A Case Study of Remedial Teaching: The Cooperation between the College and the Elementary School

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of the study was to explore the effect of practice teaching and perceptions of DAE students in the internship program. The goal of internship program of DAE in college with the elementary school was to motivate and upgrade interest and level of low-motivated children and to facilitate college students’ learning in teaching practice.

In this study, the director and the researcher as chair implemented in-service training, gave accurate English phonics, and communicated with the elementary teachers to understand the children’s situation. During the period the practice teacher exercised Audio-lingual Method, Communicative Language (CLT) and Total Physical Response (TPR) Method and adopted teaching skills: telling stories, playing games, singing songs, role play and conversation.

The curriculum of remedial teaching was for children to like learning English and pronouncing alphabets correctly in natural and happy environment. The remedial program was launched and followed by teaching evaluation meeting, revise, observation, feedback and final assessment.

In the combination of observations, interviews, reflection notes and the opinions of teachers and parents, the result was as follows:
1. Children had more earnest attitude in learning English and were not afraid of speaking out English.
2. By exercising the formula of pronouncing from daily life and interesting materials, 98 percent of the children preferred to listen to the story to learn English alphabets.
3. Most of the children were attracted by lively, animated, interesting pictures and stories. They all enjoy learning new words by playing games. But sometimes the children were not under control; the interns were at loss.
4. During this period, the DAE interns not only gained practical teaching experiences but also six of whom acquired the job-substitute teachers in Linkou Elementary School.
5. This program promoted the relationship with the neighboring school and made the college become the resource center of the local elementary schools. This program was praised and supported by the parents and teachers. It served their local school and really reached to both win-win situation through the cooperation between the college and the elementary school.

INTRODUCTION

As Taiwan becomes more global and prosperous, English is more important as a tool in the international communication and more frequently used for the natives here. In order to develop the interest and the foundation for children to learn English, children are rushed to cram schools by the parents when children are in the elementary schools or preschools. Many suggestions are raised to teach English in curriculum of elementary schools to help promote the establishment of Asia Pacific Operation Center and Taiwan’ globalization (Shih, Chow, Chen & Chu, 1997).
In 1993, the government approved of having English in the extra-curriculum if equipment and faculty were available. It was optional for the students in Grade 5 and 6 and the faculty came from teachers and the qualified parents. After Taipei, the similar English curriculum was also started in other cities respectively.

In 1997, the MOE, the Ministry of Education, proclaimed that English curriculum would put in the regular curriculum in elementary schools according to the social trend. In Sep. of 1999, the curriculum started from the students in Grade 6; in 2003, it started from the students in Grade 5. Also, in Sep. of 2005, it started from the students in Grade 3 (MOE, 2005).

It is a significant policy to put English in the regular curriculum in elementary schools. About the qualified faculty and the textbooks, the research result of feasibility of implementing English teaching in the elementary school was as follows: (Shih, Chow, Chen and Chu, 1997).

1. English course should be listed as required course

   From the responses of surveys, interviews and panel discussions, most interviewees thought English should be taught in elementary schools so the authority should implement English teaching as the required course and hire well-trained teachers to go with the stream.

2. The program was started from the students in Grade 5 and 2 hours a week in this stage.

   According to the surveys, the most votes were for the students in Grade 3 and the second were for the ones in Grade 5. The biggest challenge was lack of professional faculty so the curriculum planning should be stage by stage, starting from short term to long term, in order to establish the courses firmly.

3. The goal of English teaching was to develop the interest of learning English and basic ability in listening and speaking.

   Since the goal of English teaching were to develop the interest of learning English and basic ability in listening and speaking, the learning attitude should be put into consideration. If the measurement caused pressure, it would lower the interest of learning

4. Recruiting faculty and training program should be done in multiple ways.

   If English was required and official course, it should be taught by professional and qualified teachers appointed by schools. English teaching would be implemented for the students in Grade 5 and 6 in 2001, so the training program would be started in 1999. Through the on-the-job training and practicum, the certificate system was set up. Once people passed the exam and got the certificate, they were qualified to be the English teachers in the elementary school (MOE report, 2005).

   Forum from the MOE (2002:335) pointed out that the need for teaching English starting from Grade 3 was 2500 to 3000 more teachers. Besides encouraging more qualified teachers, inviting college students majoring in English taught English to develop more qualified teachers. So it was hoped that DAE students of Hsing Wu College would experience practice teaching. The internship program with LinKou Elementary School was launched. Then, interns had opportunities to do practice teaching to pave the way for their future.

**PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The study was conducted at the Hsing Wu College and Linkou Elementary School in Taipei county. The purpose of the study aimed to provide Hsing Wu College DAE (Department of Applied English) senior students with the practice place to gain experiences of teaching English. The curriculum of English practice teaching in the elementary school lay in:
1. Giving interns to take both teaching theory course inside the college and teaching practice in the elementary school. The proactive course was hoped to assist practice teachers to prepare their future career to be a teacher.

