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STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY FACULTY IN TEACHING COMMUNICATION ARTS SUBJECTS

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ABSTRACT

In acquiring communicative competence of students, teaching strategies play a vital role in the effectiveness of the learning process; as such, the researchers conducted a study to determine the effective teaching strategies used in teaching Communication Arts subjects. They employed the use of the descriptive method with the teacher-made instrument. The respondents of the study were the Communication Arts faculty and students. Results show that the effective teaching strategies used in teaching English 1 are question and answer, semantic webbing and concept mapping and realia; in teaching English Plus and English 2 are Outlining, controlled and guided writing, note taking, illustrations, drawings and creative writing; and in teaching English 3 are pronunciation drills, recitation and simulation /role playing, language switching and panel discussion. Programs and activities to assess the needs and capabilities of both the faculty and students to improve teaching and learning Communication Arts are proposed.

KEYWORDS: Communication Arts, Communicative Competence, Strategies, Effectiveness of Learning Process

INTRODUCTION

To achieve communicative competence requires more than a knowledge in the form of language as phonology, grammar and vocabulary and the structural knowledge of the formal system of language but also the skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Therefore, the learners' mastery of language as exemplified in his proficiency in listening, speaking, reading and writing enables them to perform classroom tasks meaningfully and productively and eventually leads them to achieve their most important accomplishments in life. Mastery in listening, speaking, reading and writing can be developed by teachers in the teaching of four Communication Arts subjects such as English Plus, English 1, English 2, and English 3. English Plus (Remedial English) is a course designed to reinforce the students' capacity in grammar and communicative competence. English 1 (Study and Thinking Skills) focuses mainly on developing the study and thinking ability of the learners thru the micro

skills in reading. English 3 deals on the speaking and listening aspect which aims to enhance the skills on oral communication used in various situations.

In acquiring such communicative competence through these Language subjects, the teacher's strategy plays a vital role. The teaching strategy depends on any particular method in achieving goals. To reach the goal of helping the students acquire communicative competence, teacher is supposed to have a better understanding of the nature of what they are teaching and what is more important for a communicative teacher is not only being an elegant lecturer but also an efficient manager of the class activity (Pan Yanping in IMEC 16:2004). To address the problems encountered in the teaching and learning process, teachers find and apply teaching strategies which are those systematic procedures of getting the lesson across the learners.

With this premise, the researchers conducted a study to determine the effective teaching strategies used in teaching Communication Arts (Comm. Arts) subjects.

This study "Strategies Employed by GE Faculty in Teaching Communication Arts Subjects", sought to achieve the following objectives: 1) to determine which of the strategies are often employed by teachers in teaching the following Communication Arts subjects: English 1 (Reading in Focus); English Plus and English 2 (Writing in Focus); and English 3 (Speaking and Listening in Focus); 2) to assess how effective are those strategies employed by teachers in teaching Communication Arts subjects as perceived by faculty and students and to test if their responses differ and 3) to propose programs / activities that will enhance effectiveness of teaching Communication Arts subjects.

Conceptual Framework

Teaching expertise is ordinarily attained by only a small percentage of those who are competent in teaching (Berliner in Reyes, 2002). It is viewed that educational institutions that have distinguished themselves for excellence take pride in a cadre of expert teachers who view teaching as a service-oriented mission, an opportunity and a privilege for sharing their expertise and humane qualities wholly and unconditionally.

According to Weinert, Helmke and Schrder in Reyes (2002) expert teachers can be described as having the following expertise. The first subject matter expertise which is mastery of content – specific knowledge for effective instruction. The second is classroom management expertise which is maintenance of high levels of on- task students' classroom behavior, prevention of speedy elimination of learning disruptions, and creation of an environment conducive to learning. The third is the instructional expertise which is the

explicit and implicit knowledge of various teaching strategies and methods to attain predefined instructional objectives. The fourth diagnostic expertise which is the knowledge of class and individual needs and goals and abilities, achievement level, motives, personality attributes and emotions, which also influence instruction and teaching strategy. The term strategies was defined as, "...the approaches that can be used across curricular areas to support the learning of students" (Herrell and Jordan 2004:5) which "...may be used only on occasion" (Ritchhart, Church and Morrison 2011:48).

