

Original Paper

Exploring the Impact of Teaching French as an Enrichment Program to Primary School Students of Municipal Corporation of Delhi for Academic Session 2023-24

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Abstract

Students of the Primary schools run by Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) lack resources to avail enrichment programs like learning foreign languages and cultures as they come from economically weaker part of the community. This lack motivated to design Josuman French Enrichment Program for MCD school students to teach French language in the mother tongue of the students following recent NEP 2020 regulations. The impact of the program was analyzed after teaching it in 80 schools of three MCD zones, East, South and Central Delhi for the complete academic year of 2023-24 to the interested students of 4th and 5th classes. The feedback from the school heads and class teachers was collected to analyze change in the affective attributes of the French program students. The weekly observational data and class exam results were collected from the French program teachers to analyze change in cognitive attributes of their students. The results of the study proved that students learnt to speak and write in French. There has been increase in the interest level and enthusiasm in learners. The impact of the French program has been so positive that more MCD schools have requested to include this enrichment program for their students.

Keywords

French language, Primary schools, MCD, French students, Enrichment program

1. Introduction

Context: Education is of prime importance to the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and provides free and compulsory education to children from the working community and economically poor sections of Delhi up to the age of 14 years. The MCD education department encourages their students to learn new skills and gain knowledge beyond basic classroom learning. “Josuman French” is an enrichment program

supported by the Department of Education to teach French language to 4th and 5th class students in their schools in Delhi. This French program is uniquely designed in accordance with the National Education Policy, NEP 2020, in the native language of the students. Therefore, the language of instruction is Hindi by French teachers. The goal of the French program is to teach the French language as a tool to enrich young children with an interest in learning a new language and a new culture that is unfamiliar to them. The program uses a communicative approach through singing, recitation, role play, art and writing activities in the classroom. The teaching is student-centered and motivates the active participation of students in speaking, writing and reading in French. The purpose of study is to investigate the teaching effectiveness of the Josuman French curriculum in the academic session 2023-24 in primary schools in three different zones of MCD, Delhi.

About MCD Schools: In Delhi, there is a multi management system for school education. There are schools, managed by Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC), the Directorate of Education & Delhi Cantonment Board (DCB). Number of schools are being managed by private organizations, trusts etc. But MCD and Directorate of Education have the major share of student population particularly at elementary level. MCD has the responsibility of imparting primary education only. (Retrieved from <https://drn.delhi.gov.in/drn/educational-scenario-district>, New Delhi, 20.05.2023). The education department of MCD works for the welfare and child intellectual development by providing free elementary education. The children enrolled in MCD schools are from labour section, economically weaker section (EWS) and the students' full attendance is a big challenge for the schools to maintain in spite of mid meals and basic education is given in stress free environment. This lack of attendance by students at elementary level can make them lose interest in studying further and fall into wrong directions. Therefore, enrichment courses/programs can instill interest in children to learn new skills. There has been many enrichment theories have been proposed, developed, and studied in the field of only gifted education and enrichment during the last few decades. There hasn't been much research in field of using foreign languages as an enrichment programs in Indian Context in the mother tongue of the learner. Lot more exploration and studies are required. As per Cambridge dictionary, the word 'enrichment' means the act or process of improving the quality or power of something by adding something else. (<https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/English/enrichment> # google_vignette, Delhi, 4/4/24)

In child education, enrichment based classes fill up gaps in child's curriculum and allow them to dive deeper into topics they are interested in. These classes are known for offering children more than what they can learn in school, as lessons are generally less structured and open for children to be more creative and natural.

The educational principles of Rabindra Nath Tagore emphasized on education through enrichment based courses. He preferred education to flourish in natural surroundings by giving child freedom and creativity. He favored discussion, activity or learning by doing method. He emphasized on joyful

creative teaching techniques in a free and universal manner. Tagore encouraged students to be creative and express themselves through art forms such as music, dance, drama, and painting. (Retrieved from: https://www.ripublication.com/ijbamspl17/ijbamv7n2spl_14.pdf, 10.04.24, Delhi). There is lot of research required in Indian school education context on studying the impact of enrichment courses.

About the program: Josuman French Enrichment Program is an effort to revive some Tagore's principles by teaching French as foreign language in the mother tongue of the student through various creative activities to engage every student in the class.

No foreign language subject has been initiated in any MCD primary schools before. With the approval of Additional Commissioner and Education Director, Smt. Alka R. Sharma, French program started in 2019 as the pioneer program to teach French to Grade 4 and 5 students. The aim was to teach French language in such a unique manner which can bring emotional as well as cognitive enhancement in the students.

The study was intended to find answers to the following questions:

- 1) What changes have been in the affective attributes in the students learning French through Josuman Program?
- 2) What changes have been cognitive attributes in the students learning French through Josuman Program?
- 3) What have been the observations of the Principals of MCD Schools?
- 4) What have been the observations of teachers of MCD Schools?

The objective of the study is to measure the effectiveness of teaching French enrichment program to elementary level students in their mother tongue.