2. Exploring the effect of practice teaching and reflections of DAE interns. It was hoped the result of the study could improve curriculum arrangement of practice teaching and serve a reference of developing qualified teachers in the future.

The goal of internship program of DAE in college with the elementary school was following:
1. Motivating and upgrading interest and level in English learning for the students in the elementary school.
2. Facilitating college students to learn from in the environment of English teaching practice.
3. Making the win-win situation through the cooperation between the elementary school and the college.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In keeping with the global trend and in response to public opinions and enhancing national competitiveness, the government conducted strongly English education. Thus, practicing English teaching lowered to Grade 3 in 2005, which contributed to children’s learning English and reached equal educational opportunities (Shih, 1999).

In view of the close relationship between school and community, the idea of equal and mutual benefit and the trend of prevail English education, the internship program of DAE had been launched from the beginning of March in 2009 about cooperation with Linkou elementary school to make remedial program together. It was expected that the program would bring better progress as follows:
1. To promote the relationship with the neighboring schools and make the college become the resource center of the local elementary schools.
2. To develop various teaching and learning channels for students to provide the in-service training before entering the career.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Shih’s investigation (1999) presented that Since 1993, elementary schools had furnished English curriculum through group activities. Therefore, the students in elementary schools started the atmosphere to learn English. In 1996, the education reform committee suggested the government pass proper required English curriculum for elementary schools. In the end of 1997 in response to social trend and expectation, the Ministry of Education declared English teaching was added to the curriculum of elementary schools.

Shih (1996) stated 83 percent of the sixth grade students had learned English for over six months in Taipei. Lu (1995) indicated that 61.9 percent students had also learned English in Taichung. Most of the children above mentioned learned English in cram schools. Until June of 1997, Chu stated 21 percent of elementary schools had English curriculum in a group activity way.

In Sep of 1997 the elementary schools’ number of implementing English teaching was obviously increasing. Owing to Taipei and Kaohsiung trying to have English teaching, other counties and cities followed them.

Many researchers (Cao,1993; Huang, 1993; Chen, 1998) presented the situation of students’ learning English in elementary schools, which were impressed by education field. Chu (2000) stated
that 112 elementary schools had implemented English teaching in Taipei. 77 schools had also implemented English teaching in Grade 5 and 6, in Kaohsiung.

Some researchers (Chow1989; Hsu, 1989; Huang, 1989) argued whether or not children learning English at early age affected their English ability.

Chang (2002), English professor of Taipei Normal College, indicated that Grade I students should establish good foundation of mandarin. Su, English professor of Taichung Normal College, also stated that Grade1 students learned three kinds of language would lower the degree of learning language. However, Chang (2002) indicated English teaching was as important as mother tongue teaching. The teacher with dialectal and foreign language ability could deeply experience the learning process of students so that the teacher would find problems of teaching and then solved them.

Chen (2000) emphasized if ten-year-old children learned the difference of culture, they could understand difference through learning foreign language and other culture, then they would perceive the bigger world increasingly.

Gui (1999) conducted a study in Taipei Da Zhi elementary school to give students diversity of group activities through the idea of equal opportunity and school communalized.

This elementary school set up English curriculum for Grade 1-3 and for Grade 4-6. The former had “Studio Classroom” teachers’ assistance. The latter had DAE students of Shi Jian University assistance. During this period practice teachers adopted basic conversation, playing games, singing songs, and acting puppetry, finally held achievement performance. Students were interested very much in learning English. The result was praised by the parents and teachers. The DAE students of Shi Jian University not only acquired precious teaching experience from practice teaching but also served their community and reached the cooperation both construction and education. The community thanked the university and the elementary school for their contribution.

Chen (2000) stated that DAE students of Ming Chuan University carried out theory and practice to implement English teaching activity in Gui Shan elementary school such as 1999 and 2000 English guidance and assistance to Gui Shan elementary school after class, and 1999 English summer camp. In addition, Ming Chuan University also assisted Tao Yuan County and Gui Shan Village adult university. The university provided the adults of the community for the channel of further study. It was hoped that the activity would cultivate the DAE students of Ming Chuan University the ability of being adapted to the society after graduation, understanding personal relationship and the condition of the qualified English teachers.

Chang’s (2002) investigation indicated that the policy of implementing English teaching was based on individual schools’ decision. Many teachers and researchers (Shi, 1999; Chen1998; Liao, 1998) presented discussion and suggestion of cultivating qualified teachers, regulating curriculum, choosing materials and teaching methods.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Participants**

This study was the cooperation program with Linkou elementary school including 2 classes made up of 68 students, (one class was 33; the other was 35.) the English teacher and the homeroom teacher of the elementary school.

