"I almost learnt to learn": Promoting Learner's Autonomy through Project Based Learning in Access Classrooms

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Abstract

Project Based Learning as a method of language teaching has gained momentum in the last couple of decades. The method promises teaching not only language skills but life skills such as communication skills, team building and independent learning. The paper explores the impacts of Project Based Learning in English Access Classrooms, a project funded by the State Department of United States for the students studying in public sector schools in Multan, Pakistan. The results of the Project Based Learning are assessed by the analysis of data collected from the students through questionnaires and interviews. The results indicated that the project-based learning played a prominent role in not only improving the language skills of the students but it also made them autonomous learners. Based on the results of the study, Project-Based Learning as a teaching method is strongly recommended for other similar English Access classrooms.

Index Terms— English Access Micro-scholarship Program, Pakistan, Project Based Language Teaching

Introduction

Project Based Learning (PBL) is a method which incorporates language teaching along with other life skills such as problem solving, independent learning and presentation skills. Focusing on learners' needs, Project Based Learning makes the classrooms more student-centered. It allows the teachers to make the learning environment lively and use the authentic materials for language teaching. It encourages the learners to learn the language as they perceive the utility of their learning in their day to day communication.

The present study discusses the efficacy of Project Based Learning Method in creating learners' autonomy in English Access Micro-scholarship classrooms. So far, no such study has been conducted on Access Program in Pakistan. Sarwar (2000) has used a similar research framework to explore the impacts of Project Based Learning in promoting learner's autonomy among the college students in Pakistan. The present research has modified the research model used in Sarwar (2011) to better suit to the needs of the study. I will start with the introduction to the Access Program. After discussing the Research design, I will describe a model of Project Based Learning devised for the Access classrooms. I will then discuss the definition, characteristics and configurations of Project Based Learning which will be followed by the discussion on the results obtained through questionnaires and interviews.

A. English Access Micro-scholarship Program

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English Access Micro-scholarship Program is a project funded by the State Department of United States. The project aims at improving English Language skills of the students from the public sector schools, who are quite brilliant but are denied the possibility of getting higher education and better jobs because of their poor English language skills. Hence the project aims at bridging up the gap between the students from the government schools and English medium schools who are better trained in English language skills. The project also aims at teaching a syllabus approved by the State Department, on the history and culture of the U.S. Currently, the project is being administered in more than 85 countries and about 55,000 students around the globe have attended this program (website of the state department. http://islamabad.usembassy.gov/english_lang_programs.html).

The project started in Pakistan in 2000 and was introduced in Multan in 2006. 5 Government schools were declared Access Centres. 60 students from the government schools were inducted in each of the five centres. The Access classes are traditionally scheduled to be held for four hours after the school ends. The students are divided into two large groups and each group is taught for two hours by a Head Teacher and an Assistant teacher. However, the timings of the class vary in some of the centres according to the locality constraints for example, in Suraj Mianai Centre (a girls' centre), the attendance of the students in the second group was quite low because most of the students were not given permission by their parents to leave their homes late in the evening. Consequently, all 60 students were called for two hours, divided into two groups and each group was alternately taught by the Head Teacher and the Assistant Teacher.

Each Access Centre is equipped with 6 computers, portable speakers, a library consisting of around 300 books (fiction and non-fiction) and resource materials. The teachers are encouraged to keep the class rooms well-decorated, neat and clean. Access Program inculcates traveling with learning. The students get a chance to go on field trips and some of the very brilliant students also get a chance to visit United States on YES program for a year, Benjamin Franklin Program for 6 weeks or Access Workshop for two weeks.

