



Designing for Children

- With focus on 'Play + Learn'

Designing for 'Multiculturalism'

: Children's Experience

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Abstract : The paper illustrates a design of task-based learning material for class 6 to 9. The design allows students realize their creative and innovative potentials in unison with the development of sensitivity and awareness towards the cultural diversity of India. The approach of this design provides play + learn environment and develops concept of multiculturalism. The paper is based on the field trial of the learning material.

Keywords : multiculturalism, cultural diversity, designing, literature, learning material.

1. Introduction

To land on the concept of 'multiculturalism' is a matter of exigency for the harmonious and progressive future of India. The concept of fostering values of multiculturalism in children has been a part of school curriculum and learning material but in a conventional way, and mostly shown inadequate outcome. It is important that the young minds as the future citizens of India develop values of multiculturalism. The effort made here is to provide a design of task-based learning material of literature/language classroom.

This learning material is based on the theme of developing the concept of multiculturalism through various interactive tasks. Idea of developing values of multiculturalism through cultural awareness, cultural interaction and cross-cultural dialogue is explored in this design of learning material.

The design comprises: 1. Philosophical base of the content taught- development of values, attitudes, awareness and critical thinking, 2. Socio-cultural theoretical concept - cultural awareness and cultural interaction are the base of developing values of multiculturalism,

3. Methods of learning - experimental learning, collaborative activity, and hand-on project, 4. Procedure - task-based learning, designing and its implementation. The activities which are designed here present ample scope for children to work: 1. creatively to innovate designs and 2. learn with theme-based design of learning material. The process of the design involves knowledge gathering, analysis, discovery, and conceptualization.

2. Method

The learning material pursues the following method and procedure:

2.1. Theoretical Foundation

I. The conception of designing this learning material holds the values of the learning theory on play and learn conceptualized by Maria Montessori (1870-1952) and Gijubhai Badheka (1885-1939) that promotes students develop a love of learning that includes attitudes of confidence, concentration and independence.

II. 'Literature' and 'Designing' is innately constructivist; inspire many forms of expression and involvement. Both upholds learning theory of constructivism and establishes constructivist engagement in learning (Piaget, 1952 & Vygotsky, 1978). Unison of literature and designing is a powerful view of learning as development that emphasizes the active role of learners in building understandings and making sense of the world. Designing as means of learning develops creativity and innovativeness while literature inspires learners beyond mere passive reception of it to higher levels of critical interpretation, creative expression, and reflective discernment. As learners interpret literature piece, they internalize and identify values and attitudes of multiculturalism.

2.2. Framework of the Design

The framework of the design is integrated with language and literature subject. This learning material begins with a piece of literature and proceeds with various tasks.

2.3. Nature of the Tasks

The various tasks include the following experiences for children:

