The Journal of Education and Educational Development (JoEED) is a biannual peer reviewed journal published by the Department of Education, Institute of Business Management. It publishes local, national and international research papers: empirical researches, action researches, case studies, research briefs, critical reviews, debates, and book reviews focused on interdisciplinary themes of education and educational development. The purpose of this journal is to provide a platform and invite work for dissemination from policy makers, social scientists, researchers, teachers at university and school level, and research students globally.

Aims and Scope

The aim of this journal is to publish original and unpublished contributions that focus on both theoretical and applied research studies in education and related disciplines, offering diversity and variety to its readers. The journal in each issue through publishing different articles, case studies, book reviews, and critical reviews intends to present its audience with interdisciplinary themes on education and educational development. The journal also provides a platform to researchers and academics for sharing their scholarly work globally.

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All unpublished submissions for this journal undergo a plagiarism test and a strict blind peer review process by at least two national and international referees. The submissions made to JoEED undergo strict editorial/review process. The author(s) who are interested in getting their work published in the journal are considered to have accepted the editorial policy.

Publication Frequency and Format

We aim to publish our issues bi-annually; specifically in June and December.

Contribution

The editorial team welcomes contributions on issues and themes related to but not limited to education and educational development and interdisciplinary themes listed herewith:
### Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic advancement</th>
<th>Inclusive education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult education</td>
<td>Innovation and best practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical appraisal of education</td>
<td>Language and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum development</td>
<td>Managing institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental education</td>
<td>Policy and development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early childhood development</td>
<td>Strategic management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational management</td>
<td>Teacher development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging trends in education</td>
<td>Teaching and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Globalization</td>
<td>Technology integration</td>
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This journal brings together many ideas that have been discussed for some time in Pakistan and around the world. My hope is that the journal will clarify educational issues and will join together with academia in bringing about changes needed to move researchers towards greater intellectual insights.

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<table>
<thead>
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<th>Title</th>
<th>Institution</th>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Iqra University, Pakistan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Editorial Note

Journal Advisory Board

Fauzia Rafiq & Yousuf Sharjeel
Level of Inhibition in Trained Secondary School Teachers: Evidence from Pakistan 81-100

Asma Hasnain & Shelina Bhamani
Exploring Perceptions of University Students Pertaining to Grades over Knowledge and Skills 101-115

Aliya Sikandar & Nasreen Hussain
Language Ideologies in a Business Institute: A Case Study of Linguistic and Socio-Cultural Realities 116-133

Eijaz Gul
Efficacy of Skill Development Techniques: Empirical Evidence 134-144

Bareerah Hafeez Hoorani
Impact of Cooperative Learning in Developing Students’ Cognitive Abilities for Academic Achievement 145-155

Ambreen Barwani
Effective Debriefing Helps Achieve Learning Objectives in the Classroom 156-165

Lubna Ali
Book Review
Theorizing Global Studies 166-168

Citation Index 169

Call for Papers 170

Guidelines for Contributors 171-172
Level of Inhibition in Trained Secondary School Teachers: Evidence from Pakistan

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Abstract

The study found that the inhibition amongst trained secondary school teachers in using learned teaching methodologies is caused due to the lack of content knowledge, insufficient support from the administration, scarce continuous professional development opportunities, unsupportive environment, large class size, in-efficiency to integrate technology, inadequate post-training support and lack of motivation. The study also concluded that teaching inhibition is not possible to be controlled by virtue of teacher’s training skills only. This study recommends that trained teachers be permitted to experiment within their permissible limits to try new teaching methodologies under supervised conditions and reflect upon them intermittently. Continuous support of the school administration is the key to successfully implementing the newly-acquired pedagogic and scholastic skills for an educational institution to improve its teacher education programme.

Keywords: Teacher inhibition, prospective teachers, learned methodologies, professional development.

Introduction

The importance of teacher education for effective learning of secondary students cannot be underestimated in the context of privately-run institutes of education. The better secondary teachers are trained, the
better they can educate the students-teachers. It is, therefore, vital to recognize the essential existence of valid teacher training programmes. Most privately-run teacher education programmes in their core mission state that teacher training programmes geared at developing secondary school teaching positively impact teachers and students’ knowledge of the subject matter. The pedagogic notion held by educational researchers emphasizes that teaching methods learned through teacher education programmes augment the content knowledge of both the secondary students and teachers. Unfortunately, the post-training experiences of trained secondary teachers reveal that their endeavors to implement the newly-learned teaching methodology is affected through a state of inhibition resulting in less motivated teaching sessions.

The present study is focused on the factors that cause inhibition amongst trained secondary school teachers and elaborates that this inhibition also breeds in them a state of frustration and deprivation at times. How well the trained secondary teachers teach in their post-training real classroom sessions depends on the level of inhibition they have experienced. This inhibition prevents them from displaying motivation, further qualification, enhancing professional experience and receiving further training. It is evident that without these trained teachers’ transformation, there is a minimum possibility of transforming the education system for improved quality of education (Memon, Joubush & Khurram, 2010).

The intended research study focused on finding the level of inhibition among professional B.Ed and M.Ed teachers in the context of using newly-learned teaching methodologies and the level of their applicability in the real classroom. The problem probed is to investigate the factors causing inhibition amongst trained secondary school teachers in using the newly learned teaching methodologies at the completion of B.Ed/M.Ed programmes. The new century has brought revolutionary ideas in pedagogic aspects around the globe in which teacher education is now seen as challenging and innovative as other competitive professional education. Teacher education requires being research-oriented now more than ever before. (Korthagen, Louhran & Russell, 2006).

Privately run teacher education programmes must take into consideration the development and management of programme, provision
Level of Inhibition in Trained Teachers

of infrastructure, pre-service and in-service education of teachers and teacher educators, content taught and methods adopted for teaching. According to Dean (2009), research has proved that traditionally-structured teacher education programmes operating in Pakistan are not working effectively as very few of the teachers apply newly-learned pedagogic strategies from these programmes in their classrooms. This attitude becomes a root cause of non-application of any learned teaching methodology in real classes in the case of trained secondary school teachers.

Most privately run institutions in Karachi that offer teacher education programmes are reputable for their services in the local context. During the early years of their inception, the graduates of these institutes made a positive impact with their practices as they entered the teaching profession at the completion of training. Darling-Hammond (2010) believes that the powerful teacher education programmes’ curriculum is clinical as well as didactic in nature. They teach pre-service teachers to turn analysis into action by applying what they are learning in curriculum plans, teaching applications, and other performance assessments that are organized around professional teaching standards.

With the span of time, the educational community including administrators, coordinators and colleagues developed inquisition pertaining to the effectiveness and application of learned teaching methodologies by trained secondary school teachers in their jobs. The researchers witnessed that the teaching methods used by trained graduates in the classroom were similar to the ones used by untrained teachers in working under similar circumstances. The administrators and colleagues expressed their concern regarding the applicability of learned teaching methodologies for efficient student learning by trained secondary teachers. This concern instigated the researchers to investigate the factors that become the basis for showing inhibition in practicing the learned methodologies.

Cole (1999) strongly believes that powerful learning of student-teachers is dependent on the availability of powerful learning opportunities to teachers. The typical pre-service teacher education programmes probably lack scholastic intervention in the real classroom context. The
study saw its direction in that it found trained secondary teachers induced into the profession experiencing inhibitions.

It was important to get into the root cause of this problem as it would reflect in the standard of pre-service teacher education programmes offered by private institutions. The prospective teachers enrolled for B. Ed/ M. Ed programmes in most teacher education institutions spend around two months in the assigned schools teaching and observing around fifty lessons respectively. They are also provided continuous mentoring support by the teacher educators during practicum. The researchers observed that prospective teachers are enthusiastic, and energetic. They show creativity, and take up the challenge of the application of various teaching methodologies during practicum. It was also observed that the same individuals, who were active and enthusiastic in practicing various teaching methodologies during teacher education, seem to be least bothered about bringing innovation in their teaching through practicing new teaching methodologies. The researchers found this problem as an opportunity to investigate the factors that cause inhibition amongst the trained secondary teachers in using the learned teaching methodologies. The study answered the following questions:

1. What is the effect of teacher education programmes offered by a private institution on the teaching practices of its graduates?

2. What level of support is provided by the school administration to teachers induced into the profession for the application of learned teaching methodologies?

The study is significant in its nature and complexity as no known study to this magnitude has been conducted. Through this study, private institutions offering teacher education programmes will be able to evaluate classroom-based effectiveness of its trained secondary teachers working under different school systems across the country. The study carries the benefit in that first, a performance-based teacher evaluation and compensation system can be developed to motivate teacher educators to continue striving towards excellence. Second, an institutional performance appraisal system can be developed to monitor institutional accomplishment against set curricular objectives and goals.
The research participants of privately-run teacher education institutions were given questionnaires as data collection tools. This was coupled with classroom observations of graduates working under different school systems. The data was cross-validated for checking validity and reliability. Time and resources limited the researcher’s accessibility to involve more than the sampled graduates. Following are some of the basic assumptions related to this study:

- Trained secondary teacher educators may not effectively role-model the teaching methodologies in their classrooms.
- It is presumed that generally, the teacher education programme is overburdened with content and assessment.
- Probably the mentoring requirements during practicum are more demanding so prospective teachers do not probe into different teaching methodologies.
- During teaching practice, the supervising teachers at assigned schools do not allow prospective teachers to use any learned teaching methodologies.
- Administration in schools where trained graduates are employed are not in favour of newly-learned teaching methodologies.
- Probably, the school environment is not conducive to support newly trained secondary teachers for the application of learned teaching methodologies.

**Review of the Related Literature**

According to Tattø (1997), teacher education is the development and enhancement of required knowledge, skills and dispositions in both the prospective and in-service teachers. Tattø (1997) postulates that through teacher education, teachers are expected to accelerate their competence, though sometimes they show inhibition in using the learned methodologies.

In this context, Siddiqui (2007) believes that the aim of teacher education should be the modification of the teaching-related conventional
beliefs and attitudes of prospective teachers. The attitudinal change should enforce teachers in using the learned methodologies in real classroom situations. Unfortunately, in the context of private teacher education institutions, trained secondary teachers show inhibition in using the learned methodologies in the classroom as the teaching methodologies taught to them do not match their contextual needs and hence, inhibition for using learned methodologies prevails (Gay, 2002).

Inhibition in teaching means to restrain, repress, suppress or desist from performing an action or doing something that under natural circumstances is expected of teachers. Thus, inhibition turns out to be reduction in the expected performance of teachers. The reduced performance could be the outcome of intentional or un-intentional activities (Dobozy, Bryer & Biehler, 2009).

Experts in educational psychology assert that inhibition may not affect the process of teaching partly or entirely, but contrarily brings down the probability of the teaching process in relation to the application of the learned methodologies. Inhibition is caused when a model of what is expected of teachers within educational setting does not exist. Therefore, teachers avoid behaving in the way they are expected (Dobozy, Bryer & Biehler, 2009). Inhibition could turn out to be permanent until situations and circumstances are provided that may challenge the teachers to practice the learned skills in relation to teaching methodologies in real classroom situations. The following aspects need attention, specifically to address the issue of inhibition amongst the trained teachers:

**Inhibition in trained teachers**

The investigators emphasized that the sleepless nights spent during the teacher education programme experienced through teacher training could only bear fruit once there is minimization of the gap between the learning from training and their implementation in the classroom. Davis (2003) believes that prospective teachers should be educated in methodologies that may provoke higher order cognition and interpersonal abilities of their students.
Level of Inhibition in Trained Teachers

Educational experts expand this issue stating that the factors responsible for the low quality and poor performance of teachers in the classroom are their educational status, employment opportunities and opportunities to scrutinize the working conditions, reward and remunerations, continuous professional development opportunities and opportunities provided for up-gradation.

Content knowledge

Eacute and Esteve (2000) elaborate that teachers need to serve as facilitators of students’ learning by having in-depth knowledge of the content and proving to be efficient educators. The trained secondary school teachers seem to demonstrate inadequate content knowledge regarding their subject areas. For research purposes, when teachers with or without pre-service training were examined for their content knowledge, insignificant disparity was experienced in the working of both the groups. Darling-Hammond and Youngs, (2002) believe in the importance of grip of subject knowledge on the part of the teacher if teaching methodologies are to be applied effectively in the classroom.

Learner characteristics

Teacher education is shaped by the people who enter the teaching profession (Kapadia & Coca, 2007: Tatoo, 1997). One of the most important characteristics they bring is the level of formal education and the status given to teachers in society. Burke and Hutchins (2010) are of the opinion that the initiatives taken by teachers in relation to using the learned teaching methodologies in the classroom heavily depend on individual characteristics. Teachers possessing positive self-esteem tend to be more influential and intrinsically motivated in performing the teaching chores in comparison to the teachers with low self-esteem and lower cognitive abilities.

Prospective teachers have the tendency of matching the relevancy of skills developed as a result of teacher education to contextual situations that will result in practicing what is learnt at teacher education programmes. Burke and Hutchins (2010) also elaborate that pre-service teacher
education must satisfy the needs of the prospective teachers in relation to improvement in job and performance that would result in practicing the learned methodologies in the classroom or else novice teachers will easily deviate from what is learnt.

**Attitude of novice teachers**

According to experts in education, the negative attitude of prospective teachers towards teacher education programme and job affect the application of learned methodologies. The findings of Burke and Hutchins (2010) depict that teachers having a positive attitude towards teacher education programmes and job have shown the tendency to be highly motivated to practice what is learnt and improve their performance at work. Therefore, Eacute and Esteve (2000) suggests newly trained teachers to analyze their attitude against the effectiveness of various teaching methodologies and hence make attempts in bringing diversity in teaching methods. The attitude of trained secondary school teachers towards teaching and learning can be modified by getting them involved in the reform processes.

**Teacher motivation**

Practice of learnt skills in the context of professional teacher training is dependent on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Experts believe that intrinsically motivated individuals are keenly interested in learning and extrinsic rewards are of minimum value to them. Whereas, others hold the view that practicing what is learnt at teacher training programmes depends on extrinsic motivation such as appraisal in the working environment.

