

Importance of Visual Aids to Motivate Young Learners

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Importance of Visual Aids to Motivate Young Learners

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Abstract

This report presents the results of the experiences gathered during the internship done in Rajuk Uttara Model College from Sep-Dec, 2016. As an undergraduate student of BRAC University, I was required to do a dissertation of six credits for which I chose to do an internship. I was given an opportunity in Rajuk Uttara Model College to work under the supervision of Shawpan Sarkar, a senior English teacher of the school.

It discusses the efficacy of the use of visual aids in motivating young learners. Young learners are children up to nine or ten years old whose learning needs are different from older learners of fifteen or sixteen years old. As young learners are children up to ten years old so they need attention and motivation. Compared to adult learners, it is easier to motivate young learners. In this case visual aids can help a lot. As young children have short attention spans and get bored very quickly so giving lectures to them is not a very good idea. Visual aids are more effective than lectures. Visual aids can be anything which is visual such as photographs, pictures, movies, videos, maps, slides, short-films, animation movies etc. As the teaching aids are visual students find it easier to understand and remember any topic. Visual teaching aids also help to grab and hold the attention of young learners as they find more interest in the course content presented in a colourful and visually interesting manner. The institution where I did my internship in was Rajuk Uttara Model College. The students were from lower intermediate level that is young learners of ages up to nine or ten. The students were of class six. This paper will discuss how the use of visual aids helped me to motivate my students. The report will highlight the problems faced and discuss the new ideas learnt during the course of the internship. Based on those ideas, the report offers a few recommendations which it is hoped will contribute to better teaching.

Chapter: One

Introduction

English is considered as a global language as it plays an important role in today's world. English is used as a second language in almost every country of the world. Many developing countries like Bangladesh also emphasise the use of English as second language. In our country English is used as second language and is taught as a mandatory subject. As the primary medium of education in our country is Bangla, so the students of Bangla medium schools sometimes struggle with the use of English.

As an undergraduate student of BRAC University, I was required to do a dissertation of six credits for which I chose to do an internship. I was given an opportunity in Rajuk Uttara Model College to work under the supervision of Shawpan Sarkar, a senior English teacher of the school.

I interned there from Sep-Dec 2016. The report which is based on my internship experience shows that through the use of modern methods of teaching, student find the task of learning English quite manageable.

According to Krashen, "The input hypothesis is that acquisition occurs when one is exposed to language that is comprehensible and that contains $i+1$. The 'i' represents the level of language already acquired, and the '+1' is a metaphor for language (words, grammatical forms, aspects of pronunciation) that is just a step beyond that level" (1982). That means with proper input students can learn English. For proper input lectures are not sufficient enough, especially in case of young learners. Young learners need extra care and motivation. If we just focus on lectures or traditional way of teaching then it would not be so effective for the young learners.

For young learners if we use animation movies, films, images, songs, videos as an input then it would be more effective. As these kinds of things are more realistic and visual so students can be able to understand and remember it. Konomi stated that, “Visual materials bring the teaching to mind in future, they enhance the children’s credibility, they also make teaching clear”. Use of visual aids makes students vocabulary sense more clear. Example, cherry, grape, berry these are similar kinds of fruit and their structure and sizes are almost same. Here, if teacher tries to make the students understand verbally then it would not be very effective rather than it would create confusion among the students. In this case if the teacher shows the images of these fruits, then it would make a clear sense and idea to them about those fruits. This example shows that how visual aids can play an important role as input to increase students’ knowledge and clear their concept about the text.

Chapter: Two

Literature Review

Literature review is basically the summery of any critically analyzed paper on a particular topic. In literature review provides the relevant information and theories related to the topic. It helps the readers to understand the concept of any particular topic. Main aims of literature review is to give a brief hints on writers work and research. The main purpose of literature review is to focus on the terms which are needs to pay attention. Literature review also shows the relevant sources used in the research paper. Moreover it also covers the main area or topic of the particular paper. In my paper I will discuss about how visual aids can help to motivate young learners. As young learners are quite sensitive to motivate so we need to follow specific ways to motivate them and visual aids is one of them.

