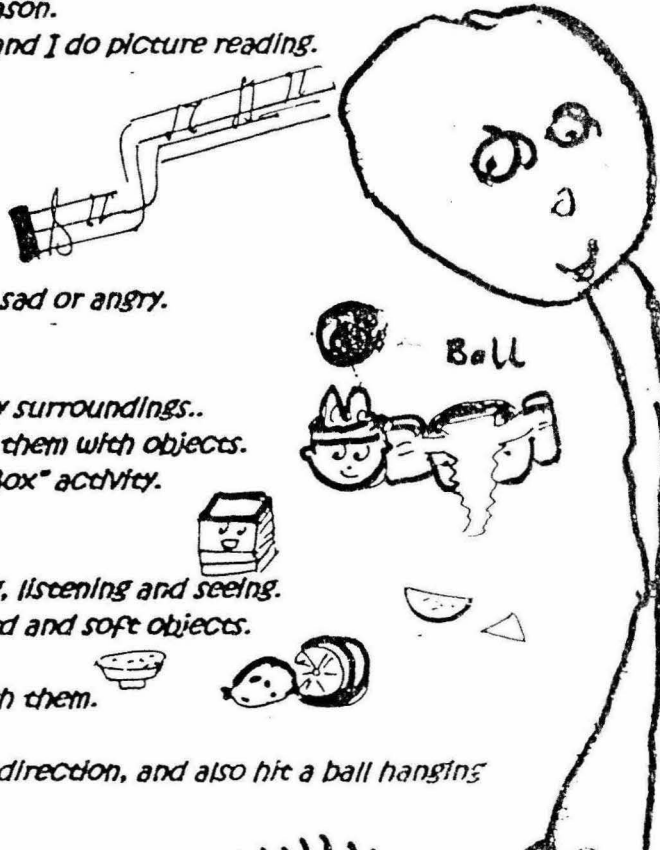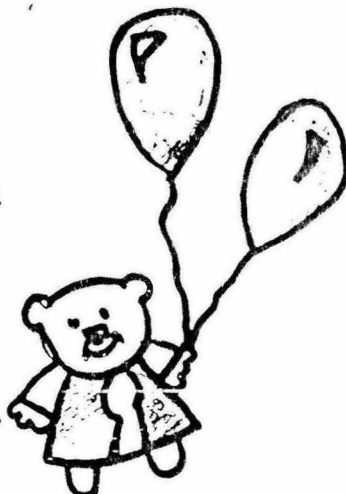
Play is serious business for children. Maximum opportunities for play are best suited for the child's growth and development. Learning and play are the two facets of the same reality.
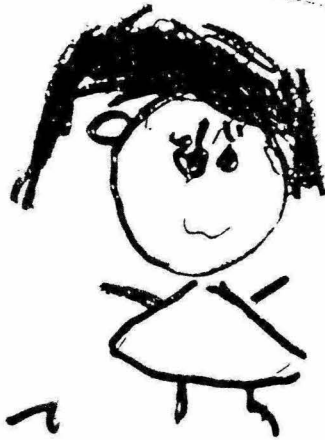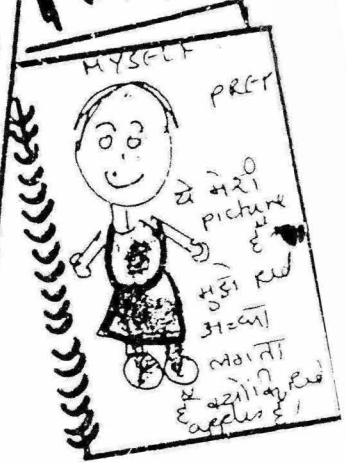
Now !!! ...
jUsT THAT
i XM Getting sTARTED......

NURSERY

NURSERY

THAT'S ME...

