



## Workshop Report – Phoneme & Phonics Awareness and Reading with Comprehension

**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, & 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023

**Venue:** Raghubir Singh Junior Modern School, Humayun Road, New Delhi

**Participants:** 35 Primary Government School Teachers (Department of Education, Government of Delhi)

**Resource Persons:** Ms. Rimpay Verma, Ms. Megha & Ms. Pooja

**Introduction:** MIE (Modern Institute for Education) organized a three-day workshop on “Phoneme & Phonics Awareness and Reading with Comprehension” at the Raghubir Singh Junior Modern School in New Delhi. The aim of the workshop was to conduct and model interactive and engaging sessions on classroom practices that emphasizes the importance of developing phonic skills and reading comprehension skills with specific reference to English language and literacy among students.

**Highlights of the workshop:** The workshop focused on enhancing teachers’ capacity to teach English in a joyful environment focusing on right pronunciation, fluent reading with comprehension, and enabling students to differentiate between letter names and letter sounds. It emphasised that these basic understanding are critical for reading with comprehension. Differentiating between



phoneme and phonics is an important aspect of teaching reading or rather language and literacy skills, and the workshop focused exactly on these skills.

The resource persons, Ms. Rimpay Verma, Ms. Megha and Ms. Pooja along with MIE team had designed the workshop keeping in view the needs of teachers identified through need assessment survey.

**Activity-based learning:** The entire workshop was designed around hands-on activity-based learning. Teachers were presented with one to two-minute activities that were not only informative but also somewhat joyful. These activities were intended to provide children with joyful environment. Through these activities, they also identify action words, phrases, and related words. Some of the activities



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incorporated in the workshop were chin drop while sounding out letter sounds, blending and segmenting of sounds, digraphs, passing the ball, naughty words, musical chairs, jenga etc. Teachers expressed a deep understanding of how such activities could enrich the language learning experience.



**Summarisation:** After every activity, followed by discussion, Ms. Verma made it a point to summarise the topic. It enhanced the effectiveness of the activities and teachers understood that in classrooms also this must be followed. Summarisation provided some useful techniques to teach phonic sounds and voice modulation like using a higher platform to practice the higher pitch of the sound and a lower platform to practice the lower pitch of the sound.

### Day 1 & 2: Workshop on Phoneme & Phonics Awareness

#### Setting the context:

Ms. Abha Sadana, Director, of the Modern Institute for Education, welcomed the participants and shared the legacy of Modern School and its contribution to nation-building, followed by introducing



MIE. Dr. Anviti provided a brief overview of the New Education Policy, Balanced Literacy Approach, and the necessity of teaching English Language.

To break the ice participants were shown a video and asked to emulate the way people were introducing themselves in the video. Participants were asked to introduce themselves by saying their name and a

unique quality they have. The activity set the stage as it initiated a discussion reflecting the way in



which the people were seen in the video emphasizing individual qualities and encourage teachers to recognize what is unique.

**Introduction to Reading Program** – The resource person Ms. Rimpay Verma, emphasised the importance of introducing a child to use the correct pronunciation and reading at an early stage. She said that comprehension is the key to speaking, reading, and writing.

**Importance of gestures, actions and expressions:** The importance of gestures, actions and expressions in language comprehension was demonstrated through foreign language instruction. The facilitators gave instructions in French with expressing gestures and body movement. The participants comprehended the language through the body movement and gestures. This activity highlighted the idea that language comprehension can be enhanced through using gestures, actions, and body movement.

**Decoding Language Sounds through introducing phoneme and phonics:** The facilitator introduced the concept of how sentences are made up of words, and words are made up of sounds.



To read effectively and to comprehend the meaning, students need to have a mastery over identifying the sounds that is syllables, and the ability to segment and blend the syllable to pronounce the word. Different small activities like identifying the syllables, blending and segmenting the syllables were done by the teachers. The workshop focused on blending vowel sounds with syllables and learning how to read them. Particular attention was paid to digraphs—combinations of two letters representing a single sound. The aim was not only to introduce phoneme and phonic awareness but also to ensure that teachers could effectively teach these concepts to their students.

