

## HOW DOES GROUP DISCUSSION MINIMIZE ON TASK BEHAVIOR

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### Abstract

This research investigated the students learning behavior during the Reading class. The aimed of this study was improving students' on-task behavior using group discussion. Furthermore, this study reveals the students' attitudes who mostly were not directing their eyes gaze at the teacher and the instructional activity. For instance, the students did not pay attention toward appropriate instructional material and they were looking elsewhere. Thus, that behave was classified as off-task. While On-task behavior was defined as activity that complied with instructions given by the teacher for that lesson. Based on the previous matter, the use of group discussion during the classroom activities is definitely a fascinating phenomenon that can improve their on-task behavior during the learning activities in the class, especially reading.

**Keywords:** on-task behavior, reading, group discussion

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Low levels of on-task behavior in classrooms can be a significant problem for teachers and students. Students who display such behavior characteristically are inattentive, distractible, and fail to complete work (Dalton, 1999). Low levels of on-task behavior may also have detrimental effects on the instructional process within the classroom, both for teachers and other students. As the English language teaching aim, reading plays as vital part which interprets learn English means learn reading. The aim of reading to get the main message of the text; it does not involve studying every word (Pollard, 2008). Reading is a difficult task, especially in foreign language; in this case it is English reading (Krashen, 2003). Lems (2010) maintained that reading comprehension is the ability to construct meaning from a given written text. Regarding, reading is the key point for basics English, in particular teaching reading become the main concern for the teachers. The students were found did not engage during the reading class. They tend to do something else out of the activity.

In addition, other studies have demonstrated the positive effects of using group discussion strategies to increase the students' on-task behavior. Group discussions are a very important aspect of group communication. Group discussions are a creative and dynamic activity which stimulates reflective thinking among the members. Definition of group discussion is the activity in a small number of people when they can exchange and share their ideas freely, this activity is to reach the decision in common issue. In order to better understand a student's ability to stay on-task, the researchers chose to conduct a study to see when small group discussion are applied in the Classroom, whether it affects students' on-task behavior or not.

## 2. DISCUSSION

### 2.1 On-task behavior in reading class

#### a. On-task behavior

Low levels of on-task behavior in classrooms can be a significant problem for teachers and students. Students who display such behavior characteristically are

inattentive, distractible, and fail to complete work (Dalton, 1999). If prolonged, this pattern can lead to more widespread problems including difficulty with creating and maintaining close interpersonal relationships with teachers and peers, peer rejection, and social isolation inside and outside of school (Lee, 2007). Low levels of on-task behavior may also have detrimental effects on the instructional process within the classroom, both for teachers and other students (Shogren, 2011).

From the previous explanation, The condition of the students who did not pay attention to the instruction given, they tend to look elsewhere, play with their stuff, and fail to complete their work.

Teachers often report being overwhelmed by the many no instructional responsibilities of their profession. Furthermore, they frequently balk at implementing complicated and intrusive interventions for individual students. Sprague and Walker (2000) stressed the importance of intervention research being practical for implementation in the schools. The current research suggests one quick, simple antecedent intervention that can increase student on-task behavior during the first 10 min of class.

The data from the pre-intervention On-Task Behavior Checklist, the students exhibited strengths and weaknesses. Strengths included completing work on time and getting to work immediately. The students were able to get to work on the activities quickly, and were able to complete work as expected. Weaknesses included time spent on-task, understanding directions, and disrupting others. The students often asked for the directions to be repeated, and had a difficult time focusing on their own work.

#### b. Reading

##### 1) Reading assessment

The test is a series of questions which consist of multiple choice in order to know the effectiveness of small group discussion during the reading class. There are 20 multiple choice question whose five options (a, b, c, d). The test included some indicators such as, Main idea, Implicit information, Explicit information, Reference, and Vocabulary. The test item is practical to score, for instance each numbers were assessed 5 point.

