BRAINSTORMING AS A PROMISING TOOL FOR TEACHING LANGUAGES

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Abstract: In this information age teachers are expected to shift from being the information provider to architect of knowledge. They should facilitate the students to build their own solid edifices. Before starting the teaching process teachers should know the gaps between where the learner is now and where he or she needs to be? In order to know the gaps, the teachers should have an understanding of different pedagogical methods that could help them to fill the gaps. Pedagogical methods range from traditional explanatory method to modern constructive methods of teaching. The selection of suitable method may be different for each course, subject, topic and context. Researchers found that brainstorming method of teaching is one of the most appropriate methods to fill the gaps between where the learner is and where he or she needs to be? Especially at the primary level of education while teaching languages, this method shows higher effectiveness. Through this article the researchers have tried to explain a conceptual framework of brainstorming by presenting comprehensive overview of its philosophy, procedure, uses and effectiveness of this method to teach languages at primary level.Students, teachers, teacher-educators, parents, administrators and curriculum-designer will benefit from this article.

*Keywords:***Brainstorming, Constructivism, Language**

I. INTRODUCTION

Brainstorming combines a relaxed, informal approach to problem solving with lateral thinking (AlMutairi, 2015).Brainstorming means the use of brain to the active problem solving and the brainstorming session aims to develop creative solutions to problems (Jarwan, 2005). (Hoing,2001)defined it as the multiple thinking that includes the breaking up of old ideas, making new connections, enlarging the limits of knowledge and the onset of wonderful ideas. Referred to its importance for students (Sayed. 292:2009) quantified as: 1. Helps students to solve problems, an innovative solution. 2. Helps students to benefit from the ideas of others through the development and build on them. 3. Helps the cohesion of the students and build relationships among them and assess the views of others.Brainstorming helps elementary school students to identify and come up with real questions to include in learning projects (ODE, 2014).(Ikwumelu & Oyibe, 2014) explains; As such, students can increase the opportunity to learn from their mistakes and their peers while still reinforcing basic skills of brainstorming. ALshammari(2015) concluded, the results expected are a dynamic synergy that expands exponentially in order to increase the creativity of the group.

The main feature of brainstorming is its flow of thoughts and ideas. It can convey the ideas and thoughts that students take away with them. Brainstorming gets more attention and active participation of learners if it is used properly. In 2nd World Conference on Education Technology Researches – WCETR2012, Rizi, Najafipour, Haghani & Dehghan (2013) confirmed the positive effect of brainstorming method on the educational achievement of students in their study on 5th grade students.

II.   Concept of Brainstorming

Advertising executive of Madison Avenue Alex Osborn developed this approach and published it in his book, "Applied Imagination." in 1953. Many researchers have made many improvements to this technique and expand its scope for various fields including learning and teaching. The approach used in teaching learning process is subtly different from Osborn's original approach of brainstorming. In teaching learning process, the goal of brainstorming is to direct students to new ways of thinking and mould from the traditional way of learning. Classroom Brainstorming is the random generation of ideas based around a topic of subject being taught. Brainstorming method of teaching encourages students to think more freely and innovatively than if they were doing a more restricted and routine classroom teaching. It allows learners to recall what they know and present it in front of their peer group. It is a dynamic and stimulating way to lead learners from what they know to what they do not know. The brainstorming session can be carried out in a one-period session or more. No materials are required apart from a chalk and board except in a sophisticated high tech classroom. This method teaches students to breaks away from old patterns of thinking to new unexplored paths of thinking.

This increases the richness of ideas explored, particularly before listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is fun for students and they participate actively in the whole process of brainstorming. It helps student-student and students-teacher relationships to get stronger as they solve problems in a positive, stress-free classroom situation. The freethinking classroom situation encourages creativity in students; even crazy thoughts may push the thinking of other students. Brainstorming is a promising tool that can be easily introduced into language classes. It helps students to become better learners. In addition, it is a fun activity which students enjoy well.

III.   Philosophy behind Use of Brainstorming Method in the Field of Education

The basic philosophy of using brainstorming method in education is constructivism. Constructivist methods of teaching are based on constructive learning theories. Constructive theories tell us that learning is greater when the learner is actively involved in the learning process. According to this view, the learners are the maker of their own meaning and knowledge. Constructive teaching gives maturity to critical thinking and creates a dynamic and independent learner. It believes that new knowledge construct on the foundation of previous knowledge that is called schema. According to this theory, all new learning is filtered through pre-existing schema. The theories suggest that learning is most effective when the learner has given chance to actively participate in the learning process, despite the fact that he or she acquires knowledge through perseverance. In such a gradual way, the teacher engages his students through questions and activities, leading them to self-research and self exploration. The role of the teacher in the teaching and learning process is to facilitate the students.

