

Perceptions of Teachers towards Active Learning through Peer Teaching and Peer Assessment

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Abstract

The current study was to explore teachers' perceptions towards active learning through Peer teaching and Peer assessment. Target population was Teachers of Punjab, Pakistan while data were collected from 62 teachers in District Pakpattan by adopting random sampling. The response received were analysed on SPSS version 17 quantitatively. The results revealed that teachers had significant value to take up active learning through peer teaching and assessment for the students. They have responses show that this type of technique should be adapted and research also provided suggestions for Government of Punjab and National Accreditation council for Teacher educators to provide professional Training for the Teachers.

Key words:

Introduction

English is used in Pakistan for official documentation and studying it is compulsory in education. Without studying English, it is argued, progress in any sphere of life is not possible as it is the language of global communication. Teaching of English has been a subject of great importance in the developing countries. In Pakistan lots of efforts have been made to improve the quality of teaching English effectively. Teaching English by adapting new approach of peer teaching and peer assessment may be very effective. Sarwar, et al. (2014) applied this approach in University Sargodha in the education department. The results

of this study proved very helpful in promoting interest among the students and they became very confident in improving themselves.

The present test was administered to examine the perceptions of the teachers towards this approach in the teaching of English in District Pakpattan and it was found that the teachers liked and preferred to teach English through this approach when they were explained about the procedure applying peer teaching and peer assessment.

Literature Review

Teaching of English through activity based learning is a very interesting approach and it has been welcomed by the teaching institutions in Pakistan. In this regards, number of researchers across the world have explored new techniques and methodologies. Following review of literature is elaborated to examine gaps in the teaching of English.

The Center for Active Learning (2007) conducts the activity in University of Gloucestershire relating to Active Learning and related pedagogic research and development projects. At the end of 2007 Active Learning was embedded into the University's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Framework. By exploring the richness and diversity of perceptions of and approaches to Active Learning, it was hoped that this research would provide not just a picture of the current situation, but also offer some ideas for future development within CEAL and the University more widely.

This project made a case study of a small number of University of Gloucestershire teaching staff from a range of disciplines in order to understand how they conceptualise Active Learning, and how they engage with it. Qualitative questionnaire and semi-structured interview methods were used to discover the perceptions of these staff regarding Active Learning, their attitudes towards it as a pedagogic approach and how/whether it is used. The information collected has been analysed in order to gain insights into how Active Learning is interpreted by individuals, and how/whether this is incorporated into approaches to teaching and learning. The key aims of the project were to identify and explore how Active Learning is understood by individual teaching staff from various faculties and to investigate approaches to Active Learning in order to contribute to an enriched understanding of what Active Learning is. It recommended that differing levels of experience of teachers/lecturers

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 15:3 March 2015

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should be considered in relation to the targeting and presentation and support first. Secondly, in future this work and research, the issue of teaching subject specific theory using an Active Learning approach, could usefully be addressed in order to offer additional support to teachers/lecturers. Thirdly, CEAL might usefully address how to appropriately support the staff specifically in the transition of integrating an Active Learning approach.

Matumo (2013) conducted an experimental research in class room setting and explored how active learning may be enhanced through self assessment, peer assessment and reflection. The participants in the study were second-year and third-year students at Rundu Campus of University of Namibia. The findings of the study indicated that the student had both positive and negative perception in respect of self assessment, peer assessment and reflection in promoting their active engagement in learning

Ralph, D. (2013) conducted a study that examined two aspects, namely, the quality of peer feedback in asynchronous discussion forum when such peer feedback is used as a formative learning tool, i.e., not for assigning grades; and students' perceptions about the process of peer feedback. Twenty-four students enrolled in higher education were involved. They were assigned two tasks: in the first task, they contributed lessons learnt about the course on the learning management system, via the asynchronous discussion forum. Thereafter they read the comments posted by their colleagues and critiqued them. In the final task that was given at the end of the course, students wrote reflections about peer feedback process. Thus all data collected were in the form of posts. Using NVivo, the posts generated in the first task were used to examine the quality of peer feedback, while the posts generated from students' reflection about peer feedback were used to examine students' perceptions about peer feedback. Results indicate that peer feedback is a useful tool for formative learning as well as assessment purposes. Future research could involve a larger sample, a diverse population, and a range of other courses.

Keith Topping (1998) conducted a research in which he highlights the aspect of peer assessment between students in colleges and Universities. In case of higher education, peer assessment can play vital role while uplifting the conceptions of students. This assessment had formative and heuristic purposes. This study made sure the value of self and peer assessment and compared them with one another. Almost 31 students took part in that study

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and most of them agreed on the validity and reliability of self and peer assessment. Overall, the concept of peer assessment was applied on different study areas. Students' stamina has been judged while utilizing test marks and grade factors. At the end of the day students had satisfactory condition and their anxiety level was reduced.

David Pundak (2009) conducted a study while conceiving instructors' attitude towards active learning. As everybody knows, science has an immense role in the field of education, especially active learning. This study observed more than one hundred and fifty lecturers in Israel and its conductor tried to distribute questionnaire which were based on some important questions, like what do you feel after adopting active learning in your teaching, etc. Teachers gave their views. Lack of study materials and shortage of time were big issues to them.

This review of literature found that if the teachers apply peer teaching and peer assessment approach in class room setting, it would enhance the students' ability and interest. This would help achieve the teachers' objective of teaching English and they would feel themselves trustworthy in keeping up their responsibilities. It would also decrease the burden of the teachers.