Aims of the Project

The project aims at improving all four language skills of the students with special emphasis on the speaking skills. Furthermore, they are engaged in co-curricular activities such as debates, dramatics, poetry writing, role playing, singing, painting and community service. The two-year project is further divided into six semesters. World English Series, consisting of six books are the prescribed text books for Access Program by the State Department. In addition, the teachers are encouraged to use multiple resources for lesson planning. Lesson planning is centralized for all the five Access Centers. The academic team of ten teachers and a coordinator plan the lessons on

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weekly basis. Access Program aims at developing critical thinking among the students and making students the autonomous learners through a variety of teaching methods. One of such method is Project Based Learning. Access teachers and students report it as a huge success in terms of skill development, hence, the experience of PBL in Access classrooms warrants further analysis. The present study aims at finding out the answers to the following research questions:

How does Project Based learning help in developing Learner Autonomy among Access students?

The ancillary questions are:

Which activities in PBL encourage learner autonomy?

What are Access students' views on PBL?

What are the outcomes of PBL?

The Study

In this section, I will discuss the subjects, the instrument and the methods of data collection and analysis used in the study.

A. Subjects

The research participants are 52 students of English Access Micro-scholarship Program studying at Access Center Suraj Miani. All of them were female and their age ranged between 15 to 18 years. All the students chosen for the study were from public sector schools and they knew little or no English when they joined the program.

Students' responses were collected before they did project work through the interviews of 5 students, randomly selected and focus group discussion.

In the focus group discussion conducted before the project based learning was tried in the class, almost all the students reported that they considered their teachers responsible for their learning and none of them thought herself in- charge of her learning. In response to the question "Why are you studying the course of English Language at school?" most of the students reported that they are studying English language because it is a requirement to get the Matriculation degree.

None of them believed that they considered learning English language as an end in itself. S5 reported that she believed that the group work resulted in the wastage of time so she preferred studying individually. During an interview, S1 was asked if she were given a chance, would she

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like to learn English language. She replied that she considered herself "too stupid and dull to learn English language."

When the students were asked if they could read a book and prepare posters on it, most of the students considered it impossible. The students selected for the study were not independent learners and none of them had ever done a project before. Moreover, the students from one particular Access Center were chosen to participate in the research because the researcher herself was the Head Teacher at Suraj Miani. Consequently, it was easy to access the participants and collect their feedback.

B. Research Instruments

The data for this study was collected through questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussion. Before the project work was done, the data was collected through interviews and focus group discussion, so that students' views about learning and about themselves as learners could be explored in detail. At the end of the project work, the students' responses were collected through the questionnaires and interviews.

The questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part investigated the biographical information of the students such as their name, age, name of Access Center, time spent in Access Program, their interests and their score in English Examination for the last three years. The second part of the questionnaire consisted of Motivated Strategies of Learning Questionnaire which was developed by Pintrich et al. in 1991. The 7 point Likert Scale was changed into 5 point scale for this study. Furthermore, 32 items from the MSLQ were chosen and adapted for this study. The items chosen were further divided into 6 categories which were Intrinsic Value (4 items), Self Efficacy (7 items), Test Anxiety (5 items), Cognitive Strategy (10 items), Self-Regulation (3 items) and Peer Learning (2 items).

Other than questionnaires, the data was also collected through interviews. Out of 52 research participants, 5 students were randomly selected for the unstructured interviews. The students were ensured anonymity and confidentiality and they were encouraged to frankly share their experience. The pictures of the posters and reviews written by the students were also collected so that it could be analyzed later.

C. Data Collection and Analysis

The MSLQ was administered at the end of the term when the students had already received grades for their project work. They were informed of the purpose of the survey and the fact that there were no correct or incorrect answers to any of the questions. They were asked to express

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their opinion by circling the right number given in front of the statement. The 52 questionnaires were collected and coded for further analysis. 5 students were randomly selected for interviewing. They were given codes S1, S2, S3, S4 and S5. A variety of themes were generated from the answers to the open ended questions, which were discussed in the later part of the paper. For detailed analysis of the students' responses, it is pertinent to understand what Project Based Learning is and how it was implemented in Access classrooms.

