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Editorial

We are very happy to come up with the 14th volume, Spring 2010 issue of Rabsel – the CERD educational Journal. Through this volume of Rabsel, we sincerely hope that our teachers, students and educationists at large would benefit a lot from the wisdom and experiences of our scholars. The issue of this new volume of Rabsel brings to light some of the pertinent issues, challenges and opportunities confronting education today. It also contains some of the most invaluable experiences, insights, adversities and practices reflected by our educators, teachers and researchers which are very helpful for moving our education forward.

Assistance in the Classroom: A New Category of Educational Worker by Dr. R. Greenwood and N. Simpson suggests the introduction of a new category of Educational worker, Teacher’s Assistant, as a way to support teachers in the classroom while addressing another concern in Bhutan, that of a high unemployment rate. It supports that a Trained Teacher’s Assistants could help Educators in their efforts to address the needs of an increasingly diverse student population and strengthen the quality of the education system.

Building Students’ Oral Fluency: Perspectives on the Use of Spoken English in Bhutanese Classrooms by Sangay Biddha, & Dorji Thinley describes the importance of Bhutanese students’ oral fluency in English as a foundation for building their academic and social skills and, hence, the need to develop it in schools and colleges. It identifies and describes the common barriers as well as its implications to developing students’ oral proficiency in the target language. Based on the barriers and implications, it recommends broad approaches and strategies for improving students’ oral fluency.

Positive Student-Teacher Relationship: A Greater Student Well-being and Success by Ramesh Thapa reports a review on how a strong positive student-teacher relationships is fundamental

for students' chances of academic success. It reflects how students as well as teachers can achieve success through mutual acceptance, understanding, warmth, closeness, trust, respect, care and cooperation. It suggests several recommendations on developing positive environment, good relationships and its effectiveness.

Special Education in Bhutan Possible Next Steps by Dr. R. Greenwood and N. Simpson attempts to review the development of Education and specifically Special Education in Bhutan and makes suggestions as to what could be done next to help students with Learning Disabilities and in turn addresses some of the concerns of retention and repetition of students in Bhutan.

How can I improve my behavioral strategies in the classroom to encourage students' participation? by Dawa Dukpa is an action research study which was undertaken to observe minimal participation of students in one of the class he taught. It provides helpful recommendations for significant improvement in the students overall level of participation in the classroom.

Perceptual Learning Styles of Higher Secondary School Students (UDHSS) by Tshewang Dorji examines the perceptual learning style of Ugyen Dorji Higher Secondary School students. The study shows that majority of the students preferred Kinesthetic and Group Learning Styles. It therefore, presents a practical option for teachers in applying a constructive approach in every day lesson plans.

For, those who have contributed to this issue of Rabsel, we extend our deepest thanks and gratitude for your continued support. Your assistance will help fulfill our common mission of achieving excellence for education in the country.

Ramesh Thapa
Research Officer

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Assistance in the Classroom A New Category of Educational Worker

-Dr. R. Greenwood and N.Simpson

More and more is being asked of Teachers in Bhutan, multi-grade classrooms, child friendly environments, inclusive education, in a dual language program, to name only a few. Along with this they must deliver a very full and in some cases new syllabus within a philosophical framework of Gross National Happiness. The authors suggest the introduction of a new category of Educational worker, a Teacher's Assistant, as a way to support teachers in the classroom while addressing another concern in Bhutan, that of a high unemployment rate. Trained Teacher's Assistants could help Educators in their efforts to address the needs of an increasingly diverse student population and strengthen the quality of the education system. While providing support in the schools this new educational position provides the opportunity for productive employment to some presently under or unemployed members of Bhutan society.

Teachers around the world are asked to do many things in the course of their job. It is no different in Bhutan. In a rapidly changing education environment the teachers in Bhutan, in addition to all their regular teaching responsibilities, are being asked to incorporate many new teaching methods into their practice. As an example, teachers are now being asked to implement inclusive education and multi-grade classrooms. This pedagogical shift in approach is to take place in classes that may contain 35 – 40 students.

The government is adamant about expanding education to all children and the inclusion of students with Special Education Needs (SEN) into the regular classroom creates even greater demands upon teachers.

The resources and expertise in rural schools are often not as plentiful as those in the larger urban areas adding to the demands placed upon the teacher. The resources for SEN children in the regular community school are often limited. In some cases if the teacher is to instruct the special needs student appropriately it may be necessary to teach that student individually. When the teacher is involved with one student the rest of the class still requires supervision and support in completing their assignments. On the other hand when the teacher is involved with the rest of the class the special needs student may not understand what is being asked of them or may find it difficult to work independently on the same curriculum as the rest of the class and may require special help to complete their assignments. In some cases the SEN student may require special care because of their physical needs or behaviour and the teacher may not have the training or experience to deal with the student's needs i.e. toileting/mobility/restraints etc. Some of these issues with older students may involve the safety of both the student and the teacher.

