

How to engage low proficient learners in a low resource classroom



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ABSTRACT

This was an action research done during an online course EVO-2017 (Electronic Village Online). The problem identified to conduct an action research is *How to engage the low proficient learners in a low resource classroom*. During this research project we (students and teacher) learnt together and worked together to solve our classroom problems. While doing research we concentrated on the following key aspects:

- **To motivate the students intrinsically and extrinsically**
- **Teachers role is to facilitate learning**
- **Child-centered classroom**
- **Make the students autonomous learners**
- **Doing mistakes is a kind of learning**
- **Students' participation is crucial in the learning process**
- **Demonstration and displaying of students' work motives them intrinsically**
- **Focus on process rather than the product**
- **Teacher is a co-learner**
- **Comprehensible input enhances learning**

Introduction: (Context of the research) This research is done in a government secondary school run by the Telangana state. Students of this school are from rural areas of Telengana. The class consists of 40 students including boys and girls. Most of them are first generation learners. The students who participated in this research studied in Telugu medium up to class 5 and joined here in our school in class 6 and are taught in English. Currently (academic year 2016-2017) they are in class 7. They are very enthusiastic learners.

Time Schedule:

Week-1:

- ❖ Understanding context
- ❖ Identifying a problem

Week-2

- ❖ When will we start our research?
- ❖ Identifying themes / strategies / techniques
- ❖ Collecting data: how?

Week-3

- ❖ Classroom try-out

Week-4

- ❖ Analyzing the data: how?

Week-5

- ❖ Findings/results/presentations

Procedure: To motivate and encourage the low proficient learners the activity chosen is designing a poster. The reason for selecting this activity is children like to work with colors, drawings, and designs. The topic chosen is also within their experiential-orbit i.e. **Snakes in India**. The students must have encountered snakes many times in their lives in their villages.

Comprehensive Input: We collected information about snakes in India, reading texts and videos showing different varieties of snakes available in India, snake bites, myths about snakes, how to avoid snake bite and how to treat a snake bite.

Here are YouTube links:

Snakes in India-: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n1SI8rPQ9GM&t=121s>

How to avoid snake bite: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vT9SX2nDW4k>

How to treat a snake bite: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVIXd5_Kcsc

We collected some sample posters to understand the skill of poster making and

observed the characteristics of poster making in group and used these features while designing posters and assessing posters.

Video showing sample posters:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5jcZjmeUrQ&feature=youtu.be>

Group work/ collaborative task: Divided the students into seven groups with each group consisting of 5 to 6 members to monitor their participation in the group activity. They were assigned different roles like:

- ❖ **Monitor/Team leader:** Team leader will monitor or co-ordinate the group work and assign different tasks.
- ❖ **Spell checker:** Spell checker will go through the poster and correct the spelling mistakes found in it.
- ❖ **Content monitor:** Content monitor will check whether the selected content is relevant to the topic.
- ❖ **Lay-out designer:** Lay-out designer will design the lay-out of the poster and use of appropriate colors and decorations
- ❖ **Presenter:** Presenter's role is to present the poster prepared by their group to the class.

Assessment: We assessed the posters informally by providing rubrics / checklists / characteristics of a good poster

S.No	Characteristics of a good poster	Yes/No
1.	Captions	
2.	Slogans	
3.	Logo/Emblem/Symbols	
4.	Picture/ Diagrams/ sketches	
5.	Messages/ Short messages/Brevity	
6.	Telegraphic language	
7.	Attractive	
8.	Appropriate pictures	
9.	Layout/Colorful/Drawings	
10.	Heading/Issuer details	

We used this check-list for self-assessment and peer assessment, based this check-list we go on updating our posters until we came to our final outcome.

Feed forward: Mistakes are part of learning so we didn't focus on language errors. We just ignored and concentrated mainly on meaning. We asked the teachers of other subjects and students of other classes to observe the poster and write their comments.

Data analysis:

We worked together and collected the data in the form of recordings of students' presentations, images and evidences of students' work i.e. portfolios.

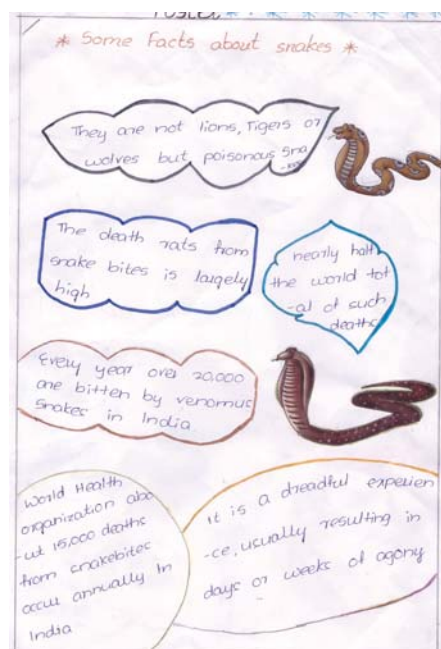
Teacher's reflections / Observations:

As a classroom practitioner what I observed during this research was that most of my students became autonomous learners and low proficient learners started taking responsibility of their learning without depending on others. There was a much recognizable behavioral change among the students.

Classroom interaction increased and about 90 percent of students began to contribute actively. Student and teacher relationship became much stronger and it resulted in enhancing the students' involvement in the classroom interaction. The classroom became a place of enjoyment and learning became fun.

Evidences:

Poster-1: Some facts about snake



Results/findings:

Collaborative tasks and group work:

Students were assigned different roles and it helped them become responsible learners and participate actively throughout the process of poster making.

Topic selected is within their experiential

orbit: The topic chosen was familiar, interesting and within their experiential orbit and this helped us to increase the participation of low proficient learners.

Error tolerance: In the process of learning we learnt to tolerate errors. We believed that making mistakes is a kind of learning without making mistakes we cannot learn anything. Making mistakes and accepting mistakes play a vital role to build confidence of low proficient learners

Concentrating on process rather than

product: Our research also concentrated mostly on process rather than the product. Low proficient learners were motivated to participate actively and during the process we focused on the number drafts they prepared rather than the outcome of their group work.

Oral presentations: The students were encouraged to present the posters to the class. Here the presenter took a lead role. What we observed here was that even some groups which did not participate or complete the given task in time, worked together and finished everything when the deadline for presentation neared. It is clear evidence that even low proficient learners also took a

lead role during group presentations. To build the confidence among the children, everyone in the group was encouraged to come to the dais while presenting their group work. Each presentation ended with a big applause from the audience and it motivated the participants intrinsically.

Students' Presentations: YouTube Video link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TrDt-tM0oUY&t=26s>

Demonstration/display of their work:

After presenting the students' work to the class, we demonstrated/displayed the work in the classroom and asked the teachers of other subjects and students of other classes to go through the poster and write their comments. This activity helped the low proficient learners to be motivated intrinsically.

Conclusion: I conclude that learning never happens in a day or two. It is a lifelong process. It can happen anywhere and everywhere and not only in classroom. It includes the efforts of teachers as well as students. The teacher's role is to facilitate learning by providing appropriate learning resources and opportunities and the student's role is to grab every opportunity to acquire language in classroom transaction.

Finally every individual is born with some hidden potential and the teacher should identify learners' strengths and tailor their teaching according to the needs and requirements of the learners.