Assessment of the Knowledge of Primary Teachers on the Right Methodology of Teaching English and their Motivation and Practices Adopted to Impart Reading Practices to Children

Dr. N. Dhanya[1]
[1]Assistant Professor
Department of Home Science and Centre for Research
St. Teresa's College (Autonomous), Ernakulam

Annapoorna M[2]
[2]Research Assistant
Department of Home Science and Centre for Research
St. Teresa's College (Autonomous), Ernakulam

Abstract: The study was conducted with an aim to investigate the motivation level and knowledge of teachers in implementing the strategies to teach reading skills and English in Class 1 and 2 and to train them intensively on the fundamentals of English language and different reading approaches. Seventy five primary school teachers teaching English in 30 schools of Kanayannur and Kochi Taluk, Ernakulam were selected through purposive sampling method. Percentile analysis and paired 't' test were the statistical tests carried out. The difference in level of awareness after the training programme was evaluated. Only a small percentage of respondents, according to the findings, had participated in a professional development programme to advance their English language skills. All the respondents (100%) valued reading skills and 89 percent appreciated independent and practiced choral and shared reading in their classrooms. All the teachers created posters and displayed their students' work. Only 60 percent of the teachers used smart boards, computers, and role-playing activities. In the classroom, all of the respondents arranged and displayed books. They knew the advantages of reading strategies. Significant difference was found in the level of awareness in reading skills, approaches, phonology, vocabulary grammar, comprehension before and after the training programme (p= 0.000, p< 0.05 is highly significant).Fifty two percent of the respondents rated the programme as excellent whereas 30 percent rated it as outstanding. All were highly satisfied with the training programme.

Keywords: reading, reading practices, reading approaches, teacher's motivation, independent reading, choral reading, read aloud, reading competency.

Introduction

India possesses one of the world's largest elementary education networks. With a significant expansion in the number of schools and enrolment in these schools, educational facilities have seen remarkable growth. In recent years, India has given primary education a higher priority and more funding because it is the cornerstone for individual and national growth. English in India has become a symbol of people's aspirations for quality in education and a fuller participation in national and international life. Proficiency in English has a great influence on a student's life in India. The Indian Government has attempted to improve the quality of language education over past ten years by encouraging teachers to implement best practices of language acquisition. The National Knowledge Commission (2007) advocates to teach English as a language in school. It has recommended that English teaching should start from class I so that after 12 years of schooling the learners will have access to higher education, employment opportunities and social opportunities. Teachers must be aware about the process of reading that will help them formulate an ideal pedagogical design. The reading process is complex and multidimensional. According to the Right to Read Foundation and National for Curriculum and Assessment research report (2012), the competencies that need to be considered while teaching reading include Motivation, Word recognition, Comprehension and Fluency.

Methodology

The areas selected for the study were two Taluks in Ernakulam District namely Kanayanur and Kochi coming under the Ernakulam AEO. Seventy five primary teachers teaching English in Class 1 and 2 were selected from 30 school of Kanayannur and Kochi Taluk through purposive sampling method. They were tested

for their level of knowledge on the right methodology of teaching English and their motivation and practices they adopt to impart reading practices to children. Subjects were selected through purposive sampling. Interested teachers (N=50) from 18 schools of Kanayannur and Kochi Taluk were given intensive online training for 45 days from Monday to Friday during the Covid pandemic lock down period and the difference in the level of awareness before and after the training programme was assessed. A self designed checklist and questionnaire was adopted to assess the knowledge of components of reading competency, interest, motivation, knowledge of strategies and methods adopted currently among standard 1 and 2 teachers. Percentile analysis and paired sample't' test were employed.

Results and discussion

Section 1: Assessment of knowledge of components of Reading Competency, interest, motivation, knowledge of strategies and methods adopted currently among standard 1 and 2 teachers

1.2 General profile of the respondents

Ninety one percent of the respondents were females and only nine percent were males. It is rather evident that women are significantly over-represented in the profession of educators. As per research studies 80 percent of all teachers in the kindergarten are usually women (UNICEF). Female teachers in schools outnumbered their male colleagues for first time in India (Unified District Information on School Education Report for 2020). Forty four percent belong to the age group of 40-49 years and 39 percent were between 30-39 years of age group. When it comes to academic qualification 49 percent were graduates with TTC and 27 percent were pre-degree holders with TTC. Half of the respondents (51%) were specialized in other subjects and not in English. Seventy six percent of the respondents were part time employees.

