

**Thrashing Learners Inactivity in Large Classes: An Action  
Research on the Secondary Students of Thano  
Bulla Khan District Jamshoro**

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**Abstract**

In recent years English language has been influenced by number of language theories and methodologies. The makers of these theories and methods claim that traditional teaching methods have become old and do not create interest among students which gives birth to rote learning instead of true learning and gaining of knowledge. On the other hand the supporters of Traditional method claim that the Grammar translation method is the appropriate and fool proof way of teaching L2.

Cunningham (2000) in his paper "Translation in the Classroom- a Useful Tool for Second Language Acquisition" indicates that translation method contributes to students learning at all levels. It enhances the correct grammar knowledge and it is useful tool to understand the meaning of abstract words and complicated sentences. This paper is based on an action research which is conducted on 48 participants of grade 9<sup>th</sup> in Government Girls High School Thano Bulla Khan Jamshoro Sindh. This research attempts to check the change in the level of motivation among students when they are being taught through different activities in classroom. The class of 48 children was divided into 6 groups of 8 children in each group. Six different tasks were given to groups with clear instructions, proper seating arrangement and well enough teaching resources. This research witnesses a remarkable change in interest of students, their level of motivation was increased and they seemed more confident.

**Key words:** Large Classes, Inactivity, Motivation, Teaching Methodologies, Traditional Methods.

## **Introduction**

Lewin (1946; 1948) codified the action research into four main steps:

1. Planning
2. Acting
3. Observing
4. Reflecting

This research is also based on these four steps. Proper planning of the research is kept in mind. As this research is based on classroom teaching so more focus is kept on lesson planning and its execution. Lesson planning should not only be the responsibility of a trained and experienced teacher rather it should be the essential feature of a professional teacher. Lesson planning is the central part of the teaching learning process. It is concerned with handful knowledge of our learners and their learning background, the curriculum, contents of the text and the teaching context.

## **1: Importance of Lesson Planning in Classroom Teaching**

### **1.1: Produces Unified Lessons**

Jensen, (2001) says that proper lesson planning produces cohesive lessons in class room teaching which obviously benefits the students and create a unified professionalism in teachers. He also argues that lesson planning produces creativity and novelty in teaching methodology. Teacher thinks beyond traditional and repetitive plan and creates something new in classroom. It helps the teacher to think of SMART objectives, the type of activities that will meet these objectives, the proper order of those activities, the teaching resource material, the time management, grouping of the students etc. Teacher can also reflect on the relationship between the one activity and the other. Teacher not only reflects on the current plan but can also compare the lesson with past/ future lessons. This type of planning benefits the teacher to meet the balance between learning objectives and assessments through this learning connections explicit more meaningful to learners.

### **1.2: Easy and Accurate Evaluation**

The lesson plan process allows the teacher to evaluate their own teaching and knowledge. Reed & Michaud, (2010) says that proper planning helps the teacher to evaluate the progress in transparent way. She can set the assessment criteria while setting the objectives and then can easily judge and mark accordingly.

### **1.3: Boost the Confidence of Teacher**

Experienced teachers sometimes claims that they don't plan before entering the class, they probably mean to say that they don't write their plan on a paper they rather have it in their mind. Written or memorized but all professional teachers have a set plan before actual teaching. It boosts the confidence of the teacher, Jensen (2011) says that a teacher with a plan is the most confident teacher in the classroom professional teaching. She is clear on what needs to be taught and how to be taught in class. Everything is planned beforehand. Through smart planning she saves much of her time and utilizes her time in creative manner. Jensen also is of opinion that although at the time of planning it takes a lot of time but it once it is done it can be utilized again and again with minor changes and amendments.

### **1.4: Useful for a Substitute Teacher**

It is always difficult for a substitute teacher to continue the teaching topic from the part it is left by the original teacher, in this regard a lesson plan document helps the substitute teacher to follow the plan and gives the regular classroom teacher the confidence that the class time is being used productively.

### **1.5: Evidence of a Teacher's Professional Performance**

In addition, lesson plan can also be an evidence of the instruction that is happening in class. For example a supervisor suddenly wants to observe the learning in class and interrogates about the topics which were covered two weeks ago ,then the teacher only has to go through the previous plans and present an evidence in front of the observer.

## **2: Basic Principles of Lesson Planning**

According to Linda Jensen there are three basic principles of a good lesson plan

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- a. Coherence
- b. Variety
- c. Flexibility

A good lesson always have consistency, logic and rationality ,that means both on macro level and micro level, lesson hangs together and it's not a succession of disconnected activities but a complete package consisted on coherence and flow of learning.