There is also a concern regarding the unemployment rate within Bhutan. Despite the rapid growth of the capacity of the education system many students are graduating from higher secondary school unable to gain acceptance into post secondary programs or to secure a position in the work force. Some students have developed specialized skills within a Vocational Institution and may still be unable to obtain employment. In addition to the skills they may have learned in school many of these individuals have good interpersonal skills (emotional intelligence) and many of these individuals' skills would be a great asset to primary and secondary schools.

There is also a group of citizens within Bhutan with strong skills beyond the academic realm. Regardless of their academic qualifications these young people could make a real contribution to special students with special education needs. If there are

individuals who possess strong interpersonal skills and the ability to relate to young people they could help provide support to students in a modified or alternate school setting. Others might have the skills to provide a strong program in both traditional and contemporary, Music Arts and Crafts. The expertise of these individuals would also be of great asset to the teachers and the schools.

A suggestion to address both of these concerns would be to develop another category of worker within schools, the Teacher's Assistant. These school workers would assist in the classroom and help the teacher.

Role of a Teacher's Assistant:

Teacher's Assistants would support both the teacher and the students. This role is not that of a teacher but as an assistant to the teacher. The Teacher's Assistant would help in the classroom and would act under the direction and supervision of the teacher. This individual would interact directly with the students and the teachers and be of support to both. For example, there may be times when the teacher has explained a lesson or concept and the students have been asked to work in groups on follow-up activities, then the Teacher's Assistant could provide additional explanation and help to a group or individual to support their learning.

Physical challenges If because of physical limitations a student is taking longer to complete an assignment the Teacher's Assistant could work individually helping the student to complete their work. Students who require assistance to with mobility or personal care issues would have the support of a trained and caring adult.

Academic challenges Students with learning challenges could be working within the class on an alternate or modified assignment under the guidance of the Teacher's Assistant. For example

instructions could be read to the students with visual processing difficulties and assessments could be given orally for those whose learning challenges involve writing difficulties.

Behaviour challenges An additional adult in the classroom would provide positive modelling for student behaviour and provide more attention for individual students as well as the entire class by the teacher. Concerns about individual student needs could be recognized earlier and dealt with greater immediacy. For example, students diagnosed with autism could be supported in their transitions and routines could be more consistent. More supervision in the classroom would improve and strengthen the safety and behaviour within the school as well as provide more opportunities for a greater variety of activities.

Traditional Arts/Vocational Skills Depending on the particular expertise or training of the individual Teacher Assistants there may be opportunities within the school where the Teacher Assistant could provide additional support and skill training in extra-curricular activities and projects. This would help the school maintain the preservation of Bhutanese tradition and culture-one of the main Pillars of GNH.

Trainees:

As mentioned above, there is some concern within Bhutan regarding the rate of unemployment. With the rapid growth in the number of graduates of the education system within the country many graduates have been unable to find employment. There is also a group of students that either did not pursue or were not accepted into a tertiary education setting. These students however may have all the interpersonal skills necessary to work with children in a school setting under the supervision of a trained teacher.

The role of a Teacher's Assistant may also be very appropriate for

adults who have been involved in Non Formal Education and have some applicable life experience and a level of maturity. Parents or family members of SEN children might also choose to learn more about the needs of their children and then, after their Teacher's Assistant training, be able to provide support in the schools. They would bring a deeper understanding of SEN to the classroom and the school.

Graduates of the Royal Academy of Performing Arts or the Schools of Traditional Arts and Crafts have a wealth of skills and knowledge which could greatly enrich a school community. With additional Teacher's Assistant training these individuals could make unique contributions to staff and students in the role of a Teacher's Assistant, not only supporting SEN students but also supporting GNH within the school.

By offering training to these groups of individuals Bhutan would be able to better accomplish its goals of inclusive education while providing greater employment opportunities and enriching learning and teaching experiences.

Training of Teacher's Assistant:

Teacher's Assistants would need to have a general theoretical understanding of child development. The general training should also include a focus on understanding the range of student abilities and how to assist those students with specific needs. If a Teacher's Assistant wanted to pursue further training to specialize in a particular area it may include specific skill training in: for example, Braille, Sign Language, mobility, physical and behavioural needs of students. This could be taken after their initial training at a later date once the Teacher's Assistant has some experience working in a school. The courses focusing on a specialization could take place through continuing education-evening, summer or winter holidays.

Training programs for Teacher's Assistants would be most effective if they incorporated a strong experiential component. That would allow trainees to work with students having a variety of needs as well as teachers having different teaching styles. Working within a variety of school settings and with different school staff would enable trainees to identify their own strengths and interests as well as develop relationships for future employment opportunities.