IV.   Steps of Brain Storming Method of Teaching

In general, inviting students to throw their storm of ideas, thoughts, knowledge and facts to solve or learn a specific problem, topic or issue is called brain storming method of teaching. In the traditional language teaching, the teacher announces the topic after entering the classroom through his introductory talk. This introductory talk is usually done through questions. At the final stage of the introductory talk the topic of the lesson is announced. Then the lesson presented through the teacher's recitation, students' recitation, drill and derivation of meaning, explanation, and recapitulation etc. However, asking questions at the time of introduction is a kind of brainstorming as the teacher here tries to connect the subject with the previous knowledge of the students. In the brain storming method the teacher uses it during the entire teaching process through the following steps.

- **The class of students sits around the round table:** First of all, the teacher tells the students to sit in an O or U order. For this round table, an oval shaped table can be used or student's chairs can be arranged in such away. Seating arrangement should be in such a way that all the students can see each other, the board and the teacher face to face.
- **Present the specific problem, topic or issue in question form:** Once it is determined the sitting arrangement is in such a way that all the students can see each other, the board and the teacher face to face, the teacher or a student presents the specific problem, topic or issue in question form. Say for example the teacher want to teach name of fruits i.e. can you make a list of fruits?
- **Clarification and explanation of the problem:** Before starting the brainstorming session the teacher explains the problem and clarify all doubts of students what they are going to do. Here, while teaching the names of fruits the teacher may say that; dear students you have seen many fruits tell me the names of fruits in your own language are in the target language (for example students mother tongue is Hindi and the target language is English).
- **Brain storming starts:** After giving explanation and clarification of doubts the brain storming session starts and the house is open for all the students to speak. It has been observed that students used to be very excited in giving response to the problem.
- **Welcome all ideas:** It is very necessary for successful brainstorming session to welcome al the ideas of students. Student may tell the name of plants, trees, flowers with the name of fruits but the teacher should

avoid criticism and evaluation of thoughts of students. The teacher also should make sure that no one can criticize someone's ideas whether they are wrong, simple, difficult, crazy or emotional.

- **Drawing-out as many ideas as possible:** The main concern should be drawing out as many ideas as possible. The students should be given proper chance and time to think and respond as much as possible.
- **Note down all the ideas:** The teacher or a student should note all the ideas on the board. The ideas should be written in keywords and phrasal words. It has been observed that by writing ideas on the board in front of all the students, it stimulates their thought process and in result students come with more ideas.
- **Evaluation of ideas:** Evaluation of ideas takes the students to generalization level. For this the teacher discusses on all ideas one after one. Suppose, first item on the board is *aam* the teacher ask to entire class whether someone knows its name in English. Most probably some students reply that it is called mango in English. In the same way one by one the teacher erases the Hindi names of fruits and writes them in English. Come to the second item, say for example if the second one is *gulab* the teacher asks student, is it a fruit? After discussion it will be erased from the list. Likewise all the items in the list should be analyzed, corrected, improved, discussed and a finalization of list should be completed on board. In this way the students got final list on board and write down on their copy for further exercise.

V.   EFFECTIVENESS OF BRAINSTORMING

The purpose of the brainstorming method teaching is to teach the students how to learn and construct the knowledge. The brainstorming method gives more emphasis on experience and training so, desired changes in the behavior of students occurs rapidly. Teaching activities are based on interaction and communication between the teacher and students and are student focused. The teacher facilitates the teaching process while students feel a sense of responsibility and become independent learner. Students get ample opportunity to express their ideas, concepts, thought and knowledge which develops creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication and problem solving skills. Students observe, read, collect and accumulate information and discuss it in the classroom with their peer group and teachers. Students do research on a project and present their results in the classroom. They use the skills learned in the classroom in the external world observations and experiences. The construction of the learned knowledge is celebrated in the classroom and the group learning process is strengthened. Students are actively involved in the teaching process. Classroom atmosphere is democratic and the role of the teacher is to facilitate the students.

VI.   CONCLUSION:

This method may prove to be helpful for students, teachers, teacher-educators, parents, administrators, curriculum designer and researchers. Brainstorming helps students to learn by their own observations and they get sufficient opportunity to express their ideas, concepts, thought and knowledge which develops creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication and problem-solving skills. Therefore, there is an emerging need for training modules for the teachers on how to use brainstorming in their classroom teaching. As it yields a significant increase in academic achievement of the students, teachers should be encouraged to use this method while teaching the languages and other discipline of knowledge. At the same time, the students should also be encouraged to develop positive attitude towards it. Language teacher can use this method to make list of nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs etc. Furthermore, this method can be used to develop their vocabulary, sentence formation and story writing skills.

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