

ASSET



Association for Social Studies Educators and Teachers

Newsletter Volume 1

July 2004

Dear colleagues,

We are pleased to share the first ASSET Newsletter with you. The main idea behind this biannual publication is to share the activities of our association and our future plans with you.

The Past six months have been very active and very creative for our association. Seven workshops and a summer session were conducted (details in the later portion).

The plans for future activities are as follows:

1. Regular monthly workshops

Like previous years, ASSET is planning to continue organizing its monthly workshops. It is aimed at facilitating the professional development of its members by enhancing their knowledge of their subject. It also aims at developing the critical abilities of the members to enable them to share their ideas and learn from each other with the sole purpose of improving their teaching and learning skills, which would ultimately benefit our students.



Some of the topics which we are planning for next year are as follows:

- Teaching History interactively
- Designing activities to teach the influence of physical geography and climate on human life
- Introduction of PowerPoint in lesson delivery

- Designing “directed activities related to text” (**DART activities**) to teach Social studies
- Arranging an exhibition on a topic or a theme
- Inclusion of environmental activities as a part of curriculum

2. First ASSET Olympiad

Our team is also planning to organize the **First ever ASSET Olympiad** for students. The planning in this regard is under process.

3. Collaboration with other NGO

ASSET has taken Environment as the theme for this year. In this regard we are planning to introduce Environmental Education through Participatory Action Learning (**EEPAL**) to ASSET members. EEPAL aims to sensitize students by providing opportunities for practical work aiming towards a better living environment.



EEPAL has been active in Rawalpindi and Islamabad since 1989. EEPAL also runs a program with five schools of Lahore. This year this program has been

extended to Karachi, Quetta and Kabirwala.

We hope you will enjoy reading our first newsletter.

Regards
Huma Ghaffar

ASSET WORKSHOPS

Teaching and learning History (December 27, 2003)

History is an integral part of social studies and different aspects of national, international and regional history have been included in the course content social studies curriculum. There is a wrong notion about teaching history that it is just a collection of information and the responsibility of a teacher is just to transfer it to students and thus students view it as a subject of memorization.

The workshop entitled “**Teaching and learning History**” was aimed at clearing these misconceptions and emphasized to introduce history as a subject which helps students in understanding the major key concepts in relation to time, change, development, process of analysis and organization. Dr Bernadette, the facilitator of workshop in her lively and informative workshop, dealt with the topic in a very effective manner so that participants could understand the true meaning of history, role of historian in recording history.

She began her presentation by asking few brainstorming questions and then commenting on the answers of these questions she explained that while teaching history, we must keep in mind that history is not just based on facts and figures, but the opinion and interpretation of historians plays a major role in what we learn as history. To elaborate her point she gave few examples from the history of Pakistan. She further emphasized that students should be taught concepts of time (chronology), change and development. This explanation was followed by different teaching strategies. At the end of a session participants worked in-groups and the session ended on a healthy discussion on the presentations by participants.

Map skills: Making sense out of Maps (January 24, 2004)

If we are looking for right path to reach our destination or wish to know the exact position of any country in the world or about the physical features, political position, demographic, economic and weather condition of any country, **maps** provide us all these details. But one certainly needs some skills for the interpretation of the lines, symbols, colors and scales present on the maps.

These skills were aimed at in the workshop with the title “**Maps skills: Making Sense out of Map**”. The

facilitator of this workshop was Mr.Sadiq Merchant and it was basically activity based.

Before forming groups of the participants and introducing activities, he gave the basic information about maps. He explained cardinal directions, intermediate directions, equator, longitude, latitude, and map keys. A handout was also provided to all the participants in relation to these informations. Then groups were formed, activity sheets were provided, and participants learnt interesting activities about distance, symbols, directions, absolute location of different regions etc.

PTAN conference: Workshop on environment (February 14, 2004)

As you are aware that ASSET operates under the umbrella of The Professional Teacher Association Network (PTAN). It was established in mid 2002 and it is a cluster of seven voluntary associations striving for the professional

development of teachers. Each association is managed by teachers on a voluntary basis. On February 14, 2004 PTAN arranged its first conference, in which ASSET arranged a workshop on the topic **ENVIRONMENT**.

This workshop was conducted by Hussain Tawawalla, the vice chair of our Association.

He dealt with certain important aspects of environmental issues in relation to Social Sciences. In the due course a comprehensive definition of Social Science was formulated and all the participants agreed that it is such a vast subject that encompasses almost all the subjects.

In this interactive session the participants were discussed in groups what are the environmental issues with relation to their area, city, province, country, etc. They wrote them on different cards provided to them and these cards were displayed systematically after discussion.

In the end it was announced that ASSET has taken **ENVIRONMENT** as the theme for the year 2004 and many workshop would be conducted on this theme.

Importance of current affairs in teaching Social Studies (February 28, 2004)

The workshop on current affairs basically highlighted the role and importance of Newspapers in the awareness of current issues. The facilitator Sadiq Merchant discussed



the importance and significance of Newspaper and its importance in the lesson delivery in a Social Studies class.

He briefed about the different sections of Newspaper and explained how teachers can use them. Different aspects of good newspaper article were also discussed.

As an activity different groups were formed. Each group chose an article from the newspaper and planned a lesson on it. In the end, each group presented their lesson and the workshop ended with a lively discussion.