Theoretical Literature: Conceptual Background of Josuman French Program: The conceptual design of the program is based on the paradigm of constructivism, which isn't new, but it's one of the big ideas for today's education to promote student-centered active learning curriculum where teacher becomes a facilitator & main focus is on the student. In this program, the French language learning follows constructivism's central idea which states that "human learning gets *constructed*, as learners build new knowledge upon the foundation of previous understanding or learning." There have been previous studies with significant attention to the affective domain in language learning and the role of foreign language in emotional development of learners. The previous studies also indicate that at emotional level, language learners experience a variety of both negative and positive emotions such as enjoyment and pride as discussed by Goetz et al. (2008), fear as discussed by Ellis (1994), and anxiety discussed by Horwitz & Cope (1986).

Emotional experiences matter in relevance to the learning of a foreign language since students mostly come with previous positive or negative experiences; sometimes the new learning environment is very different from previous ones, and they may have a diversity of motives for engaging in foreign language learning. The interplay of all these variables in one emotional event during classroom instruction may have different meanings for individual students and cause diverse effects on students'

motivation (Do & Schallert, 2004). Garret and Young (2009) explored the emotional reactions originated during a Portuguese as a foreign language course for a period of eight weeks. Garret and Young (2009) described 255 positive emotional experiences and 69 negative ones. Positive and negative experiences were mainly produced because of the teachers' voices, social relations, cultural learning and language awareness. Therefore, the design of the instructional material of Josuman French Enrichment Program is based on the concept of Constructivism which is connected to the student's previous knowledge in his mother tongue, Hindi to learn French language. Through learning French, students gain enriched personality.

2. Methodology

This study was conducted in the primary schools of Municipal Corporation of Delhi covering 80 schools of three zones, the East Delhi zone, Central Delhi and South Delhi zones. There was one French teacher in one school to teach 25 to 45 students and total count of students was 3500.

To analyze the effectiveness of the French program the data was collected from three groups: French teachers, school Principals and school teachers of classes 4 and 5 with the help of Questionnaires. Separate Online Questionnaires were shared with respective groups. The feedback from the school heads and class teachers was collected to analyze change in the affective attributes of the French program students. The weekly observational data and class exam results were collected from the French program teachers to analyze change in cognitive attributes of their students.

Questionnaire for school principal of MCD primary schools included following questions:

- In your opinion, is Josuman French program effective for your students?
- In your opinion, did your students enjoy learning French from Josuman French Teacher?
- Did your students showed interest in learning French?
- Can your students speak French now?
- Describe your overall experience about the French program in your school in few words.
- How did you find teaching behavior of Josuman French Teacher?
- Would you like the French program to continue in the school?

Questionnaire for school teachers of MCD primary schools included following questions:

- In your opinion, is Josuman French program effective for your students?
- In your opinion, did your students enjoy learning French from Josuman French Teacher?
- Did your students showed interest in learning French?
- Can your students speak French now?
- Describe your overall experience about the French program in your school in few words.
- Describe your experience about French Teacher who taught in your school.
- How did you find teaching behavior of Josuman French Teacher?
- Would you like the French program to continue in the school?

Questionnaire for French teachers of the program included questions based on their classroom observations and final exam results of their students which were analyzed on Bloom's Taxonomy on its six levels:

- Knowledge. Remembering basic French knowledge learnt during the whole academic session in the classroom.
- Comprehension: This included students' ability to grasp the meaning of French words by translating in Hindi. Ability to grasp the meaning of French words/phrases.
- Application: This refers to the ability to use learned material in new and concrete situations. Demonstrating correct pronunciation of words/phrases. Applying rules, methods, concepts as explained in the class. Requires higher level of understanding than comprehension through role playing & Group presentation.
- Analysis: This refers to the ability to break down material into its component parts so that its organizational structure may be understood. Learning outcomes here represent a higher intellectual level than comprehension and application because they require an understanding of both the content and the structural form of the material.
- Synthesis: This refers to the ability to put parts together to form a new whole. This may involve the production of unique communication (theme or speech) Learning outcomes in this area stress creative behaviors, with major emphasis on the formulation of new patterns by the students.
- Evaluation: Evaluation is concerned with the ability to judge the value of French for the student.

3. Results

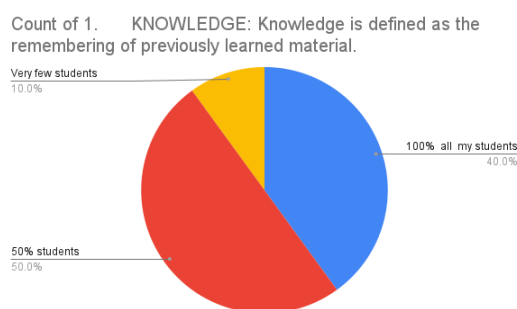


Figure 1. Count of Knowledge

Based on the responses of the French teachers of 80 schools together, it showed that 40% of the total schools students could retain 100% the French vocabulary learnt in the class. They remembered everything. 50 % of the total students could recollect only 50% during their final exams and only 10% could not remember anything.