This is interesting to realize that pedagogic practitioners assert that teacher motivation is referred to as the prospective teacher’s desire for getting most of the pre-service education. They further extend that motivation is the effort and initiatives taken by prospective teachers for learning the expected skills at training; while beginner teachers practice the learnt skills at the completion of training. Motivation could be to ‘learn’ and motivation could be to ‘transfer’. According to Siddiqui (2007) attempts made by beginner teachers to practice the learnt skills in real
work situations is referred to as motivation to transfer. The findings of many studies in educational psychology reveal that motivation to transfer remains persistent for at least one year. Studies have revealed that motivation to transfer is dependent on motivation to learn.

**Supportive leadership**

Blase and Blase (2000) are of the opinion that school principals must take initiatives in having valuable dialogues with teachers, regarding their practices. Beginner teachers must be encouraged to reflect on their learning outcomes as a result of teacher education and professional practices. Thus, supportive principals may adopt some of the strategies to have an impact on the performance of beginner teachers. The same may be applied in the context of trained secondary school teachers who visit different schools in the teaching practice sessions and stay there for a long professional purpose.

According to Blase and Blase (2000) school principals should have regular observations of the teaching practices of beginner teachers and provide them with meaningful, suitable and non-threatening post-observation feedback. Thus, the principal should behave as a critical friend and provide constructive feedback to beginner teachers on their teaching practices. The feedback needs to be specific and encouraging.

**Support from senior colleagues**

Trained secondary teachers often have social gatherings where they share and discuss the issues, challenges and norms that rule the profession. These meetings become a source of improvement in the practices of the members of a particular profession. In the teaching profession there is hardly any occasion for professional meetings; thus, negating commitment in practices.

Darling-Hammond (2010) believes that the beginner teachers should not be left alone to sink or swim once they enter the field of teaching as practitioners. This phenomenal aspect is what is missing in the while-training stage currently. The experienced and senior teachers need to be given extra time and payment to help beginner teachers in practicing teaching
skills in actual classroom situations. Beginner teachers together with the support and assistance of expert teachers should be encouraged to get involved in projects such as action research to get their classroom problems solved.

The working environment

To show in-depth growth and immersion in their profession, trained secondary school teachers require the support of the school (Razzak & Akhtar, 2014). This support could be in the form of providing encouragement, guidance and a good working environment that can challenge and facilitate teachers in being committed to their endeavors to leave a positive impact on the learning of the student. If the working environment is not conducive to teaching and learning, the teachers will be reluctant in practicing what is learnt (Folajimi, 2009). In most of the developing countries, the working environment does not support teachers to practice what they had learnt during pre-service teacher education. In addition to this, the pressures from local politicians remain a constant obstacle to their performance; thus struggling between meeting the demands of time and teaching (Reimers & Reimers, 1996).

Rewards and remuneration

According to Reimers and Reimers (1996) in most countries, teaching is associated with low rewards for the services offered. Teachers are normally paid less which does not motivate them to perform to the best of their abilities in their classes. The demands of the profession using multiple teaching methodologies for imparting knowledge are great specifically for teachers who receive no support, appreciation or motivation from families (Reimers & Reimers, 1996). In the above context, secondary school teachers also long to be paid according to their qualification and experience in the field. The incentives given to trained secondary school teachers should definitely be monetary. These teachers could further be financially supported by providing subsidized housing, food and transportation facilities. Another form of incentives could be acknowledgment and appreciation of performance in the classroom, whereas, others are of the viewpoint that rewards could be in the form of
promotion in job based on the classroom performance of beginner teachers in particular, and experienced teachers in general.

**Professional development opportunities**

Participation of teachers in an event should not be considered as professional development. Rather, it should be a chain of sequential activities for succession in profession related areas such as mastery over content, effective use of material aids and improvement in basic teaching skills responding to the demands of time. Smith and Fries (2001) strongly believe that professional development policies enforced by the government contribute in the capacity building of teachers; hence bringing variety and creativity in their teaching. Trained secondary teachers need to be given this opportunity to grow and enhance.

**Administrative jobs**

Steve (2000) is of the opinion that teachers need to learn to manage the pressures at work in relation to application of innovative teaching methodologies. According to Reimers and Reimers (1996), teachers have restricted time for teaching and this time is further taken up by administrative jobs such as mentoring trainee teachers or new teachers. These extra tasks may include time for planning, student evaluation, and participation in in-service professional development programmes, attending faculty meetings, attending to the complaints of parents and to organize co-curricular activities. The additional administrative jobs make teachers exhausted and they are hardly motivated to try out any learned teaching methodology in the class. Thus according to Steve (2000), the classroom performance of over-burdened teachers suffers and they do not perform to the best of their abilities. Trained teachers at secondary level also require to be considered to overcome this issue.

**Monitoring by teacher education institutions**

According to Darling-Hammond (2010), a very strong relationship should be established between teacher education institutions and the associated schools. A type of relationship that might lead toward modifying the theory and practice at teacher education institutes as well as the schools.
At the completion of pre-service teacher education, the prospective teachers enter the profession with great zeal and enthusiasm, but unfortunately this does not persist for long in case of Pakistan. One of the possible reasons could be lack of support, direction and feedback on the performance from teacher education institutions. This discourages teachers and consequently, leaves them baffled. They find themselves in difficult situations in relation to learned methodologies. Therefore, they easily adopt the practices that envelop their surroundings and thus continue with the teaching practices that are used in the environment they work.

**Use of technology for purposeful teaching**

Eacute and Esteve (2000) opine that the media has imposed great effects on the learning of students. Thus, students expect teachers to be as effective in communication as presented on the media whereas, teachers normally use the chalk and talk method that does not attract student learning. Therefore, use of technology can be of great assistance for teacher effectiveness and students’ active participation. Hence, teachers are challenged to integrated technology into the curriculum whereas, Reimers (as cited in Tattoo, 1997) is of the opinion that if schools have poorly prepared teachers, incompetent of integrating technology into the curriculum, there is scarcity of relevant instructional aids. This aspect is common in the level of inhibition across the trained teachers in Pakistan particularly in the context of trained secondary teachers.

**Research Methodology**

The study employed a survey strategy. The target population comprised all B.Ed and M.Ed graduates of NDIE who had been certified as secondary school teachers from 2008-2012. The total number of accessible population consisted of n=269 graduates (68 males and 201 females.)

The study used purposive sampling technique to collect data from the participants as the focus of the research was to analyze the level of inhibition amongst trained secondary school teachers. The total population consisted of 269 participants comprising 238 B.Ed graduates and 31 M.Ed graduates. Out of total population of 238 B.Ed graduates, 13
expressed their non-availability. 17 graduates informed that they did not continue with teaching as a career. The required sample size for the research was n=120 participants. From this sample, n=120 filled questionnaires were received. The minimum academic qualification of all the research participants was fourteen years of formal education. The minimum professional qualification of all the research participants was one year pre-service teacher training. All the research participants were employed by schools running under private management.

The researchers used a questionnaire for data collection. The instrument was divided into three main sections. Section A comprised demographic information of the participants. Sections B and C comprised attitudinal scales. The two main types of attitudinal scales such as Likert scale, and rating scales were used in the study.

The study comprised independent variables such as teaching methodology, teachers’ individual characteristics, teacher’s over-efficiency, insufficient professional development opportunities, school working environment, unsatisfactory rewards and benefits, large class size, lack of technical expertise, post-training inadequate support and structure of teacher education programme.

A pilot study was conducted with n=29 research participants. The questionnaire was e-mailed to each pilot study participant. 25 pilot study participants responded to the e-mail. The basic purpose of piloting was to check the validity and reliability of the research tool. Based on the analysis of the pilot study, modifications were made in the instrument and the improved tool was used for collecting data for the research activity.

The instrument reliability was ensured through test-retest reliability. Prior to actual administration of the research tool, it was administered twice and results were received. The value of Cronbach Alpha obtained from the instrument was significant with 0.798. The factors such as content expertise, individual characteristics, professional development, working environment and monitoring of novice teachers were significant in causing inhibition amongst trained secondary school teachers in using the learned
methodologies having calculated Cronbach Alpha values of 0.725, 0.738, 0.758, 0.752 and 0.774 respectively.

Participants residing in Karachi were invited to assemble on the given date and time to fill in the research questionnaire. According to Kumar (1996), this type of administration is known as “collective administration”. For the respondents who could not be present for collective administration of the instrument, the questionnaire was administered in their respective schools catering to their feasibility.

According to Kumar (1996), this type of questionnaire administering is known as administration in public place. The study excluded all those graduates who obtained their B.Ed or M.Ed degrees from the institute prior to the academic year 2006-2007. Moreover, incomplete and wrongly filled questionnaires were also excluded.

Results

Table 1. Competency analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Agree No</th>
<th>Undecided No</th>
<th>Disagree No</th>
<th>No. Resp. No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Strong grip over the content</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Trust competency for teaching</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Find teacher education an opportunity</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Depend on classroom-based teaching</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Taught the required content</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vol. 1 No. 2 (December 2014)
Table 1 indicates that 75.83% NDIE- trained secondary teachers agreed the they do not have a grip over the content, whereas 59.16% agreed that they do not feel competent in teaching the content, 49.16% agreed that teacher education programme offered does not support the learning of the content, while 44.16% agreed that they do not depend on classroom-based teaching content and 40.83% agreed that they were not taught the required content at the teacher education programme.

Table 2. Scale analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Agree No</th>
<th>Agree %</th>
<th>Undecided No</th>
<th>Undecided %</th>
<th>Disagree No</th>
<th>Disagree %</th>
<th>No. Resp. No</th>
<th>No. Resp. %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Not practicing learned methods</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>42.0</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tend to be influential in class</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Practicing learned methods by teachers</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Application of learned methodologies</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>31.0</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dislike teacher training and practice learned ways</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>60.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Dislike teaching profession practice learned ways</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>62.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Acquire degree rather than an opportunity to learn</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>22.0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Findings and Discussion

Trained secondary school teachers show inhibition in practicing any teaching methods learned during the teacher education programme if they have no grip over the content to be taught. It is very important for trained secondary school teachers to have competency over the content they are expected to teach in the schools or else they would not be able to practice any learned teaching methodologies in the classroom. In case trained secondary school teachers get no opportunity for learning the related content, they feel greatly deprived. When they begin their career as teachers, they feel reluctant in using any teaching methodologies due to poor grip over the content. In addition, employed trained teachers have a great load of weekly and daily teaching and they get no time to improve their content knowledge.

Putting into practice, what has been learned as a result of teacher education is not affected by outside forces. Application of learned skills and methodologies by trained teachers varies from individual to individual. Trained teachers who are intrinsically motivated are not hesitant in trying out something different with their students that may positively affect their learning. Moreover, when teachers firmly believe that each student in the class is intelligent and important and it is their responsibility to make teaching and learning interesting and permanent for the students, then they decode the required content using various learned teaching methodologies. Furthermore, teachers with positive self-esteem tend to practice learned methodologies than the teachers who consider the teacher education programme only a means of obtaining a degree or a means to get annual increment. The efficiency of trained secondary teachers in the classroom depends on the support and encouragement received from the administration. When the administration ensures the availability of required resources, have an ongoing dialogue with teachers related to their practices, encourage teachers for taking initiatives in trying out various teaching methodologies, motivate, stimulate and inspire teachers, then teachers practice learned methodologies with freedom. In addition, when the administration models the application of various methodologies through their working pattern, they originate within teachers the love of practicing the learned methodologies once inducted into the profession.
Trained teachers can be motivated through giving satisfactory rewards and benefits for the services rendered or else in the classroom teachers may not perform to the best of their abilities. The rewards and benefits given to the trained teachers may always not be monetary in nature. These could also be in the form of funding for professional development, conveyance, health insurance, paid study leave and so on to reduce inhibition. The large class size also inhibits teachers to practice any learned teaching methodology as most of their time is spent on maintaining class discipline and gaining the attention of the students. Teachers find it arduous to try out various teaching methodologies. In a class of 45-50 students, these teachers keep struggling to interact with individual students. They hardly find time to investigate modifications in the successful application of learned teaching methodologies.

Trained teachers need to be introduced to the integration of technology for the application of various teaching methodologies. They must receive orientation to integration of technology in the curriculum during teacher education programmes. Hence, a non-supportive attitude of the administration inhibits teachers from practicing any teaching methodology in the classroom. The newly trained secondary teachers face new challenges. One of them is certainly how to apply the learned teaching methodologies in the classroom. Newly-trained teachers can be facilitated to cope up with such kind of problems if post-training support is provided by the teacher education institutions. Trained teachers induced in the profession can show inhibition for the application of learned methodologies if they are not provided with the opportunities for carrying them out during practicum. This means an enriched practicum period should be provided to the prospective teachers with maximum opportunities for practicing the learned teaching methodologies in the classroom.

**Recommendations**

The study recommends that trained secondary school teachers try various teaching methods in decoding assigned content for their students. Thus, they need to be asked to make a shift from traditional methods of teaching and learning, recognize the importance and value of the
methodologies taught at the teacher education programme and take pride in practicing them. It is also recommended that they be consistent in using various teaching approaches learned at teacher education sessions for meaningful delivery of the content to their students. It is also recommended that administrators motivate trained secondary teachers by acknowledging and appreciating the efforts of these teachers in practicing the learned teaching methodologies effectively in the classroom. One of the recommendations includes the development of a strong mechanism of providing technical support to NDIE-graduate teachers through graduate professional network for at least the first two years of their teaching career. Through this network, trained teachers will be able to strengthen the teaching related values and beliefs of all its graduates.

Conclusion

The study concludes that insufficient professional knowledge of trained secondary teachers and their lack of intrinsic motivation cause inhibition in them. Scarcity of professional development opportunities, non-supportive working environment, in-sufficient rewards and remunerations, large class size and lack of facilities to integrate technology into the curriculum are the other major causes of inhibition in the trained secondary school teachers. The structure and design of the teacher education programme and deficiency of a system in place to provide post-training support to the trained secondary teachers also need consideration as major factors of inhibitions.

