



PRACTICALITY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE THEORIES IN CLASSROOM: REFLECTION

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Abstract

There is a saying that puts a huge responsibility on teachers' shoulders: No any job in the world can exist without teachers. Responsibilities can be different for a teacher but the prime one is to be analytical when it comes to personal improvement. This small research is carried out to the practicality of some activities in real classroom. Initially, I set a number of goals ahead of me to do the task successfully and began taking notes after each lesson, according to the questions provided as prompts. After each lesson, I commenced to comprehend my own drawbacks in teaching. Each lesson, which was analyzed straightforwardly after having been conducted facilitated the second one to be more beneficial.

Keywords: reading practice, vocabulary building, exchange ideas, different sentences, listening task, instruction , mistake corrector, comments.

Introduction

In the first week, I conducted lesson focused on reading, where I intended to give initial steps to utilize reading strategies while reading. As Grab (2009) cites being good at reading skills require a number of skill sets and high comprehension level. Knowing that I desired to increase their word recognition efficiency before the text being given and warmed them up by explaining the words fully with examples while checking their vocabulary building exercise aimed to lead them in reading. Because, Laughner and Ravenhorst-Kalovski (2010) said that "*Vocabulary knowledge is closely related to reading abilities*" Following that, I provided them with idea about Skimming, Scanning and Extensive reading. To consolidate what they had understood and to facilitate them to retain new date I gave them specific skimming and scanning exercises. Next step was reading practice and I allowed them to turn the gained theory into practice and to use the newly taken words during the lesson. The checking process was, not only to identify their results, but also to explain some easiest ways of understanding the reading piece. In the end, students were given extensive reading as homework.

Method and Materials

It is widely acknowledged that when it comes to reading most students are less motivated and they may show high reluctance in reading. Here the task for teacher becomes more overwhelming that they should try to teach the lesson interactively. Regarding students responses, all of them participated in the lesson, especially when I commenced the lesson with vocab- building exercise. They worked in pairs and they matched the words into their definitions. They were the words that they would see in their



reading passages. They were active with their pairs as most students were auditory and visual learners, they easily mixed with the task. Nevertheless, some who were tactile and kinesthetic found the task might be boring and less involved with the task. Knowing that beforehand, I had organized second half of the activity, which was checking and explaining. Explanation helped my kinesthetic learners to comprehend the words and retain them. Building students reading fluency is highly significant in making them active readers, and here utilizing reading strategies skillfully may help students to reach this target. Therefore, I explained them skimming and scanning strategies. The exercise I gave after the explanation helped student to retain the task. I made exercises smaller to prevent students getting bored, besides that they be demotivated if they cannot understand. I gave prompting questions to students to differentiate skimming and scanning such as “If we take a postcard from our friend about his trip to Egypt with detailed explanation of hours and days, how do read, do we skim or scan?” “If we are in the train station to find our train schedule, do we skim or scan?” In this part, all students were eager to express their understandings as these prompt questions led them to understand deeply. In order to create opportunity for comprehension skill practice I gave them pretty long reading passage, but before leading them to get involved with the text, I encouraged them to read the text and exchange ideas about it. Following that, they moved to the question part. The most successful part of the lesson I checking and analyzing part, where they deeply penetrated their mistakes and pluses. However, it took them longer time than it was intended because I took pretty long reading passage. If had to teach this topic again I would take much simpler and shorter text in length. The reason is that, it was the first time for them to practice skimming and scanning and they may be bored, and lose the focus and may not use the strategies being busy with reading the whole text.

In the second week, I conducted grammar lessons, which aim “The usage of tenses” to intermediate students. Primarily I distributed open tests to know their background knowledge including diverse tenses and closed tests where they had to fill the gaps by writing correct tenses. After analyzing my tutees` previous knowledge, I have confessed that they were confused while they were choosing the right tense, indeed tricky ones(Past Simple Tense or Present Perfect Tense, Past Perfect or Present Perfect, Present Continuous tense or Future tense etc.) and many of them were unable to output the grammatical rules in their speaking. In addition to that, mostly student erred while they were filling the gaps. Getting to know what were their lacks, I gave various tasks, utilized different activities to brush up their knowledge, as well as explained grammar rules that they did not know. I implemented Gatbonton and Segalowitz (1988)`s “ creative automatization” way that automates the speech of the learners and would make their speech occur naturally by using patterned sequences. Such as, she has gone to the supermarket. Then I provided another technique for directing students` attention which was introduced by Van Patten(1996). I read the two different sentences, which have close meanings, and showed two pictures where the students had to choose and match the sentences with pictures. For instance, they have been in the USA or they have gone to the USA.I am always losing my pen or I have lost my pen. She is reading a newspaper or she has been reading a newspaper. This activity was a post activity.



