

Impact of Problem Based Learning on Writing skill in English of Secondary School Students

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Abstract

English which is being taught as a second language in India has always faced problems in its transaction in classrooms, especially at the school level. Even though various methods have been tried and tested in making English language classrooms lively and active, the ultimate purpose of learning the language, that is proficiency in oral and written communication has been achieved only to a limited extent with these methods. The present study attempted to find out the impact of Problem Based Learning on writing skill in English of secondary school students. The study was empirical in nature and the results revealed that the Problem Based Learning strategy had influenced the writing skill in English of the students positively.

Key words : Problem Based Learning, Writing skill in English

Teaching of English especially at the school level has always been subjected to criticisms because of the poor performance of the students in achieving the basic skills of the language. The Traditional class rooms had the teacher controlling and dictating rules and regulations of using the language and the students were not having any choice regarding the process of learning. Though we are boasting about the glory of constructivism and hoping to mark the end of teacher oriented classes paving the way for student oriented class rooms , the reality is that even today majority of our English class rooms witness the teacher reading and explaining the text and dictating answers for the questions given at the end of the text book. Very little effort has been taken to make the learners master the skills of language. Problem Based Learning is an innovative method that attempts to make the learners efficient users . rather than rote learners of the language.

Problem Based Learning is an instructional framework in which the students work in groups for solving authentic problems. While solving these problems , the students learn the content and expand their problem solving and enquiry skills.(Hmelo-Silver,2004). According to Tan(2004) problem Based Learning goes through the steps of presenting the problem, exploring the problem trigger, discussion and finding solution ,its presentation and evaluation .It is a student centered pedagogy where the role of the teacher is only that of a facilitator. The students who go through the active process of problem solving develops not only critical thinking skills but also the skill to work collaboratively and to communicate efficiently

Though Problem Based Learning has been mainly used in the field of medicine and other sciences, its impact on other subjects have got considerable attention in the recent years .However, very few researches have been conducted on how Problem Based Learning can influence the Foreign or second language classrooms .

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In the present study the investigators try to find out the impact of Problem Based learning on the Writing skill in English of the students of Secondary school students.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are as follows.

Major Objective

To find out the effectiveness of Problem Based Learning on Writing skill in English of secondary school students

Minor Objectives

- To compare the mean pre test scores of control and experimental group with regard to writing skill in English of secondary school students.
- To compare the mean post test scores of the control and experimental group with regard to writing skill in English of secondary school students.

Hypotheses of the study

- There exists significant difference in the writing skill in English of the control group and experimental group of secondary school students.
- There exists significant difference in the mean pre test scores of writing skill in English of the students of experimental group and control group.
- There exists significant difference in the mean post test scores of writing skill in English of the control group and experimental group.

Methodology

The method adopted was the Quasi experimental in nature. The investigators selected pretest posttest design for the study. The students were given pretest in writing a discourse question which included a paragraph writing of (100 to 150 words). The post test with same questions were given after the experimental intervention using Problem Based Learning. The questions asked for the pre test were direct questions whereas in the post test it was introduced through a problem. The assessment criteria for the paragraph writing was on a scale from excellent to average. The criteria for evaluating the discourse was organization of ideas, logical and sequential arrangement of facts, good choice of vocabulary, fluency in expression, correct syntactical structure, proper spelling and punctuation.

Sample of the study

The sample of the study consisted of two intact classes of viiith standard with 35 students in the control group and 35 students in the experimental group. The sample was selected using purposive sampling technique.

Statistical Techniques used for the study.

For the present study the investigators used the statistical techniques.

Preliminary statistics

Test of significance

Analysis and Interpretations

Table 1 *Preliminary Analysis of Pre test scores of the Control and Experimental group*

Group	N	M	SD
Control	35	7.42	2.64
Experimental	35	7.65	2.67

From the table it can be seen that the mean value of the experimental group is 7.65 and that of the control group is 7.42. This shows that there is no difference in the control group and the experimental group in their writing skill in English. The standard deviation of the experimental group is 2.67 and that of the control group is 2.64. This value shows that there is only mild variation in the scores of both groups.

Table 2 *Preliminary Analysis of the post test scores of the control and experimental group*

Group	N	M	SD
Control group	35	13.14	4.38
Experimental group	35	17.31	4.45

From the table it can be seen that the mean value obtained in posttest scores in writing skill in English of the control group and experimental group are 13.14 and 17.31. While comparing the mean scores, the students of the experimental group scored better. The standard deviation of the control group experimental group are 4.38 and 4.45 respectively.

Table 4 *Comparison of Writing skill in English in the pre test scores of the control group and experimental group*

Group	N	M	SD	-t value
Control group	35	7.65	2.68	0.35n *
Experimental Group	35	7.42	2.63	

*not significant

It is seen from table 3 that the $-t$ value 3.5 is less than the set value of $(t=3.5 < P)$ at 0.05 level of significance. Hence it can be concluded that the control group and the experimental group do not differ significantly in their writing skill in English.

Table 4 .*Comparison of writing skill in English of the control group and experimental group in the post test scores of students*

Group	N	M	SD	-t value
Control group	35	17.32	4.45	3.88*
Experimental group	35	13.14	4.37	

*significant at 0.01 level

From table 4 it can be inferred that the t value which is 3.88 is $(t=3.88 > p)$ significant at 0.05 level of significance . So it can be inferred that the control group and experimental group differ significantly with regard to writing skill in English of the students of viiith standard. Hence it can be said that students who were taught through Problem Based Learning have scored better than the students who were taught through Activity oriented method.

Findings of the study

The Problem Based Learning is more effective than Activity oriented method in improving the writing skill in English of the secondary school students.

The mean test of the pretest scores of the the control and experimental group show that there is no significant difference in their writing skill in English

The mean post test scores of the control and experimental group shows that there is significant difference in the post test scores of the control and experimental group.

Conclusion

The present study shows that Problem Based learning has an impact on the writing skill of the students in English . The active process of participating in group discussions, sharing of new information and ideas, writing for presentations and its refinement by peers and the facilitator helps in improving the writing skill

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