

Enhancement of Public Speaking Skill through Practice among Teacher-Trainees in English: A Study

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Abstract

This paper discusses the innovative methods of developing public speaking skill in English for the B.Ed. teacher-trainees. Teacher-trainees must have this essential skill which helps achieve a successful academic and professional career. Normally professional course students focus more on their major subjects than on learning the effective use of English language. In Tamil Nadu, teacher-trainees, both from the rural and urban areas, seem to have difficulty in mastering the speaking skill in English though their medium of instruction might have been English in their schools. This leads to their failure to gain any success in public speaking in English. In general, public speaking is more challenging than speaking skill. Language proficiency is not used as a criterion for admission to B.Ed. courses in colleges of education. This deficiency, in due course, creates problems for these candidates when they attend interviews and when they try to communicate with their team members or others. In schools where they are employed, they have difficulty in delivering public speech in English. So, there is a need for them to develop their public speaking skill in English through some novel ways.

Public speaking is admired and is in great demand. The teacher trainees approach this skill with fear and reservation. Even in the training period, speaking skill is taught rarely in any formal sense, which may increase anxiety and discomfort. Most of the B.Ed., colleges give importance to get all their students pass the university exams rather than developing skills. This is also another reason for the teacher trainees who may obtain good to excellent grades in their subjects but fear to perform speech in the public.

In the present study, the researchers have tried to identify the ways which can be used to develop the public speaking skill among the B.Ed. teacher-trainees. This can be done

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through some innovative methods even as the trainees go through their textbook-oriented English course at the college. The researchers have also conducted a qualitative study to find out how the public speaking skill in English can be improved.

Key words: Public speaking, B.Ed. teacher trainees, methods of mastering public speaking skill

Introduction

How do I speak and present the subject effectively in the class using English? And how do I speak in English to deliver public speech? These are questions that every teacher trainee of English major and Non-English majors should raise. Many books are available to guide them to help use the various methods and techniques. However, colleges do not offer help as to how these books could be used. Colleges also do not provide for any practical training in public speaking.

A teacher may take his or her class in English in the class room efficiently but they have fear to speak in the public in English even within the campus. Normally, teachers in all types of schools - Government Schools, Aided School and Unaided Private Schools - have to appear on the stage for giving a talk in the assembly to motivate the students. Speaking in the prayer hall is compulsory for the teachers. Their topics must motivate the students to go in right path. But most of them may feel uncomfortable and uneasy to speak in English, though they are very good performers in the subject they teach. Teachers are the easily available role model for the students who may aspire to deliver public speech in English. But when teachers do not perform well, then the students may not be greatly encouraged to develop this important skill which will be of great help when they seek employment and when they are part of an office.

Public Speaking

The essence of public speaking is not to gain something but to give something.

Effective speakers must have good speaking voice which presents the personality of the speaker in a positive and encouraging mode. The speaker should be enthusiastic to attract the audience. Teachers should know the way how to present the topic in their own style using some effective methods. Teachers should be powerful presenters.

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Objectives

The researchers of this paper conducted this work to find out the answers to the following questions:

How does the practice enhance public speaking?

Does it make any changes in teaching?

How do the students deal with practice, rehearsal and performance?

Hypothesis

The researchers had formulated the hypothesis that public speaking skill makes the teacher trainees improve their performance in the class as well as in the prayer hall and in teachers' meetings effectively.

Methodology

The study was qualitative in nature.

Field notes were maintained by the researchers to record the observations.

Sample

The first researcher selected 20 B.Ed. teacher-trainees from Chezhan College of Education, Kalasapakkam.

Design of the Study

The method followed the case study design. The research was conducted in one classroom consisting of the above teacher-trainees. The study was carried out in five phases.

Phase 1 First of all, the researchers determined the entry level of B.Ed. teacher trainees.

Phase 2 The researchers selected some topics which are common and significant.

Phase 3 For four weeks, each day, the subjects worked on different topics. They were given several tips which included the following:

Draft your speech with 4-5 key points.

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Clarify your topic, describe it.

Have clarity of your speech.

Smile and speak aloud.

Record your rehearsal

Pay attention to the body language.

Practice, reflect.

Convert your energy into positive energy.

Invoke attention, interest and emotion.

They were told that the following objectives help improve their teaching performance and career prospects. They need

1. To develop speaking skill
2. To make the trainees get involved in speaking skill
3. To avoid the fear and hesitation from the beginning
4. To develop the presentation methods
5. To develop positive attitudes to make effective presentations
6. To develop self-confidence and establish rapport with the audience
7. To plan, create and deliver high impact presentations
8. To make the teacher trainees speak with good voice
9. To motivate the teacher trainees to become enthusiastic
10. To make use of conversation as part of public speaking
11. To give attention to oral training that acquires fluency of speech

Phase 4 The researchers observed classroom interaction, discussion, and speaking carried out by the trainees in the classroom and recorded daily notes.

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Phase 5 After collecting this data, the same was analyzed.

Procedure

The investigator selected 20 B.Ed., students for enhancing their public speaking skill. They were given the same topics to prepare and speak in the class.

Findings and Conclusion

The consolidated observation reports of the public speaking of teacher-trainees revealed the following.

1. How does the practice enhance public speaking?

During the observation, the researchers observed that teacher trainees were eager to give their own description of the given topics in their public speaking, but they often struggled to use the correct/desirable words. They however, helped each other to comprehend the topics better. Thus, along with suggestion, they got a good amount of speaking skill.

2. Does it make any changes in teaching?

With the help of the tips, the trainees' perception of the world was enhanced and the researchers observed a significant amount of improvement in their language skills, namely, listening and presentation skills.

3. How do the students deal with practice, rehearsal and performance?

When teacher trainees were asked to deliver a speech, by the practice they presented a clear communication with conviction because of their practice and group work. They created and used tools to overcome nervousness and they also used body language (gestures, movement, posture and eye contact) to increase understanding. As they were instructed or trained, they accepted the question and responded to it with clear thoughts and answers. After some orientation they got an idea of what should be done. Initially they found it difficult but later they got improvement.

Recommendations

Student trainees could practice public speaking in the following ways:

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1. Social gatherings
2. Speaking to one's colleagues/ mentor/ advisor
3. Participating in the meetings
4. Participating in a group/team discussion.

To sum up, public speaking skill is more useful to the teacher trainees for giving effective presentations in the classroom as well as in the meetings and interviews. Thus public speaking helps one's own career.

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