This study also concludes that it is the job of employing administration of educational institutions to provide trained secondary teachers a culture of collegiality and professionalism. This way, these trained teachers would feel professionally acknowledged and their inhibition to practice newly-learned teaching methodologies would be controlled to a large extent. Parent institutions, NDIE must also realize the role they can play in supporting trained teachers for the application of learned teaching methodologies. They can make the trained teachers conscious of the fact the inhibition in using various teaching methods may be caused due to individual interest and motivation. Therefore, trained teachers, schools and teacher education, all should join hands in eradicating inhibition and
strive towards teaching creatively with innovative ideas to support the learning of prospective student-teachers.

References


Exploring Perceptions of University Students Pertaining to Grades over Knowledge and Skills

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Abstract

The aim of the research was to study the phenomenon surrounding the perspective of university students preferring grades to knowledge and skills. Three currently enrolled participants were selected from different private universities of Karachi. Participants’ interviews were examined through thematic analysis. The findings suggested that students give preference to grades and knowledge, more job oriented focus of the study and made recommendations for institutions and academicians for further probing of the issue in hand.

Keywords: grades, knowledge, university students

Introduction

In the current education theory and research, the role of students is significant in terms of their thoughts, beliefs and feelings about teachers, peers, situations and events (educational setting). According to the cognitive theories of learning and instruction, students are active recipients of information and grasp knowledge the way it is expected, and reciprocally, the way students perceive the information and events around them highly reflects the system. The way information is usually presented and the way it is perceived is an interesting story as students perceptions are often influenced by the people in action and the situational cues.
Undeniably, the way students perceive learning and the entire evaluation system reflects a trivial image of the education system. Students’ perception regarding grades is highly considerable because of two major reasons: motivation to learn and the information that is required for learning. The aspect to be considered is whether grades truly fulfill the criteria or not. The entire scenario is rapidly changing where grades are becoming more important than actual learning and hindering the learning process by deviating students from the way of gaining knowledge. Students try to minimize their chances of getting poor grades by opting for less challenging tasks and easier courses, rather than exploring something new taking up challenging tasks.

Competition is there in any field whether business or education, but it is essential to notice whether it is of assistance or not. Unfortunately, the competition in the education world today is not for the quest of knowledge and skills but for grades. Education is not about learning, exploring and gaining knowledge in many institutions anymore. Education as perceived by many critiques is artificially inflated with grades, and the most destructive type is found in tertiary education which is done on a curve. The bell-shaped curve, with As and Bs are perceived to be as favorable grades, Cs fall in mid-range while Ds are unfavorable grades. It is unfair in terms of promoting the others as threats and a system that appreciates numbers rather than abilities. Nowadays universities are more concerned about Grades or GPAs than whether students learned and understood anything during the programme.

The grading system is also promoted by teachers, who motivate the students to obtain good grades more than learning outcomes and acquire skills that may help them in the future. Thus, grades hamper the learning of the students. Particularistic Practice is a process of converting unacceptable test scores into acceptable ones (Gordan & Fay, 2010). Students who are inclined towards high learning orientation tend to opt for a knowledge and skill-based approach in education that eventually creates a distance from them and a grade achievement approach. Therefore, the number of first-class degrees has increased over the past 10 years and has become a standard (Bruce, Birchall, Harper-Smith, Derry & Ross, 2012). The competitive labor-market has also added the
stereotypical factor into students’ minds that only a first-class degree can get them a fine job. Now it is to find out what students think about these assessment practices which may relate to the future prospects of the job market.

**Literature Review**

Evaluation of an education system by means of students’ opinions and views is generally a common practice. As a result, researchers never overlook the powerful perception of students regarding any area that is linked to education. Perception is based on beliefs or knowledge and contains a great value in providing critical feedback or suggestion for betterment. Thus, students have always been, and continue to become important in terms of their thoughts, opinions and the way they perceive the entire education system. However, students’ input is an integral source, but not the only source of evaluation as both students and teachers hold the ability to understand and modify the education system by means of their beliefs or feedback if it is taken into consideration by the consultants and the authorities.

Globalization has resulted in change of educational needs and expectations of every individual and society (Khan, 2014). Both the individual and the society are competing and striving to be on top, to improve their lifestyle and their outlook towards life in general. For an individual, an impressive feat in college, depicted by high grades determines a promising lifestyle in general. Grades and grading systems in education are perhaps the most important aspect when it comes to the measurement and evaluation of educational objectives (Tippin, Lefreniere & Page, 2012). Assessment or grading is essential and the most basic component to evaluate the effectiveness of an individual’s process of acquiring education. It is recognized as an important factor in student learning. Therefore, there exists a direct relation of students with the grades they achieve, and the impetus grades provide to learn and achieve. The relationship is almost cyclic and affects each other.

There are several operating universities and institutions in Pakistan, and the grading system prevalent in these educational setups is either inspired by existing systems or in place according to the institutions’
requirements. There are no major differences among these institutions, but a slight difference in assigning numbers to a particular grade exists.

It is important to understand that the evaluation process has facets linked with the entire institution: educational goals set the instructional objectives, which inform the assessment processes and which subsume 360° evaluation where primary importance is given to student feedback (Al Kadri, Al Moamary, Magzoub, Roberts, & Vleuten, 2011). All these aspects are aligned to deliver the end product; knowledge and skill development in students. This is undeniably an arguable, questionable and debatable topic. However, the present research explores the perceptions of students and the worth and value attached to their perceptions and experiences.

The grading criterion was developed in the 1700s. Yale University in 1783 had developed a grades depiction terminology which gave birth to the 4-point grading scale. Since then the conundrum continues to baffle students at least, for most of them are unable to find justice in the grade awarded to them. In addition, the educational fraternity is unable to state with conviction the extent of the increase in the knowledge and skills of the students because a high grade point average does not always warrant a highly skilled professional. On the contrary, it has given rise to a competitive streak where teachers and students both heavily rely on how much information one has to give must necessarily get a good grade. The grading system evolved over the years, and a plus/minus system emerged. Grades are distributed on a 4-point based grade point average (Baker, 1999).

The effects of grading may be negative due to the grading system and students may find themselves toppling down a grade level with a difference of a few marks (Baker, 1999). This also accounts for the resentment and the ensuing arguments with authorities and teachers on the grade assigned. How could a mark or two, completely change the grade from an impressive A to A- or B+ to B? What could be lacking in the assignment, test attempt, etc. to push a student to these discomforting level transits? Though the study results showed that teachers and students both have negative impression of the grading system for a particular
business course (Baker, 1999), yet it prevails and continues in all subjects and in all prestigious institutions.

Knowledge and skills are the cornerstones of education in colleges and universities (Rich, 1998). Knowledge and skills to a great extent render the success in individuals’ lives: their self-contentment, their job satisfaction, their abilities to acquire a suitable job with a suitable remuneration, and their ability to participate in civic life. A rise in enrollments in higher education programs is seen for a sustainable future across the globe, where previously higher education was available to a very fortunate few. Knowledge and income have a direct relation with each other on the premise that the educated have a better chance of a better job, but with this, the importance of academic achievement is being disregarded and devalued. For the need of a better job and a successful and speedy launch into the earning phase of their lives, most students are disregarding and devaluing academic achievement to greatly valuing grades. One of the reasons for this great value is the fact that a good grade point average (GPA) or cumulative grade point average (CGPA) is the route to success.

Most teachers are also grade-oriented. Their instructional sessions, test papers and assignments are focused towards the criteria usually set by them and the institution (Hunt, 2008). Teachers at the outset of the educational programs or courses drill the importance and value of good grades, especially around the time of tests and exams. Where teachers tend to think that their insistence on achieving good grades will be influencing the students, in actuality they do not realize the same (Reddan, 2012). However, teachers also perceive grading as one of the most difficult tasks in teaching (Frisbie, 1979). “Grading is one of the least liked, least understood and least considered aspects of teaching” (Green & Emerson, 2007, p.2). While some teachers will find it cumbersome to assign a grade, students question the fairness and the reliability of the grade and the teacher. Fairness is important to discuss to understand the perceptions of university students.

Psychometric analyses in many research studies have shown two types of students and student-orientations in higher education; a learning-oriented type and a grade-oriented type (Alexitch, 1996). With inhibitions of fairness in scoring and grading, it is plausible that students could resolve
to be on grade-oriented type (Alexitch, 1996). Therefore, institutional practices could act like a vicious circle, creating grade-oriented types, while creating more competition and struggle in the name of educational excellence (Landrum & Dietz, 2006).

The review of relevant literature suggests that students’ perceptions in general are mostly negative towards grades and the grading system. The criteria might be invigorating and competitive in impression but it poses a great difficulty for both teachers and students, for one, it is stringent and may not always depict the accurate academic achievement of the student. The conundrums will continue since the grading system does have its merits and advantages. For one, is helping institutions churn out the best graduates who must have definitely worked their hardest to achieve exceptional grades and rankings. In addition, the students, in a general setting without an exception, are also able to acquire suitable job placement and remuneration, which strongly compliments their achievements. However, the qualitative aspects of grading will continue to be debated, since it has never really been society’s mandate to extract the best few in the workforce. The evolving global trends also warrant the universities and the academia must produce able and productive citizens who are able to contribute to the betterment of the society and have self-contentment, self-satisfaction and self-esteem; there can be no other alternative.

Methodology

Study design

This qualitative investigation pursued a phenomenological study method. As per the nature of the study, purposive sampling was done to select participants from different private universities of Karachi. The study was planned to explore the perceptions of the participants revolving around the phenomenon of grade and knowledge preferences in attaining higher education.

Participants

Three participants were selected based on the criterion that each participant is currently studying in a private university of Karachi. Each
participant belonged to a different university in order to keep diversity. The participants were explained about the aim of the research and after obtaining their consent the interviews were conducted. The responses of the interviews were tape-recorded. Akhter (pseudonym) was a student of a renowned Engineering University. He was studying Biomedical Engineering. He was a regular student and was also working part-time in an NGO. Sana (pseudonym) was a student of a renowned Business University, studying MBA Executive and also working in a school. She sees her bright future in the educational field once her MBA is completed. Ali (pseudonym) was a student of BBA final semester doing his majors in Finance from a reputed university in Karachi. He has plans to study further along with working in a Multinational as a Finance Executive and to excel further.

**Measures**

The study’s source of data collection was in-depth interviews. The interviews were conducted in participant’s own university setting. The participants were allowed to be bilingual whenever they felt the need.

**Procedure**

The in-depth interview responses of each participant were transcribed into English. The themes were identified through thematic analysis of the transcribed data.

**Findings and Discussion**

The findings of the study revealed both parallel and distinct opinions of the participants. The data analysis discovered the following aspects:

**Perceptions about education**

All three participants expressed their views with complete confidence during the interview. They believed that education helps an individual to groom and upgrade at any point of time. From a futuristic view, education allows to work better and create opportunities for sustainable and life-long growth. Educational training helps in developing
a long term view and persistent intelligence. Sana explained in her response how she felt the need to acquire further education. She pursued two master level programs when the previous one left her dissatisfied. She mentioned:

“I was not keen on acquiring further education after my Bachelor’s. I began working in a school and discovered I have something to give; but before that I needed to upgrade myself. I pursued M.A. Education from a semi-private women’s university in Karachi. I was not satisfied. I wanted a more challenging learning opportunity and experience. I went for another Masters, this time in an elite private university. Anyhow, the reason for acquiring education was to upgrade myself, so that I may give in a better way.”

Sana’s response reveals that education is never a waste whether one makes use of it or not. If a person is career-oriented and stays in the loop, then at some point in time she feels the need to be upgraded in the information. However, both male participants Akhter and Ali focused more on career opportunities and professional development. Akhter stated:

“My reason to acquire education was to get better career opportunities and professional grooming.”

There is no doubt that university education, training and nature of knowledge contains a profound tendency to develop professional knowledge, critical thinking and systematic approach towards learning amongst the practitioners. Likewise, Ali in his responses confirmed that education nourishes one’s mind and helps to grow intellectually. Ali elaborated his view pertaining to the significance of education by reporting:

“Education helps you stay relevant in your field so professionally you become a valuable asset to your organization. It is also extremely important for the growth of the individuals themselves because it grooms you to be a better citizen. The more you learn the humbler you become because it helps you realize that you are in fact, quite ignorant. Education gives you the knowledge and training to make smarter decisions in your professional and personal life.”
Knowledge and abilities contribute the most in the success of a career; the lack of it can cause ineffectiveness in performance (Johnson, 2003). Ali’s response is primarily true in terms of acquiring education for professional growth and getting ample opportunities, as developing a career is a ceaseless outcome of a comprehensive maturation and evolution of both knowledge and aptness.

**Perceptions concerning education system**

In this study, all three participants shared views that were extremely individualistic, based on their perceptions. Sana believed that the education system still has room to improve when she compared one institution with the other. Whereas, the responses of other two participants showed a few similarities. Sana shared her experience by stating:

"*We have to improve, a lot! I must say there are a few higher education experiences that are worthwhile and certainly to go for. But they are just a few. The character of our nation must improve to provide such teachers in higher education institutions who will create a great impact in the lives of many. Neither you, nor I have met teachers as such.*"

Education plays a vital role not just in humanizing students but in developing a sense of self and existence amongst them in the world. Therefore, the responsibility of an institution is to provide such experience and platform to the students where they can rise above the basic needs of the materialistic world and search for one’s self. Ali in his responses questioned the accessibility of education for all, which is limited to a certain population these days. Education systems are there to nurture, but they are doing a limited job in terms of the evolution of the entire population. Ali shared his opinion by asserting:

"*Private universities are of course, commercially driven. However true this might be, private universities still offer a better quality of education compared to public universities. The only issue is that they should be more accessible to the general public, especially to the economically downtrodden*"
classes so that they can fulfill the actual purpose of education i.e., to improve lives and not just help the rich get richer and leave the poor without a chance.”