In conclusion, Education in Bhutan has taken on the admirable goal of providing an education for all its children. Inclusive education within Bhutan is very complex at present with the shortage of teachers and the rapid changes in curriculum, methodologies and approaches to teaching. Increased support for students within the classroom would enhance the opportunities for successful learning especially for exceptional children-those with special needs. Support for the teacher in the form of a trained Teacher's Assistant could help educators in their efforts to address the needs of an increasingly diverse student population and strengthen the quality of the education system. At the same time this new educational position/role provides the opportunity for productive employment to some presently under or unemployed members of Bhutan society.

The following are examples of the course outlines/objectives of Teacher's Assistant programs in Ontario, Canada. Other program outlines can be found within College Diploma offerings could provide vocational skills in.

Examples/Suggestions re: Training Programs

Teacher's Assistant (Mohawk College)

- ▶▶ Develop knowledge and skills to work with and support exceptional children in their learning
- ▶▶ Become an integral team member along with teachers and other professionals by providing support to children

with physical, behaviour, communication, or intellectual exceptionalities and unique needs

- ▶▶ Applying theory and skills in field placement experiences each semester and prepare yourself for the real world
- ▶▶ Help students with everything from academics to social and personal skills in a school setting

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

- ▶ Promote and model positive and pro-social behaviour in all aspects of their role with the learners, peers, supervisors, members of the educational team, and where members of the learners' family and/or guardians requested.
- ▶ Implement, under the direction of or with support from school personnel, individualized educational plans to assist and accommodate the varied strengths and developmental needs of learners.
- ▶ Adapt to the learning environments that support and accommodate the varied strengths and the developmental needs of all learners.
- ▶ Assist learners and team members to use assistive devices and/or technology and other educational resources as recommended or prescribed to support learning.
- ▶ Respond to/and assist with personal care needs of learners in consultation with the educational team, specialists, and family members.
- ▶ Maintain a safe and professional environment that promotes the interests, protection, and well-being of learners and members of the educational team.
- ▶ Observe, track/record, and report information related to the learner and the learning environment as identified by school personnel.
- ▶ Act in a manner consistent with the professional requirements related to all aspects of their work.
- ▶ Assist the student in attaining essential life and job related

skills, work related vocabulary, money concepts, personal hygiene, appropriate social skills.

Sheridan College Educational Assistant Program

Sheridan's 2-year Educational Assistant – Diploma Program prepares you to work in a school setting, where – as a member of the educational team –you will support students with special needs. The students you will learn to support include those with:

- ➔ Intellectual disabilities
- ➔ Physical disabilities
- ➔ Sensory disabilities

Through the Sheridan Educational Assistant program you will:

- ▶▶ Support students with special needs using modified curricula and materials created to accommodate their diverse strengths and developmental needs
- ▶▶ Use assistive technology and other educational resources to implement individualized educational goals
- ▶▶ Respond to and assist with personal care needs of students in educational settings from kindergarten to high school
- ▶▶ Work as a member of the educational team with specialists and family members
- ▶▶ Report information related to the learning environment
- ▶▶ Maintain a safe and professional environment which promotes the well being of the student with special needs
- ▶▶ Support inclusion of the student to
- ▶▶ aid his or her social development and sense of belonging

Professors with specialized graduate degrees and who are highly experienced in the field of special education teach your courses.

Your classroom activities will include:

- Group seminars and cooperative learning
- Reflective practice linked to field placement experiences
- Lectures combined with activity-based learning that incorporates the laptop

Field Placement Provides On-The-Job Experience

During semesters 2, 3 and 4, you will be placed in a school supporting students with special needs in the classroom. Sheridan arranges the field placement experience for you. During your Educational Assistant placement experience, you will encounter students with a range of exceptionalities including physical disabilities, cognitive disabilities, visual impairments, hearing loss, autism and learning disabilities.

Building Students’ Oral Fluency **Perspectives on the Use of Spoken English in Bhutanese Classrooms**

Sangay Biddha, Paro College of Education
Dorji Thinley, Paro College of Education

ABSTRACT

Drawing upon personal perspectives and insights gathered from relevant literature, this paper underscores the importance of Bhutanese students’ oral fluency in English as a foundation for building their academic and social skills and, hence, the need to develop it in schools and colleges. In doing so, we first delineate briefly the role and status of English in the social, economic and political development of Bhutan since the 1960s. In order to place the discussion in perspective, we then examine definitions of ‘oral fluency’ and identify its key elements. Discussing oral fluency in English in the context of teaching and learning in Bhutanese schools and colleges, the paper identifies and describes the common barriers to developing students’ oral proficiency in the target language. Implications of poor oral fluency for students’ academic and social development are discussed. Based on the barriers and implications, we recommend broad approaches and strategies for improving students’ oral fluency. We conclude that in order to help students acquire good oral fluency in English, schools and university colleges must create rich English-speaking environments on their campuses, create a wide range of academic and social contexts for the students to use English, and model best practice.