Objectives

1. To explore the need to implement active learning through peer teaching and peer assessment.
2. To find out the perceptions of the teachers towards active learning through peer teaching and peer assessment.

Research Methodology

The current study was a survey-based descriptive research. Teachers of Punjab Pakistan were the Target population. The Sample population included 62 teachers in District Pakpattan. Data were collected by adapting convenient random sampling and the responses were analysed on SPSS version 16.

Tools

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Questionnaire having 12 variables was administered for the collection of Data from private and public teachers.

Pilot study

A pilot study was also conducted to check the validity of the questionnaire. Questionnaires were distributed among 15 teachers first. They filled in the form and pointed out that three statements were ambiguous. The researchers rephrased the statements and got expert opinion and then it was found that Teachers were able to respond without any objection.

Table 1 showing results about the need to implement active learning through peer teaching and peer assessment.

Variables	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Peer teaching and peer assessment for the students is useful for learning and improving English	62	1.63	.093	.730
The students can get rid of anxiety in learning English through peer teaching and peer assessment	62	2.06	.119	.939
Students feel comfortable in learning English Through Peer teaching and peer assessment	62	1.87	.111	.877
Teaching English through peer teaching and peer assessment, students can learn English quickly	62	1.98	.102	.799
Implementation of peer teaching and peer assessment may be effective for the students in learning English	62	1.82	.116	.915
Peer teaching and peer assessment in English class is helpful for the students	62	1.66	.069	.542

The above table shows the mean score of the variables given in the table. The results reveal that the mean score of Peer teaching and assessment importance about students' learning and improving English is 1.63 with standard deviation .730, about students getting rid of anxiety in learning English is 2.06 with standard deviation is .939, about students feel comfortable is 1.87 with standard deviation .877, about students can learn English quickly is

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1.98 with standard deviation .799, about implementation of peer teaching and peer assessment effectiveness is 1.82 with standard deviation .915 and mean score for the statement peer teaching and peer assessment is helpful for the students is 1.66 with standard deviation .542. Mean score and standard deviation of all variables in the table reveal that English teachers favor this type of approach. All teachers find this approach very useful and easy to apply in the class.

Table 2: Showing results about perceptions of the teachers towards active learning through peer teaching and peer assessment

Variables	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Peer teaching and peer assessment is very important for English class	62	1.95	.104	.818
Teachers should exercise Peer teaching and peer assessment in English class	62	1.71	.099	.776
Peer teaching and peer assessment in English class can produce good results	62	1.76	.082	.645
Peer teaching and peer assessment in English class is necessary to create the interest among the students	62	1.71	.090	.710
Peer teaching and peer assessment in English class reduce the burden of the teachers	62	2.02	.111	.878
Peer teaching and peer assessment technique is useful to the students at secondary level	62	1.98	.129	1.016

The above table shows that the mean score reaches from minimum 1.71 to maximum 2.02 with standard error from minimum 0.082 to 0.129. This proves that there is a dire need to implement active learning through peer teaching and peer assessment while standard nominal deviation shows that there are adverse views also with quantity of having no importance.

Discussion

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Teaching demands more responsibility than other professions because teachers uplift the minds of their students. This world is entering in an era of competition where genius and more groomed brains represent the nation. Active learning is a requirement of this epoch. It has many dimensions and still there is lot of work which should be considered valuable in case of practical teaching. Active learning is a helpful methodology of teaching in which the central figure is student rather than the teacher.

First perception of teachers towards active learning must be known before implementing it in the classroom. Teachers who were part of this survey research showed positive attitude and response. Most of the teachers agreed to use peer teaching methodology because it can reduce the mental fatigue and stress of the students who adopted English as a second language. Level of comfort of students must be at its peak if we want to produce maximum results. Teacher is a key figure throughout these activities of teaching. Most of the time teachers feel hesitation to apply peer assessment and teaching techniques because they have no adequate command in using English.

When we commenced our survey research, we were scare not sure about the results of the survey. It is a general perception that Asian, especially Pakistani, environment is not suitable for utilizing these foreign pedagogies. Peer assessment and teaching can easily be applied in A grade schools and colleges of the country but public and mediocre institutions don't lay stress on it. Our findings indicated that teachers accept active learning through peer assessment and peer-teaching. They found the activities and different techniques like think-pair share, collaborative group tasks, and student debates were applicable in any sort of public and private school.

Findings of this research reveal teachers' attitude towards active learning. Teachers agreed to promote active learning and they opined in an assertive manner. One said that languages are learnt by indulging oneself in it. Peer teaching and assessment are valuable activities while learning English Language.

Recommendations

Peer assessment and peer teaching should be accommodated by authorities and owners of institutions. Teachers have optimistic attitude toward active learning through peer assessment and teaching and they have hope to produce better results by the implementation

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of active learning and active assessment. But education institutions must seek the opinion of relevant teachers.

Conclusion

Teachers' support of active learning through peer assessment and peer teaching is commendable, but there is need to share and promote these strategies of teaching through official channels. Teachers can play a role as mentors while applying these techniques of teaching. In secondary and higher secondary levels, it is easier to guide the students. Students are teachers of future, so they can get confidence from their class rooms. Although some AV aids can make this approach strengthen, school budget is an issue in public and in some private schools. Student strength may be an important factor.

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