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Original Research Article

Collaborative Instructional Strategies and Attitudes toward Second Language Learning

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the effectiveness of using collaborative instructional strategies in teaching second language and presents the attitudes toward using these collaborative strategies among Grade 8 students. To determine the results, the experimental research design was used to test the relationship between the variables. Findings revealed that five collaborative learning strategies namely think-pair-share, jigsaw puzzle, mind mapping, round robin, and send a problem were assessed as satisfactory by the respondents. Though the data show these collaborative strategies received the same assessment, "send a problem" has the highest average mean. With regard to the respondents' performance in the pretest and posttest, students who belong in the experimental group show a slight increase in scores than those students in the control group. Students from both groups have the same perception in using these collaborative strategies. Thus, the researchers believe that using collaborative instructional strategies help learners understand better the second language.

Introduction

Teaching as a kind of cognition is mainly embodied through students' understanding which believes that students are the subjects of teaching. The teacher must be good at recognizing important learning strategies and must be clearly aware about which strategies are indispensable to different learning tasks. Therefore, the teacher is able to use the appropriate strategies effectively among students with different characteristics. Engaging individuals in interdependent learning activities is found to be beneficial in helping students to learn effectively and efficiently.

Having in mind that learning is a lifelong process, teachers deemed it necessary to teach students to learn on their own, that is, to meet the needs of the current implementation of quality-oriented education called as the K-12 curriculum in our country. The studies of English learning are conducive to shifting of teacher's traditional beliefs towards improving the quality of teaching and education in large scale.

The researchers believe that collaborative language learning is a strategy that appears to be effective in raising students' level of academic achievement where students are encouraged to become responsible for their own learning as well as helping other students to learn. This study is an opportunity to enhance knowledge of both teachers and students in using collaborative strategies in learning the second language and understand deeper its contribution in the implementation of the Language Curriculum Guide under the K to 12 Program.

Hence, the researchers seek to determine the effects of collaborative instructional strategies in learning the second language. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions: 1) What collaborative strategy is most effective in learning the English language? 2) What is the performance of the students in the pretest and posttest? 3) What is the attitude of the students towards collaborative learning? 4) What is the effect of collaborative instructional strategies in learning the second language among the students? 5) Is there a significant difference in the performance of the students using collaborative and non-collaborative instructional strategies?

Literature Review

Collaborative Learning

Collaborative learning is used as an umbrella term for a variety of approaches in teaching that involve combined intellectual effort by learners. Collaborative learning tasks are designed by teachers so that students are required to depend on one another to complete the assigned tasks and to master content and skills. According to Malhotra (2009) collaborative learning is a method of instruction where students work together in a group to reach common goals. This strategy was found to be helpful in teaching all subjects across disciplines and suited to all academic levels.

As language teachers look for realistic yet effective technique in transferring communicative skills, collaboration in the classroom has the potential to elevate the learning of students from the superficial and into the deeper learning that remains for a lifetime. An understanding of group dynamics on the part of the teacher coupled with collaboration methods can help them form student teams that can get to the next level of learning (Reed, 2014). This kind of interaction develops the ability of the students to broaden understanding of the subject matter (Webb, et.al., 2002). Moreover, in the event that none of the group members has no idea of the correct answer, brainstorming among peers seems to activate one's own learning in solving problems. Students quickly realize that they are able to solve problems as a group that they would not be able to solve as individuals. Students are able to be trained to collaborate with each other and to give feedback on each other's work (Chen, 2018).

Prince (2004) observed that in collaborative strategy when compared to traditional methods, students passively receive information from a teacher. Cooperative, problem-based learning has been shown to improve student engagement and retention of classroom material. More learning methods improve students' time on tasks and intrinsic motivation to learn, as well as students' interpersonal relationships and expectation for success.

As Van (2000) explained, collaborative learning activities allow students to provide explanations of their understanding, which can help students, elaborate and reorganize their knowledge. Social interaction stimulates elaboration of conceptual knowledge as group mates attempt to make themselves understood, and research demonstrates that providing elaborated explanations improves student comprehension of concepts.