By means of these strategies, teachers will be able to prepare communicative activities to properly motivate the students to learn and to communicate meaningfully; on the other hand, learners take specific actions to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferable to new situations (Villamin:2003). It is presumed then, that these Communication Arts subjects, if taught by teachers utilizing different teaching strategies become more useful and vital. Communication Arts teachers then, specifically the faculty of Lyceum of the Philippines University - Batangas, in their quest for excellence, find means to adapt to the needs of the learners, thus they utilize different teaching strategies which they presume will be effective, and therefore create better learning outcomes.

The Communication Arts teacher as the best facilitator of the learning process must possess the qualifications and the ability to communicate and teach effectively along his field of specialization. The teacher must be an effective communicator himself as such; he should be competent in handling the four modes of communication: reading, writing, listening and speaking. He must be well versed of the techniques and motivational strategies that will inspire students to become effective communicators as well. It becomes the responsibility therefore of the teacher to suit his methodology to the abilities and capability of the students so that teaching in the classroom may be successful. He then uses varied teaching strategies to produce better learning outcomes.

The effectiveness of these teaching strategies therefore have to be measured not only by the teachers themselves but also the learners to ensure that productive and positive learning outputs will be produced in the classroom, hence will lead to the development of an enhanced program for effective teaching of Communication Arts.

. It is in this light, that this research is conceived – first, to see how effective are the teaching strategies applied by the faculty, second to see the gaps between teaching and learning specifically the Communication Arts subjects; and third, to find out what teaching interventions may be proposed to continuously ensure more effective and functional teaching

and learning of Communication Arts, which are considered a very important foundation of all courses. Teaching communication Arts subjects including English 1, English Plus and English 2, and English 3 aims to develop communicative competence that will form the foundation in learning different subjects across disciplines.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilized the descriptive method of research to gather the responses of the total population of the target respondents. The design focused on describing the common strategies used by teachers in teaching Communication Arts subjects and their assessment on the extent of effectiveness of the strategies used. The study included 100% total population of faculty teaching Comm. Arts subjects of the present school year and a total of 273 sample population from 856 student population of student respondents from Lyceum of the Philippines University - Batangas who have taken up all Comm. Arts subjects. Two sets of teacher made questionnaires were used. Ranking and frequency distribution was used to identify the strategies while weighted mean was used to determine their effectiveness. The significant relationship between the responses of the two groups of respondents was determined by the t-test. In order to determine the relationship of the profile variables and the effectiveness of the teaching strategies Pearson-r was used. Upon retrieval of the questionnaire, responses were tallied and tabulated. Results were interpreted and analyzed. Interviews were be done to gain direct opinions and insights that substantiated the results generated from the questionnaires. In identifying the most commonly used strategies employed by teachers in teaching Communication Arts subjects, ranking and frequency distribution was used.

Results and Discussions

Strategies Employed by Teachers in Teaching Communication Arts Subjects

Table 1 Teaching Strategies Identified by Both Teachers and Students in Teaching English 1 (Reading Focus)

Reading Focus	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Skimming	3.38	Often
2. Scanning	3.32	Often
3. Intensive/Extensive Reading	3.54	Always
4. Context Clues	3.46	Often
5. Semantic Webbing	2.92	Often
6. Concept Mapping	2.86	Often
7. Question and Answer Relationships	3.78	Always
8. Elaboration and Association	3.76	Always
9. Visualizing	3.54	Always
10. Evaluating	3.70	Always
General Mean	3.43	Often

1.1. The faculty and student respondents identified the teaching strategies always used by teachers in teaching English 1 (Reading Focus) are the use of question and answer relationships, elaboration and evaluating which got the highest weighted means of 3.78, 3.76 and 3.70 respectively; while skimming, scanning, semantic webbing and concept mapping are strategies often used having the lowest means of 3.38, 3.32, 2.92, and 2.86 respectively.