Theoretical Insights Into Project Based Language Teaching

Sarwar (2000) describes Project Based Learning as follows:

> "a voluntary, collaborative or individual process initiated by the teacher to provide EFL learners a meaningful use of the target language outside the classroom. The contents of the project may or may not relate to the learners' prescribed curriculum. The focal aims are to give them opportunities to become fluent and confident in using English by utilizing and expanding their existing language repertoire."

The definition is significant as it specifies that the project should be initiated by the teacher. Furthermore, the project should enable the learners to meaningfully use the target language in the real world. It enables the learners to communicate effectively. The method primarily targets the communication skills but it also focuses on life skills, such as critical thinking and team-building.

Similarly, Haines (1989) describes Project work as follows:

> "Projects are multi-skill activities focusing on topics and themes, rather than specific language tasks. Students are closely involved in the choice of subjects matter within the project, decisions in working methods and timings and the form of the end product." (p.110)

Haines (1989) focuses on the two characteristics of Project Based Learning, i.e., it is learner centred and it focuses on themes rather than the language tasks. Hence, the method is an extension of task based learning. Similarly, Stoller (2002) views project based learning as a method of language teaching that can be used in a variety of language teaching contexts:

> "Project based learning should be viewed as a versatile vehicle of fully integrated
> language and content learning, making it a viable option for language educators

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working in a variety of instructional settings including General English, English for Academic Purposes, English for Specific Purposes and English for vocational/occupational /vocational /professional purposes, in addition to preservice and inservice teacher training" (p.109)

The definitions mentioned above view Project Based Learning as a multi-disciplinary approach, which is essentially student-centred. The teacher acts as a facilitator and the focus of the lesson is the topic or theme, instead of language skills.

Some of the characteristics of Project Based Learning, reported by Stoller (2002) are as follows:

1. "Project work is students-centred, though the teacher plays a central role in offering support and guidance throughout the process.
2. Project work is co-operative rather than competitive. Students can work on their own in small groups or as a class to complete a project, sharing resources, ideas and expertise along the way.
3. Project work leads to authentic integration of skills and processing of information from varied sources, mirroring real life tasks
4. Project work culminates in an end product (e.g an oral presentation, a poster session, a bulletin board display, a report or a stage performance) that can be shared with the others, giving the project a real purpose. The value of project, however, lies not only in the end product but in the process of moving towards the end point. Thus the project work has both a process and project orientation, and provides students with an opportunities to focus on fluency and accuracy at different project work stages.
5. Project work is potentially motivating, stimulating, challenging and empowering. It usually results in building students' confidence, self-esteem and autonomy as well as improving students' language skills, content learning and cognitive abilities." (pg. no.)

A. Types of Projects

According to Stoller (2002), projects can be structured, un-structured or semi-structured. Structured projects are determined by the teacher in terms of their methodology and

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presentation, semi-structured projects are determined both by the teacher and the students and un-structured projects are largely determined by the students themselves.

Haines(1989) describes the following types of projects:

- Information and research projects

- Survey projects

- Production projects

- Performance and organization projects

Information and research projects engage the students in collecting information by reading or searching the resource materials or using the internet for collecting materials. Survey projects necessitate students to collect data through questionnaires and interviews. However, Production projects are more suitable for the creative students with the artistic abilities, because such projects focus more on the photographs, illustrations and designs. The output of performance and organization projects is in the form of students' activities such as a drama performance, a debate or holding an election etc. which also develop creativity, critical thinking and administrative skills of the students.

B. *Benefits of Project Based Learning*

Vu Thi Thanh Nha(2009) points out the following merits of Project Based Language Teaching:

•Authentic tasks.

•Increased motivation

•A context is established.

•All four skills, reading, writing, listening and speaking, are integrated

•A flexible method.

•Other skills, such as interpersonal communication, are developed.

Project Based Learning focuses on using the target language for communicative purposes, hence, the students get an authentic input of the target language. They learn the communication skills they need in their everyday life. Furthermore, the students are trained

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to use their theoretical knowledge practically. Fried and Booth (1986) also highlight the usefulness of practical knowledge obtained through classroom teaching and its impacts on learners' motivation.