##### 2) The concept of teaching reading

Reading is a good way of receiving input because it is accessible and full of input (Chiang, 2014). Some of the obstacles which discourage the language learner are lack of English book, doing no reading for English subject. As earlier explanation, it also supported by Mikulecky (2008) point out reading is the basic of instruction in all aspects of language learning; using textbook for language course, developing vocabulary, acquiring grammar and using computer-assisted in language learning program. Krashen (1985) argue that the best way to improve reading comprehension is by reading. While, reading comprehension means making sense of what you read and connecting the ideas in the text to what you already know (Harmer, 2001).

Reading is the process of receiving, interpreting information encoded, reproduce the word mentally and vocally, and understanding the ideas and information from text. The more students read, the better their vocabulary becomes and the better vocabulary they know, the better they can read.

The aim of teaching reading is to help students to find the information they want quickly besides to show the students that understanding just a few words is often sufficient to get the message. Teaching reading skills can be divided

into : skimming, scanning, on going prediction, reading for the main ideas and reading in detail (Devine, 1986).

## 2.2 Small group discussion

### a. The concept of small group discussion

It is better for the teacher to choose the group randomly or a group them only because they are sitting together when applied the group discussion in English reading class. In contrast, a lot of indicators should be considered, for example, their language proficiency, interest, attitudes towards reading, gender and personality. The teacher should know well about the students and make sure each group member has complementary advantages, at the same time, the level of each group should be almost the same and this may ensure a fair competition among them (Gu, 2010).

Group discussion is a group work of students who they are sitting together which level of their language proficiency, interest, attitudes towards reading, gender and personality each group should be almost the same.

Concerning the number of the group members, generally two to six students should be included. A class should not have too many students. Too many group members may reduce the opportunity for a specific group member to express his own idea and some students may stay in a “safe corner” and merely depend on other group members’ work. Proper tasks can be assigned to each group member. For example, if a group has 4 members, one of them should be the time keeper, one of them as note taker, one should in charge of expressing and summarizing the ideas of the group members and another one should be responsible for preventing group members from distracting or deviating from the main topic.

The role of each group member may switch from one and another so that the each member’s corresponding abilities can be trained. To make sure everyone has the chance to practice, a supervisor may be appointed to keep track of the group member who speaks less in the discussion process. Then this member should be appointed to summarize the questions in the discussion and make a presentation to others, which gives him another chance to express in English and help build his self-confidence. The teacher, at the same time, should encourage him by using appraising words (Wang, 2011). A proper grouping may ensure every student’s active participation in the discussion and no one will be neglected. In this way, it may realize the efficient communication between members and thus increase the effectiveness of discussion.

### b. The advantage and disadvantage of small group discussion

#### 1) Advantage

- a) More productive: It is been found that one of the main benefits of working in a group is that it helps to raise the complete output. If working in a group, everyone works together making use of the best of their skills to make sure of quality output.
- b) More resources: One thing to realize is that more the number of people that joins the group, the resources also increase alongside it. For example, as more people are added, the total ability of the person also increases.
- c) More reliable: One good thing about working in groups is that if in case someone is not keeping well or if they miss the work for some reason, the job can still be done properly and efficiently by the rest of the people in the team.