Using question answer relationships is utilized to identify whether an answer will be found in the text or not. Students are motivated to answer question related to a text and even raise some other questions to the teacher and their classmates. Language learners "...actively try to make sense, i.e. to find and construct a meaning and purpose for what adults say to them and ask them to do" (Cameron 2001:19). Elaboration is employed particularly when the topic is common and interesting. Evaluating enables the students to think and judge based on the facts given where they become critical in weighing things and be discrete in making decisions. By visualizing, the use of mental images that emerge from reading the text to aid in understanding is employed. Further, the use of live demonstrations and the presentation of examples of other student's work may provide a more complete description of the standard of content and presentation that is expected for a particular activity and possibly help to ease learner anxiety caused by not knowing what to do (Cameron 2001). This is very interesting for the students' imaginative and creative minds are developed. Intensive and extensive readings are employed to achieve the purpose of reading articles and to develop the expected students' reading skills.

Those strategies often used by teachers are Context clues (3.46%); Skimming (3.38%); Scanning (3.32%); Semantic Webbing (2.92%) and Concept Mapping (2.86%). The first of the six key strategies is vocabulary and language development, through which teachers introduce new concepts by discussing vocabulary words key to that concept (Alliance for Teacher Education, 2005). Skimming is reading quickly to get the gist of a section. Students are given the chance to concentrate on reading the article and make them understand the text and give meanings to words. In scanning, the students are required to read quickly to locate specific information. Usually they are told to answer the information questions as who, what, when, where, and how. This strategy is easily applied as this is less time consuming and less burdensome for the students.. In semantic webbing, the students' thinking skills are developed likewise their vocabulary is enriched because they are required to associate words with some other words and common experience. This is closely related to concept mapping where the students' psychomotor skills are developed when they use this strategy this

strategy to illustrate on paper or on the board everything that they have conceptualized. The general mean is 3.43 with a verbal interpretation of often.

Table 2 Teaching Strategies Identified by Both Teachers and Students in Teaching English Plus and English 2 (Writing Focus)

Writing Focus	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Using illustrations, drawing, etc.	3.19	Often
2. Semantic Webbing	3.14	Often
3. Concept Mapping	3.24	Often
4. Note taking	3.65	Always
5. Outlining	3.65	Always
6. Elaboration/Association	3.70	Always
7. Controlled/Guided Writing	3.54	Always
8. Use of Narratives	3.41	Often
9. Creative Writing	3.49	Often
10. Recording/Noting Oral Discourses	3.22	Often
General Mean	3.42	Often

Table 2 shows that teachers always use elaboration / association (3.70), note taking and outlining (3.65) and controlled or guided writing (3.54) in teaching English Plus and English 2 which focused in writing.

Elaboration and / or association is a very important strategy used when teachers require students to write on either specific or broad topic. A brainstorming of related ideas widens the students' horizon which they can explore when they write on an assigned topic. Note taking is one of the strategies which students like for they need some notes to guide them in writing which become their basis in outlining. This is also always done by both teachers and students. Controlled and guided writing is the first procedure in writing paragraphs and reports. With the use of outline, the teacher guides the students how to express and organize their ideas in written form.

The rest of the strategies are often used with creative writing having the highest weighted mean and illustration, semantic webbing with the lowest means of 3.19 and 3.14. In creative writing, the teacher gives the students to write freely thru the use of imagination and styles of their own. Students are given the chance to explore topics and ideas of their own which they can share with other people. The use of semantic webbing however, can be reinforced to support the ideas which are valuable to paragraph development. Students are made to interact and acquire from each other ideas contributory to their writing activity. The use of this type language with actions, illustrations, context or prior knowledge, is a key factor in helping children to learn a second language (Brewster, Ellis and Girard 2002).