Hence, Project Based Learning bridges up the gap between theory and practice. Seeing language as a utility encourages the students to be more motivated to learn the language. Project Based Learning builds up a context in which the students practice the four language skills. The tendency is in contrast with the traditional classroom teaching where the language teaching is split up between different parts such as teaching of grammar, pronunciation, reading and speaking skills. Rather it integrates all four language skills. The quality results in allowing the students to be creative, innovative, as well as focus on the accuracy of the target language. The method has an additional merit of being flexible, as it caters to the different styles of language learning.

Project Based Learning is essentially student-centred, consequently, it makes the students in-charge of their own learning. The method results in developing other life skills, making the experience of learning more fruitful for the learners. Project work gives the students the chance of working with other group members and they learn to collaborate, share and develop a positive image of themselves as learners.

Project work enables the teacher to develop links between various disciplines, e.g. a history project done in an EFL class room allows the students to use language to describe history. Similarly, the students who are weak in the language skills might be good at something else e.g. drawing, geography etc. Consequently, all the students develop a positive image of themselves as learners.

Project based Language Teaching is quite flexible so it can be adapted to suit the needs of a variety of learners in a variety of contexts. Keeping in view the various learning environments where project work can be used, the role of the teacher is also variable and quite flexible.

C. Role of the Teacher in Project Based Language Teaching

PBL is essentially a learner-centred approach and the role of the teacher is only to facilitate the students in the process of learning. Chytilova (2007:19) points out that a teacher plays the following roles in Project Based Language Teaching:

a. *Initiator*

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The teacher usually decides when the project will start, how much time would be devoted to it and how would it develop and be evaluated.

b. Organizer

The teacher usually organizes the whole activity of the project. He/she plans the groups, the work to be done at each stage, the time allotted for each of the stages of the project and how the final display will be carried out.

c. Source of Information, Guide and Advisor

Though the project based learning is largely student-centred, the teacher is the source of information, guide and advisor. The teacher can help the students in collecting information, suggest the resource material or advice on how to present it.

d. Monitor and Referee

The teacher plays a role in monitoring how the project is being done. He/she makes sure that all the students participate and collaborate.

e. Evaluator

The teacher can play a role in evaluating the project. After the final display, the teacher can initiate a process of reflection on how the students achieved the final out comes of their project. The teacher can add his or her remarks as well.

D. Role of Project Based Learning in Promoting Learners' Autonomy

Cotterall (1995) describes Autonomy as "the extent to which learners demonstrate the ability to use a set of tactics for taking control of their learning." (p.195-205) Hence, learners' autonomy refers to the techniques used by the learners for being responsible of their learning. Zimmerman (1986) notices that autonomous learners monitor and control their learning by devising certain strategies. Similarly, Nejad (Cited in Yapping: 2005) believes that autonomy is a learned response that could be taught and developed in the class rooms. Consequently, learners' autonomy is viewed as a skill which can be developed among the students through carefully planned techniques such as Project Based Learning. Yapping (2005) believes that autonomous learners are meta-cognitively, behaviorally and motivationally active participants in their own learning process. One of the aims of English Access Micro-scholarship Program is to make the students independent in their learning process, hence, Project Based Learning is viewed as an important instrument in achieving the objectives of Access Program.

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Implementation of Project Based Learning in Access Classrooms

   In the present study, the ten-step procedure for implementing Project Based Learning given by Stoller (2002) was used:

   A. **Phase 1**

 Students and Instructor agreed on a theme for the Project.

   The Access teacher showed the pictures of another project exhibition to the students. They were told that they can also do a similar project on one of the assigned books. The students were initiated to make groups of five each and select a name of their group. The students did a brain storming session on choosing an appropriate theme and a title of the exhibition.

   B. **Phase 2**

Students and instructor determined the final outcome of the project.

