

Ms. Hasin and one of her students

It happened at the 5th cluster meeting in Ullapara, Sirajganj. In the reflective session of the cluster meeting, teachers usually share the challenges they face in their classrooms while using EIA materials and/or techniques. Ms. Ummul Hasin, one of the teachers of Jogjibonpur Government Primary School, Ullapara, Sirajganj shared something different, which touched me immensely and I want to share it with you.

One day, Ms. Hasin was teaching Class 3 and she started the lesson by using the EIA poster. I know we all agree that the EIA posters all look really beautiful. The students also love to talk about the posters and get engaged with them very quickly. During the poster presentation, suddenly a student came to the front of the classroom and requested Ms. Hasin to sit on a student bench. Initially, the teacher thought there might be some problem with the student: he probably did not understand what she was trying to say or maybe he could not see the picture from the back? The reason she thought her student had a problem was that he had always been a 'back bencher' who hardly paid attention to the lessons. He was also labeled a weak student by other teachers at her school. Yet, it turned out she had jumped to the conclusion too fast. When Ms. Hasin asked the student what his problem was, the student said there was no problem at all. He just wanted his teacher to take a seat with the other students.



Ms. Hasin became really curious to know what the student wanted to do. So she decided to give him space. To her great surprise, she found that the little boy intended to take the role of the teacher. He started asking the class by pointing at the posters 'What is this?', 'What is the colour?', 'How many...?' and all sorts of similar questions. According to Ms. Hasin, the student was so excited to do this that he took the whole poster reading session and led the other students without any help from the teacher. After that, other students also felt encouraged to do the same. In fact, it became a competition among the students in this class to play the role of the teacher on a regular basis.

While telling her story, the teacher got emotional as she never saw such enthusiasm among her students about the English lessons. She always felt it was difficult for her to make the students understand the lessons, which she mainly tried to do by practicing vocabulary in chorus, with a strong focus memorization in order to make her life easier. Now she felt comfortable to try new things out in the classroom. She said that a few months ago she could simply not have imagined that anything would change students' performance so much. And that even the weakest students seem to be taken on board. She is surprised to see that the students do not only actively participate in the class in a more creative way, but also feel confident to take the teachers' role and speak English in front of the teacher and the other students. And this all happened in such a short period of time!

I really feel encouraged by this story from Ms. Hasin. I will leave the pedagogical analysis up to other people, but for me personally it gives me a profound sense of satisfaction and pride that EIA is making significant positive changes in the teaching and learning situation in Bangladesh. And that I am contributing to this success!

Mostan Zida Al Noor

Teacher Development Coordinator
English in Action