TASK BASED APPROACH IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING CLASSES TO ENHANCE THE SPEAKING AND WRITING SKILLS – A STUDY AMONG THE POST GRADUATE STUDENTS.

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Abstract

Task based approach in English Language Learning focuses on the application of better communication skills. It creates interests among the students. It is a highly communicative approach where students spend a lot of time in communicating with each other and also with the teacher.

A study was conducted among the postgraduate students where the three stages- pre task , task and review stages were carefully studied and analysed. It was found that there was more meaningful communication among the students. It provided them for practical extra-linguistic skill building. It motivated them in fine tuning their language and furthermore helped them to succeed in presenting their project work and also in their job selection processes.

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1.   INTRODUCTION

Task based approach in English Language Learning focuses on the application of authentic language. In this approach the students are asked to do meaningful tasks using the target language. It is enjoyable and a motivating approach which creates interests among the students. It is a highly communicative approach where students spend a lot of time in communicating with each other and also with the teacher.

A study was conducted among the postgraduate students where the three stages- pre task , task and review stages were carefully studied and analysed. It was found that there was more meaningful communication among the students. It provided them for practical extra-linguistic skill building. It motivated them in fine tuning their language and furthermore helped them to succeed in presenting their project work and also in their job selection processes.

Media may be used to communicate information, thus freeing the teacher to engage in the humanizing of instruction and learning. Multi media environments may be arranged to create life like, realistic and interesting information and skills learning experiences.

2. CLASSROOM COMMUNICATION AND TASK BASED APPROACHES

Out of college communication, entertainment, movies, TV, are varied and liked by the students. They make the greater impact on the student. These are termed out of college barriers to communication. There are some psychological barriers to communication within the classroom interaction process like day dreaming, limited perception, physical discomfort, language difficulty, referent confusion, etc.

Researchers call our attention to four aspects of the communication process:

1. The communication Encoder (Lecturer)

2. The Message which may be in words, pictures or signs and symbols.

3. The channel – Media: print form, computer, mass media, etc.

4. Audience – Decoder (Students)

In the classroom, three types of communication take place which are interactive:

1.   Speaking-Listening - The interaction is face to face, as in listening to a lecture.

2.   Visualisation-Observing – In watching television, the observer is physically separated from the producer but can feel the impact of ideas conveyed.

3.   Writing-Reading – The encoder is separated from the decoder, but can enjoy and appreciate the authors feelings.

3. IMPACT OF TASK BASED APPROACHES IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

The investigator framed the title for investigation as **Task Based Approach in English Language Teaching classes to enhance the Speaking and Writing skills - a study among the post graduate students.** In this study an attempt was made to know the impact of task based approach in enhancing Speaking and Writing skills among the students of M.Sc and Post graduate Diploma courses. Experimental and traditional task based approaches were followed and analysed in the English classes. Through this study it is implied that other than the language skills, soft skills could also be enhanced and evaluated through the task based approaches. The following list of skills were taken into consideration. Focus was given with different criteria.

3.1 Skills that are judged in Group Discussion

1. How good students are at communication with others.

2. How students behave and interact with group.

3. How open minded they are.

4. Their listening skill.

5. How they put forward their views.

6. Their leadership and decision making skills.

7. Their analytical skill and subject knowledge

8. Problem solving and critical thinking skill

9. Their attitude and confidence.

3.2 Skills involved in Presentation

1. Students can plan, organise and design an effective presentation

2. Describe ways to deal with the fear of public speaking.

3. Analyse the audience to develop appropriate type and style of

presentations.

4. Create and use Visual aids effectively.

5. Deliver oral presentations effectively – by using proper speech, voice and

body language.

5. Describe ways to deal with difficult audience.

3.3 Skills involved in Games, role plays and case studies

1.Develop higher cognitive skills of all types.

2.Develop multifaceted skills related to problem solving, decision making

and creative thinking

4.   OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following were the major objectives of the study:-

1.   To study the relationship between the experimental approach and traditional approach in implementing the tasks to enhance the English Language skills among the students.

2.   To study the effectiveness of making students to do various tasks with the experimental and traditional approach to enhance the speaking and writing skills among the students.