   Access teachers and the students decided which form their project should take. They chose from the options of writing a report, performing a skit on the theme of the novel, giving a Power point presentation and a Poster presentation along with oral presentation, preparing a brochure and a video. The students decided that their projects would be displayed in the form of posters. Placing card board models is an optional part of the presentation. The group leaders will prepare a 10 minutes presentation on the work of their group. They would also describe their experience of learning through project work.

   C. **Phase 3**

Students and instructor should structure the project.

   Once the final outcome was determined, the group leaders were asked to select one book from the Access Library, which most of the members of their group had read and they found it appropriate for presenting on it. The students and the instructor decided the ways of getting information to be presented. Since the students were assigned the reading projects, the planning of the projects included reading or re-reading of the assigned book. The students planned to gather information through internet, newspapers and resource books. At this stage, the teacher also specified an evaluation criterion of their project presentation, which was as follows:

TABLE 1
PROJECT ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

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Evaluation criteria on Tasks	Weightage
Having a clear idea of the kind of plot the assigned book has.	20%
Critical evaluation of some of the characters and analysis of the theme.	10%
Setting of the novel	10%
Some interesting observations about the book (the relevance with current Pakistani socio-political scenario)	10%
Poster presentation (the clarity of the visuals, appropriateness and relevance)	30%
Oral presentation (correct language, appropriate body language, maintaining an eye-contact)	10%
Team building skills and working in a group	10%

   The students were promised participation certificates and a prize for the best group presentation. They were also promised a party by the Head Teacher on a good performance by the whole class. Phase 3 was completed in one week.

D. Phase 4

The instructor designed the activities to cater to the language needs of the students for the task of gathering information.

   In this phase, the instructor assessed which language skills should be needed by the students for the task of gathering information. The students were supposed to read from internet, newspapers and books to gather information. Consequently, the language activities planned focused mostly on teaching the basic reading skills such as skimming, scanning and critical reading.

E. Phase 5

Students gathered information

   Once the students were equipped with the required linguistic skills, they gathered information using internet, newspapers, resource books, encyclopedias etc. At this stage, the instructors helped the students by bringing pictures, materials, videos or by giving ideas on collecting the relevant material. All the students were asked to report twice a week on their progress in collecting the required information.

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F. Phase 6

Instructors prepared the students for the linguistic demands of compiling and analyzing information.

   Once the students collected the information on their assigned topic, they started working on compiling it, choosing the most appropriate materials and summarizing it. For this purpose, the teachers planned the activities on précis writing, critical thinking and proof reading.

G. Phase 7

Students compiled and analyzed the information.

   Once the students collected all the information, they had to compile and organize it appropriately for the presentation. At this stage the students within each group divided the work among themselves and started working on it. In most of the cases, they volunteered to work on the sections they felt comfortable working on.

H. Phase 8

The instructor prepared the students for the language demands of the culminating activity.

   The instructor prepared the students for the final presentation of their projects. For this purpose, presentation skills were improvised through different classroom activities. The students gave mock presentations in the class and they were given feedback on various aspects of oral presentation skills such as voice quality and maintaining an eye-contact etc. Furthermore, the teachers reviewed all the material written by the students to be presented on the posters.

I. Phase 9

Students presented the final out-come of their project.

   In this phase, the students planned the final outcome of their projects in the form of posters and card-board models. Each group prepared a ten minute presentation which was in some cases delivered by the group leaders and in other cases, delivered by the whole group. The principal of the Government Girls High School, Suraj Miani visited the poster exhibition of the students. Officials from the U.S. Consulate Lahore also attended the presentations and encouraged the students.

J. Phase 10

Students evaluated each-others projects.

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In the last phase, the students were asked to provide feed-back on the presentations of each group. They pointed out the positive and negative aspects of each other's work.

At the end of the successful completion of the project, 5 students were randomly selected for interviews and all the participants filled in the Motivated Strategies of Learning Questionnaire, adapted for the present study. The following themes emerged as a result of the unstructured interviews:

Outcomes of Project Work: Themes Generated Through Interviews

Sarwar (2000) in a research on college students in Pakistan reported that lack of time, anxiety and group dynamics were the major problems encountered by the college students while doing project work. In the present study, Access students also reported the above mentioned three problems they encountered, in addition to another problem i.e. the lack of facilities. They also reported the impacts of Project Based Learning in making them autonomous learners.