1. exploring and research
2. knowledge gathering
3. designing

4. connecting and comparing
5. presentation

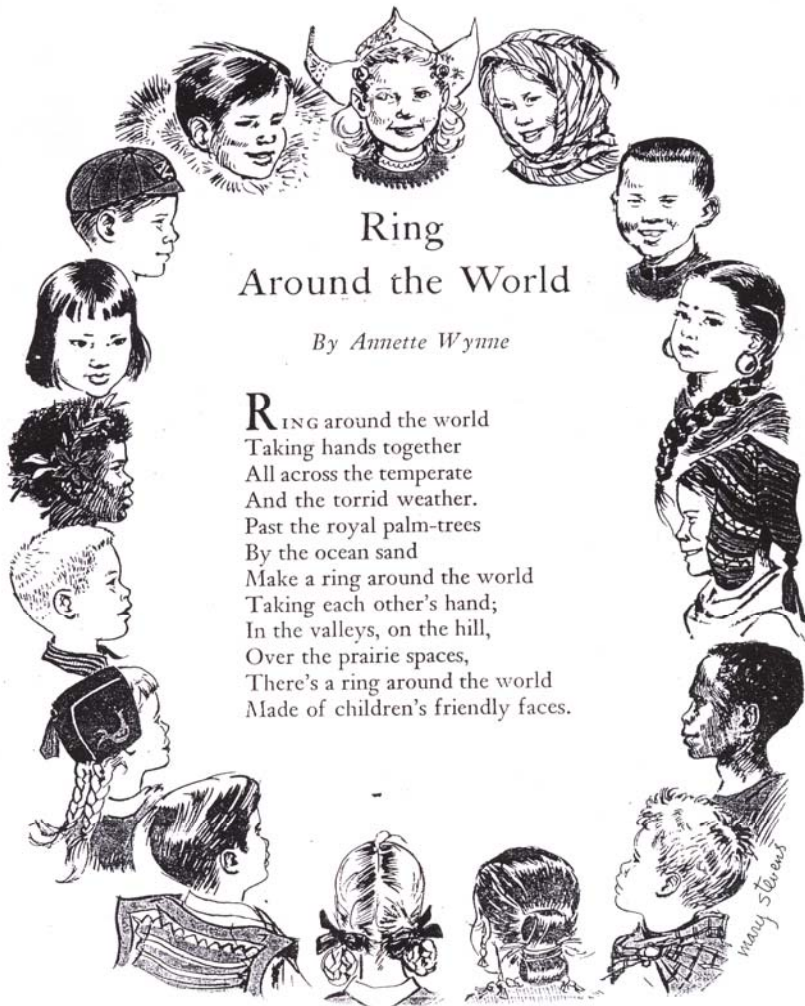
2.4. Field Trial

This learning material was tried out in five schools, class 8-10 at Anand, Gujarat as a part of a PhD research.

2.5. Design and Procedure of the Learning Material

Literature Lesson : Ring Around the World

- **Level:** 6 to 9 class
 - **Materials Required:** Poem- 'Ring around the World', drawing sheets, hardboard paper, pencil, colors, and adhesives.
 - **Time:** 5-7 hours.
 - **Student Preparation:** Gather information from various encyclopedias, books on Indian cultures, and interviews.
 - **Note to the Teacher:** Reading a poem is for both educational and aesthetic purposes. Make the classroom environment interactive and assist students to recognize the theme - values of multiculturalism.
- I. **Lead In: Read and Recite the Poem**



Ring Around the World

By Annette Wynne

RING around the world
 Taking hands together
 All across the temperate
 And the torrid weather.
 Past the royal palm-trees
 By the ocean sand
 Make a ring around the world
 Taking each other's hand;
 In the valleys, on the hill,
 Over the prairie spaces,
 There's a ring around the world
 Made of children's friendly faces.

II. Read, Think and Match

Study the following lines from the poem; match it with the appropriate meaning.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. 'ring around the world' | 1. to begin friendship |
| 2. 'taking hands together' | 2. a chain of brotherhood created by people around the world. |
| 3. 'all across the temperate and the torrid weather' | 3. the world is joined through friendly behavior of children around the world. |
| 4. 'taking each other's hand' | 4. to get united |
| 5. 'there's a ring round the world, made of children's friendly faces' | 5. the ring passes through all kind of climate areas. |

III. Letter to a Friend

Conversation between people can build 'Friendship'. What message do you want give to other children across the world on friendship ? Write the message on the given post-card.

To,



IV. Paint It

It is good to do some painting. Paint the geographical area described in the poem.