Attitudes toward Collaborative Learning

In a study conducted by Farzaneh (2014), participants hold generally a positive view of the implementation of collaborative strategies in teaching and learning context. This is probably because when students work in groups they feel that they can depend on others for help and this gives them the confidence to solve problems and enjoy learning.

Dorcas, et. al. (2014) investigated students' attitudes towards group collaborative learning experiences the results of their studies show that students liked participating in collaborative working experiences, had great preference to work in collaboration with others, viewed collaborative learning experience as important, and tended to agree that they learned more in group than alone.

McLeish (2009) said that it is clear that in spite of the potential benefits of cooperative learning it is not fully accepted by all students at the institution. Due to students' fear, apprehension and past experiences, many prefer to work on their own rather than within a group.

On the other hand, some students stated reasons for their comfort with cooperative learning such as work is made easier and faster within a group, greater understanding, team player and social skills. These reasons given by students are in keeping with the definition of cooperative learning described by Joliffee (2007) who states that students work in small teams or groups usually for a sustained period of time to improve their own learning and that of others.

Methodology

Research Design

This study made use of experimental research to determine the influence of using collaborative instructional strategies in teaching second language.

Data Gathering Procedure

In pursuing this study, a total of 80 respondents were randomly divided into two groups. The researchers devised a teacher-made tests and a survey questionnaire which had undergone validation process. The conduct of pretest and posttest to students in the experimental group and control group determined their performance of using collaborative strategies.

Data Analysis

To describe the attitude of the students toward collaborative learning, the arbitrary scale below was used.

Scale	Mean Range	Qualitative Descriptions	
4	3.25 – 4.00	Strongly Agree	Most Favorable
3	2.50 – 3.24	Agree	More Favorable
2	1.75 – 2.49	Disagree	Favorable
1	1.00 – 1.74	Strongly Disagree	Unfavorable

To measure the performance of the students in the collaborative learning activities, the scale below was used.

Score	Qualitative Description
13-15	Very Satisfactory
10-12	Satisfactory
7-9	Fairly Satisfactory
4-6	Poor
1-3	Needs Improvement

Results and Discussion

The researchers present the findings to address the objectives with regard to collaborative instructional strategies used in the classroom and how students adapt to these strategies while learning the skills in a second language.

Table 1: *The collaborative instructional strategies used in learning the second language*

Collaborative Instructional Strategies	Mean Score	Qualitative Description
Send a Problem	12.03	Satisfactory
Round Robin	11.33	Satisfactory
Mind Mapping	10.83	Satisfactory
Jigsaw Puzzle	10.83	Satisfactory
Think-Pair- Share	9.23	Fairly Satisfactory
Average Mean	10.85	Satisfactory

Table 1 shows the different collaborative instructional strategies used in learning a second language. Based on the data, send a problem has the highest mean score with a satisfactory rating. Though collaborative strategies such as round robin, mind mapping, and jigsaw puzzle are also assessed as satisfactory, students are more inclined to know the things they have not yet discovered and they prefer to work in an activity that encompasses problem-solving. Like send a problem, problem-solving helps all types of learners to develop critical thinking skills and be able to realize other aspects of learning the subject (Qadhi, 2018).

Table 2: *Students' performance on the pretest and posttest using collaborative and non-collaborative strategies*

Score	Collaborative				Non-Collaborative			
	Pretest		Posttest		Pretest		Posttest	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%
11 – 15	2	6.7	0	0	9	30.0	6	20.0
16 – 20	10	33.3	1	3.3	13	43.3	3	10.0
21 – 25	13	43.3	5	16.7	5	16.7	6	20.0
26 – 30	4	13.3	10	33.3	3	10.0	6	20.0
31 – 35	1	3.3	10	33.3	0	0	8	26.7
36 – 40	0	0	4	13.3	0	0	1	3.3
Total	30	100	30	100	30	100	30	100
Mean	21.9		30.1		18.5		24.2	

It is evident from the results that there is an increase in the mean scores of the students in the pretest and posttest using instructional strategies. The experimental group gained an increase of 8.2 points in the students' scores. It suggests that students perform better in their English language class using collaborative instructional strategies than using non-collaborative strategies.