A.Lack of Time

The project work from the first stage to the last was finished up in 2 weeks. However, almost all the students expressed lack of time as a major problem they encountered while working on the project. All the participants of the research were the female students and in their traditional setting, they were supposed to do house chores at home before coming to the school and after going back from the Access Class.

S4 mentioned that she could not do as well as she wanted to because she could spare very less time at home for studies. According to her, she had no time for herself and whatever time she spent on research was the time she was supposed to give either to her family or for doing house chores.

S1 shared her daily routine with the researcher. According to her account, she wakes up at 4 o' clock in the morning, washes the veranda of her home, feed the cattle, cooks breakfast for her younger siblings and washes clothes on alternate days before coming to school. When her regular classes are off at 2 o' clock in the afternoon, she rushes back to her home, takes her lunch and comes back for Access class. After going back from Access class, she is supposed to do washing, teaching her younger siblings (Her parents are illiterate and she is the eldest of her brothers and sisters), cooking the dinner and taking care of the cattle. She complained of having very little time for doing her home-work and according to her, project work added burden to her already hectic routine.

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S3 said, "I had to prepare for my Intermediate Board Examination and I could not spare enough time for my project work. If I had more time, I could learn much better." According to the students' responses, lack of time was seen as a major problem, primarily because of the fact that Access students belonged to the under privileged back grounds and almost all of them had to help either in taking care of their siblings or doing house chores. Furthermore, they had to cope up with their regular study programs so finishing up the project work in the allocated time was a bit difficult for some of them. The problem can be solved by allocating more time to the students for doing their projects.

B. Nervousness Due to the First Experience of Project Based Learning

Some of the students reported feeling quite nervous and tensed initially when they thought of working on the project.

S3 said, "I felt extremely confused and tensed because I had not done anything like that before."

S5 mentioned, "When I came to know that we would be graded on the basis of our project work, I thought that I was not going to even pass my examination. I kept on thinking that I would fail." Such responses indicate that the students had previously studied in a teacher-centered environment and taking the responsibility of their own learning was a completely novel experience for some of them.

C. Group Dynamics

The students also reported that while doing projects, their work was affected by the group dynamics.

S1 said, "Whenever the whole group sat down for working, everyone wanted to do things their way."

S3 also expressed the similar problem, "Nobody could agree on one thing so all the group members were ready to fight all the time." S3 was the only student who complained of not enjoying the project work because of group dynamics.

The rest of the students expressed that they enjoyed group work but they reported taking some time to get settled with each other. Such responses indicate that cooperative learning was a new experience for most of the students. Although group work is done in Access classes before as well, but doing something as important as formally presenting their project work in front of so many people was a new experience for them.

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D. Lack of Facilities

Some of the Access students reported having insufficient number of computers as a major hurdle in searching material for the project.

S3 reported, "We had only five computers at our center and only one computer could have the internet facility at one time. Project work taught us how to learn, but in my case, I almost learnt to learn.. If there were better facilities of research, I am sure I would have learnt even better."

None of the research participants had any computer at their homes and they were not allowed to use internet cafés by their families because it was considered a morally bad influence on the female students.

I have chosen a phrase from S3's remark as the title of my research paper because it best describes how the efficacy of the project work is affected by the ground realities faced by the Access students. Most of the students reported that the effectiveness of the project work could be increased in future by providing better facilities of computers and internet in Access class rooms.

E. Role of the Teacher

Teacher played the role of the guide and initiator.

S4 noted, "When we were stuck and could not think of how to work, our teacher gave us ideas."

