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EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TEACHERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (TPD) ON RECIPROCAL TEACHING STRATEGIES

***Annotation.** There has been outcry over the inability of new and less experienced English teachers to apply strategies that could enhance students' reading comprehension. Reciprocal Teaching Strategy (RTS) was therefore introduced via the teacher professional development (TPD) to augment teachers' competence in reading comprehension. The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the effectiveness of teacher professional development on reciprocal strategies among less experienced English language teachers in South East, Nigeria. The impact of reciprocal teaching has been continually established if the approach is properly carried under a guidance of an expert. Professional development has been a recognized management practice where teachers are trained to develop their professional and pedagogical skills that would effectively and efficiently enhance their teaching performance in class. Experimental research design was applied for this evaluation (pre-test-intervention-post-test approach) to determine the effectiveness of the strategy. A total of N=56 constitutes the sample size. Teacher survey questionnaire (TSQ) was the instrument for data collection. The result shows a significant improvement after the intervention. This paper therefore concludes that RTS is a good strategy to teach reading of comprehension to students. It also summarized that TDP is an effective strategy to improve the competency level of new and less experienced English teachers.*

***Key words:** Reciprocal teaching strategy (RTS), Teacher professional development (TPD), teacher competency.*

Introduction

The new and less experienced teachers were subjected to four-week professional development training to augment their competency in teaching reading of comprehension to students. This evaluation becomes necessary because of its tendency to predict if the program is effective or not.

To make sure that the learner receives the support and background in becoming proficient in reading comprehension, Palincsar and Brown, (1984) developed the reciprocal teaching strategy to help teachers improve steadily and faster. According to (Palincsar and Brown, (1984) RTS is a guided reading comprehension strategy that encourages students to develop the skills that effective readers and learners do automatically (summarize, question, clarify, predict, and respond to what they are reading). For this strategy to properly synchronize within the teaching field, teacher professional development should be made an integral part of the teaching and learning system (Anderson,1996).

General Problem:

The lack of required expertise by the new and less experienced teachers to apply appropriate strategies to teach students reading of comprehension. As a result, there is an urgent need to provide immediate support to new teachers, therefore the TPD is designed to bridge the gap.

Treatment Description

The teacher development program (TPD) was designed to run for 4 weeks where the participants received lessons on each of the four modules designed for reciprocal teaching strategy. A posttest was administered at the end of the 4th week through a survey questionnaire to weigh the effectiveness of the TPD. Figure 1. The TPD modules.

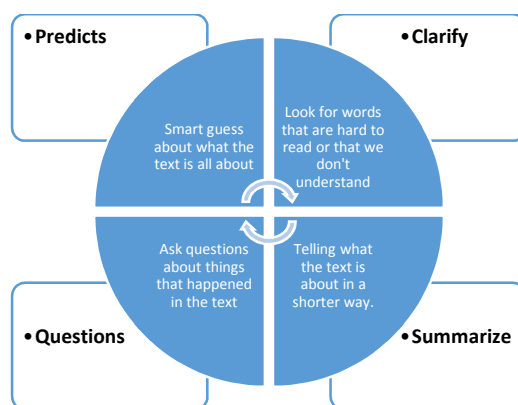


Fig. 1. The TPD modules

The summary of the TPD module week 1-4 (Pilonieta & Medina,2009).

Evaluation Objective

The objective of the evaluation is to investigate the effectiveness of teacher professional development on reciprocal teaching strategy after 4 weeks training.

Theoretical Framework

Figure 2. The theoretical background



Fig. 2. The theoretical background

Showing the Reciprocal Teaching as explained by three theories of guided learning (Brown & Paulinsca, 1986).

As reciprocal teaching is centered on guided learning, it is imperative to hint that guided learning is a systematic process where learners begin and progress their learning with the assistance of an experienced expert and/or socially derived sources such as resources, text, and/or other objects. (Billett, 2012.) On this premise, this study considered three principles, Vygotsky, (1976) zone of proximal development; Wood et al., (1976) expert scaffolding and proleptic teaching (Rogoff and Gardner, 1984).

Reciprocal Teaching Strategy

Reciprocal teaching is a system of teaching which is characterized as an instructional activity which happens in the arrangement of a talk among teachers and students with respect to segments of a literature. As the primary role of a teacher is to help students improve their performance level, it is therefore obligatory to undergo training which would lead to improving teaching competency. In their work on reciprocal teaching, Palincsar and Brown, (1984) defined it as a guided reading comprehension strategy that encourages students to develop skills effective for reading and learning to automatically (summarize, question, clarify, predict, and respond to what is being read). According to Vivin and Fahri, (2013) who cited Palincsar, and Brown (1984) stated that those four main strategies were based on the following principles:

- 1) Readers employ these strategies.
- 2) Support both comprehension monitoring and comprehension fostering.
- 3) Is applied when there is a problem in reading a text.
- 4) Regarded as metacognitive strategy.