Visual Aids:

Visual aids are basically the things, pictures, videos, photographs which are visual. According to Collins English Dictionary, “Visual aids are things that you can look at, such as a film, model, map, or slides, to help you understand something or to remember information.” In oxford dictionary, visual aids is “an item of illustrative matter, such as a film, slide, or model, designed to supplement written or spoken information so that it can be understood more easily.”That means visual aids are things which we can look at and understand any information more easily by watching it.

Young Learners:

Young learners are basically those who are up to nine or ten years old and learn differently from the older children ages fifteen years old. According to Harmer, “Young children

especially those up to the ages of nine or ten, learn differently from older children, adolescents and adults” (Harmer, 82). Various theorists have described the way that children develop and the various ages and stages they go through. Piaget suggested that children start at the sensori-motor stage, and then proceed through the intuitive stage and the concrete- operational stage before finally reaching the formal operational stage where abstraction becomes increasingly possible (Harmer, 82).

Motivate Young Learners:

It is true that it is easy to motivate young children than the adult learners. Young children can learn anything faster than the other stages of learners. Through different activities and task we can easily motivate young learners. Bright and colorful classroom, wide open window, different sitting arrangements, changing activities in every ten minutes, engage them in drawing, making different things, different kinds of games, showing videos etc through all these things we can motivate young learners and grab their attention towards the lesson. According to Susan Halliwell, those classrooms are not good for the young learners where children spend all their time sitting still in rows or talking only to the teacher (1992: 18).

Teaching Young Learners:

The teacher is a very valuable source of language used in an authentic situation, particularly if the students are studying in a country in which English is not the first language (Gower. R et al., 33). While teaching students the three most important things to motivate young learners are pictures, stories and games. The most effective combination in teaching is pictures and stories together: and the success of use of picture- books with young learners has been attested by many (Brumfit et al.,1991 and in Kennedy and Jarvis,1991). According to Ur, “games are essentially recreational ‘time out’ activities whose main purpose is enjoyment; language

study is serious goal- oriented work, whose main purpose is personal learning”(Ur, 289). These shows that pictures, stories and games how much helps to teach young children.

Visual Aids to Motivate Young Learners:

Young learners are basically students up to ten years old to fifteen years old. As they are young children so they can easily lose their attention from the lesson and in case of English as second language they feel very nervous. As all of us know that in case of learning if a student becomes nervous or anxious then it hampers his/her learning. According to Krashen’s “The ‘affective filter’ is a metaphorical barrier that prevents learners from acquiring language even when appropriate input is available” (Krashen, 1982). In this case ‘Affect’ refers to emotions, feelings, needs, motives, attitudes etc. in this situation to reduce their nervousness visual aids can helps a lot. If we show some animation movies to the students related to their lesson in this case they will find their lesson more interesting rather than the traditional way of learning. Then if we use pictures, cartoons, slides in spite of only giving lectures the students will be more motivated and find their lesson more interesting. As a result it would be easier to grab their attention towards the learning.

Chapter: Three

Implementation of the Teaching Technique of Visual Aids

I was required to observe and teach different classes during my internship period. My focus was on the teaching techniques which are used to motivate young learners. This report throws light on my observations and strategies that I used to motivate young learners in real life classrooms.

I started by first observing a few classes. Later I was allowed to take classes. I was assigned classes six and seven which are basically of lower intermediate level. There were three sections for both the classes. The average number of students in each class was 60 to 65. Since the classes were large, it was difficult to control them. Holding on to student attention was also difficult.

In such a scenario, I discovered that the use of visual aids helped a lot to motivate young learners and helped me in holding on to their attention. As the students were aged between eleven to thirteen years, they had to be taught in a caring and sensitive way. Students of this age group become bored very easily and lose their attention from the class. So it is very difficult for a teacher to motivate them. I observed two classes of class VI taken by two different teachers. I observed that the teachers use very simple language so that students can get the meaning easily and can communicate with the teacher. In the first class I observed that the teacher started the class with problem solving. Here she taught grammar in a deductive way. First she wrote down the rules in the white board then she asked the students to do the exercise. I noticed that when the teacher started writing on the board the students stopped side talking and paid attention to what the teacher was writing. While looking at the board they were also trying to understand that what

teacher was writing. As it was a lower intermediate class the teacher was writing the rules of English Grammar on the board and was explaining of the rules to the students. The teacher was teaching the rules of past tense that how a sentence in past tense forms. I noticed that when the teacher was giving instructions to the students verbally the students did not pay attention. Their facial expression and behavior was showing that they were very bored but when teacher started writing the rules of past tense in the board the students became very serious to lesson and started following the teacher. They were also asking questions about what they did not understand. The use of visual teaching aids such as the white board and marker helped students to understand and remember the grammatical rules.