1.3 Teaching experience

Forty seven percent of the respondents handled Class 1 and 53 percent were Class 2 teachers. Half of them (54%) have been teaching English in 1 and 2 for more than 7 years. Only 19 percent had attended professional development programme to develop their English language and 81 percent had not attended any such programmes. Type of programmes attended included Hello English (7%), Training at BRC (7%) and training offered by the Education Department (5%).High quality professional development programme creates space for teachers to share ideas and collaborate in their learning, often in job embedded contexts that relate new instructional strategies to teachers' students and classrooms (Hammond et.al, 2017).

1.4 Attitude on developing reading skills and approaches

Attitude of teachers on developing reading skills and approaches is crucial in elementary grades. Effective reading instruction from efficient teachers is important for the students to perform better. Attitude of the respondents on developing reading skills and approaches is shown in the figure below
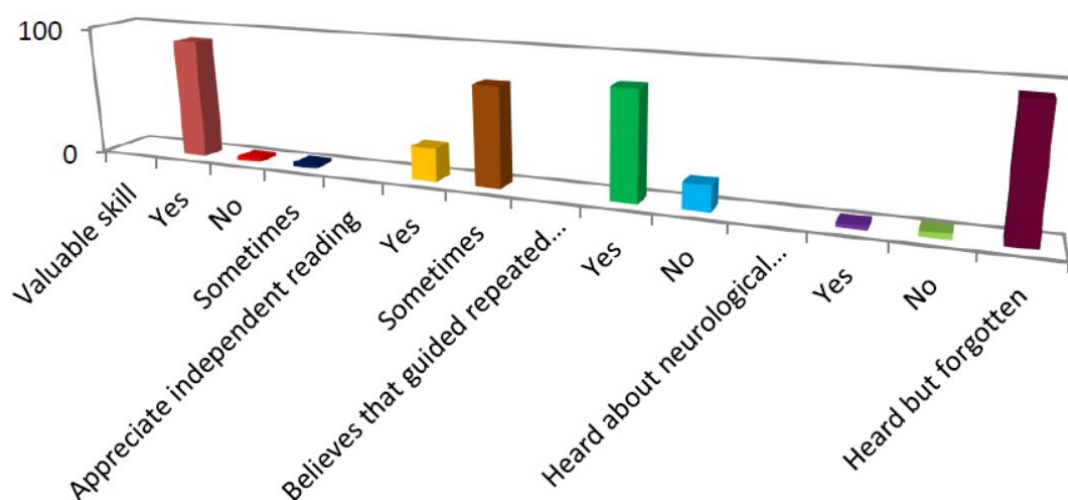

Figure 1: Attitude on reading skills and approaches

Majority of the respondents (91%) felt that reading is a valuable skill. Eighty nine percent appreciated independent reading in the classroom and respondents who believed that guided and repeated oral reading would improve word recognition were 81 percent. Ninety three of the respondents have not heard about neurological impress. Researches support the fact that during primary and elementary grades, even a small amount of independent reading helps to increase students' reading comprehension, vocabulary growth, spelling facility, understanding and grammar and knowledge of the world. Feitlson and Goldstein (1986) in their study on patterns of book ownership and reading to young children found that children often chose light reading for independent reading because they enjoyed it and they become more fluent readers in the process.

1.5 Knowledge about the components of reading

Components of reading work together to create a satisfying reading experience. Phonological awareness, fluency building, good vocabulary, student motivation, and reading engagement are all talents that teachers must possess. Since teachers must instruct children on a daily, regular, and frequent basis, knowledge about them is crucial.

Table 1 Knowledge about the components of reading

Sl. No	Knowledge about reading components	Frequency	Percentage
1	**Aware of components of reading.** • Yes • No	42 34	55 45
2.	**Resources used to impart reading components**		
a)	Blackboard	75	100
b)	Books	75	100
c)	Smart class board	45	60
d)	Computer	45	60
e)	Role play	45	60

Study on the knowledge of teachers about components of reading have found that 53 percent were aware about the components of reading such as phonemes, grapheme, vocabulary, syntax, fluency play important role in reading ability of the children. All of the respondents (100%) used blackboard and books whereas 60 percent used smart class board, computer and role play as resources to impart reading components.

