

PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING IN ACTIVATING STUDENT SPEAKING ABILITY

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Abstract. Problem-based Instruction is a student-centered educational method. Using this approach, the students are progressively given more responsibility for their own learning and become increasingly independent of the teacher from their learning. Problem Based- Learning produces independent learners who can continue to learn on their own life. Problem-based instruction is an instructional approach in which students actively overcome the complex problems in realistic situations. Problem-based Instruction is an approach in a team environment with emphasis on building skills related to consensual decision making, dialogue and sharing, team maintenance and team leadership.

Keywords: Problem-based learning, student speaking ability

One of the biggest problems for students is to speak fluently and correctly, because to master speaking skill the students must speak and think at the same time. It means that being fluent and correct in speaking need critical thinking competence.

Generally, why speaking is quite difficult for students because: first, the limitation of students' vocabulary, which makes them unable to express their ideas. Second, they are influenced by their mother tongue. Third, the students rarely practice their English during teaching and learning process or out of class. Thus, they are ashamed when they want to explore their mind in English, they are afraid to make a mistake either in grammar or in using of vocabulary.

In line with the explanation above, the other factors come from the students' side are: They feel English is difficult. These difficulties can be caused by inside and outside factors such as lack of self confidence and lack of motivation. Lack of confidence can be caused by the psychology factors like, students are ashamed to speak, scared to make a mistake. They are not confident if they speak while others laugh at them.

In learning English, motivation and opportunities are important because the teacher can motivate the students to speak by giving them opportunity to speak. Gardner (2002) says that "motivation is the key

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factor in successful language learning – teaching process, because those students who can learn a language will be better if there is motivation by the teacher”. It means that motivation has an important role to make students to success to learn English. Furthermore, lack of motivation occur because the teacher never makes exploration in their teaching. They are monotonous in using the strategy in his/her way of teaching.

Talking about motivation, sometimes in teaching learning process the teacher does not use an appropriate method to encourage the students to communicate actively. Consequently, the students will be discouraged to express their ideas in English. In other word, we can say, that the teacher does not apply an interesting way to provide opportunity for the students with the intention that they can be motivated to practice their speaking skills.

Those are the real factors that happen around of students .hence , to overcome these problems there are so many approaches, methods, techniques, that can be used to activate students speaking ability, so, they did, not shame, or afraid, and make them aware that late better than never try. Try here means that, the students try to explore their mind in English or they should be brave say something in English during teaching and learning process . Therefore in this paper, the writer choose Problem- based learning as a method in activating students speaking ability. According to Levin (2001:2), Problem-Based instruction is an instructional method that engage students to apply critical thinking, problem solving skill, and content knowledge to real problems and issues. Problem-Based learning (PBL) is a learner-centered educational method. Problem-based Learning was described as instructional approach that students do an authentic problem to arrange their own knowledge, to develop inquiry and the higher thinking process, and to develop self confidence independently. From those activities, that offered by problem-based learning are freely(let the students decided by them self, what they want to do. Hence, it can active or foster the students to explore their main in English consequently, it will help them improve their speaking ability

Problem based- Learning is a method to engage the students to communicate, share each other in order to solve their learning problem, automatically, the day by day their speaking ability will be improved. If the students are obedient to practice their speaking, it is has the significant effect in improving their speaking ability.

Problem based instruction not only used in science field but also in the other discipline. Levin (2001:2) states that, problem-based Learning (PBL) has been applied in several disciplines in colleges and universities (Bridges, 1992; Camp, 1996;) and, in teaching most subjects in schools. (Delisle, 1997; stepien, Galagher&workman, 1993; Torp& Sage, 1998). Problem based learning (PBL) has spread to other professions because it was found to foster growth in many areas, such as: ability to be critical thinkers, skills to analyzed and solve complex problems, expertise in

finding, evaluating, and using information resources, ability to work cooperatively in groups, skills to communicate and in written form.

From that point of view, it can be said, (PBL) was developed in many disciplines of knowledge is not focused only in science, economic, social but also in education and so forth. And the areas of learning: focused on social interaction, cognition in this case the ability to analyze, criticize the problem in real world close the student's life. Thus, from my point of view problem-based learning force, the students not only to be a critical thinkers, but also the student's ability to communicate and write actively, when they do their tasks that given by the teacher.

In this paper the writer want to focused to discuss about the Characteristic of Problem-based Learning, what are role of teacher on problem-based learning, Students' Role in the implementation of Problem-Based Learning, and the beneficial of Problem-based learning in activating student speaking ability.