Applying different ways, approaches and activities helped the students to analyze, differentiate the tenses. In the first activity, many of students made blunders by confusing tenses. However, some of my visual learners' results were better than others. As I have observed, it did not help the students because they felt stressed, so some could not manage their time even though they did not almost any make mistakes. The second activity assisted to output the speech of my students especially who had not used the grammar rules in their speaking and could not speak naturally. The last activity was the most precious one. It tested not only their grammar knowledge, but also the activity analyzed their listening skill, analytical and problem solving skills. I have seen that all students eagerly did the task because it gave pleasure them either.

Result and Discussion

I conducted lesson focused on listening skills. The main aim of the lesson was to teach listening for detailed information. Celce Murcia (2014) identified the clear diverse between listening skills and strategies saying that *“skills are acquired abilities that enable a person to listen without a great deal deliberate effort or conscious planning”* while *“listening strategies are ways of listening that are planned and consciously adopted to improve comprehension and communication as well as cope with listening difficulties”*. Considering this theory, I chose two listening activities, which were different. One of them were appropriate to their level and second one was pretty easier.

Commencing the lesson with gap filling song as warm up activity helped students get alert. I utilized in that lesson the method Suggestopedia to begin the class by subconsciously involving the students into the lesson. Besides that listening requires individual approach. So some students may find it hard for the beginning. For this reason, I organized small two way (interactive and participatory listening task, before the main activity, which presumably helped them all. In that activity they were paired and talked about their personal life and took notes by taking the tasks in turn.

The most fruitful part of the lesson for students was “dictation”. The easier track (the speed and words were basic) was for that part they listened and took notes in a form of dictation. While having dictation they learned what to take into account while listening for detailed information.

Next part, I explained stages for pre-while- and post-listening and strategies such as planning, predicting, evaluation monitoring. I warned them not to get distracted by the same words. Then they did multiple choice listening task according to the rules. However, the lesson much more fruitful for the learners who excelled at listening skills. Strategies can work when skills are in moderate level. The students with lower listening skills could not cope with multiple-choice questions as good as skilled ones. The reason was they had not enough receptive materials. I gave advice for weaker listeners after the lesson.

The lesson was fully devoted for speaking and the aim was increasing fluency. Citing Levent (1989), Bygate (2001) cited three most important combinations in increasing fluency; they were conceptualization, formulation, and articulation. For that reason, I intentionally chose topic that might be interesting for them. The topic was crime and I gave them crime types as without vocabulary it is impossible to increase fluency.



Challenge is a thing that makes students get alert and motivated. So, I gave them a problematic condition, which was incentive to coerce them to speak. They were fully engaged with the task, all of them active in group to tell their ideas and propose solution to the condition. I used different ways of correcting mistakes according to my students' individual differences. Because some of them get shy when they are corrected while speaking for them I gave sticker with comments on it. For some students, I gestured or repeated what they had told and implied their mistakes. One part was difficult for them when I gave the topic "Euthanasia" as for and against discussion. As they had not enough idea on the topic, my definition could not help them to speak. Then I realized that to increase fluency easier topics should be taken. If I had to teach this topic again, I would have changed the selected discussion topic to increase students fluency.

Conclusion

Generally, in these conducted lessons students' interaction took the highest importance. Students both challenged on new themes and practiced their background knowledge. My role as a teacher was observer and instruction giver, mistake corrector, comment giver. I mostly used anti-oppressive activities to motivate the students. But I identified and corrected one of my drawbacks regarding choosing appropriate materials for the learner's need. The reading class that was conducted helped to understand that. The reading passage was pretty long and tedious, negatively making students bored and dividing their concentration. Another important thing that I identified has been my lack of attention to each learner's needs, and individual differences, learning styles. I discovered it in my grammar lesson. I gave open-ended question to my students to check their background knowledge and some of them with poorer previous fundamentals found the task boring. I thought I should have given them another type of question to check current level. I while organizing activities and exercises, a teacher should match and modify the task into students' needs. As a teacher, I did my best for my students, however I could see my drawbacks as well. I have decided to make a review of my each lesson within five minutes after each lesson, as I find this task feasible for my improvement as a teacher.

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