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## Activity Based Classroom for Adult Learners in Language Teaching: A Case Study

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### **Abstract:**

*This paper explores the activity based classroom as a strategy towards the learning and exploration of language. It brings out the productivity and the utilization of human intellectuals with giving the importance of interaction between learners and teachers. Making the classroom as an interesting place of learning and sharing, it evolves an emerging part of the means and the utility of communication with greater ability with maximum output. It enlists the meaningful activities that can be practiced by both teachers and learners for a better learning. It also evaluates the students of particular learners on whom different activities are exercised. Through interviewing the participants, their evaluation is brought up for measuring how the activity based classes worked on them. The result analysis are put with recommendations for language classes*

**Keywords:** Activity based, adult learner, English language teaching

### **1. Introduction**

Language is social matter and people are habituated with the use of it for the purpose of their necessities and communication. In the society, people are actively involved in different sorts of situations and the life means ultimately activity; activity in different forms and different situations. Wherever we go, language is there. This wide variety of using language has made it a contextualization with the local and global culture. In teacher oriented classroom, the teachers' lectures and the student passively listens. The students do not get enough time to practice it in their classroom. At this stage learning a language becomes less enjoyable and it encourages the students to become the monotonous and root learning process.

### **2. Background Story**

I was teaching in the professional course where participants gather to get the knowledge of different courses in English Language. They have taken preparation for going abroad and got the training to work in outside of the country. The activity based language teaching was introduced to learn the language effectively. Their age is between 35 to 50. These are basically adult learners and they have intended to learn the English language as they are supposed to under the programs of BRAC International. Their language course is designed by BRAC University BRAC Institute of Languages (BIL). The teacher followed mainly activity wise activities rather than only lecture based instruction. Participants are enthusiastic in seeking, in expressing themselves. They were more productive rather than to be only receptive. They qualified successfully and they went to abroad for work. Interesting classroom means maximum outcome. When the teacher involves the participants with interesting activity, the learner feels motivated and they can remember the things easily. On the perspective both teacher and the student, it is noteworthy to say that everybody wants an interesting class. Research shows that participants cannot hold attention for a long time at a time being hearing only lectures. So they need refreshing consecutively. In one way lecture participants becomes inattentive. To make them there is no alternative of activity. It is better to do anything rather than only listening. Ultimate and practical knowledge come from the perspective of practical involvement of knowledge itself. It enhances better understanding about the life and reality. A person is going to do a small business, and he is memorizing all the rules of doing business. Unless he goes to visit a business or sets up a small business, he cannot get the proper dimensions of the knowledge itself. The purpose of language learning is to use it in the different contexts of real life situations. Classroom activity can reflect the world outside and its implication using the language. Following that motto Institute operates its learners into different activities.

### **3. Literature review**

The use of a variety of different kinds of tasks in a language teaching is said to make language teaching more communicative....since it provides a purpose for classroom activity which goes beyond the practice of language for its own sake (Richards, et al, 1986 : 289) Breen (1984: 52- 30) commented "...Prioritize the route itself; a focusing upon the means towards the learning of a new language. Here the designer would give the priority to the changing process of learning and the potential of the classroom- to the psychological

and social resources applied to a new language by learners in the classroom context... a greater concern with capacity for communication with the activity of learning a language viewed as important as the language itself, with a focus upon means rather than predetermined objectives, all indicate priority of process over content. David Kolb (1984) argued for an integration of action and reflection. In his model, learners move from what they already know and can do with the incorporation of new knowledge and skills. They do this by making sense of some immediate experience through a process reflection and transformation.

Margarita Limón Luque discusses professional learning as a matter of integrating the intellectual, emotional and behavioral components of personality development into a conscious capacity for action. The writer shows that the following three conditions are necessary for a conceptual change (Luque 2003, 135–140): (a) knowledge and understanding of what it is that needs to be changed (metacognitive/-linguistic condition), (b) motivation for the change (volitional condition: engagement, commitment), and (c) self-regulation of the change process (condition of self-regulation: goal-setting, monitoring, self-assessment).

Working towards sharing with each other in teaching means meeting the student as a partner in a reciprocal relationship. The teacher encourages her students to strive for authenticity in their language use and learning experiences through her genuine presence in the class. This involves consistency, integrity and respect, and the recognition of their achievements (van Lier 1996,19). Dewey(1916) believed that observations of reality and nature were the starting point of knowledge acquisition. Adults need to adjust themselves as they are already matured and they prefer learning by doing.

#### 4. Methodology

Research was conducted through individual face-to-face interviews with 40 candidates from June 9 - June 12, 2011.