The second teacher started the class by a warm up session so that he can draw the attention of the students. In this case for warm up session the teacher showed some pictures of different types of clothes on projector and asked them to guess the topic to be taught that day. Then he started asking questions about students' Eid dress and shopping. As the lesson he was going to teach was on buying clothes so he started the class by asking the students about their Eid dresses. As he showed the students images of various dresses using the multimedia so the students were completely focused and paid attention to the teacher. Then before reading from the text teacher told the students that, after finishing the reading he will ask them to write questions from the text. As a result the students were alert and attentive towards the teacher and to the lesson rather than side talking or making noise. The teacher read out the text and explained each and every small topic of the text and showing them the pictures on the projector. As a result the student got motivated and found interest in learning. By using projector for showing pictures, teacher made it easy for the students to understand and enjoy the lesson. As it was a large

classroom consisting of 74 students and the class duration was of 30 minutes, so it was not possible to motivate each and every student.

On the other hand the other class I observed was class 7 and the class was totally opposite to class 6. This class was also a large class consisting of almost 70 students, but the teacher was not very good at motivating students. In this class the teacher came to the class and asked students to open their books. Then he started reading out the text and asked students to listen to him carefully. In this class the students got bored and lost interest in the lesson.

When I started taking classes, I focused on the use of visual aids to motivate young learners. As I had observed classes before, I found that the use of visual aids was very effective to motivate young learners. So I followed this strategy while taking classes. I took classes of class 6 who are lower intermediate level students. As they are young learner and they are 11 to 12 years old, so I tried to make the classes interesting to them. I wanted to make them enjoy the class and be attentive towards the lesson. I took their English 1st paper class and tried to teach the lesson with different styles. In this class I taught them the lesson by showing videos. As the lesson I was going to teach was on 'think of a place you like to go on your vacation and with whom'. I showed them some videos of different places like sea beach, hills and mountains, historical places, forests, heritage of our country etc. Though books have pictures of sea-beach, hills and mountains, but those are steal pictures and not natural. From those images students' do not get enough idea or it does not clear students' concept properly. As I showed them the video it helped them to get the idea about different places. They got the concept of how a sea beach looks like, what is the difference between hills and mountains, which are our historical places etc. Those videos help them from getting bored and to motivate them towards the lesson. They found

these videos quite interesting and enjoyed the class. As these videos made the concept of the text easier to them to understand so they got motivated to the lesson.

In another class I had to take a writing class. As we know writing class is quite boring and students does not want to write at all. To motivate them in writing I showed them some pictures and ask them to describe the pictures by writing. I divided the students in groups and I gave different pictures to each groups. Students had to talk about the pictures in groups that what the picture is describing and then they had to write it down. In one group I gave them a picture from Aesop's fable. In the picture there was an old farmer and his seven sons. There was a bundle of sticks in front of them and one son was breaking a stick by his hand. After giving the picture I asked them to discuss about the picture and what they understand from the pictures. While I ensured that they understand the story then I asked them to write down the story in their writing script from their understanding. If I asked them to write down a story then they became bored or confused that what they will write. As a result they lose their interest from the writing. When I gave them the pictures they got the idea about what they will write and as I asked them to describe the picture so they got the chance to show their creativity in their writing.

Another day I had to take the class on listening lab. In listening lab class instead of asked them to listen dialogues and improve their listening. Young learners do not like the monotonous conversations. They like cartoons, interesting and funny films, songs, animation movies etc. I showed them an animation movie and asked them to focus on what the characters are saying on the movie. In the animation movie to understand the context or situation they pay attention to the listening. They focus on listening in a way that what the characters are saying. As a result it helped them to improve their listening and make them motivate towards the listening. Listening lab classes are usually very boring for the students' as they had to listen dialogues between

people and it is quite tough for the young learners to hold their attention on listening. Moreover only listening sometimes could not clear the concept or vocabularies effectively, but use of visual aids help students to understand the concept what is talking about? For young learners they love to watch cartoons or animation movies so I chose animation movie so that I can easily grab their attention on listening.