Perceptions regarding grading practices and competitive environment

Normative grading system, based on curve, discourages collaborative learning and brings several consequences with it. Normative system creates disengagement with studies among students, lessens motivation, and increases examination and evaluation anxiety and affects interpersonal relationships (Crooks, 1988). Sana believed that there is a lack of check and balance when it comes to assessment and grading practices, as every university seems to be following its own system or a system that has been enforced. Sana shared her experience by expressing:

“With my experience I have come to know that there are conspiracies in the universities to purge a particular number of graduates each year. There is no measure of quality in testing procedures, in one program, a student is demanded to undertake various forms of evaluation, mostly memory-based or application-based. These again are arbitrary in form, purpose and outcome. Hence, the practices are questionable and not reliable.”

The progress of a nation is highly dependent on the educational systems; the quality they provide impacts the success of the students and all together the success of a country (Xu, 2011). Therefore, the educational practices including assessment and evaluation need to be upgraded as time changes. Akhter shared his views regarding the grading practices by stating:

"Assessment and testing practices are quite traditional and need to evolve with the changing times. Students should be assessed based on how they are taught. Tests need to focus more on the upper levels of cognitive learning of Bloom’s taxonomy instead of assessing only their knowledge and comprehension skills. University level education prepares
students for their jobs and so assessments should focus on their evaluation, application and creation skills.”

A child has an innate desire to compare himself with the others in every possible manner. Initially, formal competition was restricted to sports only, but now it is affecting education also. It is not the fault of an individual as society educates him/herself to compete and exercise all the abilities he/she owns (Verhoeff, 1997). Competition can be both encouraging and discouraging in the context of higher education. In Sana’s case, competition highly depends on the environment in which it entails and the aim it carries. She defined competitiveness as:

”There are two ways to see competitiveness: one way determines the best in a group of individuals, the other determines creative contribution of all, equally and accountably. I advocate for the second determinant. If I have the second environment, I feel creative and intelligent too. In the absence of it, I am not motivated and often feel negative emotions of either being too smart or too dumb in the presence of such a competitive group.”

Undeniably, competition exists in every culture and education is to communicate that culture, as a child is not born with a culture but embraces it later. This culture needs to be incorporated in the life of every child so they become characteristic and get prepared to deal with the hardships later in life. Ali takes competition as a healthy activity by declaring:

“As long as the competition actually helps you learn and improve, I think it’s a necessary element as it drives a student to getting better.”

Whereas, Akhter defined competition as a way of exploring and knowing oneself in depth. Theories suggest that competition is one of the most effecting way of motivating students and providing them with constructive feedback to perform better both in academics and later in life. Akhter believed that there is no harm in comparing oneself with others as it is a useful activity. He affirmed that:
“In the competitive environment of education, we can compare ourselves with others so we can easily get to know our weaknesses.”

Competition in education promotes a complete practice of abilities, guarantees a balance distributed between benefits and encumbrance, promotes high standards and progress in various fields (Crooks, 1988).

**Perceptions relating to academic credentials:**

Studies have shown that students who are more interested in extrinsic values put emphasis on grades, marks, standards, reputation and competition in general. Whereas, students focus more towards intrinsic values tend to look for intellectual competence, professional or personal growth. Ali shared his views regarding the race for grades:

"I believe that a student should think in terms of themselves and forget what grades others getting. As long as the student has achieved what they set out to achieve and they are satisfied with the grades they have, nothing else really matters. Grades are a reflection of learning up to a certain point, but they are based on tests, the results of whom are extremely circumstantial. So if grades are based on overall performance, they can be credible.”

Grades only provide information that is helpful in determining the progress of student learning. Research shows slight or no prevailing relationship in determining the adult accomplishment through grades. Grades tend to be limited to academic performance, but may not signify the overall life achievement of an individual. Sana’s beliefs are quite similar when she expressed:

“*I think grades do not reflect the true potential and performance of a learner, especially given the fact that the evaluation methods and techniques are not qualitative, comprehensive and all encompassing.*”
Grades over Knowledge in University

Students increasingly recognize educational credentials in determining their future employability; consequently, they sense a strong need to enhance their values in the labour market by increasing their performance in academics (Tomlinson, 2008). Sana believed that apart from grades, academic credentials contain greater value in the job market. She confirmed the significance by narrating:

“Good education, greater value, greater job opportunities.”

Regardless of a slight difference in perceptions of preference of grades and knowledge in education for future prospects, all the three participants strongly believed that academic credentials along with the skills one owns signify a person’s true abilities. Education in any era is not a waste, but helps in every possible visible or hidden manner (Lee, 2005).

Conclusion

Hence, it can be concluded that students see the importance of grades, knowledge and skills in terms of pursuing a satisfactory career in their lives. Whereas, they believe the system has created this success route map for them, where the name of the institution, grades or academic credentials remarkably signify better job prospects. Though students have an understanding of all the flaws the educational system has, this has become the demand of the labor market, and they are intentionally or unintentionally obligated to follow the established trend. Thus, the phenomenon can be further studied in order to understand the larger population, as the study is limited to a few cases and cannot be generalized. The findings of the study might support the private educational system in modifying their objectives for providing education and for the job market also to demand for candidates with academic credentials and without disregarding knowledge and skills.
References


Language Ideologies in a Business Institute: A Case Study of Linguistic and Socio-Cultural Realities

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Abstract

This case study explored the English language related ideologies of different management groups and student representatives at a business school of Karachi, Pakistan. The study tried to bring an insider’s perspective to the causes of certain language ideologies prevalent in the business school’s social structure, and the role language played in power relations between the main actors of the community. For this purpose, a sample of four research participants from each of the focussed management cadres was selected for study. Analysis of semi-structured interviews, administered on the participants, was done using Fairclough’s (2009) dialectical-relational approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The study suggested the prevalence of certain language ideologies that were manifested and latent in the discourses of the participants. These deeply rooted beliefs were predominantly patterned by centering authorities: language became a means for those in power to sustain their hegemony and maintain social stratification in society. Functionally, English played a stratifying role, and also was found to be extensively
perceived as a commodity, a product that is to be acquired or attained. The study realised this social wrong of inequity and divide in a particular community, and on the basis of the findings, recommends a re-organizing of social structures into those of more inclusive and democratic ones for the operationalizing of equality and fairness in social practices.

**Keywords:** dialectical-relation, entextualization, interdisciplinary, language ideologies, semiosis

**Introduction**

Language ideology emerged as an independent field of linguistic-anthropological study in the last decades of the 20th century, combining insights from the fields of linguistic ethnography with social-scientific study of ideology. The field of language ideology has impacted in a large way the disciplines of linguistic anthropology, linguistics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, and cross-cultural studies. Language ideologies study relations between the beliefs speakers have about language and the larger social and cultural systems they are a part of, and show how these beliefs are informed by and grounded in such systems. In this way, the field of language ideology has been able to relate to the latent and manifested assumptions people have about language, given the speakers’ various educational, socio-economic, historical, and political contexts and backgrounds.

Recently, the subject of language ideologies has attained a significant place in the ethnographic tradition of linguistic anthropology, variationist sociolinguistics and applied linguistics. It is most dominantly developed in the social-scientific tradition and has displaced some very basic established concepts of language, text, speech community, and identity. Major scholarships in the field of language ideology are concerned with ideologies prevalent in education, gender studies, globalization and political economy, migration, media, and organizations. Some of the major probes have been related to power and control, peripheral normativity, racism, inequality, and child labor.
The topic for the present study attracted the researchers because of its scope and intensive study of ideological aspects, social processes related to elements of power and hegemony in business academia. This is an emergent and much-needed potential topic of research in academics, which has not been studied in such an intensive manner in Pakistan. In the context of Pakistan’s educational system, specifically in a business education context, this present study is pioneering as it tried to capture the manifested and latent language ideologies embedded in the texts of the various management cadres in a business institute. Due to the scarcity of in-depth research in this area, the study hopes to fill quite some gaps in knowledge about ideological processes and relations of power and hegemony among academics.

The aim of this study was to find explanations for the main actors and other social actors of academia about their perceptions and beliefs related to the English language. It tried to capture the latent and manifested language ideologies of a business education community. Thus, the objectives of the study were to:

1. Identify the factors involved in forming specific ideologies about the English language.
2. Explore the status and role of the English language in a specific business school.
3. Find explanations of how these language ideologies transmit in society.

The objectives of the study led to the formulation of the following questions for the research:

1. What are the perceptions of academia at different management cadres in a business school about the role and status of English?
2. What are the manifested and latent language-related ideologies embedded in the participants’ discourses?

**Literature Review**

A very close construct related to the beliefs and perceptions of people in a socio-cultural situation is of language ideology. Language
ideology refers to a shared body of common beliefs, views and perceptions about language, which includes cultural assumptions about language, nature and purpose of communication, and patterns of communicative behavior as a collective order (Woolard, 1992). Such ideational complexes pertain to every aspect of communication: about linguistic forms and functions as well as about the wider behavioural frames in which they occur (Blommaert 2006). According to Tollefson (1999), language ideology tries to capture the implicit, usually unconscious assumptions about reality that fundamentally determine how human beings interpret events.

Language ideologies maintain that people perform meanings, that is semiosis, and language as a regimented field, is one of the mode, thus language ideologies are ideational as well as practical. Semiosis analyzes language as well as other modalities, such as body language, visual images, tone and intonation. Silverstein (1979) furthered that linguistic form is indexical, that is, it has a social meaning, indexing ‘context’ through ideological inferences: in this way, a particular form ‘stands for’ a particular social and cultural meaning (Silverstein 2006). We flag socially and culturally (ideological) indexical meanings while we talk; we continuously manipulate and molest language for social and cultural purposes; and, that widespread language ideologies are indexical.

Language ideology rejects the artifactual view of language, which Silverstein’s (2006) referential ideology of language explains as a transparent form and essentially structured. It is non-contextual and characterizes groups of people. This artifactual view postulates that language is a set of grammatical structures with clearly ordered functions. Metaphorically, it is seen as an object which one can possess. Language is collectively seen by a specific culture as stable and contextless. People comment on language quality, lexicon and grammatical structures of language as if it is a product. This view makes language an object of normative control of institutional regimentation, and leads towards centers of authority (Silverstein, 1996). This view dictates standards of language, academically, and at the socio-cultural level signals indexicalities of refinement or crudeness, forming classes, dictated largely from the centering authorities, be it in education, bureaucracy, or politics. Members of a group are expected to use language-genres, grammar, register, etc. in a
patterned way as these are the symbols of their belonging to a particular group.

Language ideology contrarily looks at language as a socio-cultural event, embedded into historical and political aspects of language and language usage, stressing on language as ideological construction which involves power and authority, and essentially is performed in ways that shows control, hegemony and domination. Contextualization is an essential ingredient of language. It maintains that language provides contextual clues, that is, who speaks, in what mode, on which topic and circumstances; therefore, indexical value keeps changing with each context quite dramatically.

Language ideologies are formed through the combination of particular discourses and registers, institutional structures, and professional practices. For instance, Silverstein (1979 & 2003) gave examples of pronouns and honorific language use. The analysis of the specific linguistic forms is organized so as to attain ideological effects. According to Blommaert (2006), language ideology has contributed to the understanding of cultural variability, of concepts such as inequality and power, for example, the forms of regimentation used by bureaucracy can differ strongly from those used by laymen.

Taking this view, language is ideological (metapragmatic and indexical) framing. It can also be seen in the metapragmatic framing of texts changes as discourse are lifted out of their contextual meanings and are transmitted with new suggestions of meanings in new contexts (Bauman & Briggs, 1990). Thus, utterances are packed with indexical meanings that are social meanings. Whenever people interact they try to create socio-cultural meanings, which Blommaert (2006) calls the order of indexicality and they use enregistered forms of language use (Agha, 2003; Silverstein, 2004) which is a patterned way of talking and referring to an event, situation, norm or phenomena, and further, situating these norms in relation to other norms.

Language ideology views speech community as the allegiance of people according to the artifactual language, where speakers display joint
orientations towards identities and communities. The existence and range of these discourses depend on the sharedness of indexical values. People are grouped together to display joint membership in certain socio-cultural events, situations, or circumstances, which construct identities and communities. Such speech communities are categorized according to trajectories of class, educational level, professions, etc. and are signaled through shifts in discourses, signifying changing identities. Language inequality and standard language have become sources of such categorization.

There is an organizational speech community with a top-down perspective which looks at language ideologies from the point of language prioritization and policies about language use in institutions and companies; equally and simultaneously, individual ideologies are also at work (Sherman & Strubell, 2013). People actively experience power relations, and weave webs of perceptions and beliefs around their experiences (Blommaert, 2013).

The ideologies are inherently embedded in discourses of the speakers. Fairclough (2009) analyses discourses in society through dialectical-relational approach of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Semiosis is viewed as a social process which is dialectically related to others. Elements are related but not fully separate. Thus, power relations, institutions, beliefs and cultural values internalize semiosis without being reducible to them. CDA tries to study the relation between semiotic and other social elements, and the current study tries to analyze this relationship in the context of a specific business school.

**Research Methodology**

This case study followed a exploratory-interpretive design by collecting qualitative data. The study focused upon the uniqueness of data, so as to generate thick descriptions. The design focused on the context and its value for individual differences (Lantolf, 2001). The study tried to explore the sociocultural factors which often limit an individual’s interpretation and the way reality is understood.
Sampling

The case study used a representative sample by selecting one member each from senior, middle, junior management group and one representative from the student body to understand the phenomena as a case and bring in-depth insights about English language ideologies prevalent among students and their stake-holders at a business school.

Measurement

The data were analyzed using Fairclough’s Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model (2009) of dialectical-relational approach. For this study, the model tended to be the most suitable choice in terms of studying dialogically constructed discourses with their interconnectedness and relatedness of themes, and unfolding relations of power and control as a social practice. The study analyzed the relation between semiotic and other social elements specific to this business institute. Following Fairclough’s CDA model, the analysis of the data followed the four stages given below:

Stage 1. Focused upon relations of power and hegemony, in its semiotic aspects
Stage 2. Identified obstacles to addressing the power relations
Stage 3. Considered whether the social order ‘needs’ the power relations
Stage 4. Identified possible ways past the obstacles

Following CDA’s transdisciplinary tradition, the study included insights from business education, English language education, and teacher education, with references from sociology, history, and politics. It studied the data from three semiotic categories: genres, discourses, and style, as well as the orders of discourses. Interviews were transcribed as verbatim and analyzed focusing mainly on the speakers’ basic, high and low tones, pauses, and flow of speech adapting the Sinclair and Coulthard (1975) Model of Discourse Analysis.