1.6 Strategies adopted to develop children's reading ability

Adopting right strategies is necessary to improve the performance of students. The details of the strategies adopted by the teachers are given in the figure below.
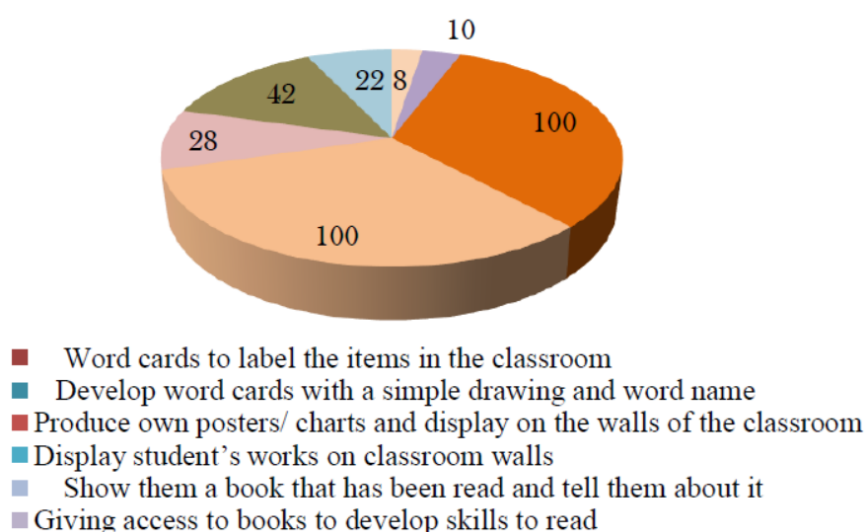

Figure 2: Strategies adopted to develop children's reading ability

The above figure shows information on the strategies adopted by teachers in order to develop /improve the reading ability of children. All respondents (100%) prepared their own posters/ charts and displayed it on the walls .Teachers also displayed the work of the students on the classroom walls. Forty percent of the teachers gave access to books to develop reading skills. During the initial years of primary school years children's reading skills and interests are formed. In line with these strategies used in the classroom by the teacher has a great influence on the well-being of pupils and their decisions regarding the learning processes or reading habits (Chu, Li & Yu, 2020).

1.7 Organizing and displaying books
A well organized library can complement the curriculum, and invite students in the classroom to explore. Results of the study on the thoughts of the respondents on organizing and displaying books in the classroom is illustrated in figure 3.
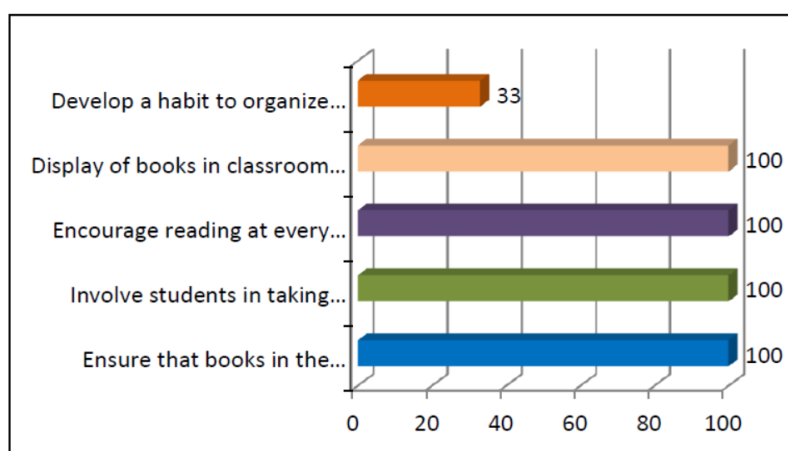

Figure 3: Beneficial aspects of displaying books

It was found that all the respondents (100%) organized and displayed books in the classroom. As regards the knowledge of teachers on the beneficial aspects of displaying books in the classroom, all the respondents (100%) believed that displaying books ensure that books in the collection are age appropriate, involve students in taking interest in looking after the books, encourage reading at every opportunity. This apart display of books in the classroom shelves create a feeling of ownership of books. Fountas and Pinnell (2001) stress the importance of both ownership and independence in establishing an effective classroom library.

1.8 Choral and shared reading
The teacher will read the selection aloud just before shared and choral readings can begin. Children can benefit from the teacher's fluent reading demonstration. Preschool classrooms usually engage in shared reading, which is believed to support the development of oral language, print concepts, and listening comprehension. Results of the analysis of thoughts on choral and shared reading among respondents in discussed below.