NURSERY

NURSERY

green
class

cow

aeroplane

aeroplane

NURSERY

मेरी गुड़िया के बाल
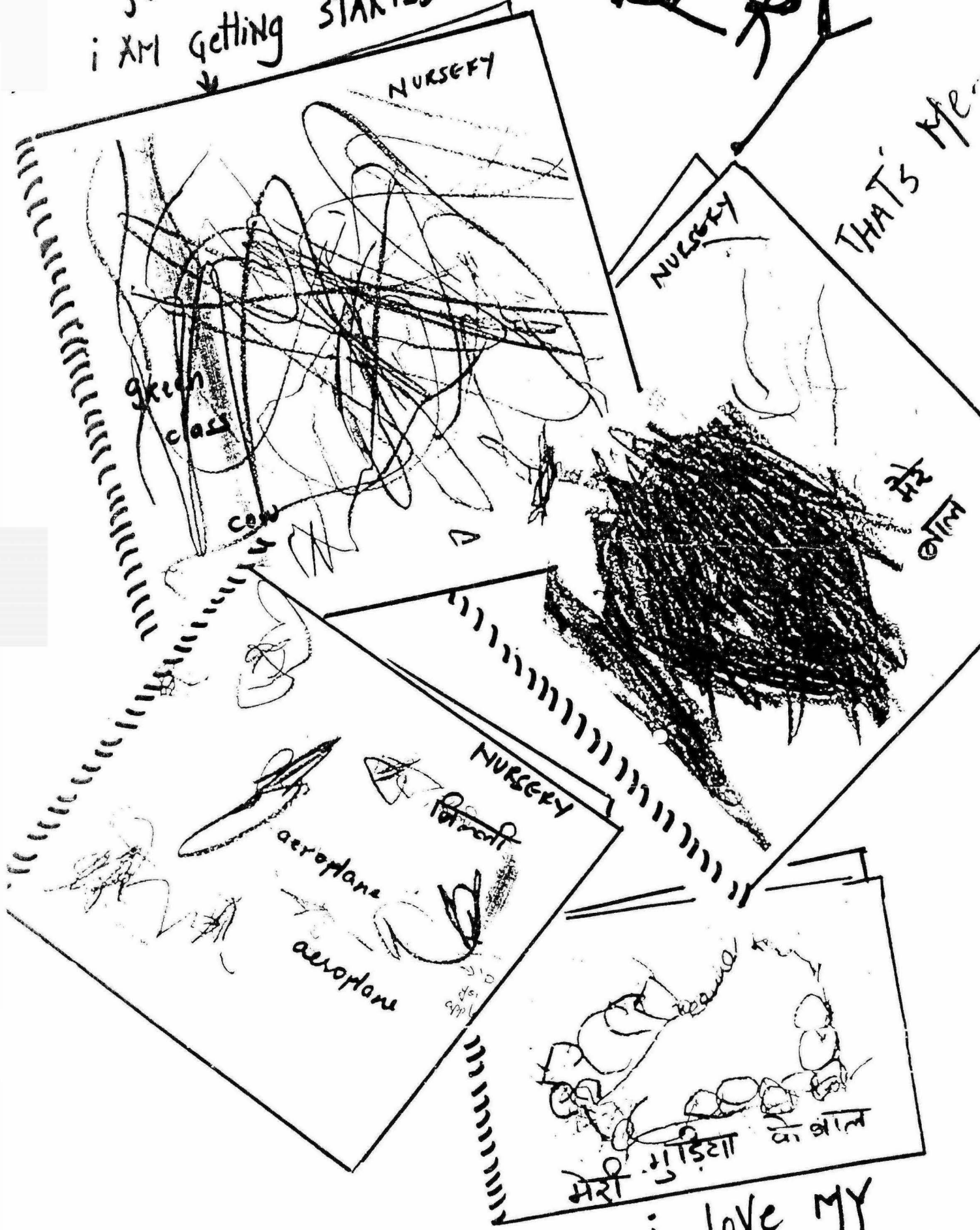
i love MY
DollY....