1. Background

Public schools based on Indian models of Western education were established in Bhutan in the 1960s. In order to implement

the country's first economic development plan launched in 1961, implement the social, political and judicial reforms of the time, and communicate effectively with the outside world, it was necessary to build a pool of skilled and knowledgeable people competent enough to do the job. Therefore, English was introduced as a medium of instruction and official communication in Bhutan. Since then it has grown rapidly. Also, due to its status and influence as an international language – “the language of the sciences, technologies, trade, and international relations” (CAPSD, 2006b, p. ix), the royal government of Bhutan considered English a language of “advantage” for Bhutan in the globalized world. It could, for example, assist Bhutan in the articulation of its identity (CAPSD, 2006a) and its people to participate productively in the global community. Today it has a generally accepted status as Bhutan's “language of international relations” and “modernization” (DDC, 2002, p. xv).

Although there is at the moment very little research evidence to show that, the vital role of English in the developmental history of Bhutan is generally acknowledged. According to the Curriculum and Professional Support Division (CAPSD, 2006b, p. ix; CAPSD, 2005a, p. xi) of the Ministry of Education, English has helped Bhutan in many ways:

Like many other happy developments, the advent of the English language to Bhutan was a matter of choice. When the veil of self-imposed isolation was lifted, Bhutan looked beyond its borders and began to prepare itself to modernize and join the community of nations. Which language to use to interact with the international community was one of the many decisions that had to be made.

It is generally acknowledged that English has helped to advance Bhutan's interest in many significant areas of development. For example, in the language of the English curriculum for schools (CAPSD, 2006b, p. ix; CAPSD, 2006c, p. x; CAPSD, 2005a, p. xi):

The flexibility, versatility, and richness of English allow it to be used in a variety of circumstances and to be used by the Bhutanese people to meet their own goals ... The cultural and intellectual resources of the English-speaking world and the formulations of philosophy, jurisprudence and economics, to mention a few, have been opened to the Bhutanese people directly. In return, Bhutan has been able to share with the international community its rich cultural and spiritual heritage and, in the ensuing dialogues, enrich the intellectual resource of the world.

An analysis of different policies shows that English is a “language of instruction”, a language of importance alongside Dzongkha the national language (CAPSD, 2006c, p. ix; CAPSD, 2005b, p. v; CAPSD, 2002, p. i; Sinha, 2001, p. 196). It is taught as a compulsory subject from Pre-primary (PP) through class 12 and in university. Apart from the study of Dzongkha as the national language and with the exception of a few subjects such as environmental studies and social studies which are taught in Dzongkha at the primary levels, English is the predominant language of the curriculum for all the other subjects at all levels. For example, at the lower primary (Pre-Primary to Class III) level, two subjects are taught in *Dzongkha* and two in English. Of the five subjects taught in upper primary (Class IV-VI), four are taught in English. Five out of six subjects at the lower secondary level (Class VII-VIII) and eight out of nine at the middle secondary level (Class IX-X) are taught in English. Thus, English is used as the primary language of curriculum and instruction in the school system while Dzongkha is taught only as a compulsory subject (also see Namgyel, 2003, p.57).

1.1 Learning English in a Multilingual Context

Bhutan is a multicultural and multilingual society. Although it is a small country geographically and demographically, it has a “diverse linguistic heritage” consisting of nineteen different languages spoken in different parts of the country (van Driem, 2004, pp. 294-295; Gyatso, 2004, p. 265). Therefore, English is

taught and learnt in school and university in a multilingual context. When children first come to school, the two target languages -- *Dzongkha* and English -- become their second and third language. For example, for a child who comes from a home background where *Sharchopkha* (language spoken in eastern Bhutan) or *Mangdekha* (a language spoken in the district of Trongsa) is used as the home language, *Dzongkha* and English have to be learnt as second and third language. In a multicultural and multilingual language learning situation it is natural for the learner to switch between the target language(s) and their home languages for the sake of inter-comprehensibility and intelligibility. By nature, a person tends to use the language sh/e is most comfortable with in terms of understanding and expression. This influences the way a Bhutanese students develop oral fluency in English.

Although most of the subjects in the curriculum for schools in Bhutan are taught in English, it is observed that oral fluency in this language is a very difficult goal to achieve for many students. While some students in urban schools, especially those in the capital city, and a handful elsewhere, are able to develop an acceptable level of oral fluency, the bigger population of the students does not seem to get there. Even at the university level, a significant percentage of students are not able to develop oral fluency good enough for effective communication in academic and social situations. This is a looming issue in the general discussion of quality and standard of education in Bhutan.