According to Vivin & Fahri, (2013), readers who passed through reciprocal teaching are more informed of their own thinking and reading process.

Teacher professional Development (TPD)

Teacher professional development, which is one of the trendy innovations in the teaching and learning process, is considered part of lifelong education (Bümen et al., (2012). Teacher professional development is defined as a process or organized activities designed for teachers to develop their students, and to further improve their professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Guskey, 2002). Teachers’ continuing professional development is seen as one of the most recent innovations in the field of teaching and learning. Furthermore, Birman et al., (2000) have shown through their study that professional development is playing a prominent role in teacher improvement.

There are numerous reasons TPD should be encouraged, if not for anything for the sake of teachers’ effectiveness in the classroom. To be an effective teacher requires a combination of professional knowledge and specialized skills as well one’s own personal experiences and qualities (Murray, 2010). The need for TPD should not be overemphasized because it adds to the knowledge base and via acquisition of new skills (Bailey, Curtis & Nunan, 2001). Suffice to say that professional development training is a worthwhile activity for teachers to improve professionally and become more responsive to duties by improving their competencies. Evidence has also shown that beneficiaries of this program are more prepared, more effective and can contribute more to student learning (Boyd et al, 2008).

Evaluation Question

Does teacher professional development (TPD) improve reciprocal teaching strategy among new and less experienced teachers?

Method

Data Collection/instrument

A questionnaire was used as both pretest and posttest to assess the effectiveness of the teachers professional development on reciprocal teaching strategy through participants’ response after four weeks of the intervention. The four-point Likert scale questionnaire SD-SA used for the survey was divided into six sections (section A = demographic information; sections B-E were items designed for each week’s activity. Namely, predictive, Questioning, Clarification and Summary. Section F was based on teacher professional development. The reliability test of the items confirmed a high Cronbach alpha indicating its reliability.

Figure 3. Evaluation Model/ Process.

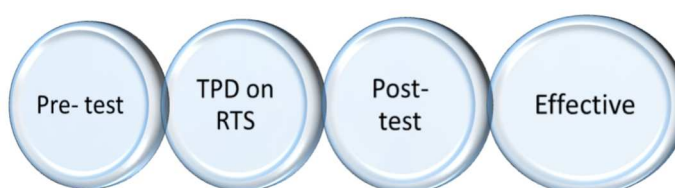


Fig. 3. Evaluation Model/ Process

Showing the evaluation processes. Source-Author

Result (Tabl. 1 – 4).

Table 1

S/N	Classification	Demographics			Total
		Category	Male	Female	
1	Sex		28	28	56
2	Age	24-27	10	11	28
		28-31	18	17	28
3	Years of Experience	0-1	08	11	19
		1-2	12	10	22
		2-3	08	07	15

Note: N=28; years of experience is between 1-3; age is between 24-30.

Table 2

Mean and Standard Deviation of the Raw scores			
Category	N	M	SD
Pretest	56	17.26	4.14
Post Test	56	34.26	3.42

Table 3

Significance of difference between pre-test and post-test teacher professional development (TPD) on reciprocal teaching					
Category	N	M	SD	t	p
Pretest	56	17.26	4.14	-18.34	.00
Post Test	56	34.27	3.42		

Note: $N=56$; $df=34$; $t_{.05}=1.67$

Table shows that the actual difference between the mean of pre-test and post-test score was found to be highly significant because the calculated t value is higher than critical t value at 0.05 level of significance and is also significant at 0.00 level. It can be concluded that there is a significant difference between the mean TPD scores of pre-test and post-test after the treatment.

Discussion

Considering the result obtained from the independent t-test, the raw scores taken from the pre-test and post-test were computed using SPSS software. Independent samples t-test was used to compare the possible differences between the means of the pre and posttests. As indicated in tables 3 and 4 respectively, the mean score of the pretest ($M = 17.26$, $SD = 4.14$.) in comparison to the means score of ($M = 34.26$, $SD = 3.42$; $t(34) = 1.67$, $p = 0.05$ after the treatment. This result shows that the mean score after the treatment (posttest) is more than the score before the treatment (pretest). The mean difference between the TPD on reciprocal teaching score of pretest and posttest was $M = 17.01$ which is significant as the calculated t-value is higher than the critical value at 0.05 level of significance.

The effectiveness of the TPD is confirmed from the available evidence as shown in tables 3 and 4 which indicates that the participants benefited from the use of the RT strategies and the participants found the process interesting and were enthusiastic in their involvement. They also gave evidence of internalizing particularly the strategies of questioning and clarifying (Cooper & Grieve, 2009).

Conclusion

This development indicated that TPD was useful for learning RTS. As reciprocal teaching is linked to four strategies, viz: predicting, questioning, clarifying, and summarizing, the TPD was used to improve participants' level of knowledge on reciprocal teaching strategy as it incorporates the above categories. Considering the change model approach, the outcome of the TPD seems positive after the application of the treatment.

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