MYSELF

मैं लड़का हूँ इसलिए KG.
मैंने लड़के

होंठ मुँह

skalmp
and आँखों

MYSELF
KG

MYSELF

MYSELF KG.

SELF IMAGE

KG

Jadan हूँ
रहती हूँ

Pope

smiley

yellow
strips

green colour
मुझे अच्छा लगा
स्कूली इ school
dup से पुती

मैं रजनीगंधा में
रहन रही हूँ

MYSELF. KG.

MYSELF/KG

ZOO O O O M IN ZONE

Featuring STORY TELLING

A young girl was once asked about her favourite
childhood story. Without taking much time she said
'लाल परि की कहानी'
This was the story her grand mother used
to tell her every night she went to bed.
She grew up loving and cherishing this story.
The story gave her an imagination
that was rich and fertile. It filled her
imagination with colours and charecters. Imagine a childhood
without stories!!!!!!
does it not seem like a deadlock. So it is not surprising
that we at Santa Maria, give a lot of importance to
story telling. These sessions not only take the children in a world
of fantasy, but they also help in improving the child's vocabulary.
helps the child listen attentively and establish
a rapport with the narrator. It is a pleasure to see
the child's face react to the story
he/she is listening to. They smile, laugh,
giggle, echo sounds and even show surprise!!!
Story telling does not end there.
There are many more aspects to it.
In a classroom situation, story telling is followed by
a story role play.
In this the children get ample opportunity to enact the
charecters of the story. Children also come
forward for story narration. This helps them
build up confidence and overcome the hesitation
to speak. Aids like puppets and masks are at their
disposal all the time.

Cherish every gift that your
child gives you. A pebble could
mean a whole world to him.
He is giving his world to you.

SANTA MARIA SCHOOL

NAME...........................
CLASS..........................
DATE............................

COLOUR THE PAIRS
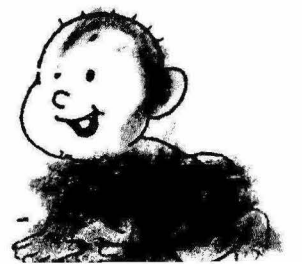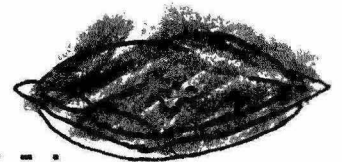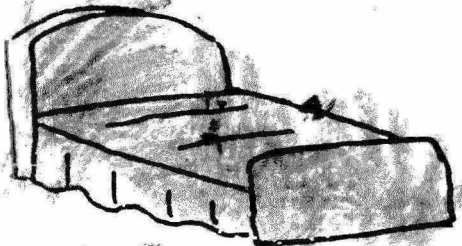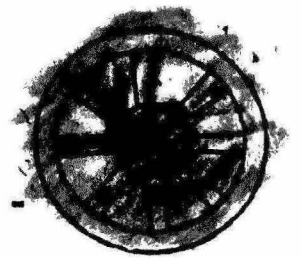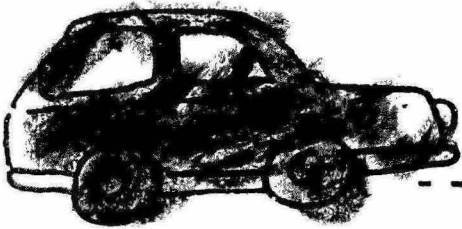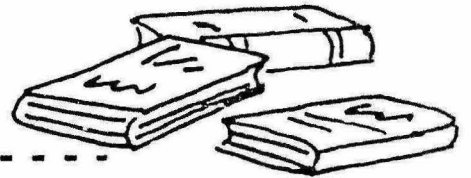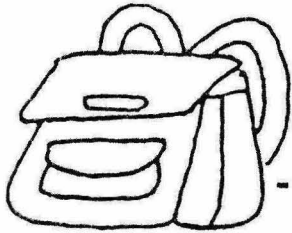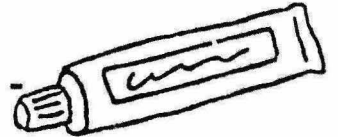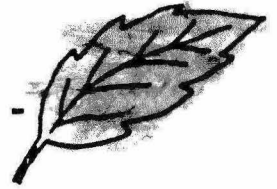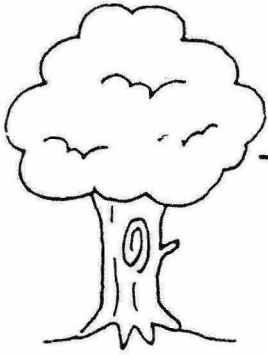
The Santa Maria Nursery School
Vasant Kunj