2. Oral Fluency: Definitional Clarifications

Oral fluency encompasses many aspects of the language (Derwing et al. cited in Al-Sibai, 2004, p. 2), which is why it is difficult to define it precisely. According to Hartmann and Stork (cited in Al-Sibai, 2004, p.1), “a person is said to be a fluent speaker of a language when he can use its structures accurately whilst

concentrating on content rather than form, using the units and patterns automatically at normal conversational speed when they are needed". Similarly, Fillmore's (1979, cited in Al-Sibai, 2004, p. 1) definition alludes to not just one standard ability that indicates a person's oral fluency but many. It says there are:

...four abilities that might be subsumed under the term fluency, the first of which is the ability to talk at length with few pauses. The three other abilities include the ability to talk in coherent, reasoned, and "semantically dense sentences", the ability to have appropriate things to say in a wide range of contexts, and finally the ability to be creative and imaginative in language use.

While Richard et al. (1985) defines fluency as "the features which give speech the qualities of being natural and normal, including native-like use of pausing, rhythm, intonation, stress, rate of speaking, and use of interjections and interruptions", Brumfit (1984) simply calls it "natural language use" (cited in Al-Sibai (2004). Along similar lines and in the context of immersion programs, Stein (1999) believes that fluency is "the automaticity of the speakers to converse without apparent difficulty, without halting pauses and stumbles or searching for words".

A pattern emerges from the common strands evident in these definitions. Generally, the notions of ease of talk, naturalness, normality, automaticity and intelligibility in the use of language and communication of ideas in a range of contexts underpin Derwing et al.'s, Hartmann and Stork's, Fillmore's, Richard et al.'s and Brumfit's definitions (see above). Based on this pattern, oral fluency may be defined as the ability of a person to speak naturally and intelligibly at a normal speed using the appropriate nuances of speech in a wide range of contexts.

3. Importance of Oral Fluency

Oral fluency is essential for both social and academic purposes. Trout (n.d.) states that “oral language provides a foundation for communication of ideas and intelligent conversation” suitable for all contexts. ‘Talk’ is not simply an exchange of words between speakers but it involves thinking. In her speech delivered at the International Oracy Convention in England, Tarleton (1987, cited in Mowbray, [n.d.], p. 10), says:

Since language and thought are so intimately connected, human beings develop, refine and extend their thinking capabilities ... through the immediate testing of ideas in oral language commonly characterized as ‘talk.’ ... Adults who can persuade others, defend and argue viewpoints, and listen in a discriminating way have enormous advantages. Oracy, therefore, as well as being a set of skills and an activity through which we learn, is fundamental to the social and personal development of young people.

It can be inferred that fluent speakers can express their thoughts, intentions and plans to their audience in more influential and intelligent ways than those who are not. Jerome Bruner (1983, cited in Dahlgren, 2007) states that “Proficiency in oral language provides children with a vital tool for thought”. Without fluent and structured oral language, children will find it very difficult to think.

At all stages of education, oral fluency must be achieved because it is a determinant of academic success. Kirkland & Patterson (2005, p. 1.) argue that the development of oral language is crucial to a child’s literacy development because it ultimately impacts all reading and writing aspects of the curriculum. In other words, the development of oral language skill must normally precede the acquisition of reading and writing skills. Knowing the nuances of a language orally helps children to comprehend language better when they encounter it in print as well as when they have to write it. Since English is the language of curriculum and instruction for

most of the subjects in schools and university colleges in Bhutan, it is vital for the students to gain oral fluency in this language. Competency in English is necessary for effective participation in classroom discourse, debates and interactions. An acceptable level of competence in the language is necessary to develop positive attitude towards the language and the subjects learnt in that language.

4. Barriers to Oral Fluency

In the Bhutanese context, the development of oral fluency in children is limited by a number of factors. We call these ‘barriers’ to acquiring fluency. It is generally observed that students at all levels of school and university are not able to use English for active classroom discussion, asking questions and raising issues, generating new ideas or challenging existing ones, expressing opinions, analyzing and interpreting data. As a result, most classroom practices are characterized by teacher-fronted talk, long lectures and commentaries and explanation of concepts which are received passively by the students. As a result, students are not able to use English as an effective tool for thinking, reasoning, problem-solving and social interaction. Although there are numerous factors that affect oral fluency in English in the Bhutanese context, here we discuss five that we think are the most conspicuous.

4.1 The Schools’ English Language Culture

There has been little dispute, among language education teachers and others concerned with foreign language education, over the principle that learners should be exposed as much as possible to the target language in use (Dickinson, 1996).

