

การศึกษาความเชื่อของครูสอนภาษาอังกฤษ ที่มีต่อการเรียนรู้ที่กระตือรือร้น

Exploring Teachers' Beliefs toward Active Learning

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Abstract

As learning involves the active building of knowledge, it should be noted that the function of the learner has been characterized as an active member in a community of learners. They are thus actively involved in their education on both a physical and mental level. The beliefs of teachers have an impact on language instruction as well. To encourage active learning, teachers should reflect on their teaching. This study aimed to determine how teachers can promote active learning. Interviews with five participants from various universities were conducted under the qualitative framework. The outcomes demonstrated that elements of active learning are supported by the agency.

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บทคัดย่อ

ผู้เรียนในฐานะผู้มีส่วนร่วมอย่างเข้มแข็งในชุมชนการเรียนรู้ คือ ผู้ที่สร้างความรู้ด้วยตนเอง และมีส่วนร่วมอย่างกระตือรือร้นทั้งทางร่างกายและจิตใจ ในส่วนของผู้สอนนั้น ความเชื่อของผู้สอนมีส่วนอย่างมากในการจัดการเรียนการสอน ดังนั้น งานวิจัยนี้จึงมีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาว่า ผู้สอนมีวิธีการในการจัดการเรียนการสอนอย่างกระตือรือร้นอย่างไร โดยทำการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพ ผู้วิจัยดำเนินการสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกกับผู้สอนในระดับอุดมศึกษา จำนวน 5 คน จากการวิจัยครั้งนี้พบว่า การส่งเสริมให้ผู้เรียนมีความเป็นผู้กระทำเป็นรากฐานที่สำคัญในการเรียนรู้ที่กระตือรือร้น ดังนั้น จึงมีข้อเสนอว่าผู้สอนควรที่จะพัฒนาผู้เรียนให้เรียนอย่างมีวัตถุประสงค์

คำสำคัญ: ผู้เรียน, การเรียนรู้ที่กระตือรือร้น, ความเป็นผู้กระทำ

Introduction

There has been a significant change in English language teaching. As a result of a new understanding of the nature of language teaching, it has resulted in a variety of teachers' beliefs, particularly how they perceive teaching. Besides, learners, today have more control over their own learning, both in terms of the content they can learn and the learning process they can use. The importance of learners in language teaching has been exponentially recognized. This results in a greater emphasis on learners, making them central to the learning process. Learners, therefore, are active agents in learning and shape the ways in which they are learning.

However, teachers have their own ways of teaching, so they might teach differently in response to their varied beliefs. Because of this, teachers' ideas about how learning happens should be empirically studied, since teachers' ideas are based on their own experiences. As its name suggests, reflective teaching is a method of inquiry that emphasizes self-awareness. In the words of Larsen-Freeman & Anderson (2017), an attitude of inquiry is a teacher's commitment to inquire and reflect on his or her teaching practice.

Related literature

Teachers might have different ideas about how to develop active learning because learning is a multifaceted process. Some factors pertinent to active learning are explained as follows:

Learning strategies

Saville-Troike & Barto (2017) summarized that learning strategies are the behaviors and techniques that individuals adopt in their efforts to learn a language. A typology of language-learning strategies has been divided into meta-cognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies. Good language learners definitely have the ability to change their strategies depending on what they need to do. VanPatten & Benati (2015) maintained that learning strategies are efforts by learners to enhance or assist their language-learning experience. Elements attributed to these strategies or efforts include the following:

- They involve choice on the part of the learner;
- They involve conscious selection—that is, the learner is aware of deciding to use a strategy;
- They are goal-directed (i.e., they are purposeful in nature and geared toward task completion)
- They are effortful.

Learner autonomy

Mitchell, Myles & Marsden (2013) summarized that learner autonomy is a readiness to take control of one's learning independently or in cooperation with others to achieve one's learning purposes. Moreover, Benson (2003) defined autonomy as the capacity to control one's own learning. There were different levels of autonomy, and the autonomous learner may choose classroom instruction or they may choose self-directed instruction, becoming an independent learner outside of the classroom. In short, autonomy refers to a learner's ability to direct or be responsible for their own learning. Autonomy can be achieved in a variety of ways.

Embodied cognition

Eggen & Kauchak (2016) asserted that the concept of embodied cognition is the idea that our thinking depends on the characteristics of our physical bodies and that our bodies significantly influence the way we process information. When it makes sense, telling students to use their

bodies to think about tasks can help them think more clearly. Additionally, embodied cognition is the way we think about and represent information. It reflects the fact that we need to interact with the world. These interactions occur through our senses and bodies, and the way our bodies interact with the world to achieve our goals affects our thinking. In other words, our cognitive processes have deep roots in the interactions of our bodies with the real world; what develops cognitively depends on our sensori-motor engagement with the world (Woolfolk, 2016).

Agency

Brown & Lee (2015) contend that agency is the ability of learners to make choices, take control, self-regulate, and thereby pursue their goals as individuals within a socio-cultural context. Further, teachers were called on to offer appropriate affective and pedagogical support in their students' struggle for empowerment.

In conclusion, there was ample evidence that learning is a social process and that students construct rather than receive knowledge. Learning comes from the student. Students must actively participate in their own personal construction of knowledge. Teachers must create an effective learning environment where students are active in their own learning.

Objective

The research question of this study is as follows:

In what ways can teachers develop active learning?

Methodology

To this end, the researcher's goal was to describe, from the teachers' perspectives, how to develop active learning. Therefore, this current study was qualitative in nature. It relied on in-depth interviews with five participants. The participants were chosen based on the premise that they had been teaching English at the university level for more than 3 years, were willing to participate, and could provide relevant information for this study. After that, the data analysis was done by looking for patterns and categories. The findings of this study were in narrative form with some descriptions of the data. The researcher didn't claim that the results would generalize to other teachers but aimed to describe a specific phenomenon using words.