Table 2: Choral and shared reading

Sl. No	Choral and Shared Reading	Frequency	Percentage
1.	**Practice Choral and Shared Reading in your classroom** • Yes • Sometimes	67 8	89 11
2.	**Benefits of choral and shared reading**		
a)	Provides opportunity for less skilled readers to practice and receive support	71	95
a.	Serves as a model for fluent reading	75	100
b)	Improves the ability to read sight words	23	31
c)	Helps students to work together in cooperation	75	100
d)	Serves as an error correction procedure	75	100

International Journal of Latest Research in Humanities and Social Science (IJLRHSS)
Volume 05 - Issue 06, 2022
www.ijlrhss.com || PP. 119-126

Table 2 shows that 89percent of the respondents practiced choral reading in their classrooms whereas 11percent did not. All the respondents believed that choral and shared reading served as a model for fluent reading; error correction procedure and helped students to work together in cooperation. Ninety five percent of the respondents felt that choral and shared reading provided opportunity for less skilled readers to practice and receive support

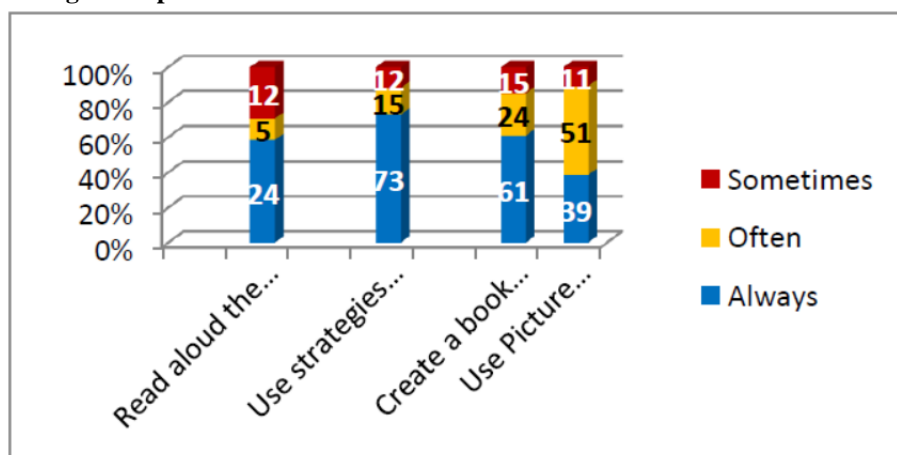**1.9 Reading strategies adopted in the classroom**

Figure 4: Reading strategies adopted in the classroom

Figure 4 shows that 73 percent of the respondents always used strategies to teach the components of reading. Seventy one percent always read aloud in the classroom. Sixty one percent always created a book collection in the classroom to provide access to reading and 51% often use picture books as important tool to motivate reading and 39% always use picture books.

1.10 Read aloud approach

Reading aloud is one important technique that a primary school teacher can do with the children. Reading aloud improves many of the skills like vocabulary building, fluency and expressive reading and help children to derive pleasure from reading. Research studies have proven incidental vocabulary acquisition in children who listen to their teachers' read aloud. The table below shows the results of the analysis of the thoughts of respondents on the role of read aloud approach in motivating the children to read.

Table 3: Read aloud approach

Sl. No	Read aloud approach	Frequency	Percentage
1.	**Read aloud to students** • Yes • No • Sometimes	67 1 8	88 1 10
2.	**Benefits of read aloud approach**		
	a) Introducing the book	65	87
	b) Talking about what you are reading	49	65
	c) Reading the book for the children	75	100
	d) Reflecting on the session on the part of the teacher.	62	83

From the table above it can be observed that eighty eight percent read aloud to their students. Cent percent of the respondents believed that reading the book for the children would prove to be beneficial. Eighty three percent felt that it is introducing the book which is beneficial.

International Journal of Latest Research in Humanities and Social Science (IJLRHSS)
Volume 05 - Issue 06, 2022
www.ijlrhss.com || PP. 119-126

Section 2: Comparison of the difference in the level of the awareness before and after the conduct of the training programme

The analysis of the results of the change in awareness level on reading skills, approaches and fundamentals of English language is discussed in this section.