Learners need plenty of opportunities to hear and use the target language. Evidence shows that the more foreign language input learners are exposed to, the greater will be their proficiency (Knop, [n.d.], p.1). In the Bhutanese context, most schools and higher education institutions do not yet have an English speaking culture where the students gain maximum exposure to the language. For example, teachers use the target language with students in the classroom, but not many use it with them beyond the classroom. The language that teachers use for social interaction and professional exchange in school or university is mostly *Dzongkha* or some other language (e.g. Sharchopkha, Nepali) and rarely English.

In Bhutanese schools, the teachers' use of English is confined mostly to teaching their own subjects, thus reducing the role of English to just 'academic talk'. But experience shows that academic talk alone does not give students enough exposure to the language. Learners of the language must gain enough registers of dealing with real talk -- talk that is used in a wide range of situations in the real world. Apart from 'academic talk' that happens in the classroom, students need to practice 'real talk' so that they use classroom English in the context of communicative situations in the real world. The rich vocabulary, grammar and structures learnt from across different academic subjects would become passive and may slowly be forgotten if they are not used in active language learning situations.

In schools where the use of target language is maximized, the oral fluency of the students is seen to be higher. For instance, Bhutanese students who go to high quality English medium schools in India where the use of English is dominant in all pedagogical and social situations come out speaking the language fluently within a short time. This is also evident in some Bhutanese schools where the importance of spoken English is stressed. Learners need to be immersed in the language, must feel the need to communicate,

and use the target language for real purposes.

Beyond the classroom too, children do not get enough opportunity to practice English. Social and cultural factors influence the use of the target language. Since English is not the language used at home, nor is it a language used by the society at large, learners do not have the opportunity to practice it in informal situations. Also, the languages and dialects of the particular region where the school is located generally pre-dominate informal communication among students (see also Namgyel, 2003). Ultimately, the use of English for oral communication is confined only to teaching the content of particular subjects in the curriculum.

4.2 Teachers' Attitude and Pedagogical Habit

Teachers' attitude towards the target language determines the extent to which they use the language. If the teachers do not have ingrained habits of using English in different communicative contexts in school, there is no way they can encourage the same in their students. Although there is no empirical evidence to show it, most Bhutanese teachers use English only to teach the content of their subjects. Perhaps, this habit gets ingrained in the teacher education colleges of Samtse and Paro, where the situation is no better. This is a clear case of transfer of acquired habit. Since the faculty members do not generally demonstrate it, most pre-service teachers do not use English as much as they should, either with the lecturers or amongst themselves. Most conversations, including classroom discussions, are carried out in their home languages. As a result, teacher trainees do not develop acceptable levels of competency in the English language. Evidently, there is a lack of role models for learners both in school and university. Ideally, in an educational institution where a good English using culture exists, there are role models aplenty.

Another factor that affects the quality of learning English is the approach of the language teacher. When English is taught merely to transmit academic contents to the students and not used to develop specific competencies in relation to the disciplines and the social world at large, the development of oral fluency is bound to suffer. The problem is often compounded by the dominance of teacher talk and the students' passive reception and rote memorization of academic contents. A language class that does not encourage 'student talk' will not develop students' oral language and vocabulary (Trout, [n.d.], p. 2).

4.3 Teacher's Competency in the Spoken Language

Teacher competency and confidence in spoken English is vital for maximizing its use in school. A teacher's oral fluency in English depends not so much on her or his academic qualification as on that teacher's experience with the language, habitual use of English and interest to use it effectively in academic and social situations. Naturally, the amount of good exposure that the teacher themselves have had in relation to English will determine their level of competency, hence their confidence. This implies that if teachers' oral competency in English is low, the use of this language with the students will apparently suffer -- qualitatively and quantitatively. Needless to mention, teachers' oral competency in English will influence their attitude towards the importance of developing oral fluency in the students. For example, Namgyel's (2003) study found that "Use, attitudes and competence have been shown to be dependent upon each other". In sum, while teachers' formal qualification may have some role in their ability to develop the students' oral fluency, what is crucial is their ability to provide adequate and authentic opportunities for the students to have direct contact with English in a myriad of communicative situations.

4.4 Lack of Opportunities for Students to ‘Use’ English

In the Bhutanese context, although English is used to teach most of the subjects in school and university curricula, much of classroom talking is actually done by the teacher, while the students for the most part are passive consumers of transmitted information (see also Trout, [n.d.]). In most classes, the teacher talks and the students listen passively. This largely unidirectional pedagogical method is often attributed to large class size. In a crowded classroom, for instance, the teacher may find it better to talk and let the students listen than mismanage a large class and lose control of it. While this may generally be the case, one may also see evidences of ‘student talk’ in some classrooms. Yet, the students who ‘talk’ are mostly the high achieving ones or those who come from English speaking homes and from schools where effective use of English was modeled by the teachers and where rich language learning experiences and opportunities were created for the students (e.g. substantive conversations, using English in meaningful social interactions, good language models). Kirkland & Patterson (2005) believe that ‘Classroom can serve as a Mecca of language events that help children to construct new understandings about receptive and expressive language.’ They warn teachers that the cost of deleting oral language from our classrooms is high. In a typical Bhutanese classroom, the chances of deleting English from the students’ classroom discourse are high since the students use their home language to learn academic content and the teachers do not generally insist on the use of the target language.