Findings

Supporting embodied cognition

Data from the interviews revealed that one participant emphasized the connection between cognition (thinking), the body, and action. As she said that,

"Learners must learn by doing. Teachers should plan their lessons to enable students to engage in a variety of activities."

Another participant confirmed that,

"Students like to play activities in class, especially ones that are fun and meaningful to them in the future."

Their beliefs align with Brown & Lee (2015), who highlight that embodied cognition is the concept that an individual's sensori-motor capacities, body, and environment play crucial roles in the development of cognitive and linguistic abilities.

Promoting learning strategies

One participant realized that it is important for students to be aware of their learning strategies. As she said that,

"Teachers should help students develop their actions to improve or complete the tasks at hand."

Learning strategies were also mentioned by another participant,

"I notice that students who are successful in learning English are those who have made an attempt to develop their competence."

Their beliefs resonate well with Loewen (2020), who commented that learning strategies have been viewed as responsive to teaching. Besides, strategy instruction is worth the time because it helps students become strategy users and perhaps more autonomous learners.

Fostering learner autonomy

One of the participants agreed that students should have some control over their learning. As he mentioned that,

“Teachers should help students create their own goals. Students should plan their own learning and evaluate their own progress together with their teacher. As for teachers, we need to provide students with the opportunity to help them make significant choices and decisions about their learning.”

Another participant reiterated the utmost importance of autonomy,

“Students should make learning more personal and focused, having more responsibility for what they learn and how they learn it.”

Their beliefs were synonymous with those of Benson (2012), who argued that the idea of learner-centered learning has been reconceptualized as a pedagogy for autonomy. It was suggested that both teachers and students should become analysts of their own practices and critical informers of the educational community.

In sum, the results of this study were illustrated as follows:

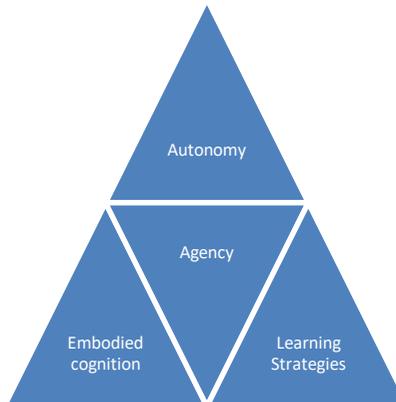


Figure 1: The components of active learning

Conclusion and Discussion

The ultimate aim of this study is to elicit teachers' beliefs toward active learning by means of in-depth interviews. It is found that teachers believed that supporting embodied cognition, promoting learning strategies, and fostering learner autonomy could lead to active learning. From the aforementioned findings, it might be evidently concluded that explicit in active learning is the notion of agency. Hall (2018) commented that agency is to portray an active and positive image of learners, suggesting learning with their own agenda and purposes. What this means is that learners should believe that they are capable of learning English so that they are able to take control of and responsibility for their actions. As with the teacher, it is very important to believe that the goal of teaching is to create independent learners who can learn on their own.

It is worth noting that teachers hold varied beliefs about teaching and learning, and these beliefs influence their actions. To put it another

way, understanding how teachers approach their work requires understanding the beliefs they hold. The construction of personal theories and an understanding of teaching is a central task for teachers (Brown & Lee, 2015). Richards (2015) also claimed that the study of teachers' beliefs is central to the process of understanding how teachers conceptualize their work. Plus, much has been changed in the field of English language teaching. In the broader field of Education, there has been a focus on building 21st century skills. By doing so, the United Nations established a holistic and transformation educational approach called Education for Sustainable Development. This approach integrates the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into the curriculum which promotes an action-oriented, transformative pedagogy which supports self-directed learning, participation, and collaboration (UNESCO, as cited in Shin, 2021).

According to these frameworks, teachers need to develop students to meet the challenges of the 21st century. In order to develop these skills and prepare students to succeed in our world, teachers must find new ways to empower students and ensure that learning is a student-driven process. That is, there is a shift to a teaching approach that puts learners at the centre of our educational goals. A priority for teachers is to make students the focus of teaching with an effort to maintain active student involvement in lessons. Classroom instruction will have to become more interactive and engaging than it currently is. Fundamentally, teachers want students to feel a sense of agency and believe that they can improve their language skills. Students need to feel empowered with a sense of control over their learning. By anchoring my discussion within another relevant concept such

as post-method pedagogy, teachers can reflect on and examine their teaching and generate their own teaching. Instead of searching for the best method, teachers have complete autonomy to choose and develop teaching methods suitable for their classroom. One of these guiding principles is promoting learner autonomy (Kumaravadivelu, 2003).

In a similar vein, with an emphasis on constructivism in education, constructivism, in particular, has gained increasing momentum in English language teaching and has laid a foundation for the agency. Brown (2014) explained that cognitive constructivism emphasizes the importance of individual learners constructing their own representation of reality. Social constructivism emphasizes the importance of social interaction and cooperative learning in constructing both cognitive and emotional images of reality. In this respect, constructivism is about how individuals make personal sense of their world. They are involved throughout their lives in constructing their own sense of the world in a unique way that is different from the sense others make of it. As such, it is hoped that it is a desirable goal for teachers to promote this feeling of agency and empowerment in students. This study, thus, cemented the position of agency as pivotal to active learning. Students are said to have agency if they are in control of their own learning. Those who feel they are responsible for their own actions are likely to succeed. On the other hand, students who feel that learning is out of their control and who depend on the approval of the teacher may languish in a state of learned helplessness (Thornbury, 2006).

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