Table 3 Teaching Strategies Identified by Both Teachers and Students in Teaching English 3 (Speaking & Listening Focus)

Listening & Speaking Focus	Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1. Language Switching	2.89	Often
2. Recitation	3.30	Often
3. Simulation/Role Playing	3.32	Often
4. Answering in Unison	2.65	Often
5. Oral Reading	3.16	Often
6. Pronunciation Drill	3.59	Always
7. Use of realia	3.54	Always
8. Use of rhymes	3.19	Often
9. Panel discussion	3.24	Often
10. Interview	3.11	Often
General Mean	3.20	Often

Those teaching strategies always used as assessed by teacher and student respondents in teaching English 3 are pronunciation drill (3.59) and the use of realia (3.54). Those often used consist of simulation and role-playing and recitation with the highest weighted means of 3.32 and 3.30; those with the lowest weighted means are language switching (2.89) and answering in unison (2.65). Simulation and role playing are done by forming small groups to facilitate their own activity to demonstrate the use of specific language concepts which according to Hill and Flynn (2006:55) may be "... a powerful tool for fostering language acquisition". "Research has shown that learners use considerably more language, and exploit a greater range of language functions when working in small groups" (Nunan 2000:51).

Among the strategies used in teaching English 3, teachers always use pronunciation drill together with the use of realia having the weighted means of 3.59 and 3.54 respectively. Ranked number three by teachers to familiarize students with terms used in specific disciplines, they utilize simulation / or role playing (3.32) to vocalize words using proper intonation, articulation, stress, phonation, among others. Quality of voice is also improved.

Recitation with a weighted mean of 3.30 is also often used. This strategy is employed by teachers so that students will be able to translate words into actions which will lead to meaningful experiences. Students learn to speak with art and confidence. Language switching and answering in unison got the lowest weighted means of 2.89 and 2.65. Although teachers are not encouraged to speak the vernacular or Tagalog, in their attempt to clarify statements and instructions; however, the teachers still insist on English speaking among students. On the other hand, answering in unison has been a usual practice where students can express their thoughts and respond to their teachers' question confidently the weighted mean of 3.17. Among these strategies which were rated often by respondents concept mapping got the least

weighted of 2.90 while panel discussion is used to let the students interact and discuss on a certain topic.

2. How effective are the Strategies employed in teaching Communication arts Subjects

2.1. Findings revealed that majority of teacher respondents rated as Very Effective the two strategies used in English 1 which is focused in Reading. Question and Answer Relationships and Evaluating which got the weighted mean of 3.70; followed by Elaboration and Association (3.59) and the rest Visualizing, Intensive/ Extensive Reading and Context Clues got the weighted means of 3.57 respectively. Question and answer strategy becomes very effective in inducing the students to read an article or section because they are guided by question the answer of which will come from the text itself. Since reading is considered sometimes boring by students, it becomes more interesting when students are given a number of questions to answer. Evaluating is also a very effective strategy in the sense that students' critical thinking is honed. They learn to see situations that should be analyzed before making wise decisions which later on may apply to their practical life. Elaboration and association strategies are also very effective as students can relate what they read to other concepts and experiences, therefore more ideas are brought up for discussions related to the topics. The strategy visualizing becomes very effective when teachers encourage students to use mental images drawn from their imagination while reading the text which becomes more interesting for the students because they can imagine real life situations.

Scanning, skimming, semantic webbing and concept mapping were rated as effective by the respondents as they got the weighted means of 3.38, 3.27, 3.24 and 3.22 respectively. Scanning is effective as students are motivated to make use of time at a certain reading speed. This develops the students' ability to get the most important ideas and facts out of reading materials available elsewhere. Skimming on the other hand, enables the students to comprehend more detailed concepts paving way to a deeper understanding of what is read. Semantic webbing and concept mapping are almost similar in the sense that both makes the students illustrate words ideas associated to the given word; thus elaborated and more substantial ideas emerge from the readers themselves. The general mean is 3.48, verbally interpreted as Effective. This implies that there is adequate ability to use possible reading strategies effectively in overcoming difficulties in reading. Students are able to note details, guess and infer the possibilities, do some restating, form hypothesis and draw conclusions based on selections read.