Table 3: *Attitude of students towards collaborative learning*

	Collaborative		Non-collaborative	
Items	Mean	Description	Mean	Description
1. I participate willingly in collaborative learning activities.	3.17	More Favorable	3.33	Most Favorable
2. Collaborative learning can improve my attitude towards working with my classmates.	3.10	More Favorable	3.43	Most Favorable
3. Collaborative learning helps me to socialize more with my peers.	3.40	Most Favorable	3.23	More Favorable
4. Collaborative learning enhances good working relationships.	3.30	Most Favorable	3.37	Most Favorable
5. Group activities make the learning process easier.	3.40	Most Favorable	3.23	More Favorable
6. I enjoy the topic/lesson more when I work with other students.	3.07	More Favorable	2.73	More Favorable
7. My work is more organized when I work with the group.	3.07	More Favorable	2.87	More Favorable
8. Collaborative learning helps me to learn to work effectively in groups.	3.10	More Favorable	3.07	More Favorable
9. Engaging in collaborative learning helps me in my academic progress.	3.13	More Favorable	3.10	More Favorable
10. Collaborative learning helps me develop better my communication skills	3.37	Most Favorable	3.07	More Favorable
11. Collaborative learning helps me improve my desire to excel	2.80	More Favorable	3.20	More Favorable
12. I can express myself better when I am alone	2.20	Favorable	2.83	More Favorable
13. When I work with other students I achieve less than when I work alone.	2.17	Favorable	2.60	More Favorable
14. Group activities make the learning experience harder for me.	2.07	Favorable	2.50	More Favorable
15. I prefer that my teachers use less group activities	2.77	More Favorable	2.40	Favorable
Mean	2.94	More Favorable	3.00	More Favorable

Table 3 reveals the attitudes of the students towards collaborative learning as perceived by those who have undergone collaborative and non-collaborative strategies. It was the statement "collaborative learning enhances good working relationships" received the same rating as most favorable among the learners from the two groups. The rest of the statements were assessed as more favorable by students in both groups with one exception in the results. Students in the control group favor "teachers to use less group activities". Perhaps this can be attributed to the notion that using collaborative activities require movement and become difficult to some students.

With the same result for both groups, students identify these collaborative instructional strategies as more favorable in developing positive interactions with their classmates and help them become more inclined in learning English (Bronet, 2008).

Table 4: *Significant difference among collaborative instructional strategies*

Comparison	Mean Difference	Critical Value	Decision	Interpretation
Think, Pair, Share & Jigsaw	1.60	1.15	Reject Ho	Significant
Think, Pair, Share & Mind Mapping	1.60	1.15	Reject Ho	Significant
Think, Pair, Share & Round Robin	2.10	1.15	Reject Ho	Significant
Think, Pair, Share & Send a Problem	2.80	1.15	Reject Ho	Significant
Jigsaw & Mind Mapping	0.00	1.15	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Jigsaw & Round Robin	0.50	1.15	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Jigsaw & Send a Problem	1.20	1.15	Reject Ho	Significant
Mind Mapping & Round Robin	0.50	1.15	Accept Ho	Not Significant
Mind Mapping & Send a Problem	1.20	1.15	Reject Ho	Significant
Round Robin & Send a Problem	0.70	1.15	Accept Ho	Not Significant

The significant difference among collaborative instructional Strategies in learning the second language is exhibited in Table 4.

It is reflected from the results that the collaborative strategies think-pair-share when paired with jigsaw, mind mapping and round robin and send a problem have significant effect in learning the second language since their mean differences, respectively are greater than the critical value of 1.15. It is further inferred that send a problem strategy when paired with jigsaw and mind mapping have strong effect in learning the second language as evidenced by their corresponding mean differences which are greater than the critical value.