Name _____   Prep _____

Colour the bigger one.
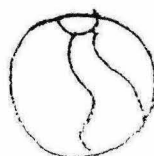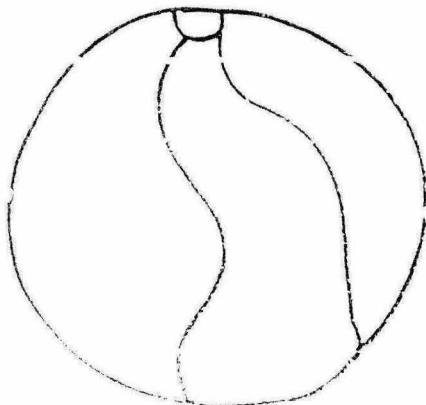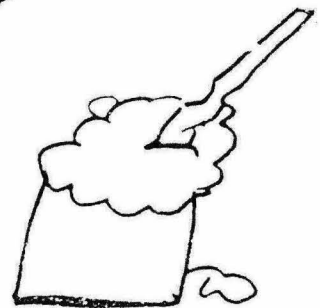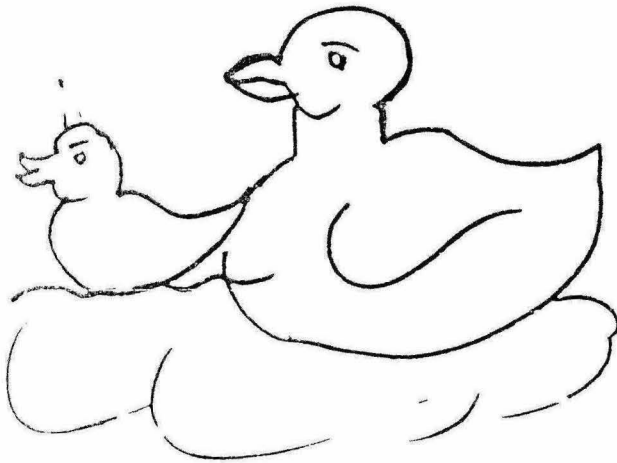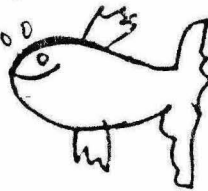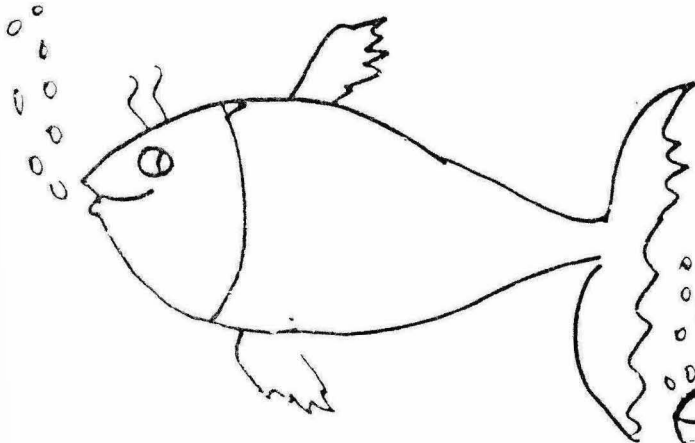
SANTA MARIA SCHOOL

Name: _____

Class: _____

Colour the duck with ~~more~~ many chicks in yellow colour,
and the duck with ~~less~~ few chicks in blue colour.