5.   SAMPLES USED IN THE STUDY

Two branches of post graduate students of M.Sc and PGDTE were selected for the study. The first semester students from these branches were selected as samples. The performances of twenty five students were analysed. The three tests were conducted for the students of two different branches.

6.   VARIOUS TASKS USED IN THE STUDY

In this study the investigator tested the enhancement of language skills through the traditional approach using different tasks in the beginning. The students were asked to perform the integrated tasks using audio visual aids. In the traditional approach tasks like self introduction, just a minute, expository speeches, group discussions were used to analyse the language skills of the students. The students were asked to perform integrated tasks after making them to use the language Resource Centre and Communication Skills Centre in the college. Audio visual aids were also used in language classes. Case studies were given and the answers with the supportive statements were collected from the students. Students were also evaluated through the tasks related to team work, role play, and mock interviews.

7. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Design of the study adopted the quasi-experimental research design. Specifically, the study was non-randomized pretest, post-test group design. The design was chosen because intact classes were used instead of randomly composed samples.

The representation of the design is as shown below:

O_1 X_1 O_2 Experimental approach study

O_3 X_2 O_4 (control) Traditional approach study

Where O_1 and O_3 represents pre-test

O_2 and O_4 represents post test

X_1 represents treatment (experimental task based approach)

X_2 represents treatment (traditional task based approach)

8.   STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES APPLIED

The data collected were gathered, organized, analyzed and interpreted and the following statistical techniques were applied to investigate the study: 1.Mean 2.Standard Deviation 3.Correlation co-efficient. In this paper focus is given for speaking and writing skills of the post-graduate students.

9.   FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The usage of the Language resource centre and Communication Skills centre with the Task-based approach in the English classes enhance the speaking and writing skills among the students and it is very significant.

9.1MAJOR FINDINGS

The major findings of the study suggest that:

1. Enhancement of Speaking and Writing skills in English Language, attainment of the concept and mastery of competencies could be possible through the various tasks at the post-graduation level of students.

2. Task based approach in the English classes through the Language Resource Centres, that is through the Language Laboratories creates interest, attention and improves learning attitude among students.

3. Enhancement of Language skills in speaking and writing plays an important role among the post graduate students.

4. Students enhance their leadership qualities and get better placements by improving Speaking and writing skills through the task based experimental approach using Language Labs.

9.2 FURTHER FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

1.   There is significant relationship between the enhancement of speaking and writing skills through the traditional task based approach and experimental task based approach using language laboratories with the integrated tasks.

2.   There is no significant difference between the scores obtained by the students of different residential locality based on the scores in their tests with the task based approach through the traditional method.

3.   There is no significant difference between the scores obtained by the students in their speaking and writing skills test in both the experimental and traditional task based approaches when their scores were analyzed based on their parental education.

10. IMPLICATIONS

1. The outcome of the study proved that the teaching and fine tuning English Language skills through task based approach with the experimental design using Language Resource Centre is more effective among the post graduate students.

2. The services of the best English language teachers in each college could be utilized to prepare tasks from the literature extracts and other case studies to enhance the speaking and writing skills among the students.   3.This task based enhancement of language skills can be modern approach as this is a tool

which has great implication in all fields of instructions, demonstrations and documentary projections in classrooms.

4. Literature extracts could be used to prepare audio-visual aids in order to appeal to visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners. Students could watch a movie, enact, role play so that the language skills could be fine-tuned with much of the interest among the students.

5. Media in the classroom engage students in learning and provide a richer experience. Students view media as exciting learning aids, making learning entertaining and less monotonous.

11. CONCLUSION

The ability to speak and write effectively in the English Language is the need of the hour. It is with the matter of experience, training and learning. This must be enhanced through the educational institutions, especially in the higher level of education, where the communication skills of the students are fine-tuned, reshaped and refined and the students are sent as future executives of the society. Technical Skills and Language skills decide the life style of the students. These two skills are tested through the spoken and written tests. Technology has been improved a lot and everyday new inventions and discoveries are made. Teachers, being the facilitators, could generate their own tasks related to the curriculum designed to enhance the language skills of the students during their English classes. Life skills and human values could also be inculcated through these tasks. This helps them in getting better placement and further strengthens their personal and professional career.

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