4.5 Students’ Confidence and Language Competence

A majority of Bhutanese students come from backgrounds where English is not spoken as a home language. While they get few opportunities in school to use English for “substantive conversation” (see Hayes et al., 2007) or ‘real talk’, it is not a

language that is learnt at home. Hence, these students do not have adequate prior knowledge and experience of English that allows them to use it for effective communication in school. This implies that their exposure to English is limited to what they hear from the teacher (who uses it mostly to transmit academic content).

Due to lack of adequate competence in spoken English, students generally experience anxiety and inhibition when required to engage in oral expression in curricular, extracurricular and social situations. For the most part, the uptightness may be attributed to fear of erring (e.g. see Trout, [n.d.], p.2) and to being ridiculed by others. Since students mostly use their home languages at all times, they tend to think in the home language even while they are using the target language (English in this case). For example, the speaker translates the cultural and linguistic messages from her or his home language into English, which often results in erroneous use of English in terms of grammar, structure and vocabulary. By implication, the inhibition students feel in using English affects their level of confidence, because of which they switch to L1 (e.g. their home language) for most purposes.

5. Implications

Lack of oral fluency in English has a number of implications for students at all stages of their learning and development. Clearly, it will continue to impact the students' performance in the social and professional arenas of their adult life. Although there may be many, here we highlight four areas where the implications are most deeply felt.

5.1 Language Learning

Oral language is the foundation of literacy skill. It is from the

oral skill that proficiency in reading and writing develops. From brainstorming, contemplating possibilities, discussing, and arguing points of view, learners generate the language they will use to write, which they recognize and extend also when they read (Mowbray, [n.d.], p.6). If a learner lacks oral fluency in a language, s/he will hesitate to participate fully in language learning activities. Lack of oral fluency and hesitation (or anxiety) to use language both hamper the development of language competency. For example, the speaker might resort to using other languages for most purposes and may avoid oral presentations in the target language. Some common symptoms that indicate lack of fluency in a language are halting or pausing unnecessarily, using frequent stall words such as ‘uh’, ‘ah ...ah’, ‘like’ or ‘what say’, frequent shift between languages, and frequently searching for words. When a speaker shows these symptoms while speaking and the listener casts a confused look, the speaker feels embarrassed. This can affect the speaker’s self esteem and may over time lead to loss of confidence in using the language. These symptoms are very visible in Bhutanese classrooms, both in school and in university colleges.

5.2 Confidence and Attitude

Lack of oral fluency influences students’ attitude towards the target language. Lack of experiences and opportunities for students to learn English in the authentic social, cultural and academic contexts of school, home and the community will not only generate fear and anxiety in the learners but will over time generate an attitude that views English as an elitist language with standards they can never achieve. In fact, this linguistic cringe is still evidenced in South Asian countries, including Bhutan. Rahman (1996, pp. 191-205), for example, says, “Nineteenth-century literary English, however, is still held in high esteem by a large section of educated persons in Bangladesh” and that “People have negative attitudes toward nonnative models”. Desai (cited in Baily, 1996,

pp. 47-48) says, “‘Indian English’ is laughed at by the purists, but so was ‘American English’ a hundred years ago”. An attitude that deifies ‘native’ American or British models and downplays the importance of learning English in the lush environment of one’s culture and society will take students further away from the possibility of acquiring competencies and developing a unique ‘nonnative’ model of English that is comprehensible, intelligible, congruent with accepted international standards, and therefore acceptable to a global audience. In relation to ‘standard’ of English used in non-English speaking countries, emphasis is generally placed on principles of comprehensibility or intelligibility, not on ‘best models’. For example, Baumgardner (1996, p. 3) suggests the need for users of English to break the myth around the native “exonormative British or American model” and non-native “indigenized varieties of English” and emphasizes an “international standard” for the sake of “global intercomprehensibility”.

Kramersch (2000, p. 16) asserts that although the desirable goal of teaching English is to allow students to “find their own style in language”, the task must be to enable the learners to “use English language in ways that are recognizable, acceptable, and legitimized by native speakers”. So Lam (1999, cited in Kramersch, 2000, p. 16) asserts:

Our responsibility as language teachers is to help students not only become acceptable and listened to users of English by adopting the culturally sanctioned genres, styles, and the rhetorical conventions of the English speaking world, but how to gain profit of distinction by using English in ways that are unique to their multilingual and multicultural sensibilities.