Data analysis and discussion

First stage: The first stage of analysis looked at aspects of power and hegemony as a social practice and system in academia. CDA as a
tool of social critical science analyzed the power structures in academia. Such power structures were expressed in participants’ discourses through various semiotic forms such as texts, orders of discourses, tones, pauses, and flow of speech. At the second step of this stage, the social order of power and hegemony was studied through the insights gained from the field of language ideology.

**Second stage:** In the second stage of analysis, the study tried to understand the obstacles in the way to address the hegemonic presence of centering authorities in academia. Nested in the field of language ideology, the analysis laid out the relations of power in its semiotic aspects, through the orders of discourses, and semiotic forms used by senior educational leaders, and adhered to by the junior cadres. The dialectical-relations among the participants of this context became a source of social stratification and inequality, with power and hegemony centering on the main authorities.

To start, the discourses of the research participants reflected an artifactual view of language, of language as a product, stable and contextless- a structured set of grammatical structures, and functions. This view led to perceive language as a field for deploying power and control. According to Blommaert (2006), this view leads to look at language as an object of normative control by the institutional regimentation and leads to centers of control and authority. The senior management participant regarded English as an important medium for accessing knowledge and for business studies and stated:

“In order to become a leading business institution nationally, its graduates need to be placed in leading organizations and multinationals, there English helps.”

The participant created an ideology of high standards laid out for the institution, realizing his senior leadership position at the institute and in academia. The participant entextualized when he talked at length about the deteriorating standards of education, with graduates who are actually ‘functional illiterates’, but he corrected himself:

“As far as the institute was concerned my statements were very general (repeated in low tones: very general).”
This is the social or indexical meanings. The participant’s tone falls where he himself marks the generality in context and the tone rises with the specificity of the context: the relatedness and distancing with the subject: his identity as an educational leader makes him realize the role he has to play:

“We are fortunate to take intakes which are much better, there’s a screening test and similarly, our criteria is very strict.”

Immediately after this he said in a low tone:

“So, it’s like this. But again the structure is repeated: Louder: ‘...so, our students are quite comfortable in that way. Similarly, our teachers are also comfortable....’”

He himself marks what the text is and how to approach it: “...what I mean is”, or “that’s not the point”, as well as by his rising and falling tones as if he wants to say a few things aside and some things are there for the general public. It leads to the cultural transmission of beliefs from the text of a centering authority in education to the other contexts, with new suggestions of meaning which will be echoed in yet other texts.

The text relays the moment-by-moment construction of ideologies in the order of discourse. The participant indexes the talk as collectivism with an imperative tone:

“So, if communication is imperative, then communication must take place in that medium which is most understandable.”

Participants of the study formed membership in different speech communities but their memberships were volatile. The field of language ideologies adheres to contextualization and the same person whose discourse reflected norms of a particular community, displayed joint memberships in different speech communities, in the progression of the discourse. As the roles changed and the topics turned, the actors assumed
different social roles and contextualized accordingly. The same expression of power and authority continued in the several changing roles the participants played. To start, the senior management participant stated:

“We are fortunate to take intakes which are much better, ... our criteria is very strict (senior academic leadership); In order to become a leading business institution nationally, its graduates need to be placed in leading organizations and multinationals. (member of business management): in order to manage big organizations in Pakistan that organization has to live with a labour force and that labour force talks in Urdu (industrial administrator); if your area of management relates to dealing with local population, then 95% of our population does not know English (a social scientist); So I personally think that language issue has to do with politics rather than communication (a nationalist); The other day we had that conference and in the Hall there was one speaker who was speaking English initially and the whole hall was sleeping and the moment the speaker turned into a local language I could see that the comprehension improved and the listening comprehension improved (a social scientist).”

Middle management participant’s voice also ushered in multiple belonging: first, the identity of the Institute’s membership it’s our fault; that’s the way it happens here, when talking about the conflictual perception bout teaching business English courses and the need for teacher education, the participant created a synchronous identity of an educationist, education leader, ELT practioner, and the Institute’s senior faculty. Switching from a background of English language teaching, the participant realized the new needs of the Institute and associated oneself with that:

“English is not that important it’s the concepts that are more important. And how to transfer those concepts in English is more important.”

Now, a more pragmatic aspect of the artifactual view of language seems to have reified in the participant’s discourse. Here it is also the
‘othering’ process, to weave a new role and identity distinct from old community’s membership: but X didn’t believe in that because X herself was not trained. The identity of the participant became fluid in the older community where the participant belonged and got hardened in the new context, ascribing the participant’s new membership. The participant from middle management, being an expert in the area of English language teaching, immediately categorized the teaching/learning of English in the institute as English for Business purposes, with clearly defined goals and value.

“We support English, we have always supported English ... but English is not that important; it’s the concepts that are more important, and how to transfer those concepts in English is more important.”

These directives in the text polarize obvious trends of control and authority, augmented by a rising tone and strong emphasis in the speech. The flow of speech gets rapid as the discourse centers on the faculty’s need for formal training and education:

“Now where I learn how to teach ... depends upon the books I refer to. So whatever I pick up, whatever I learn becomes my forte.”

Here I is used to mean a general educational situation as bleak and by referring to ‘they’ talks about the teachers and we generalizes the issue:

“So when they tell the students to write reports, then anything that is given to them is acceptable. So, here it is that we lose base, right at the beginning.”

The transdisciplinary inclusion of discourses entering from English language education teaching, business education, teacher training, history and politics, are recontextualized and relayed with a force as if it was an imperative. The capillary power and regimented control in the field comes into play: “anyone who has done Masters in English ... needs to be trained.” Here the tone rose again, with an emphasis on training.
As the discourse progressed, its order changed and turned towards the student community, revolving around the need for teacher education, and the student body is viewed as a victim of a flaw of the educational/academic system:

“They say that whatever you explain to us we take, take a little from here and there and write it.”

And the discourse concretes the educational flaw:

“But I don’t think that it’s the students who are at fault—it’s our fault. Students get different vibes from the teachers—that’s the way it happens here.”

The intonation turned critical, with rising tone and fast speed. The participant dealt with the concepts fast which were clear and the person had been trained in. This is the inherent contextualization. The event of a face-to-face interview created an opportunity of setting the rules in a patterned manner, and the emphasis in the tone added the indexical meaning of enforcing those rules as enactment in the ELT field as well as in business education.

As compared to the senior and middle management groups, the text sets forth a contrast of tone, lesser intonation patterns and far less speed and more frequent pauses in the junior management participant when talking about the role of English at the Institute. The participant is tackling the operational aspects of teaching English, and the communication of concepts take a higher priority:

“We also have students coming from other places... so where we have classes called mixed ability classes we have to make sure that everybody understands it.”

The person perceived the role of English as very critical in education:

“English is of immense importance because when we look at business it’s not only business in Pakistan but then there are
many global challenges as well, ... English as tool of communication is very important because English is a global language.”

The tone of the participant rose, the speed and the flow of speech improved, and there seemed to be more confidence in what the participant was saying. These themes expressed in the participant’s discourse were well-established themes, and there seemed to be entextualized from the fields of globalization and English as a global language.

The study is guided by the field of language ideologies which postulates that every institution or social community constitutes its own ideological frames and membership norms, regenerated by its central actors. Members of this community comprehended and picked these ideologies and enacted those in texts through discursive practices. The student responded:

“The Institute though emphasizes on English..., but it’s basically a production machine. They are producing us to adjust to the outside world... so they have to concentrate on us, and English is one part of it.”

The participant is at the receiving end of the continuum of academia and here it is clearly seen how the pragmatic value of education is realized and followed. The participant repeatedly expressed that perfect English is not needed:

“So we need to have the basics because here also we need to contact clients in the outside world of Pakistan. Not very expert English. No we don’t need.”

The orders of discourse structured these ideologies at the micro level with suggestions of a mediocre approach to education: We need just the basics, a utilitarian aspect attached to business education: Technology has made things very easy for us. We have verbs, synonyms, we have everything available on the net, with a view of the student body as production machines. The discourse of the participant...
suggests new world’s meanings, new order of academia, and the support of information technology as invaluable.

Discourses centre on the voices of the participants, which polarize the role of cantering authorities or main actors—the senior and middle management, as they maintain power relations by nearing or distancing identities. The phoric expressions *I*, and *you* index individuality and authority, as well as generalizing beliefs, by transmitting norms of the Institute as well of the society at large, as if these were a collective order:

“I’m talking about; I could see that the comprehension improved; So, my experience ....” “I would start off by saying that... I would also like to stress.”

However, notably, at points in the discourses where the burden of responsibility got stronger, the expression turned to *we* and *us*, and even *I*. These cues are in sharp contrast with the use of *we*, by the junior management and non-management participants’ use of a more democratic and inclusive voice. The junior management participant’s voice seemed to echo the norms dictated by the centering authorities or actors, with the emphasis on delivering services:

“We do speak in English in our classes but Urdu is also there especially when we have to describe a concept or phenomena; we understand....”

The main actors or centering authorities (Silverstein, 1998) reproduced patterned manners of giving out popular opinion or belief, that is, doxa, in a particular group or community. This generates social meanings to which others orient or attribute to, in order to become one of the group members, to: socialize with them or to call themselves as a member of this group. This study suggests that these attributions are symbolic in nature as they aim at perceived central values of the group, like good, bad, ideal are all created or re-created by the centering authorities to which other members try to take on to become one of the community: Senior management’s valuation of a social ideal “leading business institution national”; “*I* support communication”, turns into norms for
those who are attributing towards this central actor. The middle management’s orientation is embedded in the expression:

“It’s the concepts that are more important, and how to transfer those concepts in English is more important.”

Later, followed by the junior management:

“I do not believe that we cannot switch from one language to the other especially when it comes to explaining the concepts.”

For the last link of the community, the non-management voices it out with full conviction:

“You see, it’s very easy to grasp things in Urdu than in English, because there are many technical things that should be explained in Urdu....”

These are speech chains picked from the environment of this specific group and then communicated further to the group members through discourses, behaviours, acts of adherence or rejection—which are easily understood and picked up instantly by the group members. And this is how power structures gain strength and sustenance. Other actors of the community, who were not in the power domains, became a partial source of reinforcing and strengthening the obstacles to remove power by conforming and complying with the power structures and centring authorities.

Discourse also became a means of cultural stratification and created hierarchies among the participants as centre and periphery, through their speech repertoires. The speech repertoires of the senior and middle management participants’ were in sharp variability with the junior cadres, based on their semiotic constitutions such as tone and choice of lexicon and argumentation schemes, with a discursive ability of borrowing references from other disciplines such as bureaucracy, politics and history, when reflecting upon education and business. Their language resources
were visibly marked by distinct levels of social and educational awareness; their linguistic repertoires were distinct; their handling of argumentation was with knowledge, logic and reason; and their references to knowledge were discrete. In the discourse of the senior management there was a sense of universalality and macro-power display in the handling of topics and themes. At the middle management level, the view of language gets restrained to the Institute’s academic management largely, and the structured pattern directing how things should be done here. At the junior management level with the use of *we* and *they*, *other regions* and *them* the discourse settles for the here and now issues; while the non-management participant’s approach to knowledge, education and business education, and the vital role of the Institute is understood at this level to be synchronous with getting them *acquiring and adjusting in job markets or higher education or doing business abroad*—something which is directly related to achieving economic stability and control.

**Third stage:** The third stage of analysis looked at the data from the point of whether the particular social order needs the hegemony and power, linking ‘is’ to ‘ought’. In this study the Ideology as a field, explained structures of power and hegemony as an important constituent of the inherent social order of this context. The study postulates that because of its ideological weight it may be possible that this specific institute as a social order needs the power structures, and addressing it at a large scale would lead to larger social changes which may not be feasible or possible at this macro-level.

**Fourth stage:** The fourth and the last stage of analysis of the study looked at the possibilities within the social order to look at the possibilities of removing obstacles in order to eradicate the power and hegemony in academia. It led to suggestions, firstly, of change in the system in terms of a more democratic set-up; secondly, more dialogues and consensual forums inclusive of junior cadres of management; and, lastly, for the need of de-centralized hubs of power and protocols. The study also recommends a re-organizing of ideologies of the institute and the roles of senior leadership about and of structures of power and control to that of a more democratic and equality oriented, and the junior management’s re-adjustment of perceptions about the roles of senior
leadership in academia. Even if not a comprehensive change is practically possible, it may initiate a constituent change in the power structures. The study envisions this transformation as a building of a new face of the institute and the roles of its main actors.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study, situated in the field of language ideologies, attempted to study the nature and causes behind English language perceptions of different management cadres at a business institute. The analysis of the data was done through Fairclough’s CDA Model (2009) and analyzed power and hegemony in the field of academia by selecting a business institute as a case.

The study recommends firstly, of adopting a more democratic set-up in the social order; secondly, constructing more dialogue-oriented consensual forums inclusive of junior cadres of management; and lastly, re-constructing de-centralized hubs of power and protocols. The study also recommends a re-organizing of ideologies of the Institute and the roles ascribed to senior leadership. Dialoguing among the actors would be contributive to mutually construct and revise the discrepancies in the perceptions of roles of various members of the academia.

**References**


Efficacy of Skill Development Techniques: Empirical Evidence

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Abstract

Making students skillful is the ultimate aim of teaching. The teachers who feel that their jobs are over once they explain and demonstrates the lesson in the class are certainly on the defective side of thinking. Rather, students must be guided towards the objectives of learning demonstrated through modeling, and given ample practice to handle learning independently. This paper elucidates various techniques available for skill development by studying the case of 75 students. Their views regarding learning were gathered through a questionnaire. A statistical analysis of their views was carried out, after which they were given a skill to practice through a selected technique which they considered as the most effective technique for skill development. It was empirically concluded that students learned the skill more rapidly when they are allowed to use their initiative and judgment in a mutual practice technique of skill development. At the end, guidelines for effective skill development have been suggested which could be adopted by teacher for skill training of students.