S3 reported, "Our teacher kept on helping us with vocabulary and language skills. The project really helped us to improve our English language." Some of the students also reported that their teacher ensured that each group manages time effectively and all the members are engaged. The teacher assessed the knowledge of the students by asking questions from any of the group members about their group work at the time of submission of the project.

Results Obtained Through Motivated Strategies of Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ)

The results obtained through questionnaires reveal a significant change in learners' beliefs about the process of learning and of themselves as learners. In the following section, the results obtained through MSLQ will be analyzed and discussed to evaluate the efficacy of the project work in making Access students the autonomous learners.

A. Intrinsic Goal Orientation

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Intrinsic goal orientation refers to the reasons for which a student participates in a task. Having an intrinsic goal orientation towards an academic task means that a student considers his/her participation in that academic task as an end in itself. The results obtained through the questionnaires show very high values of Intrinsic Goal Orientation:

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Intrinsic Goal Orientation and its 4 Items

	Number	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Item 1	52	2	3	5	4.4482	.569	.329
Item 2	52	3	2	5	4.310	.120	.34
Item 3	52	2	3	5	4.655	.53	.282
Item 4	52	2	3	5	4.2758	.83	.69

Item 3 (The most satisfying thing for me while doing my academic work is trying to understand the content as thoroughly as possible) has the highest mean (i.e. 4.655). Similarly, item 1 (While working on an academic assignment, I prefer material that really challenges me, so that I can learn new things) also has a high mean 4.4482. The results indicate that Access students see learning as an end in itself.

B.   *Expectancy for Success*

Expectancy for success refers to performance expectation primarily task performance. It relates to the expectations of a student about how well, he/she is going to do in a task. The results obtained through MSLQ were as follows:

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of the 7 items of Expectancy for Success

	Number	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Item 5	52	3	2	5	4.4482	.626	.3924
Item 6	52	2	3	5	4.310	.630	.397
Item 7	52	3	2	5	4.2068	.923	.852
Item 8	52	2	3	5	4.3793	.760	.578
Item 9	52	2	3	5	4.4482	.624	.390
Item 10	52	2	3	5	4.5517	.622	.387

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Item 11	52	2	3	5	4.3793	.672	.452

Item 5 (I believe I will get an excellent grade when my work is evaluated) and 9 (I expect to do well in my class) have the highest mean i.e. 4.4482. Item 7 (I am certain I can understand the basic concepts related to the topic assigned) has got highest Standard Deviation. The highest value obtained through data is 5 and the lowest value is 2 for item 5 and 7 which shows that the students' responses range quite a lot.

The results indicate that Access students in general expected to do well in their academic work, however, there are a few students who have doubts about how well they are going to do. The results obtained through interviews also reveal that the students doing projects for the first time had doubts about their performance initially. Most of the students developed a huge expectancy for success but the others did not, probably because of the fact that the Project Based Learning, as a method was being used in the Access Classrooms for the first time.

C. Test Anxiety

Test Anxiety negatively affects self-performance as well as, academic performance. It has two components: Cognitive component and emotionality component. Cognitive component refers to students' negative thoughts and emotionality component refers to physiological aspects of anxiety. Test anxiety is considered one of the major sources of poor academic performance.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of the 5 items of Test Anxiety

	Number	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Item 12	52	4	1	5	3.2758	1.58	2.5
Item 13	52	4	1	5	4.0689	1	1
Item 14	52	4	1	5	3.3448	1.24	1.55
Item 15	52	4	1	5	2.8620	1.41	1.98
Item 16	52	4	1	5	2.7586	1.33	1.78

The results obtained through MSLQ reveal that the highest mean value obtained is of item 13 (When I am taking a test, I kept on thinking about those things that I did not know, or explored.) i.e. 4.0689 whereas, the highest Standard Deviation is of item 12 (When I think about evaluation of my project, I think about how poorly I am doing as compared with other students) i.e. 1.58. The lowest standard deviation is item 13, which shows its very less frequency of occurrence. The results indicate that the participants of the research have varied responses about their being

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effected from test anxiety with quite a lot of range between them. It implies that most of the students had less test anxiety as a result of Project Based Learning, but still the others had a lot of test anxiety probably because of the fact that it was the first time when Project Based Learning was done in the class.