2.1 Assessment of the level of awareness about reading skills, approaches and phonology

The level of the awareness of respondents about reading skills, approaches and phonology before and after the training programme is presented in the figure 5.
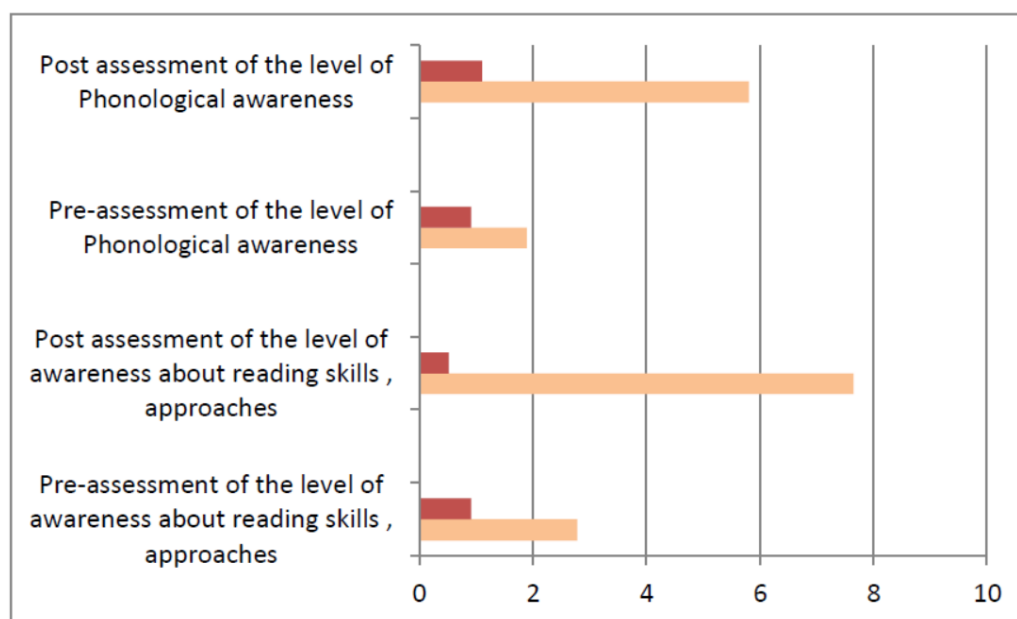

Figure 5: Difference in the level of awareness about reading skills, approaches and phonology

Results show that there is a marked difference in mean scores .The data was analyzed to compare the level of awareness of teachers about reading skills and the approaches they adopted before and after the training programme. Paired sample 't' test showed that the difference is highly significant at 0.000 levels (t = -30.546, p < 0.000). Here the p-value (0.000) is less than the significance level 0.05.Difference in level of phonological awareness is also significant (t - -22.365, p < 0.000). Therefore the falsity of null hypothesis is proved with the implication that the alternative hypothesis is acceptable.

2.2 Assessment of awareness about grammar, comprehension, vocabulary and spelling

The results of the analysis of the change in awareness level on reading skills , approaches and fundamentals of English language is given in the table 4.

The table given below shows that there is significant difference in the awareness of respondents on grammar before and after the intensive training (t= -6.764, p value = 0.000). The difference in the awareness about comprehension and vocabulary is also highly significant at 0.000 levels. (Comprehension – t value = -8.041; vocabulary and spelling = -27.563). Therefore the falsity of null hypothesis is proved with the implication that the alternative hypothesis is acceptable.

Table 4: Difference in the level of awareness about grammar, comprehension, vocabulary and spelling

Sl. No	Pairs	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean df	' t' value	P value
1.	**Assessment of awareness about grammar**					
a)	**Pre test**	**2.360**	**.6928**	**49**	**-6.764**	**0.000** **P<0.05** **Highly significant**
b)	**Post test**	**2.880**	**.6273**			
2.	**Assessment of awareness about comprehension**					
a)	**Pre test**	**3.320**	**.9570**	**49**	**-8.041**	**0.000** **P<0.05** **Highly significant**
b)	**Post test**	**3.960**	**.9026**			
	Assessment of awareness about vocabulary and spelling					
a)	**Pre test**	**1.060**	**.2399**	**49**	**-27.563**	**0.000** **P<0.05** **Highly significant**
b)	**Post test**	**3.580**	**.6728**			

**Difference is significant at 0.000 levels.

2.3 Evaluation of the programme by the respondents
The feedback of the respondents after the intensive training programme is illustrated in the figure given below:

The figure below shows that fifty two percent rated the programme as 'excellent' whereas 30% rated it as outstanding. All the respondents (100%) were satisfied with the training.
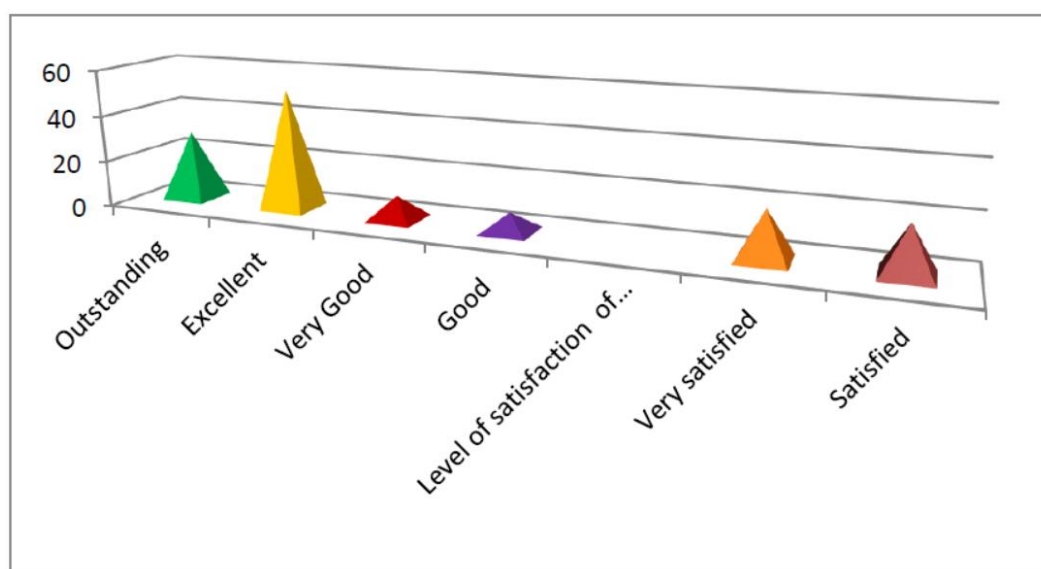

Figure 6: Evaluation of the programme by the respondents

Conclusion
Results showed that only very few respondents have attended a profession development programme to improve English Language. Majority are aware of the importance of reading skills and they appreciate read aloud approach and independent reading. Cent percent created posters and displayed their student's works. More than half of the respondents used smart class board, computer and role play in their classroom. All the respondents organized and displayed books in the classroom. They were aware of the beneficial aspects of

reading approaches. Intensive training programme played a significant role in improving the awareness of respondents on reading skills, approaches, phonological awareness, grammar, vocabulary and spelling and comprehension.

References

[1]. Catapano, S, Fleming, J., & Elias, M. (2009). Building an effective classroom library. Journal of Language and Literacy Education [Online], 5(1), 59-73.

[2]. Cullinan, B.E.(2000).Independent Reading and school achievement. School Library Media Research. Research Journal of the American Association of School Librarians.

[3]. Diana-Crina Marin, M. B. (2022). Strategies to Improve Children's Interest in Reading Activities. Research Gate.

[4]. Feitelson, P.A., and Goldstein.(1986).Patterns of book ownership and reading to young children. The reading Teacher.

[5]. Layne, S.L (2015).In Defense of Read Aloud Sustaining Best Practice. Stenhouse Publishers. Portland

[6]. Myrberg,E(2007).The effect of formal teacher education on reading achievement of 3rd-grade students in public and independent schools in Sweden Educational Studies, 33 (2) , pp. 145-162, Department of Education, Unit for Individual, Culture and Society.

[7]. National Curriculum Framework (2005); National Council for Educational Research and Training, New Delhi.

[8]. NCERT (2006); Position Paper, National Focus Group on Teaching of English; National Curriculum Framework 2005; National Council for Educational Research and Training, New Delhi.

[9]. Pearce, D., Gomez,J., Christensen, R., Pletcher,B and Fleming, K.(2018).Read two impress and the neurological impress method: Effects on elementary students' reading fluency, comprehension and attitude. Journal of Educational research

[10]. Retrieved from https://learningpolicyinstitute.org (Accessed on 21-09-2020)

[11]. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/228501791(accessed on 22-09-2020) Retrieved from https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00220671.2017.1393650 (accessed on 24-09-2020)

[12]. Retrieved from blogs.unicef.org (Accessed on (24-06-2022)

[13]. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1097102.pdf. (Accessed on 25-06-2022)