However, when jigsaw puzzle is paired with mind mapping and round robin and round robin with mind mapping and send a problem, it was found out that they have no significant effect in learning the second language as indicated by their respective mean differences which are less than the critical value.

Table 5: *Test of difference on the scores of students on the different collaborative instructional strategies*

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MSS	F Computed Value	Critical Value (α = 5%)	Decision	Interpretation
Bet. Groups	127.44	4	31.86	11.93	2.43	Reject Ho	Significant
W/in Groups	387.33	145	2.67				
Total	514.77	149					

Table 5 presents the test of significant difference on the scores of the students on the different collaborative instructional strategies. It is evident from the test that the critical F-computed value of 11.93 is greater than the critical F – value of 2.43. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected at five percent level of significance. Thus there is significant difference on the scores of the students in the English subject using the different collaborative instructional strategies. It implies that the scores of the students differ from each other using the think-pair-share, jigsaw puzzle, mind mapping, round robin and send a problem collaborative learning strategies. Therefore, the findings confirm with the researchers' claim that send a problem is the most effective collaborative strategy in learning the second language.

Table 6: *Test of difference on the pretest and posttest scores of students using collaborative learning*

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	t Computed Value	Crit. Value	Decision	Interpretation
Pretest	21.9	4.60	29	8.85	2.05	Reject Ho	Significant
Posttest	30.1	4.98					

Table 6 presents the test of difference on the pretest and posttest scores of students in collaborative learning.

The test shows that the t-computed value of 8.85 is greater than the t-critical value of 2.05. This signifies the rejection of the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, significant difference exists between the pretest and posttest scores of the students in collaborative learning. It suggests that the scores of the students on the pretest differ from their posttest. The findings are further affirmed by their respective mean scores of 21.9 and 30.1. It is further inferred that the performance of the students on the posttest in collaborative learning is better than on the pretest.

Table 7: *Test of difference on the pretest and posttest scores of students using non-collaborative learning*

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	t Computed Value	Crit. Value	Decision	Interpretation
Pretest	18.5	4.74	29	4.18	2.05	Reject Ho	Significant
Post test	24.2	8.07					

The test of difference on the pretest and posttest scores of students in non-collaborative learning is presented in Table 7.

It is evident from the results that the computed t-value of 4.18 is greater than the critical t-value of 2.05. For this reason, the researcher rejects the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. As a result, significant difference exists between the pretest and posttest scores of students in non-collaborative learning. It means that the scores of the students on the pretest vary from that of their posttest. The researcher further states that the students perform better on their posttest in non-collaborative learning than on their pretest as evidenced by their mean scores of 18.5 and 24.2 on the pretest and posttest, respectively.

Table 8: *Test of difference on the performance of students using collaborative and non-collaborative learning strategies*

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	t Computed Value	Crit. Value	Decision	Interpretation
Collaborative learning	30.1	4.98	58	3.39	2.00	Reject Ho	Significant
Non-collaborative learning	24.2	8.07					

Table 8 exhibits the test of difference on the performance of the students using collaborative and non-collaborative learning strategies.

The test shows that the t-computed value of 3.39 is higher than the critical t-value of 2.00. Hence the null hypothesis is rejected at 5 percent significance level. Thus, there is a significant difference on the performance of the students using collaborative and non-collaborative strategies. It implies that the performance of the students using collaborative learning strategies is better than the performance of the students using non-collaborative strategy as evidenced by their respective mean scores of 30.1 and 24.2.

Conclusion

This study highlights the use of collaborative instructional strategies in teaching English language and the attitude of high school students in learning a second language inside the classroom. It was found that using collaborative instructional strategies leads to better performance in learning the second language. The students consider collaborative instructional strategies as an integral part of developing their critical thinking skills to better understand the second language. With the use of collaborative instructional strategies, the students consider these strategies in promoting teamwork and enthusiasm to work with peers

while maximizing the transfer of learning. For collaborative learning to be effective, it must be administered appropriately focusing on interdependence among group members. The students should rely on each other with the understanding that each individual is required to contribute toward overall group success.

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