Keywords: skill development, teaching techniques, teacher efficiency.

Introduction

Sound application ability is a highly significant aspect that gives confidence to a student in applying theoretical knowledge to practical situations (Armstrong, 1998). It is at the application stage that a student excels in a skill. In teaching a skill, emphasis is on practicing the skills. Skills are not truly learnt until they become a habit (Bass, 1995).
Efficacy of Skill Development Techniques

Therefore, students are required to go through a cycle of practices until students become skillful. For this, various techniques are used such as controlled practice, mutual practice and team practice (Dawson, 1992). The efficacy of these techniques was determined based on the opinion of a group of 75 students. The statistical analysis of the data indicated that most of the students were in favor of mutual practice technique of skill development. This paper describes skill development techniques and gives a clear picture of the efficacy of these techniques empirically.

**Literature Review**

Behavioural and educational scientists agree that skill development is a systematic process comprising definite stages and actions taken within each stage (Dawson, 1992). To simplify the process, we can summarize that there are three basic stages involved in acquiring a skill. Explanation of these stages along with the methods to achieve each is given in Table 1.

**Table 1. Three basic stages in acquiring skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Methods to Achieve</th>
<th>Desirable Level Involvement of Teacher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Building concept of skill</td>
<td>Explanation. Demonstration. Directing and guiding students to study reference material</td>
<td>Maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing the skill</td>
<td>Students initiate the demonstration. Student’s activities are directed and guided. Teacher’s evaluation, encouragement and guidance.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice for accuracy and perfection</td>
<td>Practice exercises. Guide students to overcome their weaknesses.</td>
<td>Minimum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in the table explanation and showing should take the least time so that maximum time can be devoted to practice. Preferably, the teacher should guide on a requirement basis during the skill development stages. Students should be allowed to exercise their initiative and use their judgment during practice (Elgin, 1980). But, mostly it is not so in reality. Rather, the teacher is still an active part of skill development training which is contrary to the modern approach of teaching and learning. In modern teaching methods, learning is through active participation of students while the teacher acts as a mentor or guide (Ellis, 1997).

The most important thing in developing a skill is to teach how to solve problems or handle a particular situation rather than how to arrive at an approved set of solutions (James, James & Barkin, 1998). The student should use a systematic course of action to solve a problem which is briefly shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Sequence of action to handle a problem

Reconize the Problem → Collect Data about the Problem → Suggest Solutions → Evaluate the Solutions → Adopt the Best Solution

There are many techniques for learning a skill; however, the author has taken three major techniques which are being used for skill development in skill training institutes of Pakistan.

Controlled Practice: Students work individually or collectively under the supervision of a teacher. The teacher is the active part of such practice (Jakubowski & Lange, 1978). Students are not allowed to use their judgment beyond limits, and work step by step according to the guidelines provided by the teacher, followed by practice under the supervision of the teacher (Nirenberg, 1976).

Mutual Practice: This method is particularly useful when the class has learnt sufficiently and they acquire capability of supervising each other’s
work under the limited guidance of the teacher. The students alternatively act as coach and pupils (Nichols, 1995). This method teaches the students to think as well as “to do”. It stimulates interest and builds up a sense of responsibility and spirit of cooperation. In this method of skill development, the teacher is passive and the students are active (Piaget, 1991). Here the students are allowed to initiate their actions and use their judgment (Schunk & Gunn 1985).

Team Practice: At this stage students are first trained individually and then made part of a team. In this method, they learn how to work with others. Team practice is done in two phases, the technique phase and the practical phase (Kouzes, 1987). In the technique phase, the members of the team master the technique of their task without applying it to a practical situation. In the practical phase, the whole team does the same task in realistic conditions under a practical scenario. The teacher remains active in technique as well as in the practical phase (Peters, 1982).

Method

Study design

Essentially, it was not a simple task to determine the best technique for skill development. Educationists have given different verdicts about the suitability of various skill development methods; however, no serious attempt by the researchers could be sighted which describes students’ opinion about different skill development techniques. To accomplish this task, a thorough research methodology was used which comprised the following steps. Survey through questionnaires is one of the appropriate methods for research in social sciences. It is a method used to collect information from a sample of individuals in a systematic way. In this research, a survey was conducted to know about the best skill development technique based on the opinion of students. An interactive and easy to follow questionnaire was designed. Each student was required to answer four simple questions about each technique, whether that technique was slightly effective or moderately effective.
Participants

A simple random sample of 75 students was selected as respondents regardless of any gender, caste and creed bias. Selection of this size of sample was based on the premise that generally for computing averages, a sample of this size is adequate. Moreover, sample configuration was kept mixed. It included students from all categories regardless of gender, caste and creed bias. The mixed representation in the sample catered for bias and error in the sampling. The level of awareness in the respondents about skill development techniques suggested that 75 respondents could effectively represent the opinion of the complete school. The average age of the students was 20 years.

Measures

The students were given full liberty to rate the skill development techniques as per their own assessment. No tampering was done to achieve a natural response. Questionnaires were distributed among a sample of 75 students. The data obtained through the questionnaire was statistically analyzed. To validate the results, students' favourite technique in the art of presentation was given to a group of 15 students to practice. At the end of this process students were found more skilled. Thus, their opinion was validated practically.

Procedure

A comprehensive procedure was adopted to obtain the data. Starting from the formulation of an easy questionnaire till validation of the results obtained, a systematic process was adopted as shown in Figure 2. The process was first explained to the students and then they were asked to respond to the questionnaire as per their own judgment.

Results

The feedback obtained from students indicated a strong tendency towards mutual practice method as 35 out of 75 students declared it be a very effective method of skill development. On the other hand, 25 students were for team practice and only 10 were for controlled practice as the best technique of skill development. This shows that students like initiative
and use of judgment which is optimally available in mutual practice method. Students learn better when they are on their own, with least involvement, though under the guidance of a teacher (Phelps, 1987). In the modern scenario a teacher should act as a mentor and guide the students, rather than controlling them to an extent that they are not able to practice their judgment the data obtained along with descriptive statistics is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of the data obtained through questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Response</th>
<th>Techniques</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of students for Controlled Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not effective</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Effective</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately Effective</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Effective</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Descriptive Statistics</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kurtosis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Skewness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 reflects a very interesting scenario of the student’s opinion. Few statistical conclusions are as under.

The standard deviation value for mutual practice was high (12.50), followed by team practice (7.54) and then controlled practice (7.50). Statistically it means that for mutual practice technique, the change in opinion occurred after every 12th student, whereas, in the case of controlled and team practice techniques, every 7th or 8th student changed his opinion. The values for all the three practices ranged between 68 to 95 % of the area under normal distribution curve (on either side of the mean).
Data set of mutual practice had positive skewness which meant that its data set contained few small values. This again proved that students are satisfied with mutual practice. On the other hand, controlled and team practice methods had negative skewness, which indicated that its data set contained few high values. It reflected that students were not satisfied with controlled practice and team practice.

Data set for mutual practice had positive kurtosis value, indicating that the curve represented by data set was steeper than the normal distribution curve which was an indication that most of the observations were clustered near the average and fewer on the extremes. On the other hand, data set for controlled and team practice had negative kurtosis value indicating a flatter curve than normal distribution curve. In other words, fewer observations clustered near the average and more observations populated the extremes.

Discussion

After determining the best technique based on students’ opinion, students were given practice in the skill of presenting a topic of their choice by adopting mutual practice approach. Students were divided into 5 groups of 15 students in each. In each group, every student was asked to present the topic of his own choice for 10 minutes, and the rest of the 14 fellows were asked to correct him for errors. When this practice was repeated by 15 students of the group, students were found much skilled in the art of presentation. 15 rounds of this activity were conducted.

During the skill development activity, the teacher observed the students closely, without directing, and controlling. The teacher just mentored. During this process students were observed for improvement in skill after each practice. Thus, the study showed a very definite relationship between the number of practices and level of skill development as shown in Figure 2.
Figure 2. Relationship between number of practices and skill development

Figure 2 shows the three distinct stages of skill development and its relation to the number of practices observed during the students' activity. In stage 1, the students learnt slowly, as the numbers of practices were more than the corresponding percentage of skill development. In stage 2, the students learnt more with fewer practices and in stage 3, there was a consistent level of skill development and no worthwhile increase in skill learning occurred with an increase in the number of practices. At the end of stage 3, students were found skillful in the presentation skill (Bandura, 1993).

The time required for skill development was observed after each practice round to draw a relationship between time required for skill development and number of practices. This again had three distinct stages as shown in Figure 3.
Figure 3. Relationship between time and number of practices

Figure 3 shows that initially students took more time and only fewer practices could be conducted (stage 1), but as the learning progressed, they started taking lesser time and consequently, more practices could be conducted (stage 2). Finally, they reached to a stage (stage 3), where time could not be reduced further with increased number of practices. At this stage, students were skilled in the skill of presentation.

Application stage for skill development requires greater imagination and ingenuity by the teacher. The teacher has to decide how to institute a systematic process whereby the students are allowed to use their initiative and judgment and at the same time they are guided and mentored (Smith & Stiff, 1993). This depends on the subject curriculum which a teacher is teaching. The teacher needs to take care of necessary equipment and aids required so that the practice can be conducted in a meaningful way (Mirza & Hussain, 2014). And more importantly, he should be sure about the time the practice should last, depending on the mental and physical capacity of students. Also, the number of practices for skill development depends on student’s learning capability.
**Conclusions**

Making students skillful is a skill and a teacher needs to learn this skill. The study was conducted to know about the response of students about different skill development techniques and to determine the best technique as per their opinion. The following conclusions can be drawn from the study:

1. Mutual practice is the most effective method of skill development. It is because students learn better and fast when they are allowed to use their initiative and judgment.

2. As the number of practices increases, the time to learn a skill reduces.

3. Initially more practice is required to learn the basics of skill, after which the speed of learning increases, unless it reaches a stage of consistency where no increase in learning occur with additional number of practices.

4. Teacher should act as guide and mentor during skill development; but he should allow students to exercise their initiative and judgment.

**References**


Impact of Cooperative Learning in Developing Students' Cognitive Abilities for Academic Achievement

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Abstract

This study used an Action Research Method to investigate ways to improve the thinking and reasoning skills of grade eight science students in an under-resourced school in Karachi. The students’ rote learning patterns were challenged using the schema provided by Bloom’s taxonomy of learning domains. A cooperative learning environment was generated with a renewed investment plan, a restructured lesson plan and an intensive workshop with the group leaders. These interventions were done with the help of the preliminary data that was collected through questionnaires. The outcomes of the action research method showed a positive correlation between cooperative learning approach and academic achievement of the students.

Keywords: cooperative learning, cognitive abilities, Bloom’s Taxonomy

Introduction

The school where this study was conducted is located in Shirin Jinnah Colony, Karachi. The school being a government school does not charge any monthly tuition fee. It is an under resourced school that lacks basic physical infrastructure, which includes no running water in the bathrooms and frequent power breakdowns during the day. The desks are also not proper and the overall physical environment is not conducive for teaching and learning. Furthermore, rote learning is also very common amongst these students, as it is encouraged by the government teachers who themselves are not competent in the subject that they are teaching.
After teaching science for eight months to grade seven students, I was disturbed to see the class average being at 45 percent. The bell curve for the marks in the final exam was left skewed, showing that more students had scored below 50 percent. Moreover, there was a big gap between the student who had achieved the highest mark, and the student who had achieved the lowest mark. As a teacher, it was alarming since the exam questions were all based on the content and questions that we had done in class. Furthermore, the group system that I had introduced for the purpose of increasing students’ academic performance had really not shown much of an impact on their final exam scores. As a result, I had to revisit and reevaluate the situation.

Literature Review

Cooperative learning promotes learning and fosters respect and friendships among diverse groups of students (Atte & Baker, 2007; Slavin, 2004). In fact, the more diversity in a team, the higher the benefits for each student. Peers learn to depend on each other in a positive way for a variety of learning tasks (Gillies, 2007). In cooperative learning students typically work in teams of four. This way they can break into pairs for some activities and then get back together in teams very quickly for others (Lai & Wu, 2006). It is important; however, to establish classroom norms and protocols that guide students to contribute, stay on task, help each other, encourage each other, share, solve problems, and also give and accept feedback from peers (Hänze & Berger, 2007; Siegel, 2005).

According to Bond and Castagnera (2006), students’ learning is greatly enhanced when a child teaches another child; since social support in class can either be received from peers or from the teacher (Johnson, 1985). However, a cooperative environment is essential for an effective peer support system (Bond & Castagnera, 2006).

In cooperative learning, students work in small groups to help each other learn and understand academic material (Slavin, 2013). Cooperative learning conversely would fail if prerequisite social skills (Slavin, 2008 & 2011) among students were not developed (such as listening, negotiating, problem solving, resolving conflict and encouraging
one another); and at the same time it is important to abandon competition (Zakaria & Iksan, 2007), as there is a difference between making students compete amongst each other and challenging them (Shevin, 1994). If implemented correctly, research has shown that cooperative learning has helped to maximize students’ learning, and has also resulted in greater academic achievement than other methods of teaching (Johnson, 1985). Cooperative learning has often been referred to as a means of fostering thinking skills and promoting higher order thinking (Slavin, 2013).

Activities and experiences are important in the academic success of students, but so are standard objectives, assessments, and materials. For standard objectives and assessments, Bloom’s Taxonomy is quite helpful (Pickard, 2007). The revised taxonomy has been classified into seven hierarchical levels namely remembering, understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Bloom’s Taxonomy was revised with the intention of serving to the needs of a larger audience with the emphasis of improving instructional delivery, curriculum planning and assessment.