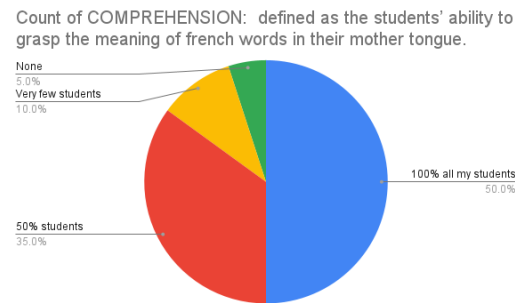


Figure 2. Count of Comprehension

50% teachers stated that all students were able to comprehend the meaning of French vocabulary in their mother tongue. 35% teachers stated that 50% students were capable to comprehend. 12 teachers stated that only few students or none were capable.

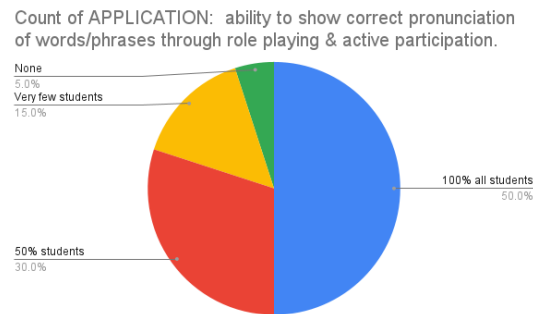


Figure 3. Count of Application

50% teachers stated that all were able to apply their learning concepts into actions during classroom activities. 30% teachers stated that only half of the class was able to participate. 20% teachers stated that low or no participation by their students was recorded.

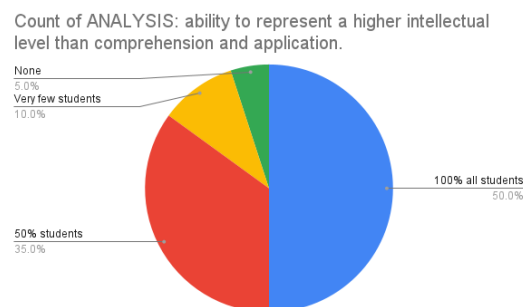


Figure 4. Count of Analysis

50% of the teachers stated that all students were able to analyze and make corrections of their mistakes in oral and written French vocabulary. 35% teachers stated only 50% of their class was able to analyze and self-correct themselves and others in the classroom practice. There were 15% of schools where students were not able to do analysis.

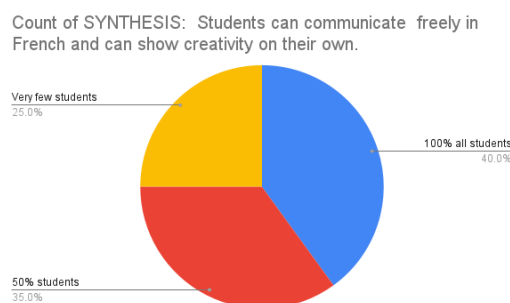


Figure 5. Count of Synthesis

40% of the teachers stated that all their students were able to communicate freely. They could introduce themselves in French. Other 35% teachers stated that 50% of their class was able to participate freely in French. 25% teachers stated that very few students were able to communicate in French.

Following affective attributes changes were observed by the French teachers:

- 1). 45 % of the total schools, all students demonstrated self-reliance in working independently' in French class and 55% of schools only 50% of class could work independently.
- 2). In 55% of schools all the students showed commitment in French class and rest the 45% of schools, only 50% of students were committed.
- 3). In 50% of the schools, all students showed good teamwork and collectivism. In 45% of schools, only 50% of students showed teamwork.
- 4). Problem solving attitude was shown by all the students if 40% of schools and in 60% schools, 50% students showed problem solving attitude.
- 5). High Interest level in learning French language was shown by all the students of 85% of schools. In 15% of schools only 50% of the students showed interest.
- 6). All the students of 60% schools participated in class discussion with the French teacher, whereas in 40% of schools, only 50% of students showed participation.

The responses of the school heads and school teachers were positive. All found the French program very effective for their students and they all want this French program to be taught again in their schools. All agreed that their students showed high level of interest in learning French. They stated that all their students enjoyed learning French from Josuman French teacher and all were able to speak in French language. The class teachers found this program motivational for their students. The teachers stated that their students wanted to learn with great enthusiasm.

4. Discussion & Conclusion

Based on the responses from all the respondents, it can be concluded that teaching Josuman French Enrichment Program to elementary level students in their mother tongue was highly effective in the primary schools of Municipal Corporation of Delhi. The students were observed on daily basis by their school teachers and they stated that their students were very excited to learn and sing French poems. The students were able to speak in French language. The students became highly motivated to learn new language without any external pressure. This motivation gave confidence to these students to learn and participate in class activities. More research is required to explore the effectiveness in more depth. The changes in the affective attributes of the students were prominent in their active participation in discussion with the French teacher. The high level of interest was observed in all the students in learning French. The changes in the cognitive attributes of the students were prominent in remembering French vocabulary in more than 50% of the total students. The students were able to correct themselves. They were able to freely communicate in French in class.

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