



TEACHERS' VOICES

CAPTURING THE DYNAMICS OF CHANGE

2017

ENGLISH  ACTION



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We would like to express our thanks to Cambridge Education, the EIA project team and The Open University (UK) and, in particular, to Sue Williamson, EIA Team Leader, Cambridge Education



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"English in Action (EIA) is a UK Government funded programme implemented by the Government of Bangladesh and managed by Cambridge Education, a member of Mott MacDonald."

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S.M Rabbi, Grade V

Can students' reading skills improve through group work ?



Background of the study

I joined as an assistant teacher at Hatipara GPS in 2010. Till today I have worked in four schools. When I taught, I faced a similar problem everywhere – that most of the students could not read the text properly, which made me very unhappy. If a student can read the text properly, s/he will continue his/her regular learning process at school and self-study at home smoothly. Then I asked a question to myself, "How can I overcome this situation?". The answer came: I could involve bright students in groups to overcome this situation. That is what motivated me to take up this topic for classroom research.

Research questions

In my classroom research, I tried to find answers to the following questions:

- How can group work be used to improve the reading skills of my students?
- How can I conduct group work with slower students with extra support effectively?
- How can small-group work (SGW) be used to improve the reading skills of my students?
- How can a reflective journal and post-class video observation be used to improve my own teaching techniques?

The persons who were involved in my classroom research: my beloved students, my Head Teacher, my colleagues, mentees, mentors and EIA representatives.

Description of the research study

For this study, we joined a mentor workshop for TVC which was organised by English in Action. They showed me what things we could

do for our research study. After completing the workshop, we were called for joining another workshop with mentees at Gazipur PTI. Coming back to my own school, I prepared a lesson without any learning because I took Cycle 1 as the baseline. I made six groups in an organised way. I took feedback from my students. I faced some problems and wrote a reflective journal with learning after completed Cycle 1. In my journal I wrote possible solutions.

This research study was very effective and interesting to me. It showed me the way in which I could overcome problems and enrich my professional life. It has helped me to increase the reading skills of my students in an organised way. For this classroom research, I completed three cycles. For each cycle, I gave the students an individual feedback form. In that form I mentioned some questions. I tried to find out the actual condition of my students by asking some questions and through my own observation.

The main questions were:

1. Has the teacher done group work in your class?
2. Which skill has the teacher given preference in group work?
3. Have you improved your reading through group work? How?
4. Do you think that extra classes can increase your confidence?
5. Do you feel better in small groups?

To improve the reading skills of our students, I involved bright students to improve slower students in groups in an organised way. Here, I selected a leader who would lead the group, a secretary who would write and present the

group work and a time-keeper who would remind other group members about time. For increasing the confidence level of slower students, I gave them extra support and appreciation. To give them extra support I organised some extra classes for slower students. I made a plan to organise two extra classes on Saturday and Tuesday every week. I

gave 15–30 days' interval between every cycle. In Cycles 1 and 2, I provided group work and in Cycle 3, I provided small-group work. These helped us to improve students' reading skills and ensure participatory group work. I tried to improve my own teaching techniques by writing reflective journals and watching class videos.

Area of comparison	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3
Slower students	Could not participate actively because couldn't read the text properly	Some slower students read the text properly	Most of the slower students read the text properly
Myself/ teacher	Conducted class with usual lesson plan because no learning at the beginning of Cycle 1	Conducted class with improved lesson plan after considering the learning from Cycle 1	Conducted class with improved lesson plan after considering the learning from Cycle 2
Members of group	6–7	6–7	4–5 (SGW)
Number of extra classes	0	4	5

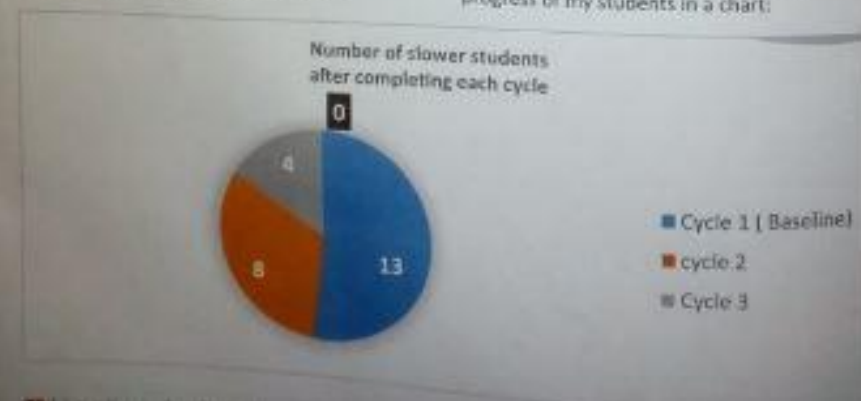
Comparison between the cycles

Outcomes

'It is our attitude at the beginning of a difficult task which, more than anything else, will affect its successful outcome.' (William James)

In this regard, I would like to say that the outcome of my research study is very successful. It seemed a very effective way

to me and my students. It inspired and motivated me to go forward. I believe that if I improve the reading skills of my students and give them some confidence to use English, not only as a language but also as a tool, it will help us to create an economically enriched Bangladesh. Here I want to mention the progress of my students in a chart:





Conclusion

I would like to give special thanks to my beloved pupils. They helped me very much to do my research work. Now I would like to say what the famous Martin Luther King of USA said: I have a dream. I have a dream to develop my own English. I have a dream to create some good students so that they can use English not only as a language but also as a tool. And make Bangladesh enriched.


Recommendations







1. You may use group work as a tool for improving students' reading skills.
2. Understand students' real problems. If possible, give extra support to slower students.
3. Appreciate your students. It can play a vital role in improving their confidence.
4. Provide small group work activities. They can help you to increase students' participation.
5. Maintain a reflective journal and watch while-class video. It can inspire you and show you the area of improvement of your class.



ENGLISH in ACTION

English in Action (EIA) is a ten-year education programme which aims to enhance the economic and social prospects of people in Bangladesh by improving their communicative English. It does this through communicative language learning in primary and secondary classrooms, and television and other media, such as websites and mobile, aimed at adults. EIA encourages teachers to introduce new English language learning activities into their classroom practice, with their students. Teachers are supported by audio-visual and print materials for professional development and classroom practice activities, and by other teachers in their school and local area. Teachers 'learn by doing', in the classroom, reflecting on their practice and by supporting each other. They are guided by a video 'trainer in the hand', showing authentic videos of classroom practice and supported by audio materials for use with students in class. Audio-visual materials are provided at low cost, offline, through memory cards accessed on affordable mobile phones.



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