3
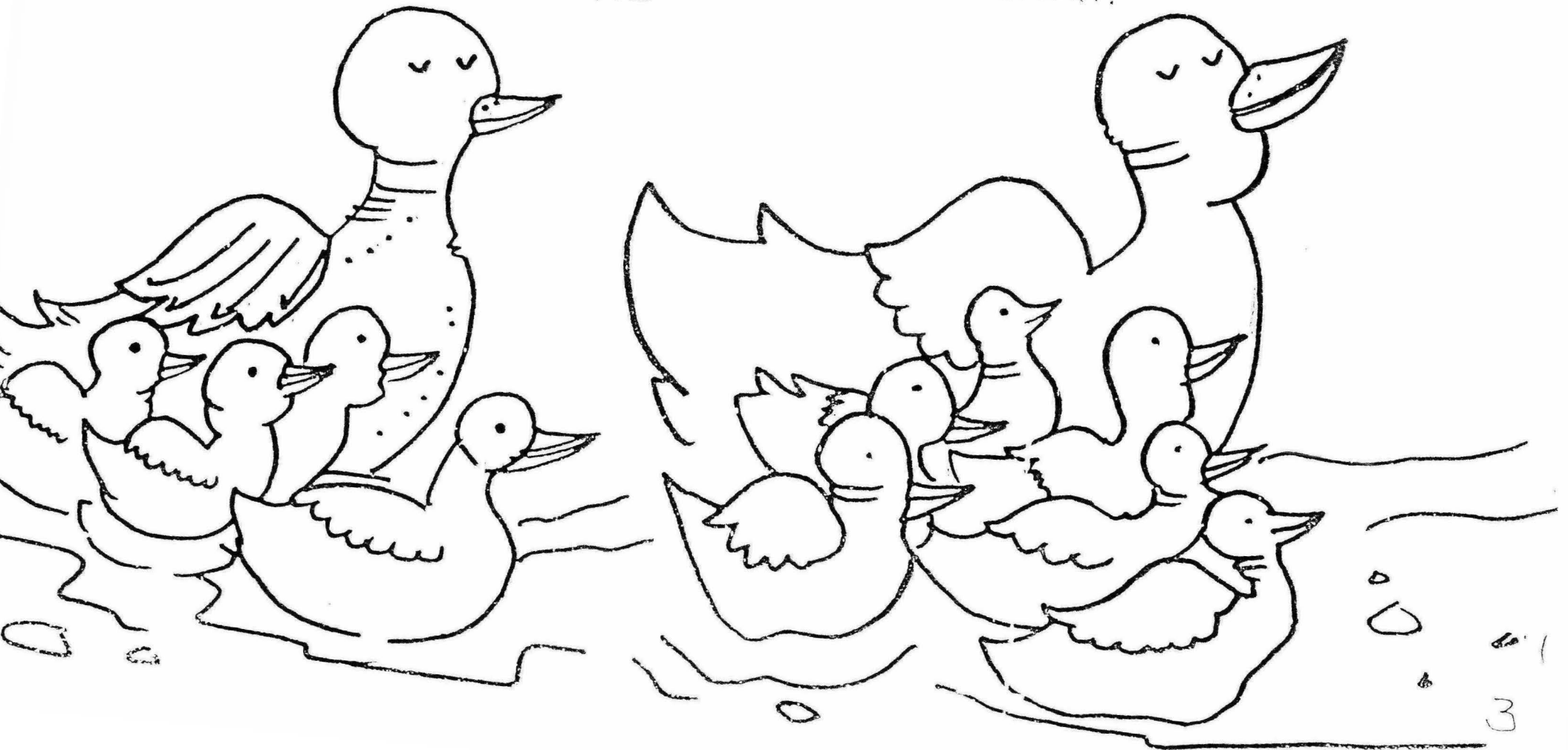
The Santa Maria Nursery School
Vasant Kunj

Name _____   Class   Prep.