Methodology

Design

Self-reflective cycles of action research were employed for this research (Koshy, 2013). These cycles included reflecting upon the current practices, coming up with a plan to change a current practice that was not effective in class, implementing the new plan, and then determining the effectiveness of the new actions (Bencze, 2013).

Participants

The participants for the action research were grade eight students. All participants were girls since it is an all-girls' school. The ages of these participants range between 13-16 years. Most of them are Pathan, and students have to wear burqas or chaddars when they are outside the school. They come from low income conservative families.
Measures

The measure that was used in this research was the ability of the student to answer questions pertaining to level one and level two thinking skills on Bloom’s Taxonomy during the independent practice and summative test. The questions for level one of Bloom’s Taxonomy aimed at assessing whether students remembered a concept or not? The cues used to devise these questions were ‘what’, ‘list’, and ‘name’; whereas, the objective of questions pertaining to level two was to assess whether the students had understood the concept. The cues used for devising these questions were ‘explain’, ‘classify’, ‘differentiate’ and ‘give examples’.

Procedure

As part of the first step of the self-reflective cycle I tried to assess my current teaching practices by doing a situational analysis. This helped me to identify the areas that I wanted to explore during my literature review. In the literature, the terms cooperative learning and Bloom’s Taxonomy were explored in more depth. Once this was done, I made an intervention plan to meet my objective. The research objective was to make my students capable of answering questions pertaining to level one (remembering) and level two (understanding) on Bloom’s Taxonomy with the help of a cooperative learning environment. I wanted to determine the effectiveness of my intervention plan by looking at the improvement in the summative test scores of the students. My situational analysis was based on two investigation tools which were the following:

1. Questionnaire
2. Reflective journal

Questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered on 46 students who had been promoted from grade seven to grade eight. The questionnaire had nine questions. The first question required them to rank the subjects that they were studying in order of their preference. Looking at the frequencies for this question, English was given the highest preference, which was followed by math and science.
Table 1. Frequency table of students’ subject preferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Math</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamiat</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sindhi</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the second question, students had to rate their likeness for science on a five point Likert scale (five being the highest score and one being the lowest score). The questionnaire results showed that 86 percent of the students liked science subject. In the third question, 73 percent of the students felt that they understood the content that was taught during the science class. In the remaining six questions of the questionnaire students had to give a score on a five point Likert Scale to the following factors:

1. Clarity of lesson objectives
2. Effectiveness of group work
3. Getting individual attention from the teacher
4. Getting help from the group leader
5. Usefulness of books
6. Getting help from home

It can be concluded that students were not ‘getting help from home’. This was followed by not ‘getting help from the group leader’. Students however, gave the highest score to ‘getting individual attention from the teacher’ which was followed by ‘effectiveness of group work’.
Table 2. Total scores given by students for questions four to nine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Total score (230)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The teacher tells the objectives of the lesson.</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group work is effective.</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher gives me individual attention.</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group leaders explain when I don’t understand.</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books are effective in understanding a concept.</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At home I get help when I don’t understand a concept.</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings of the reflective journal

I maintained a reflective journal and kept recording my field experiences in it. The reflective journal helped me to assess my practices of cooperative learning. I implemented a group system in the class with the class strength of 47 students. The whole class was divided into groups of four. The groups had been formed such that every group had a strong student, one or two weak students, and one or two average students. The stronger student was made the group leader. According to the findings from the journal, this group system was not helping the weaker students especially during the guided practice of my lesson. During the guided practice of the lesson plan, I made students work with their respective groups. I gave every group a problem sheet that had questions and they had to solve it as a group. The problem that arose from this practice was that I could not assess whether the weak students had tried solving the problem or not.

In structuring of the group system the pitfalls that I had identified through my reflective journal were three. First, I did not mention to my class as to why I was making them work as a group and what I expected of the groups. Secondly, my group leaders were not instructed about what they were supposed to do, especially with members who were not listening.
Leaders had not been coached or trained for the responsibility that they had been assigned for. Thirdly, I was focusing more on achieving academic objectives than developing their social skills, which are crucial for academic achievement. Lack of planning and implementation were the reasons for not fully benefiting from the group system.

After situational analysis, I made an action plan that I implemented in my class. My action plan had two phases. As part of the first phase of my action plan, grade eight was divided into two sections so as to reduce class strength. Section A had 26 students, whereas section B had 21 students. This was followed by a renewed investment plan, through which the class was introduced to new rules and consequences, along with a new quantitative and qualitative goal which revolved on developing a cooperative learning environment. Furthermore, during the first phase the group leaders were made to go through an intensive workshop that tried to inculcate skills that would foster a cooperative learning environment within the class. The second phase focused on changing my instructional delivery by using Bloom’s taxonomy within a cooperative learning environment.

**Renewed investment plan.** Students were introduced to new qualitative class goals. The qualitative goals of my class were teamwork, discipline, determination and hard work. These goals were discussed with the students and new but simple rules and consequences were also introduced in the class. If any student broke any rule, they had to face a consequence so as to discourage the behavior. The severity of the action was determined by how many rules were broken, and with that also determined the severity of the consequence.

**Group leader workshop.** The workshop was five days long. The purpose of the workshop was to make group leaders understand their role and responsibility. The workshop aimed at making the group leaders understand who is a leader, and tried to nurture the soft skills of listening, negotiating, problem solving, resolving conflict and encouraging one another.
Changing the structure of the lesson. The old lesson plan had a learning objective. The plan was divided into three parts: (a) introduction to new material, (b) guided practice, and (c) independent practice. In guided practice, I only gave them group work. In the new lesson plan there were social objectives along with the learning objectives. Learning objectives unlike in the old lesson plan format were based on Bloom’s Taxonomy level one and level two. The introduction to new materials was limited to seven minutes like in the old lesson plan format. Guided practice was divided into two stages. Each stage of the guided practice ensured that students master level one and level two thinking skills of Bloom’s Taxonomy. Stage one of the guided practice had pair work in which the pairs had to decide who would be the writer and who would be the speaker. Once they had decided, the speaker had to answer level one question of Bloom’s Taxonomy by dictating it to the writer who had to just write the answers. This role had to be then reversed, and students had to adhere strictly to their respective self-assigned roles. Once done, and if they had more time they could discuss the answers amongst each other. This was then followed by the second stage of the guided practice where students had to answer questions pertaining to level one and level two on Bloom’s Taxonomy individually. In both phases they were permitted to ask for my help if they needed it and then these questions were discussed in class. In the independent practice, students had to answer questions pertaining to level one and level two on Bloom’s Taxonomy, on their own. Students’ work was tracked and any student who failed to attempt even one question during the independent practice had to stay back for remediation after school.

Results

During my action research, I used the new lesson plan format for the topics: temperature, matter, states of matter, melting, boiling, and freezing within a cooperative learning environment. A summative test was given to students once all of the above topics had been taught in class. The summative test had questions pertaining to level one and level two on Bloom’s Taxonomy. The class average for the summative test of grade 8A was 80.10 per cent and the standard deviation of the scores was 3.7 per
cent; whereas for grade 8B the class average was 89 per cent and the standard deviation of the scores was 2.9 per cent.

**Outcomes and Discussion**

In my action research I learnt that learning objectives need to be specific. Once my objectives were tailored to level one and level two on the Bloom’s Taxonomy, I was able to plan a more structured lesson. Questions during the guided practice and independent practice were driven by the learning objectives which made assessment genuine. It also ensured that remedial was not just for below average students but were for any student who failed to answer any of the independent practice questions.

The investment plan had qualitative goals along with the rules and consequences, and the workshop helped in creating a cooperative learning environment within the class. This environment helped in maximizing students’ learning. Pair work was also a good activity as it helped students to not only remember the concepts, but to listen to the lecture carefully during the class.

Students, however, struggled in remembering the content after the lesson was delivered. Once this was noticed I gave them a post lesson worksheet. This worksheet summarized the key points of my lesson followed by questions pertaining to level one and level two on Bloom’s Taxonomy. Students had to copy the content of the worksheet in their copies and then had to answer the questions of the worksheet on their own. The name of this post lesson worksheet was *Dorbeent*.

**Conclusion**

Cooperative Learning Method and clear objectives helped me to bridge the gap between the weaker and the stronger students. Cooperative Learning Method provided me the ultimate foundation for the smooth execution of the lesson plan during the class; whereas, clear objectives helped me in structuring an effective lesson that maximized students’ learning. Bloom’s Taxonomy was a useful framework that helped me in establishing clear and precise objectives for my lessons. It also allowed me to devise questions that made the assessment of students authentic.
References


Effective Debriefing Helps Achieve Learning Objectives in the Classroom

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Abstract

Learning involves making sense of whatever has been taught or experienced in the classroom (Watkins, 2009). Individual students may, in fact, interpret such experiences of learning differently and may apply this knowledge distinctly throughout their lives. Classroom activities in this regard may work as useful tools to enhance students’ learning experiences through active involvement and reflective practices (Watkins, 2009). However, if whatever done in the class makes no sense to a student and is not integrated effectively with the content and students’ demographics both purpose and process of teaching and learning become ambiguous (Berman, 2004). One of the many reasons where students’ learning is said to be hampered is inadequate opportunity left for the teacher to debrief or review activities once they are done (Dennison & Kirk, 1990). Thus, I believe, one of the ways to ensure student learning is adequate integration of pedagogy with learning objectives through reviewing and debriefing exercises.

Keywords: debriefing, reflective writing, teaching and learning

Post-activity discussion or reviewing any task performed during the class may be referred to as ‘Debriefing’ (A’Echevarria, 2010). In other words, after any task is given to the students or any activity performed during the class, the discussion (formal or informal) that leads to the main purpose of the exercise may be referred to as debriefing (Dennison, &
Kirk, 1990). Debriefing may sometimes be used interchangeably with the terms reviewing or reflecting. Thus, as the name suggests, debriefing like any other review or reflective exercise, involves in-depth discussion or interchange of ideas to deduce the purpose or objective of the pedagogy used in the class. For learning to take place, effective debriefs are said to be vital whereby people acknowledge occurrences around them and give sense to such experiences (Dennison & Kirk, 1990). This is because students’ experiences and knowledge gained during the class play a vital role in the overall learning process of the child (Dennison & Kirk, 1990).

Learning is a very complex process of giving meaning to a particular experience or making sense of the knowledge acquired (Watkins, 2009). Lessons learnt from such experiences play a significant role in the development of a person’s knowledge, skill and expertise (Baker, Jensen & Kolb, 2002). When students are involved in the class and are able to comprehend classroom exercises and activities, learning occurs. It may thus be said that classroom activities provide opportunities to students to get involved in the process and debriefing time provides opportunities for students to enhance their knowledge and experience as reflective practitioners (Watkins, 2009). When students are involved in classroom exercises, they participate well in the overall process of learning, which helps them to make sense of their experiences with precision (Baker, Jensen & Kolb, 2002). On the other hand, if whatever is done in the class makes no sense to a student and is not integrated effectively with the content and the students’ demographics or their cognitive level, both purpose and process of teaching and learning become ambiguous (Berman, 2004). Students’ learning in the class in such cases, may be said to be hampered because of inadequate opportunity for the teacher to debrief or review (Dennison, & Kirk, 1990). Through effective debriefs, the teacher can make sure that students are able to deduce key messages from the lesson being taught or are able to learn something from the pedagogy used in the class. This discussion will highlight the importance of effective debriefing exercises in the class as one of the ways to ensure students’ learning and adequate integration of the pedagogy with the learning objectives. This essay would first give a brief context of the classroom experience as an instance and then would highlight the importance of review or debriefing in the class. In addition, this essay would also provide the implications of
having post-activity review / debrief sessions in the class for learning to take place.

In a secondary education classroom, where students range from 10-13 years of age, my task as the new term teacher was to begin the new chapter and give an introduction. Our planning for initial classes was all done and tasks were delegated way before to elaborate assigned key concepts for the lesson; therefore, I was confident about my class planning and execution. Despite initial planning based on students’ level of understanding, there arose some concerns while we talk about teaching and learning in secondary classes. I reflected that it was often easy to apply various teaching pedagogies, but difficult to sustain students’ interest and achieve the content objective at the same time.

For the introductory session, we asked students to draw objects they thought would resemble their own personality and then asked them to present their drawings to the whole class. After individual presentations, students had to relate the individual pictures in the form of a story. I had planned the lesson in a way that I thought would keep my students engaged in the learning process, using their ideas to explore the concept of development and evolution. The aim was to let the students identify their own features and traits so as to relate these with their acquaintances to generate a story. In this way each concept begot new concepts, which was the evolution or development of ideas.

Students participated well in the classroom activities. However, as soon as the lesson was over, it was found that all the efforts that were put for students to learn the very concept of development and process involved in the evolution of ideas went in vain. The activity did take place and students participated actively within the classroom, but by the end of the lesson, all they remembered were the images that were drawn and that they had great fun and laugh during the lesson. My reflections of the lesson made me realise that by the end of the lesson, teachers and students were not on the same page. Objectives for the session seemed to be lost behind the colourful drawings, fun and laugh students had during the lesson. Hence, the purpose of the activity and the reason for that particular strategy to be included in the lesson plan may not have been inferred effectively.
Similar to the instance stated above, teachers face many such challenges in their classrooms. Although teachers do anticipate minor issues within the classroom which they try to manage using various teaching pedagogies, understanding student’s level of interest and so on, but careful considerations for planned debrief exercises and reviews are seldom considered. All the key messages needed to be communicated to the students are assumed to be learnt automatically after each activity is concluded. That is, teachers assume that students would be able to deduce the purpose of the activity effectively, but this practice is easier said than done. Even though planning and deliberate efforts are done by teachers to reach appropriate conclusions, directed questions and specific linkages are not consciously made while deducing key messages from the lesson. As evident from classroom experience, fun during the activity, no doubt, created a comfortable environment for the students to share their views; however, the students were still unable to comprehend what was actually aimed for a particular activity.