**Sight Words:** The session addressed the introduction of sight vocabulary, emphasizing its importance at the beginning of reading. Teachers were guided on how to effectively define and reinforce sight words to recognize their role in building a solid reading foundation.





The two-day workshop on integrating phoneme and phonic skills into reading comprehension was a great success.

The teachers actively participated in the sessions. The workshop activities not only enhanced teachers' understanding but also provided them with practical tools to incorporate these strategies into their classrooms.

### Day 3: Workshop on Reading with Comprehension

Day three commenced with a recapitulation of the previous day's concepts and reflection on the practices the teachers tried to implement in their respective schools. A couple of teachers shared their experiences that the techniques they have learned in the workshop are truly implementable and effective.

#### Workshop Activities:

**1. Musical Chair:** The third day of the workshop began with an interesting activity that blended music, movement, and vocabulary. The facilitator asked teachers to play musical chairs and whoever could not get hold of the chair had to take a Jenga block and say the word written over the block with different



expressions like anger, love, hatred, etc.

The aim was to scaffold teachers to understand the impact of tone and expressions on comprehension especially when the target students are of primary grades.

**2. Importance of Expressions:** The facilitator used various rhymes and stories to highlight the importance of incorporating gestures,

expressions, and body language while reading a text.



Through telling a story in Hindi and reciting a poem in English using gestures, body movements, and expressions, the facilitator underscored the importance of reading with expression for language comprehension.

**3. Reading with the Right Pace:** The facilitator demonstrated reading a text with both fast and moderate speed, emphasizing

how the right pace enhances comprehension. The story of “Two Silly Goats” was used to illustrate the concept effectively.

**4. Importance of audio-visual aids:** The next activity focused on making teachers understand the importance of using audio-visual aids for enhancing the language comprehension skills of students. An activity to create a comic strip was introduced and teachers were asked to create a comic strip.



They were asked to present their creation and read aloud the story. It reinforced the significance of visual elements in comprehending written texts.

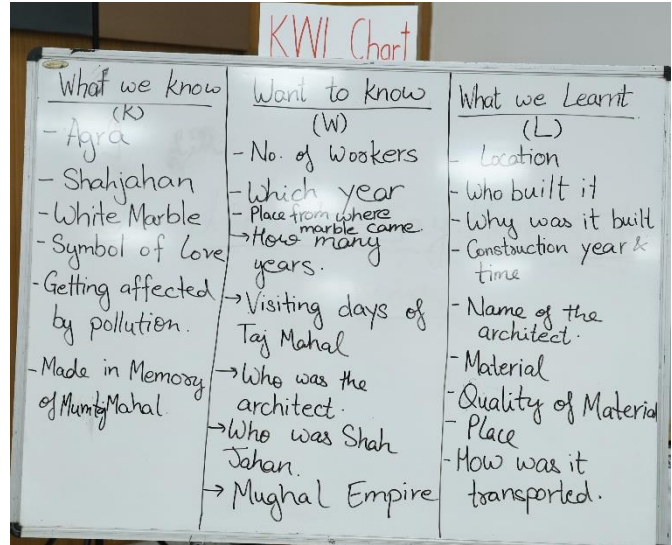
### **5. Vocabulary Building: The importance of glossary**

Teachers were taken on a journey of exploring the meaning of unknown words by using them in context. The facilitator also underscored the importance of using a glossary with the text in different forms i.e. The meaning of coloured words written beside the word or writing down the meaning on the black/whiteboard. To further reinforce the importance of glossary teachers were asked to read the given text with and without the glossary.



**7. Building Background Knowledge:** This activity involved a 'KWL' chart. **K** stands for 'I Know', 'W' 'I Want to Know', & 'L' stands for 'I Learnt'.