- d) Learn things: It is seen that more often that, people in a group can go on to learn new things from the others. They get the option to learn from each other. All people while working in groups have their own ideas, from which another person can learn so many things.
  - e) Information Exchange: While working in a group, everyone gets the opportunity to communicate to others well within the group. Each idea or suggestions, whoever it is by is considered and thoroughly discussed before the group arrives at a conclusion.
  - f) Team commitment: When one is committed to work in a team, the person can go on to encourage and support the performance as a group.
- 2) Disadvantage
- a) Unequal Participation: It is quite possible that while in a group some of the customers may not do that much work, while others may work hard
  - b) Intrinsic Conflict: When a wide variety of people start to work in a group, disagreement is sure to arise between all the people in the group. Everybody should have their own ideas which could conflict with what the other person has to suggest.
  - c) No Individual thinking: While working in a group, there is no place for individual thinking. It is by no means a one man show.
  - d) Decision making takes time: In view of the fact that it is a group effort, suggestions and ideas from all of the people in a group have to be taken into account.
  - e) Easy to avoid work: When in a group especially a large one, it is very easy for the person to avoid work and leave it to others to complete.
  - f) Time consuming: The whole process could be time consuming, while working in a group. It takes a lot of time, since there is need for agreement and co-ordination from all members of the team.
  - g) Inequality in getting work: If the person opts to work in a group, when the work is being distributed chance is not every one gets equal amount of work. Someone might end up with more work, while other might get only little to do.

### 2.3 The implementing of small group discussion in reading class

There are several plausible interpretations of these results. First, it is possible that group discussion provided during the reading class reduced or eliminated the establishing operation for attention-maintained off-task behavior, thereby increasing on-task behavior during the initial portion of class (e.g., Laraway, Snyckerski, Michael, & Poling, 2003). However, in the absence of a functional analysis of off-task behavior, this account remains speculative.

Second, small group discussion have functioned as a discriminative stimulus indicating the availability of attention as reinforcement for appropriate behavior. Third, increases in student on-task behavior have been a result of unprogrammed changes in the reinforcement schedule for appropriate behavior. Data on teacher implementation of the programmed intervention, as well as other potentially influential interactions with students (e.g., consequences for appropriate behavior, number and type of instructions), are necessary to draw conclusions regarding the relation between group discussion and on-task behavior.

Teachers often report being overwhelmed by the many noninstructional responsibilities of their profession. Furthermore, they frequently balk that at implementing complicated and intrusive interventions for individual students.

Sprague and Walker (2000) stress the importance of intervention research being practical for implementation in the schools.

Merely having small group discussion enhance and increased students' reading activeness and on-task behavior as well. The reading materials for the group discussion-based English reading class should be graded according to the level of students. The reading materials or the textbooks should not be too difficult to understand; otherwise the students may lose interest and become de-motivated. The reading material should not be too easy or too difficult. An effective way to measure the effectiveness is: if the reader can enjoy reading the text, or do not take reading as an exercise, then it can be assumed that the reading material conforms to their level. The reading material can be prepared beforehand or ready-made from books, or can be authentic or tailor-made for the students. If pre-prepared materials are adopted, the teacher may use text from magazines, internet on the hot topics which students may be interested in, such as entertainment, the World Cup, campus life, science fictions etc. This will help foster a positive attitude towards reading. At the beginning, the reading material should not be too hard and this helps the students to build their confidence and courage in the further tasks.

During the teaching process, the leading role of the teacher and the main role of students should be combined and the students' subjective initiative should be fully made use of. To organize effective group discussion activity, the teacher should change his role to the organizer or coordinator of classroom and take full consideration of the method of grouping, the seat arrangement, the selection of reading materials.

#### 2.3.1 Step of small group discussion

- a) Ask the students to introduce their self : to start the discussion, make sure that everyone is comfortable and the best way to make the ice break is introduce themselves.
- b) Give the rules : before launching to the discussion, tell about the role so that everybody knows the conditionals rules of conducted.
- c) Explain the topic before: a group discussion usually will be based on the central topic, so that make sure the participant knows about the topic. Then, give them a quick refresher before discussion begins.
- d) Give the participant the chance to ask question open-ended question to begin, do not allow to give the answer like simple answers "yes" or "no". The question should not in wrong or right answer as this will push people to begin the discussion.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The used of group discussion in English language teaching and learning will help the students to increase their listening, speaking, reading and translating skills. It will also help to build up the students' confidence and sense in the classroom.

Finally, Group Discussion will arouse the students' interest in studying English by implementing of group discussion, it will help the student improve their ability in reading skill and improve their on-task behavior.

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