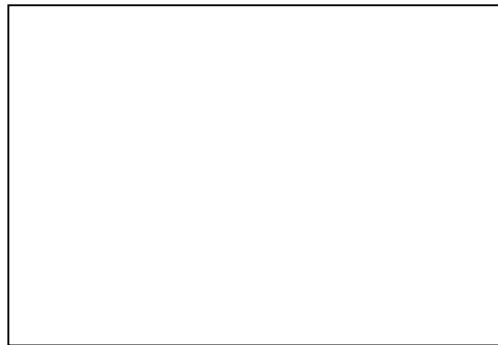
Palm Tree

Prairie Land



Hill

Valley



Ocean

V. Design a Spin Wheel: Ring Around India

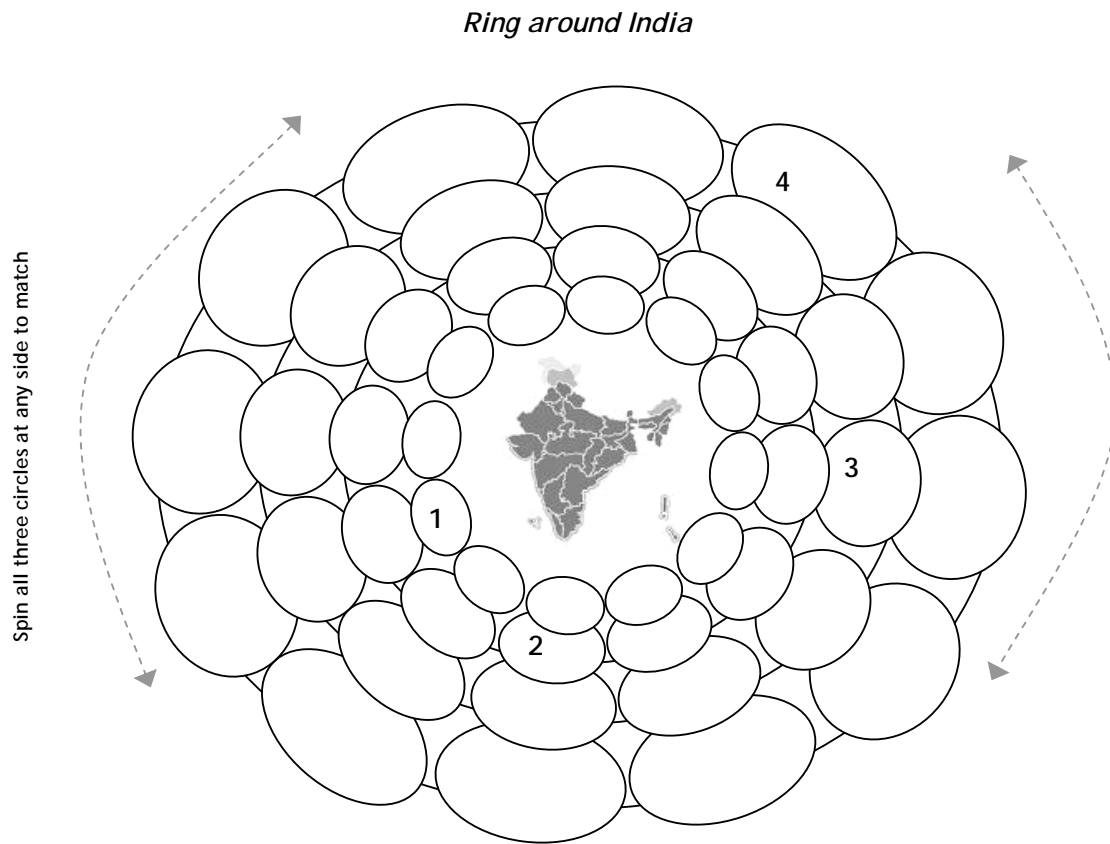
Here is an interesting game for you. Cut three large cardboard circles in three different sizes: first should be of 4 ft. second should be 3 ft. and third should be 2 ft. Now cut many oval shapes from cardboard. Fix the ovals on each circle. Fix a map of India at the middle of the smallest circle. Fix all three circles from their center in a way that you can spin them individually.

Now collect information of different states of India. The information includes language, fair, festivals, dance, attire, and craft. You can paint, paste picture, write, or make a collage. Add this information in each oval. Do not write the information in sequence of the ovals but make it random. Write name of the state on the inner circle.

For example : Inner circle 1 = state's name
Middle circle 2 = language
Middle circle 3 = fair, festival, dance
Outer circle 4= attire and craft

What is the game then ? Now mismatch all the circles and tell your classmates to spin the circles and match the ovals with its state.

The design should look like this :



3. Result and Discussion

It has been observed during the field trial that the concept of learning the values of multiculturalism and developing creativity through literature and designing received satisfactory responses. This type of learning was a fresh experience for the learners. The design of the learning material allowed the students to perform collaborative research and presentation. The concept of cultural awareness developed sensitivity and respect for the cultural diversity. The structure of the design helped the students to construct their own creative invention.

Concept taught through learning material and designing:

- cultural awareness.
- cross-cultural interaction.

- identifying, recognizing the difference and similarities of cultures.
- attitude, values and skills: respect, acceptance, recognition of differences and similarities of cultural diversity.
- understand that every culture is unique.
- compare and contrast different cultures.
- understand other's way of life is also valued and respected.
- develop critical thinking, abstract reasoning.
- learning through experimentation.
- project-based learning
- develop crafts, creativity, conceptual thinking
- development of interdisciplinary skills & presentation skills
- work independently and collaboratively through designing.
- develop insight of research and artistic responses.

4. Conclusion:

Combination of 'literature' and 'language' with 'designing' as a learning material endeavor a playful atmosphere and holistic learning. Literature and designing nurture together nurture cognitive and affective domain. Various tasks engender awareness of different cultural patterns and thus children develop recognition and respect towards cultural diversity of India. This innovative method of designing learning material inculcates values of multiculturalism.

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