The teachers were asked a few questions about the topic to be read i.e. an informative text on the Taj Mahal. Before reading, the facilitator discussed the Taj Mahal and wrote down their answers. Then she asked what they wished to know more about Taj Mahal and she recorded these answers too. Then she asked the participant to read aloud the text.



Now the teachers know how important it is to ask for previous knowledge or background knowledge to make the classroom practices engaging as well as interesting.

**6. Asking Questions for Better Understanding:** The facilitator also emphasized the art of asking questions before, during, and after reading any text. The questions ignite the imagination, and critical thinking, and aid in enhancing the oral language skills of students. The facilitator also reiterated the fact that the questions should not only be factual but also inferential.

**8. Role Play:** Each group of teachers was given a situation to enact. The situations were like office meeting, interviewing a film star etc. Each group enacted the given situation in front of all the teachers. This activity aimed to make teachers understand the importance of role-play.



If this activity is replicated in classrooms, it will not only increase the confidence of students but will also aid in their oral language development, build their vocabulary, and make them more confident.

**9. Key Techniques for Reading Comprehension:** The workshop concluded with a discussion on basic strategies to help students improve their reading skills. Teachers were suggested to summarize texts, create concept maps, highlight key themes, and encourage drawing.



These strategies were found to be important tools for improving students' understanding of the reading content.

The workshop provided primary school teachers with a variety of tools and strategies to improve reading comprehension in their classrooms. Through interactive activities, discussions, and practical demonstrations,

teachers gained valuable insight into the importance of expression, movement, imagery, vocabulary, questions and answers, background knowledge, activities, and strategies.



**Director, SCERT, Dr. Rita Sharma** visited the workshop for a brief period while this role play activity was going on. She interacted with the teachers and asked certain relevant questions regarding their learning from the workshop. She queried that is it possible that the learning from the workshop will be implemented in the classroom and will reduce the numbers of students falling in Mission Buniyad level 1.

It is quite reassuring that teachers responded in affirmative.

### Reflection of teachers

To gauge the responses and experience of the teachers, the MIE team interviewed teachers and also collected their feedback through Google forms. Apart from rating the workshop as excellent and very good, the teachers expressed their reflections and the need for more such workshops to be done. The most common themes that emerged from both the interviews and the feedback forms are:

1. Highly implementable activities such as CVC word puzzle, jail box for naughty and tricky words, words rainbow story with voice modulation, etc., were demonstrated in the workshop
2. The workshop should not end here rather follow-up sessions should be held where teachers can share their experiences and issues while implementing the techniques learned in the workshop.
3. The TLMs used during the workshop are highly effective and low-cost.





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4. These workshops have ignited a zeal among us to go into our classrooms with new vigour and energy and to believe in the capacity of students.
5. We need a workshop on teaching grammar to primary classes and the same kind of workshop to teach Hindi, Foundational Math, EVS, Creative writing, Integrated Learning, and building subject-specific vocabulary and many more such topics.



### Conclusion

The workshop on phoneme and phonic awareness, coupled with reading comprehension, achieved remarkable success, fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation for these crucial aspects of literacy. Participants gained valuable insights into phonetic principles, enhancing their ability to decode and comprehend written language. The impact of this endeavour is expected to be seen in the continued growth and proficiency of all those who participated and hope will have multiplier effect.

The workshops could be a great success due to the active participation and enthusiasm of the young bright teachers. They got the firsthand experience of integrating art, sports, music and dance with language development. The exchange of ideas, collaborative learning, and practical exercises contributed to a rich and engaging experience.

MIE team is grateful to the Headmistress and the team of RSJMS for outstanding support and cooperation extended in terms of the excellent infrastructure, conducive environment and facilities to accommodate needs for the sessions.

We appreciate the fact that Department of Education (DOE) and the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) gave an opportunity of collaborative initiative to Modern Institute





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for Education (MIE) of sharing the pedagogical practices and instructional strategies used by teachers at Modern Schools with the vibrant set of primary teachers of Government Schools. We look forward to more fruitful collaborations that will positively impact the educational community.