There an argument may come that, is our traditional education system is not effective enough to teach the students'? For this argument I would like to say that, our traditional education system is not so much productive as sometimes it could not motivate the students towards the lesson. The use of board and marker are not enough for the students' specially students like young learners. Though use of board and marker are visual but the use of power point slides, multimedia projectors, flashcards, audio-visual clips are more effective in case of holding on students' attention and clear their concept of the lesson. For example, if I wanted to teach traffic rules to the students and rather than using only the book, board and marker if I use images with colours and videos that which colours, signs and signals means what, then it would be more effective to the students'. Through this students' would get a real life idea about traffic signals and signs. For this reason I think uses of visual aids are more effective to motivate young learners rather than our traditional teaching system.

Chapter: Four

Recommendations

Young learners become bored very easily. As they are very unstable so it becomes very difficult for the teacher to motivate them. To motivate young learners' teacher should use different techniques to make them feel interested towards the class. In this case teacher should use props, pictures, videos, and maps etc. as visual aids to motivate them. Rather than following the traditional teaching techniques teacher can apply visual aids to make the class enthusiastic. By using visual aids in classes schools can change their traditional concept of teaching and can also students can be benefited and can fulfill their targets. So the school authority should provide proper resources of visual aids like projector, multimedia, white screen, necessary props etc. while I was doing my internship I noticed some problems regarding the use of visual aids and solutions of some problems are given below:

The traditional teaching system is not very productive. In case of teaching young learners traditional teaching system is not so effective. To motivate young learners there should bring some changes in their teaching system. Teachers should include more enthusiastic topics in their lesson from which students can gather real life experiences. Here, instead of taught other protagonists' life style given in the book, they can taught how to follow traffic signals, which traffic signs means what etc. As a result students would be able to use their knowledge in their real life experiences.

In our country the school authority does not have enough equipment for the teaching. For example, school authority has library but has not enough books in the library, they has lab but there is not enough staffs and tools required for the lab. Similarly, the school authority does not

have enough requirements of visual aids. The school authority should provide more scope for using visual aids. They should provide projector, multimedia content, educational documentaries, props like videos, pictures, maps etc.

School authorities should arrange more scope of teacher training so that they can get proficiency in using visual aids such as projectors, slides, white boards, flash cards etc. Maximum of the school teachers are not proficient enough to the use of visual aids. They do not have enough ideas and experiences of modern technologies. So Teachers should be more proficient in using modern technology in their teaching.

Teachers should be more qualified in using visual aids in their lesson plans based on students' proficiency level. That means when a teacher would choose any visual aids for his/her students he/she has to keep in mind students' level because, students' choice and interest varies from level to level. In this situation if a teacher chose any documentary film for the young learners instead of choosing cartoon movies then it would not be so effective for the students. Teachers should use proper visual aids for different proficiency level's students.

Before using any visual aids in the class teacher should at first analyse the visual aids that she/he is going to use in the class is appropriate for the lesson to be taught in the class. For example, if the teacher is going to taught about the size and shapes of the clothes and shows the images of different kinds of clothes, then it would not be the appropriate use of visual aids. In this case the teacher had to show the images of different shapes and sizes of the clothes to the class so that students can identify the sizes and shapes of the clothes properly.

To motivate weak students, teachers could use more interesting and easy visual aids such as images, songs, videos, and animation movies etc. which are interesting to them so that students can easily understand the context of the lesson.

Chapter: Five

Conclusion

In conclusion it can be said that, visual aids not only help to motivate young learners but also can help in class management. By using visual aids teachers can easily grab students' attention. As a result students pay attention to the lesson rather than side talking or gossiping. Students can also find the class more interesting and creative. For using of visual aids students can learn faster than the lecture based classes. As visual aids are more effective and realistic learning process so students learn better by visual aids. Visual aids can make the learning more productive. Before using visual aids teacher should analyze the visual aids based on the students' lesson plan and proficiency level. For example, young learners prefer to watch animation movies. For young learners if one uses documentary video than it will not be very effective for them. In this case students' can lose their attention from the lesson. So teacher should need to analyze the text that how he is going to present the context before selecting the visual aids. It is very difficult to manage young learners so teacher should take proper care of the students to motivate them.

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