There were 27 interns, one advisor and the researcher as chair. The interns from the college were divided into A and B group. A group including 13 persons totally six teams was responsible for class A;
B group including 14 personas, six teams, took charge of class B. From Feb. of 2009, the students from DAE, Hsing-Wu College instructed the 2nd grade students who were low-motivated students, an 8-week remedial program to enhance their basic English ability.

In the period of the program, the students of DAE involved the English teaching internship were supervised and instructed by the advisor and the researcher. The students’ presentation of practice teaching would be listed as their grade assessment.

**Teaching Materials**

The curriculum centered on spelling and pronouncing as remedial teaching and stressed to build up natural, happy language environment so as to develop students’ learning interest and basic communicative ability. To make teaching lively and to make up for the falling difference of low-motivated students, the interns chose lively, proper, and interesting teaching materials and made teaching aids.

Interns made use of every Tuesday afternoon to do remedial teaching. The goal of the remedial teaching was to like learning English and pronouncing alphabets correctly for children. By exercising the formula of pronouncing from daily life and interesting materials, children could listen and tell new words apart.

Finally children could cultivate the earnest attitude in learning English and were not afraid of speaking out English.

**Teaching Procedure**

1. Before implementing English teaching, the researcher as chair and the advisor gave interns training, such as intensifying teaching methods and giving accurate phonics.
2. The college teachers communicated with the homeroom teacher and the English teacher of the elementary school to understand the learning situation of children.
3. Interns should prepare for the teaching plan, teaching materials and teaching aids adequately.
4. Interns should wear the uniform to maintain a good image and went to school on time.

Interns should make use of professional knowledge they had learned to serve the community and the elementary school based on the volunteers’ spirit of duty.

During the teaching period, the interns should inspect and learn from the teaching work of other teams carefully and intently.

**Teaching Examples**

While the teaching team on the platform, the rest members of the group all assisted and guided the children, observing the learning situation of children, and taking pictures by the video recorder to serve as the improvement of next teaching procedure.

**Case**

The objective of the team was to make students know four alphabets “A,B,P,K” through the situation – “Fruit Market” and “Games”, and learned Apple, Banana, Peach, Kiwi by using four alphabet cards, clerk counter, fruit hats, mallet, name cards, coins, paper money, and exercising Audio-Lingual Method (ALM), Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Total Physical Response (TPR) Method.

1. **Situation**

   The teachers arranged one “clerk counter”. The children came to the situation “Fruit Market”, and every child could play the role of mothers who bought fruits and inquired the prices.
Teachers asked “What kind of fruit do you like?” Using chatting way to ask students “What kind of fruit do you like?” “If you go to the fruit market, what kind of fruit do you want to buy?”

2. Presentation

Teachers taught children to know four alphabets ”A,B,P,K” and to match fruit pictures. Teachers repeated the fruit names, and asked students: “What is it? “Students responded: it’s ______.”

3. Game playing:

   (1) Crazy Fruit Squat:
   a. There were six groups and four students were in one group.
   b. The students of the same group would put on fruit hats and one student was chosen as the “Ghost”.
   c. When the “Ghost” spoke one “fruit name”, the students of that fruit group would squat.
   d. The group squatted three times and spoke “another” fruit name.
   e. If students “delayed” responding or forgot fruit names, the group would be the “Ghost”.

   (2) Fruit Card Hitting:
   a. Teachers put “fruit cards” on the blackboard.
   b. Each group sent a child
   c. When teachers shouted fruit name, four students would grab the mallet at once to “hit right fruit cards”.

   (3) Fruit Cards Turn over in Pair:
   a. Teachers scattered pair fruit cards and put on the blackboard.
   b. Every group selected one student to “turn over the fruit cards”.
   c. If the students turned over the “same pair of the fruit cards”, they could get points.
   d. If they didn’t turn over the same pair of the fruit cards, they went back to their group.
   e. All groups took in turns and turned over in pair of the fruit cards.

Assessment

Through playing 3 games “crazy fruit squat”, “fruit card hitting”, and “turn over in pair fruit cards” in class, the teacher would know whether all students understood the four alphabets “A`B`P`K”.

During the activity, the teammate helped to take pictures by the video recorder to observe all the students’ learning situation.

Result

The advisor and researcher took part in the procedures for data collection and analyses. Teachers’ observations, interns’ reflections, and interviews were analyzed and categorized as follows:

Teachers’ Observations
1. 90 percent of the children were familiar with English alphabets and pronunciation they had learned
2. 80 percent of the children could make use of alphabets and pronunciation to distinguish new words.
3. Most of the children were curious to listen to the story, and eager to enjoy playing games.
4. The majority of the children were attracted by lively and vivid pictures but sometimes the students were so active and talkative that the interns even were at a loss, the interns tried to calm them down and not let them go too far.