According of Jensen, a good lesson is not a sequence of repetitive teaching methodologies but it's a mixing of variety teaching materials and methods. Lesson plans are not meant for fixed tools which binds the teacher for pre ordinate plan but it should be flexible, good teachers always know the perfect moment to change the activity regardless of what lesson plan say. Any quest ion from an intelligent student may lead the lesson to a different direction same way a slow learner may need more time to understand the same point so, the lesson must be elastic and teacher must be on her feet all the time.

### **3: An Introduction to Action Research**

Cohen, et.al., (2007, p.297) in their book research methods in education impressively defines the scope of action research and says that it is a multi tasking research method that can done in any setting, by this they means that action research involves people, tasks and procedures that cries out for solution, or where some change in future is expected. Action research can be done in varieties of areas for example:

- Teaching methods
- Learning strategies
- Evaluative procedures
- Attitudes and values
- Continuing professional development of teachers
- Management and Control
- Administration

In this article action research is taken as a process to analyze teaching methods and learning strategies in the setting of public secondary schools. Ebburt (1985.p.156) defines action research as a systematic study that is a mixture of both action and reflection with an intension of improving practice. Cohen and Manion (1994.p.186) call it a small scale intervention in the process of real world.

Corey (1953.p.6) calls it as a scientific process which involves the action followed by evaluation to undermine the solution for further practice so in this manner action research is a continuous process which involves proper plan, execution of the plan, reflection on the plan and then again acting on it. The same point is discussed by Kemmis and McTaggart (1992:10) as to do action research is to plan ,act ,observe, and reflect more cautiously, more thoroughly and strictly.

Kemmis and McTaggart (1992.p.21-22) separates action research from normal everyday actions of the teachers in classroom teaching by these key principles

- It's an approach to improve education by learning it from the consequences of changes
- It is participatory act which involves not only a researcher but also participants
- It develops through a self reflective spiral chain of events.
- It's a collaborative act
- It develops self critical communities of people
- It's a systematic learning process which is always open to surprises and responsive to opportunities
- Its open minded in terms of data collection, analyzing the data and making out own judgments.
- It involves people at making critical analysis of the situation in which they work.
- Action research starts with small cycles of planning, with small group of collaborators, even one person can start this research and then slowly extends it into something large and creative.
- It is a record based research which allows us to keep records of every improvement; it calculates every changing activity and planning.

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## **4: Implementation of Action Research**

### **4.1: Planning**

Let's shape this research article in the light of Lewin's four step action research plan. At the beginning the lesson plan(attached in appendix1) was keenly planned and resources were kept ready a day before the execution of the lesson on the students of grade 9<sup>th</sup> in GGHS Thano Bulla Khan. The introduction, explanation and reading of the lesson Moen jo Daro was done a day before from the text book. Therefore I started my lesson with some motivating questions (questions are attached in the appendix).

#### **Acting**

**Activity 1:** One silent reading was given to the text to reinforce the knowledge about the people and ruins of Moen jo Daro.

**Activity 2:** Class of 48 children was divided into 6 groups of 8 children in each group. Keeping MI theory in context ,different task to different groups were assigned like those who are good in handwriting and comprehension they were asked to find out important points from the text and jot down on a chart paper it was named as group one. Those who are good in drawing were named as group two they were assigned to make drawings of dancing girl, priest king, seals and head of a bull etc. Group 3 was busy in browsing as they were good students of class so I made them sit with my laptop and search the related material from internet and write them on different sheets. Group 4 and 5 was based on shy students so I made them do a little more work which was based on their kinesthetic intelligence ,I asked to make toys and things from clay. I made them sit on the floor of a class and gave them clay and clay pots they made different toys and replicated the model city of Moen Jo Daro .Group 5 was coloring pottery and decorating necklace and other ornaments. Last but not the least Group 6 was monitoring each group and was helping me to manage the group work properly. Then in the end we all set a display table in the class and pasted charts of pictures and information on the walls.

### **4.2: Evaluation of the Implementation/ Observing**

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Students were eager to participate and they fully participated in their assigned tasks. Previous day when we read about the text from the book they were facing difficulties in reading and pronouncing so it was not enjoyably sound experience for them they are already bored with chalk ,talk and reading and listening type of activities. This was a new experience for them where everybody participated according to their interest and level. They worked with collaborative learning and every group wanted to do the task in their best way. The problem of seating arrangement was sorted with the help of peons and volunteers who sat two tables in the corridor where group 1 and 3 managed to sit rest of the groups were inside the class. I managed a carpet in the class where group 5 was asked to sit as they were making things from clay. Resources were ready a day before, all the required resource was arranged by me and my participants. Every group activity was carried smoothly as planned but time management was not properly done .I wasted my time more on arranging class so my lesson started late and was not completed on time, it took 80 minutes to compete. I was not able to explain the homework to them and skipped the wrap up of the lesson. This was done on the next day. Next day I took an oral feedback from them and asked to write 5 lines on the Moen Jo Daro.