D. Cognitive Strategy (Elaboration)

Elaboration strategy enables the students to store information in long term memory by building internal connections between different items learnt. It includes skills such as paraphrasing, summarizing, creating analogies and note taking. The descriptive statistics of the cognitive strategy of elaboration are given below:

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Cognitive Strategy (Elaboration) and its 10 items

	Number	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Item 17	52	2	3	5	4.5862	.67	.45
Item 18	52	3	2	5	4.4137	1.6	2.60
Item 19	52	2	3	5	4.4482	.72	.52
Item 20	52	2	3	5	4.5172	.82	.67
Item 21	52	2	3	5	4.5517	4.04	16.34
Item 22	52	2	3	5	4.3793	.707	.5
Item 23	52	4	1	5	4.6896	1.87	3.50
Item 24	52	2	3	5	4.4827	.69	.48
Item 25	52	2	3	5	4.3448	.69	.48
Item 26	52	2	3	5	4.5517	.06	.36

The highest mean is of item 23 (When I study, I try to outline material to help me organize my thoughts) whereas the highest standard deviation is of item 21 (While working on the academic assignments, I write brief summaries of the main ideas from the readings and concepts from the lectures) which show that its frequency of occurrence is quite high among the students. The students were given a lot of practice in summarizing, précis writing and looking for the main idea in *phase 6* of the project implementation. The highest standard deviation of item 21 shows that the students are using those skills to work out the final outcome of their project.

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E. Self-Regulation

Self-regulation refers to the students' ability to control their effort in spite of all the uninteresting tasks and distractions. Self-regulation is the effort management and it reflects a commitment to complete the tasks in the face of all the difficulties.

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of Self-Regulation and its 3 items

	Number	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Item 27	52	4	1	5	4.1379	.89	.08
Item 28	52	3	2	5	3.5862	1.15	1.34
Item 29	52	3	2	5	4.2413	.634	.402

Item 27 (I often felt so bored or lazy when I am working on academic assignments that I quit working before I finished what I was doing) has a very high range varying from the maximum value of 5 to the minimum value of 1. Item 30 (Even when the academic assignment was uninteresting, I managed to keep working until I finished) has the highest mean i.e. 4.2413 which shows that by and large, the participants remained motivated to finish their projects.

F. Peer Learning

Peer learning refers to the collaboration with one's peers to improvise the quality of learning and clarify the course material. It is considered to have a very positive impact on the process of learning.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of Peer Learning and its 2 items

	Number	Range	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance
Item 30	29	2	3	5	4.5517	.635	.404
Item 31	29	2	3	5	4.5862	.485	.236

Both the items 30 (While working on the assignments, I often tried to explain the material to a classmate) and 31 (I tried to work with the other students from this class to complete the course assignments) have a very high mean i.e. 4.5517 and 4.5862 respectively. Many students also mentioned in the unstructured interviews that the experience of working in a group had a very positive impact on their learning process.

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Conclusion

The study tells us that Project Based Learning as a method is highly successful in encouraging confidence among students in Access Classrooms. Access Classrooms comprise of the students from humble back grounds and one of the aims of English Access Micro-scholarship Program is to develop a positive self-image of students as learners.

While doing the projects, the students learn not only language skills but also life skills such as working in a team, self-regulation, self- motivation and time management. Their achievement exhibited in the form of their posters and the appreciation they received at the exhibition developed a very positive self-image of the students as learners. Furthermore, Project Based Learning helped to develop learners' autonomy among the students.

The results obtained from the questionnaires and interviews clearly indicated that Project Based Learning taught them skills to be independent learners. The method could be made more successful for future access classes by providing the students with better research facilities and providing more time for doing the projects. Learners' anxiety also needs to be controlled by providing more encouragement to the students so that the results of the learning could be made maximum.

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