This instance in my teaching experience, aroused my interest towards ‘debrief time’ specifically allotted during classroom exercises in order to make meaning and connections of the activity with the actual content. With effective debriefing discussions, it was evident students were engaged in the class, learnt from each other’s responses and opportunities were available for them to clarify any missing links. It helped me in setting up a healthy environment in which students’ learning could be facilitated, lesson objectives achieved and students’ learning assessed (Dennison & Kirk, 1990). Hence, it may be said that the simple notion of debriefing and reviewing of activities can bring about a change in a big way for the overall achievement of objectives.

There are many prospects regarding debriefing within the classroom. First, it is suggested that it is vital to include debrief time consciously within the lesson plan (Dennison & Kirk, 1990). Assigning appropriate time for debriefs consciously, during the lesson is effective to integrate teaching methodologies with the content being taught. Designing debriefing questions and possible connections prior to the lesson helps the teacher to remain focused and direct the lesson towards the overall objective which would otherwise remain ambiguous.
With planned deliberate attempts to engage students in the post activity discussion, teachers can allocate protected time to debrief their students about the purpose of the class and how cooperative learning is linked with the learning content and with their lives at large. Wrapping up the classroom tasks in a structured manner would help students make meaningful connections about what they are learning and make them understanding the importance of reflection or reviewing exercises in their everyday lives.

Second, debriefing or review discussions may be incorporated at the end of the class or even several times during the session, according to the need and context of the study (Pearson & Smith, 1985). As starting any activity is important for a greater impact and attaining the motivation and interest of the students, so does the conclusion. The ending should be impactful, reflective, and long lasting for the students. Therefore, it is advisable to follow a sandwich approach in the class. The sandwich design of teaching and learning suggest that before and after the main task or the learning experience planned for the students, there should be an meaningful conclusion together with the detailed beginning. This structure for the lesson suggests that before the actual learning, tasks, objectives, instructions, and resources for the activity need to be clarified. Then after the students’ performance or completing the task/activity, the finishing phase must include the opportunity to discuss the achievement of outcome, collective learning from the task performed, and to reflect on the learning with the students that we have discussed above as debriefing activities. Nonetheless, rather than emphasising on the stages where these discussions are placed, these can be made effective when it is structured in the lesson plan beforehand (Pearson & Smith, 1985).

Third, both formal and informal techniques may be used to debrief any lesson for students. While debriefs may be initiated informally, several planned activities and questions including reflective writings and guided discussions may be used formally. In formal planning for debriefs, it is said to be essential to practice and plan debrief questions beforehand in order to remain focused and connect the activity with the learning objectives, than to assume that it is an automatic process. Although the questions were laid out before the actual performance of the activity and that might
not reflect what students’ real experience in the class are, there is always room to modify the questions and link them to activities as per the needs, rather than going in the class without foreseeing the outcomes. Whether a formal or informal approach is used for effective debriefing discussions, debriefing questions determined prior to teaching can be useful to guide the teacher about the time and effort needed to make the students understand the activity and its relevance with the actual content (A’Echevarria, 2010).

Where in the above discussion, planning and implementing debriefing was highlighted, we will now discuss the implications and positive outcomes debriefing might lead to in the classroom. In the process of teaching and learning, debriefing discussions or activities might help students in the following ways; First, discussion or interaction within the classroom in the form of debriefing may actually help both students and teachers to become conscious of their learning in the classroom (Watkins, 2009; Dennison & Kirk, 1990). This requires mutual effort from the teachers as well as the students to build an understanding and to move forward with this understanding (Harrison, 2002). In this way, students learn how to learn and teachers learn how students have learnt (Watkins, 2009). In other words, discussions or reviewing activities provide a tool for students to share their learning with their fellow students as well as with the teacher (Dennison, 1990; Nicholson, 2012). Second, due to this developed habit of learning from experiences, students and teachers may both begin to reflect upon its implications in their daily lives (Berman, 2004). I will discuss these implications as follows:

Debriefing activities are said to be crucial in providing reflection time as well as an opportunity for learners to interact. Discussions during debriefs provide room for interaction amongst students and between students and the teacher (Dennison & Kirk, 1990). This helps create enabling learning environments where students engage actively in the process of meaning making apart from their engagement in the teaching methodology used (Watkins, 2009). Involving students in the post-activity discussion helps the whole class to share their individual understanding with each other and then to build upon their learning from each other’s experiences (Jaworski, 1996). Students’ learning from the class might be
different from their peers and therefore, debriefing discussions can be
used to collect diverse ideas together and multiply individual learning
experiences through synergy (Baker, Jensen & Kolb, 2002). Hence,
students can become active participants in the learning process and
education may not be limited to mere transfer of knowledge from a teacher
to a student, but becomes a collaborative process (Barclay & Weir, 1994).

Here, debriefing activity may have to be given a completely new
dimension. This is because review or debrief exercises have not been
limited to students learning, but also a tool to assess students (Baker, Jensen
& Kolb 2002). Moreover, it may function to facilitate a teacher’s own
learning that how well teacher was able to actualize a plan and achieve the
students' learning objectives in the classroom using a particular activity in
the class and how that can be modified in the later classes to make it more
explicit and impactful for the students (Barclay & Weir, 1994). This may
also serve as an opportunity for the teacher to provide evaluative feedback
to the students about their performance and contribution in the class
(Pearson & Smith, 1985).

In addition, the process of reflecting on the experiences and how
they have affected one’s life may also be studied through constructivists’
approach (Jaworski, 1996). The theory suggests that learning takes place
when people reflect on their experiences. In other words, post-experience
reflections in the classroom help students to learn the skill and knowledge
to integrate various learning experiences with their own lives (A’Echevarria,
2010). While this approach assists students to observe overall learning
experiences not as discrete order of activities but a continuous spiral of
concepts that they are learning, it also helps a teacher to structure learning
in an effective way so that all the exercises in the class are relevant to the
students’ context (Berman, 2004).

Furthermore, engaging in any activity or experiencing any
phenomenon helps students develop a certain thinking pattern that will
not only help students to acquire knowledge but totally internalize it (Baker,
Jensen & Kolb 2002). Therefore, reflection on the critical experiences
during and after the class is essential (Dennison & Kirk, 1990). Kolb’s
experiential learning cycle also gives significance to the reflective process
after any concrete experience within the classroom. According to him, learning may take place through active experimentation and conceptualizing it through the process of reflection. This shows that reflection is an integral part of the learning process, which will be initiated through debrief-time within the classroom. Kolb further notes that learning is a continuous process, whereby students learn from their experience, reflect upon it and then testify it. This may lead to experiencing something else and hence the process continues. This is important because it allows the learner to review his actions and thus avoid repeating the same fallacies again.

Classroom experiences may be acclaimed as a critical learning base for our experiences. Lessons learnt henceforth, may be applied to enrich our learning environment and make constructive changes in our teaching philosophy to overcome challenges. In this regard, it may be said that experience from an instance opens opportunities for researchers to dig deeper into the concept and highlight strategies for improvement. In this case, the discussion paper invites teachers to inculcate the habit of using debriefing and review activities and to make conscious efforts in their classrooms for the same. Such efforts not only provide classroom experience a proper direction, but also opportunities for learners to assess and evaluate their experiences.

When I implemented structured, yet flexible debriefing discussion questions with my class, I observed changes in my students’ attitude. By the end of any activity, students had begun to deduce its main purpose and they even tried to look at the same activity with various perspectives that even I had not thought of while planning. They also asked me to define certain terms that were confusing which also gave me a new dimension towards which I should work on during subsequent classes, that is, to clarify certain genres being used in the class so as to make sure all the students are on the same level of understanding. Since debriefs have become a regular practice in my classroom, I find my students asking high order questions as they learn from each others’ responses and are ready to add value to their own limited knowledge.

I feel encouraged to observe that by using careful ‘debrief-time’ in my classes I am able to conclude my class with more satisfaction. I am
now more confident that students are taking at least something from the many objectives intended for the lesson through debriefing exercises, which earlier were left quite vague. When students are engaged in discussions, they gain confidence and then the class becomes open learning ground for them to discuss their issues, raise concerns and internalize the meaning or purpose of the lesson (Dennison & Kirk, 1990).

In the end, I believe it would not be wrong to claim that activities are meaningless unless given meaning through debriefing or review discussions/activities. Overall, debriefing discussions may be used to summarize the content, evaluate the interpersonal skills and to identify the thinking processes of the students. When teachers try to implement effective review time within their classes, it is helpful for them to remain focused in their lesson and to comprehend students’ understanding. Review or debriefing exercises are thus meaning making exercises which when done during the class would help widen the students’ perspective and would help them think about the world with a completely new paradigm. They would begin to learn and deduce learning outcomes from every experience in their lives and would then be able to apply it in their daily lives.

Teachers’ little effort to try to make sense of the pedagogy used and the content being taught, the debriefing activities or discussions may prove helpful to assess students’ progress and their understanding. The teacher would hence, be able to reflect on their practices too by observing the applicability of the pedagogy used and then to modify the plan for the next session based on feedback from the students. Though debriefing might not bring drastic changes in the students’ attitude towards learning, I believe that with gradual input and consistent effort, this review methodology would be helpful for me as a teacher-learner and to the students who are trying to make sense of the world.

References


Theorizing Global Studies
By Darren O’Byrne and Alexander Hensby

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The title of the book being reviewed is Theorizing Global Studies. It is published by Palgrave Macmillan Publisher Limited in England and United States in 2011. The authors are Darren O’Byrne and Alexander Hensby. O’Byrne is a Principal Lecturer at the University of Roehampton, UK. He is a human right specialist and has been a speaker of Amnesty International for many years; whereas, Hensby is a scholar at the University of Edinburgh. The theme of this book is ‘globalization’. To make this theme comprehensible, the authors introduced eight models. In the first chapter, the authors looked at the term of ‘globalization’ from the range of social sciences and related disciplines to ferret out how diverse scholarly contributions have sought to define this subject. To extricate these contributions from entanglement and to present alternative paradigms, paradoxical plan has been developed to give the readers an unbiased concept of globalization and its transition throughout history. Here, the authors explain the philosophy of global citizenship and how global events either bring the entire world together or tear it apart.

In the second chapter, second model, ‘Liberalization’ is given due importance. Authors explain that the true globalised world can be made truly liberalized by making it borderless. This borderless world should be the hub of free market which should benefit new global economy bringing with it economic prosperity in the entire world. However, this economic prosperity would also give birth to economic inequality and divided this world into explicit blocks. These blocks can still be seen as the economically advanced countries; whereas, in contrast to these, we have economically under-developed countries known as the third world countries. This race of acquiring world wealth and economically prosperous status in the world, countries are trying to push their boundaries to increase their trade across the world. However, this increasing trade is in the form of standardized
franchises of giant business chain that penetrate boundaries to represent their countries in a foreign land. This gives rise to cultural homogeneity, consequently losing local traditions.

In the third chapter, the idea of economic inequality is carried forward and is given the name of, ‘Polarization’, which is the third model. Authors have explained how this divide of economic inequality has demarcated the world into ‘rich world’ and ‘poor world’. The reality of polarization and trends of inequality have been discussed through structuralism. This approach provides a comprehensive framework to this divide and illustrates that this distinction of rich and poor is inevitable in modern times. Therefore, beside this divide, both rich and poor countries have to develop relationship for mutual benefits.

In fourth chapter, ‘Americanization’ is discussed, which is the fourth model and also the mother of standardization. Business giants take their businesses to other countries with the same standard they have set within their own country; even the impecuniousness does not affect this set standard. If the standards are not met, the business will terminate its activities and decide closure. It does seem quite harmless; however, it can be proved damaging to the countries where business activities are terminated. It can also stigmatize the country in the international community resulting in less trade with the rest of the world. It also affects the foreign investment plans adversely. Another way of strewing Americanization is through American cultural and military imperialism. At the same time, it is also successfully argued that Americanization is no more an appropriate term to delineate the prevailing state of the entire world than the terms ‘Islamicisation’ or ‘Chinaization’. As Americanization propounded the remaking of the world in the American image, the fifth model, ‘McDonaldisation’ describes a process by which values, practices and institutional arrangements of nation-states are becoming the same to make the global society increasingly one dimensional.

In the sixth chapter, the authors introduce the model, ‘Creolization’. It is defined as two interlinked processes. First is the effect of imperialism and colonialism causing the cultural interplay of different traditions and national identities; and the second is the post-modern commercialization
of culture. This commercialization leads to the Creolization of culture focusing on food and music. For instance, in the UK, there are around 8,300 curry houses and Britons spend nearly £2 billion per year. Moreover, Foreign Minister, Robin Cook named, Curry, as Britain’s national dish. Similarly, Creolization can be seen in the latter records of The Beatles, who blended into their music references to American Blues and rock ‘n’ roll, European avant-garde, eastern philosophies and Indian classical music. Hence, Creolization invokes the separation of nation and state and delinking of cultural from political identity and results in the emergence of new cultural identity where nationalism co-exists without the assertion of authority over religion, culture, values, race, and gender, etc.

In the seventh chapter, ‘Transnationalization’ model is discussed. This model has attracted considerable support in global studies. Transnational organization such as petroleum business and transnational institution such as United Nations plays a vital role in promoting trade relation across boundaries; however, at the same time this phenomenon also negates polarization.

In last eighth chapter, the eighth model, ‘Balkanization’ provides the framework that focuses on the new international world order where rivalries among countries coexist with the resurgent tribal nationalism. This model presents an entirely different globe to that of the liberal ‘Globalist’ whose idea dominates the globalization and liberalization tradition. This model adheres to the theory of cultural relativism, that values are socially and culturally embedded and have to be understood in their context. As we have seen in the case of Soviet Union disintegration in 1999, 15 independent states were emerged and changed the globe for good. Similarly, for all of the scale and symbolism of the atrocities committed in the 9/11 terrorist attack, the origin of America’s neo-conservative foreign policy preceded the rise of Islamist terrorism.

All in all, this book is a valuable contribution to comprehend global economy and society. This book also presents a range of theories to make the subject less complex. It is a must read book for students of Sociology, International Relation, Economics or for those who want to understand the phenomenon of globalization in the post modern world.
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6. (Barwani, 2014)
7. (Ali, 2014)

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