#### **4.3: Implications for Future Practice /Reflecting**

1. They have weak base of English, they are unable to write 5 sentences without any guidance so they copied the text from the book. Next time I should focus on their language skills so they can at least write 5 sentences in their own words .They have pronunciation and reading problems so they were asking the pronunciation and meaning of different words. Next time such activities will be planned which will help them to enhance language skills.
2. Next time I will try to arrange more computers because one laptop was not sufficient for 8 students.
3. Group two was the best among all because they were good at drawing so they drew beautiful pictures on charts and pasted them on time in class. Next time water colors or pencil colours will be provided to them so that they could add colours to their pictures.
4. Group 4 who was assigned to work on pottery and decoration of necklace, they were adding beautiful colors .Next time I would try to arrange oil paints for them.

5. Next time I will request the headmistress to cooperate with me and provide basic resources like paints charts colors etc.
6. Next time more attention will be given to slow learners although they were not neglected in the plan but next time special attention will be given to them. On the spot feedback will be given so that individuals who less active can improve their performance next time .Though appreciation was given but next time certain rewards will be kept in class and will be given for these types of activities.
7. Time management will be strictly followed next time because most of the time was wasted in seating arrangement which resulted miss management of time .Rest of the plan was proceeded and executed smoothly.

## 5: Conclusion

*Tell me, and I'll listen.*

*Show me, and I'll understand.*

*Involve me, and I'll learn (Teton Lakota Indian)*

Action research has been seen as a significant medium for empowering teachers, through this research we come to know that old traditional way of teaching should be replaced by need based learning. It is a straight forward sequence of identifying problem, intervention, implementation the intervention and evaluating the outcome (Cohen, et.al. 2007).

In the light of above research it can be said with any shadow of doubt that if the teacher is fully planned and prepared, she is considered to be a successful teacher but if she is not ready like most of the teachers do in large classes then the learning is not taking place. Just lecturing by the teacher is not sufficient because then students only listen but still they do not learn. If you show them they understand how to do or replicate things but if you involve in learning they get firsthand knowledge and experience so this way they quickly learn.

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## Appendix 1

### Lesson Plan

Class IX      Time: 40 min      Subject: English      Topic: Moen Jo Daro      Concepts:

Awareness about the life of Moen Jo Daro

SLO's	Methodology/Strategies	Time	Resources	Assessment
At the end of the topic children would be able to:	<b>Motivation</b> :Teacher will discuss about their life style Students will discuss the food they eat ,the dresses they wear,their life style ,civilization etc	5 min	Laptop Clay Clay toys Ragdolls	Children will be assessed on their ability to:
Know facts about the life and people of moen jo daro	<b>Main Lesson:</b> Lets read about some dead civilization Activity 1: Silent reading of the text will be done(detailed explanation of the lesson is already done a day before) Activity 2:(Group work) Class will be divided in to 6	5min      20min to each group	Old broken Necklaces Chart papers  Markers	Know facts about the life and people of moen jo daro      Reproduce the ruins of moen jo daro like clay toys ,rag dolls etc

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<p>Reproduce the ruins of moen jo daro like clay toys ,rag dolls etc</p> <p>Write 5 sentences on the moen jo daro</p>	<p>groups of 8 children in each group</p> <p>G1: Children will be given a sheet to write some important findings and ruins of moen jo daro</p> <p>G2: Draw pictures of ruins</p> <p>G3: find out the material on internet about the ruins of moen jo daro and write links on a chart paper</p> <p>G4: Colouring Pottery</p> <p>G5: Reproduce the ruins like "The Priest-King", a seated stone sculpture, The <i>Shiva Pashupati</i> seal. Etc</p> <p>G6: was monitoring the groups</p> <p><b>Written work:(Homework)</b></p> <p>Q: Write about three lines on the moen jo daro</p> <p><b>Wrap up:</b></p> <p>Teacher will ask some questions and sum up the lesson by discussing their work .</p>	<p>5 min</p> <p>to explain HW</p> <p>5min</p>		<p>Write 5 sentences on the moen jo daro</p> <p><b><u>Evaluation :</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Lesson went well</u></b></p> <p><b><u>.seating arrangement</u></b></p> <p><b><u>created some</u></b></p> <p><b><u>disturbance but it was</u></b></p> <p><b><u>timely managed and</u></b></p> <p><b><u>done well with efforts. I</u></b></p> <p><b><u>need to focus on their</u></b></p> <p><b><u>writing skills in my next</u></b></p> <p><b><u>class .</u></b></p>
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## **Appendix 2**

### Questions of Motivation

1. What sort of dresses you wear at home ?
  2. What sort food you like to eat ?
  3. How were the streets of Moen Jo Daro?
  4. What sort of dresses their men and women wear?
  5. What are the ruins of Moen Jo Daro?
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