Characteristics of Problem Based- Instruction

There are various developer of Problem Based-Instruction have described the instructional model as having the following features (Krajcik, 1999).

a. **Driving Question or problem.** Rather than organizing lesson around particular academic principles or skills, problem Based-instruction organizes instruction around questions and problems that are both socially important and personally meaningful to the students. They address real-life situations that evade simple answers and for which competing solution exist.

b. **Interdisciplinary focus.** Although a problem based-Instruction may be centered in a Particular subject, the actual problem under investigation is chosen because its solution requires students to delve into many subject (science, Education, for example: The pollution problem raised around of us and applied subjects- biology, economic, tourism and sociology.

c. **Authentic investigation.** Problem Based-Instruction necessitates that students pursue authentic investigations that seek real solutions to real problems. They must analyzes and define the problem, develop hypothesis and make predictions, collect and analyzes information, make inferences, and draw conclusions. The particular investigative methods used, of course, depend on the nature of the problem being studied.

d. **Production of artifacts exhibitexhibits.** Problem based-instruction requires students to construct products in the form of artifacts and exhibits that explain or represent their solutions. It could be a report, a physical model, a video, or a computer program, artifact and exhibits, as

will be describe later, are planned, by the students to demonstrate to others what they have learned and provided a refreshing alternative to the traditional report or term paper.

e. **Collaboration.** Problem based Instruction is characterized by students working with or another, most often in pairs or small group, working together provides motivation for sustained involvement in complex tasks and enhances opportunities for shared inquiry and dialogue , and for the development and social skills.

Based on the characteristic of problem based - instruction, it can be said that this approach is really different with conventional one. In conventional one the teacher dictates what is to be done: information and details are presented first which the students then use to solve the problem but, in problem based-instruction the problem is presented first after which students work in small group to solve the problem.

The role of the teacher's in Problem –based learning

Teacher has the essential role during the implantation of problem based-instruction.

The teacher identifies the problem, that is purposely complex and vague yet intriguing enough to excite students to inquire about it, do research on it and draw reasonable multiple solution on the problem. The problem should be linked to course content, however, although the problem should not be familiar to students it should be familiar to students it should be relevant to potential future use in work environment.

- a. Identify a problem that is appropriate for the course and student population. The problem should help teach students new skills they will use for a problem that would be too difficult for them to complete on their own. State the problem in a narrative format that includes details about its background but do not provide too much information that the students could find on their own as they search for a solution.
- b. Organize students in groups that represent different skill levels and diversity in an effort to achieve more successful team dynamics and outcomes. Find ways to engage students collaboratively in teams. This can be achieved by having students identify their strengths and weaknesses which will assist them as they assume different roles during the problem-solving process.
- c. Provide instructional support to assist the students in building their understanding of new content and the problem-solving process. Support should be provided from the time you present the problem to when the teams present their solutions. Key here is support - your role will be facilitator, coach and mentor to guide and move students from what they already know to a deep understanding of

new material. (Northern Illinois University, Faculty development and instructional design center facdev@niu.edu, www.niu.edu/facdev, 815.753.0595)

d. Students' Role in the implementation of Problem-Based Learning

During problem-based learning, students collaborate in small teams to explore the presented problem situation. "Through this exploration students are expected to examine gaps in their own knowledge and skills in order to decide what information they need to acquire in order to resolve or manage" the problem situation (Savin-Baden, 2004). What follows is a method that summarizes the steps students take to solve the problem situation which is excerpted from and used with permission, *Problem-based Learning* by Landsberger (2011).

Explore the issues related to the problem.

Read, discuss and analyze the problem and identify its significant parts.

List what your team knows about the problem.

The students should Discuss **in their** team members' current knowledge and experiences that relate to the problem. Identify the strengths and capabilities each team member can offer as they explore solutions to the problem. Brainstorm possible solutions and accept everyone's contributions.

Develop and write out the problem statement in your own words.

This description should be based on what they know about the problem and what they need to know to solve the problem do the following

1. Get consensus from the team on the new written statement
2. Write the problem statement
3. Get feedback from the teacher (for confirmation that you are on the right track
4. Be willing to change/ modify the problem statement as they gather

List all possible solutions to the problem.

List ideas, speculations, and hypotheses about the problem - what are its causes and in what ways might the problem be solved? Order the possible solutions from the most likely to the least likely and choose the one your team feels is mostly to succeed

List actions to be taken with a timeline.

- a. What do they have to know and do to solve the problem?
- b. How do they rank these actions?