Draw the missing part. Colour it.
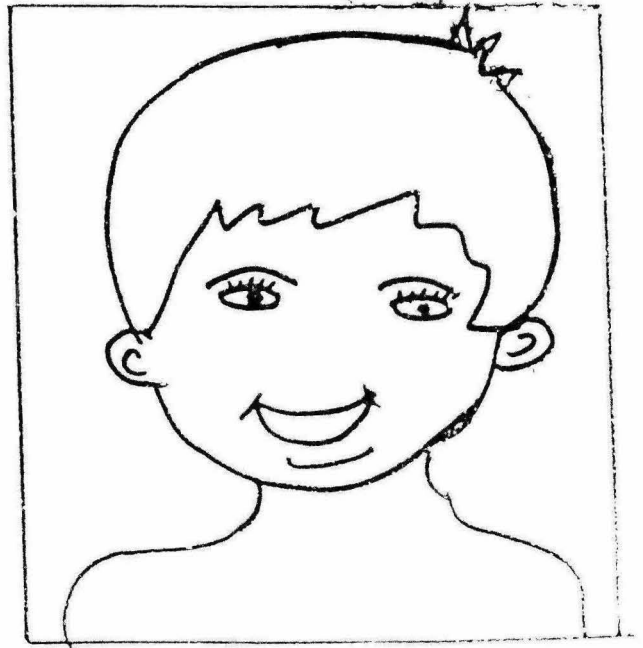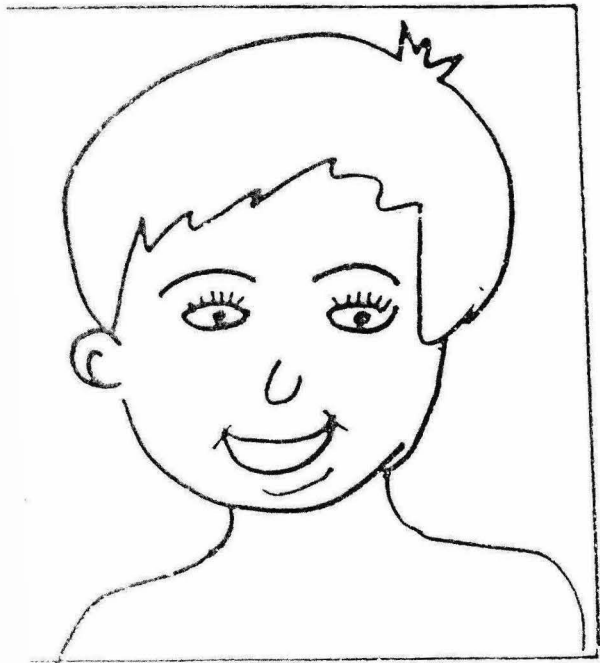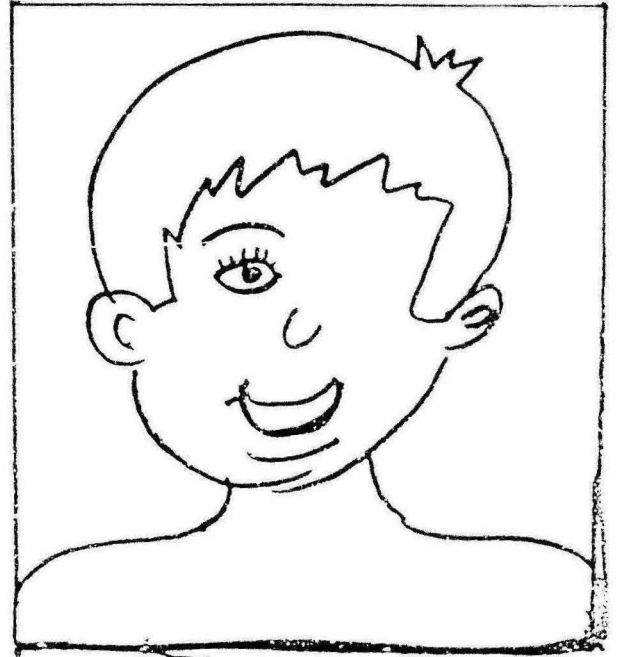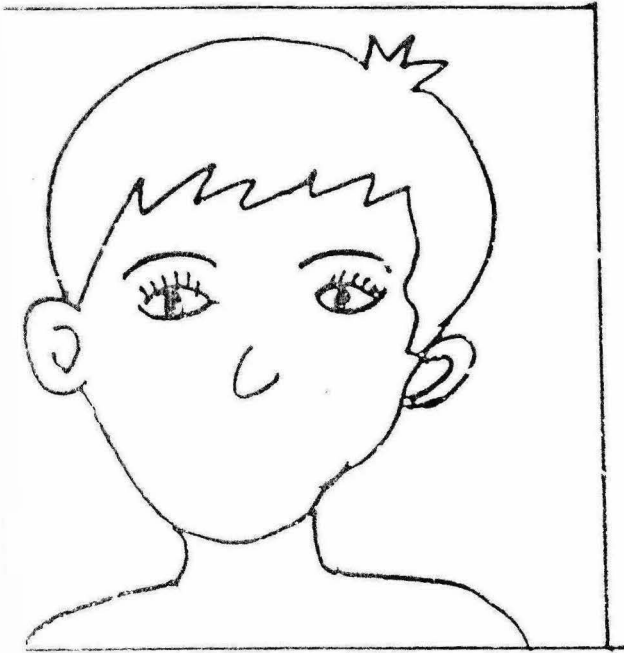
SANTA MARIA SCHOOL