Research was conducted through individual face-to-face interviews with 40 candidates from June 9 - June 12, 2011. Candidates were questioned in English on their employment history and current job responsibilities. Their English-only responses were assessed in five key areas:

- Fluency
- Content & Relevance
- Vocabulary
- Grammar
- Pronunciation

In these five areas, Development Professionals (DevPro)'scandidates' performance was first evaluated in 4 different performance groups: limited, partial, general, and fully. In the limited group, candidates express long pauses in fluency, a limited range of vocabulary, many fundamental grammatical errors, as well as serious difficulty with pronunciation and a general misunderstanding of questions asked. In the partial group, candidates need some additional effort to understand the questions. Here, their responses are somewhat relevant even while their breadth vocabulary and grammar are in a fair range of understanding.

However, their pronunciation is heavily influenced by their native tongue. In the general group, candidates speak with a relatively clear fluency. Their answers are on topic, and they articulate a good range of vocabulary with few grammatical errors and a pronunciation which does not impede the communicative process. In the last and final stage of the fully fluent, candidates are smooth and easy to understand. They use idioms, an extensive vernacular, consistent grammar, clear pronunciation and are entirely relevant in their discussions. After this initial evaluation, the candidates' complete depth of understanding in each of these areas was evaluated on the Global Achievement Scale. Final scores were calibrated on a 1 to 10 scale which designated the candidates' English-speaking competency as limited, fair, satisfactory, good, very good, or excellent.

- Results: Parts A, B, and C illustrate the three Dev Pro batches' English-speaking competencies in on the Global Achievement Scale in both raw numerical format and with graphs. Batch 25 experienced a general problem with fluent pronunciation. Consequently, their scores are lowest in this category, and many of them were recorded as being only partly fluent in regards to their pronunciation. However, many of the candidates responded to questions with a general grammatical fluency, and many also answered with directly relevant content

##### 4.1. Batch 25

BATCH 25	Limited	fair	good	Very good	Excellent	Total
language learning	0	0	7		5	12
Classroom environment	0	0	4		7	12
Attention level of the participants	0	1	4		6	12
Practical relevance with the language content	0	2	8		0	12
Communication skill	1	7	4		0	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>26</b>			<b>60</b>

Figure 1

No candidates were fully fluent in either pronunciation or grammar, but no candidates were limited in their general fluency or grammar either. Interestingly, the intersection, which received the highest amount of marks was the generally fluent grammar section. In fact, twice as many marks were entered for candidates being generally fluent rather than only partly fluent.

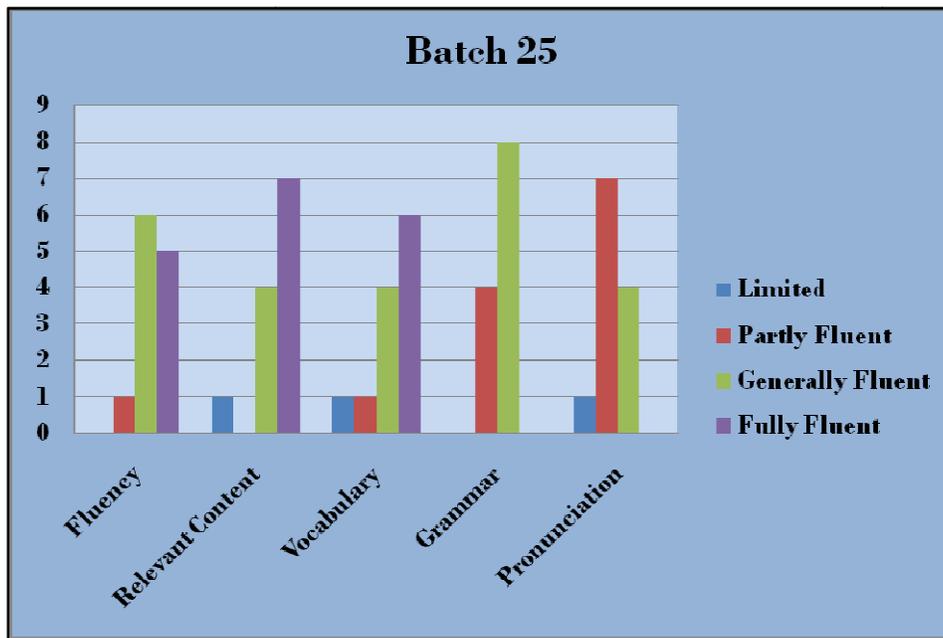


Figure 2

As a result, 7 of the 12 candidates received a ‘good’ achievement score and only 1 was denoted as limited in his/her speaking capacity. 3 were selected as ‘very good,’ and the last candidate was received as ‘satisfactory.’