- c. How do these actions relate to their list of possible solutions?
- d. Do they agree on these actions and if not, how do they reach consensus?

List what your team needs to know to solve the problem.

List what their team does not know about the problem and ask questions such as, “What do we need to know to solve this problem?” or “Can the instructor provide us with more information?”

- a. Discuss possible resources needed to solve the problem such as the Internet, textbooks, primary and secondary sources, interviews, the instructor.
- b. Assign and schedule research tasks to each team member.
- c. Set deadlines for all tasks.

Write your team’s report with the solution to the problem that includes supporting documents.

This step can act as a preliminary step that involves a draft report or can be the final report. Check with your instructor on his or her requirements.

- a. Prepare how they will present their findings by following the requirements for this part of the activity. Typically, each team presents their solutions as a group presentation to the entire class or stakeholders related to the problem.
- b. The findings should include the problem statement, questions, gathered data, analysis of the data, and support for solutions or recommendations based on the data analysis. This step will show the process and the outcome of the problem-based learning activity.

Presenting and defending your conclusions.

An important goal in problem-based learning is to present not only their team’s conclusions but also the foundation upon which they are drawn. Prepare all of the following points:

- a. State both the original problem and your conclusions
- b. Summarize the process in which the problem was solved: what options were originally considered, what difficulties were encountered, what resources were used.
- c. Convince their audience of their solution by using supporting documents, interviews and guests and the reasons these pieces of evidence were used
- d. Prepare for challenging comments and questions - clearly address and or answer what you can and if you do not have an answer, acknowledge it and refer to it for more consideration.

Review and reflect on your individual and team’s performance.

This reflection is an important step that will help validate what they learned and how they could improve on the process. A key

component of problem-based learning is the act of reflection in which students are asked to apply what they have learned in other situations (transfer of knowledge), how they will apply what they have learned in their personal lives (as students and citizens of a community) and how they will apply what they have learned in another course-related projects (Barell, 2007). Reflective thinking also helps students become more observant of their own learning environment and to pose thoughtful questions as they solve problem.

Beneficial of Problem- based learning in activating student speaking ability

The benefits of PBL in language learning are various. It is widely accepted that utilizing problem solving activity promotes construction of useful knowledge, develop reasoning strategies and effective self-directed learning strategies, increase motivation for learning, and become effective collaborators (Hmelo and Evensen, 2000).

Particularly in language classroom, PBL promotes meaningful interaction in the classroom. The interactions that occur while students were dealing with real-world issues and problems are more meaningful and authentic than interactions produced during activities such as assigned role plays or repetition of dialogues. Since PBL shifts the emphasis on learning activity from teachers to students, it can also help students become more autonomous learners who will transfer the skills learned in the classroom to their lives outside of the classroom (James, 2006). As to activate learners to interact with each other in listening speaking class, PBL can be powerful. To the writer assumption, while students are focusing on the problem to be solved, they will try to overcome the linguistic hindrance, retrieve prior knowledge of the language to be used, and finally, become skillful language users.

In the previous explanation one of features of PBL is skills to communicate orally, in line with this statement, communication is an essential need for human being. One of the ways in communication is through speaking. It is very important to master speaking skill. In order to do it, students must be trained to use English in communication orally. The frequency in using the language will determine the students' speaking ability, and without implementing the experience of learning the language in the real life; it is difficult for the students to master speaking ability. Hence, speaking competence can be accomplished by practicing it orally.

Through problem –based learning the students speaking ability will be improved. from the weakness students to the stronger stronger one and speaking ability can be activated, because, the activities in problem based-learning engage the students to communicate and explore the ideas in English to solve the problem. Automatically it has the significant effect on students speaking ability.

Conclusion

Through problem-based learning students learn to become partners in the teaching/learning process where they accept responsibility for much of their learning, work successfully as a team member, deal with new and changing situations and develop lifelong learning skills. Problem-based learning then, can help students think critically, analyze and solve real world problems that will better prepare them to be critical thinkers, in this case, the students have the ability to think critically, in order to share the ideas, discuss to solve the problem. Thus, it can be said there are the relationship between Problem-based Learning and students speaking ability.

The application of problem-based learning will be running well, if the teachers have the rules during the project done. Let say that, the teacher ask the students, in sharing, reporting and so forth in target language. These ways are foster the students, should explore their mind in English, share each other in group or in peer, in doing the exercises, Automatically, it has the beneficial impact for the student speaking ability.

Problem-based learning increase students' respectable, to each other in order to built social interaction between them, to know each other The weakness students can be supported by the strength one.

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