Interns’ Reflections

Many interns stated in their reflections how appreciative they were for the teachers and other teams’ help. They learned each other and revised their teaching. They built up the ability of resolving problems. As every team stated in their reflection reports as follows:
Team 1: We believed preparing for the lesson before teaching and making teaching aids personally were the key to achieving the goal.

Team 2: Teaching materials had to satisfy children’s need; otherwise, children would lose their interest. How to control time and how to deal with bad situation should be learned and revised.

Team 3: We were not satisfied our teaching. The materials –Zodiac Animals seemed difficult for children to pronounce. Children needed to be “noticed” and game playing needed all children’s participation.

Team 4: We were honored to have chance to practice English teaching in a public elementary school. At first the students of the elementary school could not be under control, even hissing us. Although meeting frustration, we learned growth, strength and calmness.

Team 5: Our English chair and advisor asked us to be serious and earnest to fulfill the very important mission to represent our college. One member said “although I would not want to be a teacher, I indulged myself with colorful and interesting experience”.

Team 6: Teaching in the entertainment was obviously attractive. Children enjoyed learning in the games. We demanded that all the children should participate in the activities.

Team 7: During the practice teaching, we found the biggest need was to have assistant teachers to coordinate us. Though most of the interns had no experience, we had to have enough preparation to meet children’s needs.

Team 8: Most of the children did not let us go. This result meant our having achievements.

Team 9: Through other teams’ demonstration we adjusted our teaching aids, pictures and music effect to attract children’s learning.

Team 10: From the beginning, the children were noisy; to the ending, children were curious to learning. So the teaching needed patience and creation.

Team 11: We felt frustrated by low-motivated children but little by little, we found out methods to improve problems. Children needed encouragement. The choice of games and class management were important.

Team 12: That noisy situation sometimes couldn’t be controlled easily made us frustration. Without the practice teaching lesson, we would lack such impressive memory.

Team 13: Wing (one member of the team) said “practice teaching made me ensure my future career-English teacher”. The other stated that being an English teacher in practice teaching enriched my English ability. This was my biggest achievement.

Interviews

From interviews, six interns acquired the job – substitute teachers. They felt honored to have these precious opportunities to pave the way for the future career.

Most of the students felt this was the first time to face and to teach children. The numerous feeling buried in the deep mind. They also stated how to catch children’s attention and how to make children pay attention to learning was the key to successful teaching. Some students mentioned that speaking out a set of pithy formula and developing a tacit agreement to calm children down was necessary. Some students indicated learning atmospheres, teaching technique, teachers’ glamour, communicative skills were very important.
CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusions
1. In a series of teaching activities, the researcher, advisor and teachers found out that most students were involved in the learning and had great interactions in the relaxing atmosphere, including some more low-motivated students. They all enjoyed learning new words by playing games. Sometimes the children were out of order; the interns were at loss. Through the comprehensive evaluations, the children showed significant improvement in their English ability. 98 percent of the children preferred to learn and listened to the story to learn English alphabets. The ability of listening and knowing was better than that of pronouncing.
2. The most important thing was that the interns could design good lesson plans using ESL theories, wrote authentic material to motivate students to English-learning and developed the confidence toward further learning.
3. During the practicum, a group of teachers and interns needed to pay attention to students’ learning feedback and outcomes constantly; once they were behind the schedule, the teachers needed to come up with the solutions and alternatives. This challenge for students contributed to further understanding difficulties of English teaching and did plans of their future career. In addition, this challenge for teachers gained numerous experiences and trials to facilitate teachers to improve teaching techniques in the future.
4. This practicum helped interns to have the attitude and benefits of cooperative learning that Jacobs, Power and Inn (2002) stated, such as increasing motivation to learn, increasing responsibility for their own work, developing collaborative skills, and increasing ability to appreciate and communicating with others.

Suggestions
1. Encourage discussion and brain-storming between teachers and Interns. To face the different problems and bottlenecks in the class, the researcher, the teachers and interns need to have the weekly meeting to discuss and revise the problems they have met and do the corrections. Furthermore, solving problems by brainstorming equips interns for their creative capability in the future career.
2. Adopt listening and speaking practice, the performance of role play, team work, and game activity in the assessment. After activities, the teacher can record students’ performance in detail and put on internet campus to encourage children to understand their situation of learning.
3. Ask students to record English pronunciation before class by using mp3 record or record pen. In order to improve children’s ability, the teacher can encourage students to compare their recorded voice with their own previous pronunciation.
4. Make good use of multimedia materials. Such materials not only gives teachers more diversity for teaching but also provides students self-learning channels. Through internet, children will gain new interesting materials such as sound, animated cartoons, and images. Then children are willing to learn.

Lastly it is recommended that establishing instructional consulting team and visiting Elementary schools and preschools to exchange opinions and teaching techniques then serve a reference of developing remedial teaching.
REFERENCES