2.2. Among the very effective strategies used in teaching English Plus and English 2 as regarded by faculty respondents are Outlining having the highest weighted mean of 3.67 followed by controlled and guided writing (3.59) while the strategies regarded as effective only are using illustrations, drawings and charts (3.38) and recording/noting oral discourses (3.30). For the students, among those which got the highest weighted means are note taking (3.32), using illustrations, drawings, etc. (3.29) and creative writing (3.27) while those which got the lowest weighted mean of 3.09 are semantic webbing and brainstorming.

Outlining is also regarded as very effective by teachers for this is one step which will prepare the students to writing a paragraph and a composition. Controlled or guided writing is also a very effective means of teaching the students particularly those beginners in writing good paragraphs. Note taking is also used by teachers to keep the students listen attentively to the discussions and participate in brainstorming, thus allowing students use the notes as wellspring of rich thoughts and ideas. Creative writing is used very effectively by teachers as they let the students create ideas and formulate statements on their own and discuss on matters of their own interests. Use of narratives also produces very effective results as this strategy gives the students various forms of life experiences where they can deduce their own topics to write on. They learn not only new insights but also practical lessons to live by.

Among the effective strategies. Elaboration and Association got the highest weighted mean of 3.49, followed by using illustration, drawing, etc., (3.38); recording / noting oral discourses (3.30), and concept mapping (3.22). Elaboration and association is being used by teachers as this will enrich the students' imagination on trying to explore novel and related concerns. Using illustrations set the students' minds to write good and interesting paragraphs for this stir the students' imagination and creative thinking. Through recording or noting oral discourses students learn to borrow ideas from others and gradually create their own. By means of concept mapping, students are provided with more a rich reservoir of themes and topics to write on.

The average weighted mean is 3.45. This means the strategies cited are effective. Students are able to write quite smooth flowing compositions with acceptable focus. Grammatical accuracy is observed with evidence of enough knowledge and writing strategies; however, there are slight problems with expression and must be more selective and precise with the use of vocabulary. The complexity and variation in the sentences are limited.

2.3. As evaluated by teacher respondents, the very effective strategies used in teaching English 3 are pronunciation drills with the weighted mean of 3.70 followed by recitation and simulation/role playing which both got a WM of 3.51.

Students regarded the strategies used in English 3 as Effective. Among those commonly used are recitation (3.31), language switching (3.28) and panel discussion (3.26). In teaching English 3, the Very effective strategy ranked by most teachers is Pronunciation drills. Most often, students' listening and speaking skills are developed through this. By being models to students, teachers may encourage them to imitate oral speaking and eventually become good speakers. This is followed by the use of realia which got the weighted mean of 3.65. Making use of real life situations are effective where students draw emotional reactions and witty ideas and expressions which are vital in speech delivery. Recitation and Simulation / role playing both got the weighted mean of 3.51. Hill and Flynn (2006:23) suggest that, "Language structure and form should be learned in authentic contexts rather than through contrived drills in language workbooks".

Recitation as practice drills of students makes the speaking act perfect while simulation / role playing provides students to impersonate real life characters and make speaking very realistic and natural. The effective strategies rated by teachers with the highest weighted mean of 3.49 are panel discussion and interview. When teachers use panel discussion, the students learn how to interact and adjust with the group members and at the same time, speak with confidence as practical questions bring out answers from characters which they usually impersonate. Interview strategy is also effective where students are allowed to talk to another person by face to face contact and learn from personal experiences and achievements. Students feel a sense of accomplishment also when they talk to such persons from whom they lift a source of inspiration. An interview presentation makes students feel more confident to speak in front as they can be assured of a good working relationship or rapport from such dyadic interaction. The item which got the lowest weighted mean of 2.57 but still regarded as an effective strategy is Language switching. While language switching is not allowed, still the teachers are sometimes prompted to translate terms from English to the vernacular / dialect for better understanding of students particularly those students who cannot just understand straight English. But afterwards teachers shift to English language so that students will realize that teachers really know how to speak in English.