Name: _____   Class: _____

Complete the pattern

△ ◯ △ ◯ △ ___ ___

△ ◻ △ ◻ ___ ___ ___

◯ △ ◯ △ ___ ___ ___
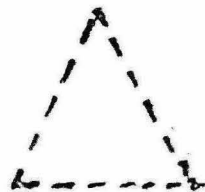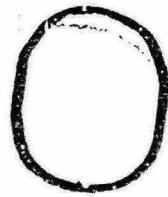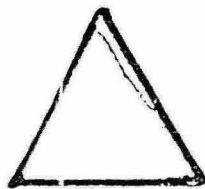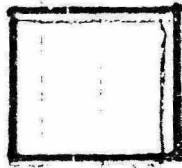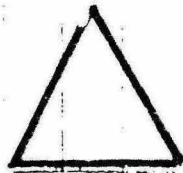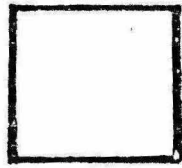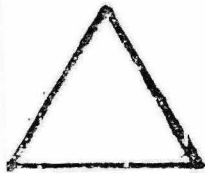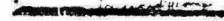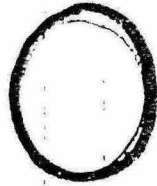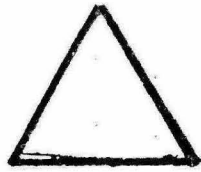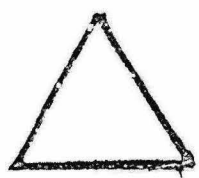
Tick those that have sweet smell (fragrance) & cross those which have bad smell.

SOAP

Dust Bin

Perfume

8-5-08

Amilia