The value of a good discussion in a Social Studies

Class

(March 27, 2004)

In this workshop the main emphasis was on understanding the objectives for initiating a classroom discussion on a particular topic.



Mr.Hussain

Tawawalla, the facilitator of this workshop began his presentation through a discussion on a very important question. The question was 'what are the elements of communication?'

Discussing different replies, the facilitator guided the participants towards the main theme of workshop.

Value of a good discussion was highlighted. Proper method of group forming and the methods to initiate a creative discussion in the class were mentioned. Then guidelines for conducting a classroom discussion were explained. Thus elements of discussion, its etiquette, taboos, do's/don'ts and challenges were discussed at length. Participants very actively participated in the whole session.

Then groups were formed. Each group was provided with a moderator and they were given a topic to discuss. In the end one participant from each group presented a brief summary of their discussion.

Developing teaching aids: A Social Studies Class

Newsletter

(April 24, 2004)

Mrs.Asfiya Mahmood and Mr.Hussain Tawawalla jointly facilitated this workshop. The objective of this workshop was to facilitate social studies teachers enabling them to engage their students in the compilation of a newsletter and to use this as means to share information on Social Studies topics.

Facilitators began their presentation by building the concept of newsletter. They explained its basic component

of it i.e. idea, identification of target, selection of words, frequency of publishing time, and also the correct method to write it.

Then Mrs. Asfiya gave a presentation on the layout and structure of a newsletter. This was followed by a discussion on the identification of themes for newsletter.

Finally, participants were broken into groups. Each group selected a topic, had a discussion about the structure and content of the newsletter and then they all created interesting and informative Social Studies newsletters.

Developing teaching aid: Thematic Poster

(May 29, 2004)

This workshop was the continuation of the previous workshop on newsletter. In this workshop the main emphasis was on the development of thematic posters as a tool for widening the interest of Social Studies among students.

In his interesting presentation, the facilitator Mr. Sadiq Merchant discussed certain important points such as

- Why create a poster?
- What are the important components of a poster?
- What should be the design of a poster?
- How posters should be displayed?

He then showed certain posters to enhance the above-mentioned points. The most interesting aspect of the workshop was the group work. The participants were given different letters and alphabets and they had to make posters on the theme of environment.

Each group prepared four posters and they were all bilingual. Finally all the posters were displayed on soft board and participants visited them and wrote their feedback.

If you require the activities regarding above mentioned workshops, feel free to contact us.

QUAT ABLE QUOTES

- * A book is like a garden carried in the pocket.
- * Don't be afraid to learn, knowledge is weightless a treasure you can always carry easily.
- * The purpose of education is to replace an empty mind with an open one.

TEACHERS CORNER

LEARN WITH FUN: EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIPS

Teachers use different teaching strategies and activities to explain the course content. Their objective is to make it interesting for students. Along with that they want to enhance the learning skills of the students and also develop their critical thinking. There are many interesting teaching strategies; Educational field trip is one of them.

Field trips provide valuable learning experience and better understanding of the concepts. They also provide students an opportunity to observe and experience things in real situation. Field trips are important for the following reasons:

- They increase students' knowledge and understanding.
- They add realism to the topic of study.
- They provide an opportunity to develop and enhance students' socialization and citizenship skills.

While selecting a site for the visit, it is very essential to understand its relation to the course content. For example visit of history museums and historical sites are important in teaching history; natural history museums for science; factories and firms for economics, and welfare organizations for civics etc.

Planning: For the success of an educational field trip, proper planning is very important. While planning a teacher must have the clarity of the objectives which in turn help in the selection of the correct site.

The next step is proper planning at the administrative level which means

- seeking approval from the administration,
- informing the administration about the site,
- finalizing the date of visit,
- taking parental permission,
- informing other teachers
- arrangements of transportation, etc

My Visit: We planned a visit of SOS children village Malir Cantt for class IV. SOS children village is the home for orphan children and it is supervised by a non-governmental organization. This site was selected in relation to the topic on charity and welfare work. The main objective of this trip was to enable the students to recognize the need and importance of charity and welfare work. It was also aimed at to give them first hand knowledge about SOS village and also motivate them to participate in some kind of welfare work.

Pre-activity: As a Pre-activity students were asked to collect information about the SOS village either from Internet or Library. After this activity students were much aware about the SOS logo, its mission and vision and why and how it was formed.

While-activity: Two work sheets were also provided to each student, one was for student's observations and another was a questionnaire, which students were supposed to complete.

The Trip: On the day of the visit students had all the basic information. They knew their tasks. Realizing the importance of welfare work, they brought some gifts for the children of SOS village. When we reached the site, groups of students were formed and they were given instructions on discipline, behaviour, etc. In an organized manner, they started working on their worksheets, took interviews and photographs. Students were motivated and enthusiastic to share their views and knowledge with other children.

After the visit the next task was follow up activities. Students were given the freedom to choose any medium for sharing their information. Some students used charts on which they drew SOS logo, wrote its history, mission and daily routine of SOS children. Other students presented the information in the form of booklets and models. They also shared their findings in the school assembly. They also felt the responsibility to send the letter of thanks to the administration for their cooperation.

In the end I can say that with the help of proper organization and planning and, of course, with the clarity of objectives and motivation of students, this trip was a success.

Hawa Haji Mohammad
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Looking forward for your active participation in ASSET activities, and also feedback on our first newsletter.

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