Generally, these strategies got the weighted mean of 3.34. This shows that the strategies are effectively used as students are able to moderately perform listening and / speaking tasks. They show acceptable competency in performing these communicative functions and the grammatical forms for automatic communicative performance. Students are able to moderately perform listening and speaking tasks. They show acceptable competency

in performing these communicative functions and the grammatical forms for automatic communicative performance.

Results of t-test show there is no significant difference between the responses of the teachers and the students as per effectiveness of teaching communication arts subjects is concerned. This shows that both faculty and students assess Communication Arts teaching strategies as generally effective. Respondents may also believe that learning strategies have the potential to be “an extremely powerful learning tool”(O’Malley, 1985, p.43. It is probably unlikely that learning strategies will prove to be a magic wand to solve all language learning problems any more than any of the other eagerly-seized new ideas have proven to be in the last 50 years. But, used eclectically, in conjunction with other techniques, learning strategies may well prove to be an extremely useful addition to a language learner’s tool kit(learning strategies have the potential to be “an extremely powerful learning tool”(Griffiths, 2004).

3. This study proposes programs/activities cited below to achieve the following objectives:

3.1. To assess training needs of faculty with regard to teaching methodology - training Needs assessment

3.2. To reinforce teaching strategies used by Comm. Arts faculty – in house training seminar-workshops for faculty and in outside seminar-workshops, conferences and symposia ; Train the Trainers Program in Communication Arts; training in the language proficiency programs introduced by CELL (Center of Language Learning) thru the use of technology and updated methodology

3.3. To identify the language competencies and language deficiencies of students – research on students’ language proficiency and deficiency;

3.4. To facilitate teacher’s mastery of subject matter - content- based instruction development / development of Outcomes based learning competencies

3.5. To review curriculum and syllabi used by GE teachers in Communication Arts – curriculum evaluation and development; Evaluation of instructional materials; revision of text manuals

3.6. to conduct a follow study on effective teaching strategies and other methods- research on students problems related to the development of Communication Arts skills/competencies

3.7. to conduct activities on improving the performance in Communication Arts- conduct of remedial class/Tutorial Program; holding of competitions in different Communication Arts focus

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results generated from the study, the following conclusions were drawn: 1) Strategies such as question and answer relationships, elaboration, and evaluating are always used in teaching English 1. Elaboration/association, note taking and outlining are strategies always used in teaching English Plus and English 2 while English 3 pronunciation drills and the use of realia are always used. This means that teaching strategies are consistently used by teachers in teaching the four Communication Arts subjects; 2) Both students and faculty assessed the teaching strategies as Effective. The responses of both groups in assessing the strategies do not differ significantly and 3) The proposed programs/activities may help enhance the teaching of Communication Arts subjects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions, the research offers these recommendations:

1. All GE Communication Arts faculty members should finish their graduate studies along their field of specialization taking particular attention on the use of effective methodologies. More support from the Administration such as providing more trainings and scholarships and the use of advanced technological aids to enhance teacher competencies in Communication Arts teaching should be provided.
2. GE faculty members may try other effective strategies that may suit the needs and enhance the learning skills of the students in Communication Arts.
3. The proposed program / activities maybe tried, implemented and evaluated. Results of evaluation maybe used as basis of a relevant and responsive Communication Arts program for college students. Reinforcement strategies as cooperative learning, integration of technology, integration of outcomes based learning and other significant approaches may also be consistently done.
4. Follow-up studies on related research problem maybe done for continuous improvement or enhancement of the faculty's teaching strategies in Communication Arts.

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