BATCH 25	
Limited	1
Fair	0
Satisfactory	1
Good	7
Very Good	3
Excellent	0
Total	12

Figure 3

In batch 25, 92% performed at a satisfactory level or higher on the Global Achievement Scale. Additionally, 25% performed in the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile of this index.

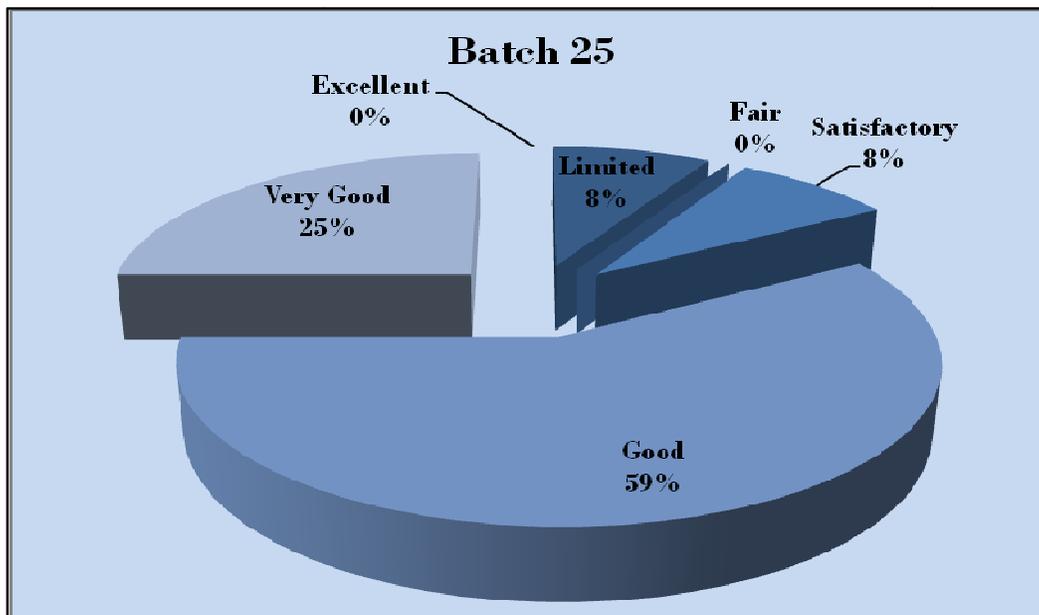


Figure 4

#### 4.2. Students Sharing the Activities Name that They Think Interesting

When it was interviewed with the learner it was asked what activities did they think worked for their language improvement. Their ideas are put here chronologically:

Making Presentation: Students organized their presentations with technological attachment and clear understanding. It provided them opportunities to express clearly which built their confidence. When they practiced spoken English in front of their classes they feel motivated and got the feeling of achievement.

1. Playing Games: According to the participants language games of different activities are 'hilarious' and 'interesting'
2. Making extempore speech: Participants can come in front make speech on different subjects .I will depend on the learner's interests, age and other things. So learner's level of linguistic competency is also important.
3. Jigsaw: This activity is very useful tool for collaborative learning. Here every group gets the chance of practicing among groups.
4. Group work: The class will be divided into groups and they will be assigned with different tasks. They will be assigned with tasks and they will bring the solutions.
5. Pair work: In a language classroom it is effective to give the chance of pair work by which they can get the chance of interaction with each other. It does not only make the classroom communicative but also effective by exchanging information with each other.
6. Debate: Students can discuss on various topics for different debatable issues for their better development on language skills.
7. Dialogue acting: the real life situation can be shown through the dialogue acting by which the students get more confidence in expressing their personal stories with situational practice
8. Reporting: students can report on any incident or events so that they can get the knowledge by themselves and practice it before the class.
9. Solving Worksheet: the particular subject matter can be taught by giving some tasks on that very matter. Students will themselves solve the worksheet and submit it to the teacher. Practicing worksheet helps the students to get the subject matter clearly.
10. Participatory based activity: There can be endless participatory based activities if language instructor tries to practice it in his / her classroom. It needs thinking on the subject matter and defining the activities on that subject matter. Both deductive and inductive approach can do a revolutionary change in the development of students language, critical thinking.

#### 5. Conclusion

When students are involved in different language activities, they experience a learning which is different than only lecture based language teaching. The modern language practitioners have energized their students with interesting activities. The real life activities and learning by doing seem to be milestone doorstep towards the history of English language teaching and learning. It is also notable that adult learners likewise, other learners aspire to achieve language proficiency if they are given the opportunity in practicing and learning the Language.

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