

Orientation workshop report on
Teacher's Communities of Learning Project (TCoL)
on 2nd March, 2010
at SSA Lab, SSA, Bangalore

The objectives of this workshop included:

1. To introduce teachers and department officials to TCoL program's goals and processes.
2. Share experiences of teacher capacity building and ICTs in Education
3. Debate on possibilities for teacher networking and computer aided learning
4. Provide basic computer training, office, internet, email (after assessing current skills)

The morning session started with a welcome address by Sri. Jayaram, SADPI (ET), from DSERT, who motivated the teachers to give their best to the project and expect full support from DSERT on their needs for creating teacher's networks. This was followed by Sri. Bapuji from Policy Planning Unit (PPU) of Department of Public Instruction (DPI), who said that computer learning is a trivial issue. Anyone can do it. Therefore teachers must not be afraid or think of it as a hard task. We must also go a step further and see how this can be integrated in the classroom.

Ms. Getzi Joel of Development Focus (DF) then talked about the work that DF does, their focus on primary education in marginalised sections of the country and their expectations from the project. This was followed by a short sharing session by Ms. Kritika Vishwanath from IT for Change (ITfC) on the situation of ICTs in Education in Karnataka, with focus on Yadgir in North Karnataka. However, the consensus was that the challenges faced are similar in Bangalore ICT schools as well.

After the tea-break, there was a presentation by The Teacher Foundation (TTF), which talked about the teacher training and teacher network building that the organisation is involved in. Ms. Sheela from TTF spoke of the different activities that they have undertaken with respect to this and the challenge of getting government school teachers to be part of the e-group that they have created.

This was followed by the Open House with Sri Gurumurthy Kasinathan from ITfC moderating a discussion with the teachers on what their expectations from 'Teacher's Communities of Learning' were. He stressed on the fact that this project will not focus on student's learning; thus teachers must be selfish and talk about their needs and what they want in terms of improving their own knowledge and teacher methods. Thus, the emphasis was on teacher's professional development.

Since, the participants were ranging from Maths, Science to Social Science and Language teachers, the variety of expectations and needs were also large.

As a response to what the teachers wanted from a knowledge flow; how it can be created and what they would like to do with the, the issues that emerged were:

1. Basic computer literacy
2. Teach the syllabus (example science experiments) with the help of the Internet and also introduce current affairs in this manner.
3. Learn more about history and get other information
4. Create and collect local language resources (Kannada, Telugu, Hindi, Urdu and Tamil)
5. Practise language pedagogy through ICTs, and introduce language learning tools for accents,

- phonetics etc. Also learn techniques of teaching English
6. Create e-mail ids (done). Create and share digital resources through this.
 7. Prepare audio-visual classes and audio-visual resources and enable ways of addressing practical issues in the classroom (for examples, teaching solar system, digestive system etc)
 8. Introduction to educational software
 9. Curriculum based training, ICT based education, Computer aided learning
 10. This network should be a space where can get support from other teachers through on-site workshops, trainings, cluster level resource centres and meetings
 11. Create communication processes between teachers on a regular basis.
 12. Create different online subject forums as well as create school websites.

So it was decided that these were some of the projects that TCoL would undertake.

The afternoon session started with an introduction by Gurumurthy on the vision and road map of the program. It began with a brain storming session on a local language name of the project. Some of the suggestions that emerged from the teachers were:

1. Shikshakarigagi shikshana
2. badlavanekagi shikshagara koota
3. shikshaka samudayake shikshana jalay
4. e shikshandalli shikshakaru
5. computer ke sath shikshak
6. e chaitanya

This brainstorming would be part of the process of this project. The idea is to debate, exchange ideas, share knowledge. The final output is not as important as the process of knowledge formation.

Finally, through a process of discussion and mutual consensus, the participants decided what this project would and would not do.

This project would:

1. Help teachers use computers/Internet (ICTs) for their own learning
2. Engage in different learning experiences
3. Conduct regular workshops
4. Have on-site visits for site support
5. Have interactions amongst teachers
6. Have interactions with teacher educators
7. Have interactions with others.

However, this project would not:

1. Buy hardware
2. Focus only on computer literacy

The **principle** of this project is that all participants must come on their free will (voluntary), be interested and keen to learn ICTs and ICT based learning.

This was followed by a demonstration of a free and open source maths educational software called GeoGebra by Ms. Bindu Thirumalai. In this session, she introduced the participants to how basic

geometry can be explained using three-dimensional figures along with integrating it to algebra and basic calculus. This was done through constructing a square, algebraic expressions etc. She also demonstrated some advance concepts and how they can be taught easily in a fun manner through this software.

The participant then were oriented to basics of computer use, internet and open office. They also created personal e-mails ids, which will be collated into an e-list.

The session ended with positive feedback from the participants and the next meeting date was fixed for 22nd and 23rd April. Till then, the participants would communicate with one another through e-mail and IT for Change would also do school visits and install Ubuntu wherever demanded with the permission of the school authorities.

As the SSA Lab was available the rest of the week, ITfC trained 15 teachers from this workshop extensively on basic computer use as well. This two day workshop was conducted in 2 batches of 5 and 10 each on 3rd, 4th of March and 5th, 6th of March respectively. The workshop covered basic text, number and image processing along with Internet and e-mail use. Some basic educational software was also introduced.