The principles of comprehensibility or intelligibility can be applied in the way English is taught in Bhutanese classrooms. But teachers must first develop the right pedagogical attitude towards English.

5.3 Academic Advancement

Lack of fluency can hamper the academic advancement of students who wish to pursue higher education which requires them to develop and demonstrate higher order thinking, deep knowledge and understanding, and problem solving skills. As language and thought are inextricably linked and complement each other's development, these skills must be learnt through rich language experiences (see also Mowbray, [n.d.], p.13). For example, the analytical skills required for all types of academic and social learning develop through recognition and verbalization of problems, discussing and arguing points of view, making personal judgments and so on. Lack of oral fluency in English will create artificial barriers for students' academic aspirations and intellectual growth in life. For example, students planning to enroll in universities and colleges in North America, Canada and Australia are required to sit for high stake tests such as the 'International English Language Testing Skills' (IELTS) or the 'Test of English as a Foreign Language' (TOEFL). Oral proficiency is one of the major areas of language skill that these tests measure. Lack of oral proficiency will not only affect the students' scores in the spoken component of the test, it will also affect their performance in the reading and writing components. If the candidate's score is below the standard a university sets for international students, admission is denied. Implied here is that students with high intellectual caliber but without much proficiency in English (often as a result of unfavourable language learning circumstances) are deprived of opportunities for advancement in life. The gap must be filled.

There is a difference between conversational language fluency and academic language fluency (Vialpando et al. 2005., p. 9). It may be argued that students with good fluency in English do not necessarily demonstrate high academic performance. While this may be true, teachers need to be aware that conversational

language fluency (everyday language) is acquired faster and more naturally (if given adequate exposure) than academic language fluency as the more complex skills of reading, writing, analysis and interpretation require more time and greater intellectual investment. Therefore, although conversational language and academic language fluencies can be acquired simultaneously, conversational language fluency could be the first step to academic language proficiency. It is only when a speaker has attained a certain amount of oral fluency that she or he can pay attention to the higher intellectual skills, to think clearly and communicate intelligibly.

5.4 Development of Social Skill

Lack of oral fluency in the target language affects a person's ability to participate meaningfully in social situations where language is the primary tool. Lack of oral fluency in English affects students' confidence to use language in social circumstances, especially when they have to use it in group situations or use it for a large audience, for fear of embarrassment and ridicule. Language thus becomes a barrier to learning social and interpersonal skills. For example, due to lack of vocabulary or structure many students are not able to convey messages effectively. In a typical Bhutanese classroom, these students' contribution to classroom discussion will be minimal. For example, a student who lacks fluency may make unnecessary halting pauses, use too many stall-words such as 'ah, like, you know, what say, this,' or search for words all the time. In learning situations where English has to be used, social interaction often becomes a painful process for these students. Conversely, students' with eloquence and oral fluency are normally more able to draw their peers' attention or take on leadership roles.

6. Recommendations

It is important for teachers to know that using the target language is the only way to learn a language and learn how to think in that language, in the classroom and beyond. The more time learners spend with the language, the faster they will learn it. Over time the learner’s repertoire of vocabulary increases and their ability to communicate verbally in a functional and accurate way in a variety of contexts will increase exponentially (see also Stein, 1999, p.1). As the learners improve their oral fluency in the target language, they learn to automatically think in that language. This being the case, when students speak in English they have no time to translate the thoughts from one language to another. Based on the barriers and implications discussed above, we make five recommendations for improving the students’ oral fluency in English in schools and university colleges.

6.1 Increasing the Use of Target Language in Classrooms

Teachers should provide students with rich language experiences in class that promote growth in fluency in English. Language activities should float on a sea of ‘talk’ (Mowbray, [n.d.]. Learners must be given adequate opportunities to practice language with the teacher and with their peers and they should be engaged in meaningful interactive language activities. Met and Rodes (cited in Knop, [n.d.]) point out that “both research and experiential data suggest that the amount of time spent on language learning and the intensity of the experience have significant effects on the acquisition of significant levels of foreign language proficiency”. The more learners get to use the language, the more fluent learners will become. Modeling and teaching learners to be creative and imaginative in language use will also be beneficial. Since English is taught across the curriculum, it is not only English teachers who should teach oral fluency. The importance of oral fluency must be

foregrounded, practiced and modeled in all the classrooms and across all the subjects that are taught in English. It must become a pedagogical culture in schools and university colleges.

6.2 Building Students' Vocabulary, Syntactical and Rhetorical Devices

For learners to be able to speak fluently they must have exposure to a repertoire of vocabulary and to the linguistic structures of the language. Learners need to develop vocabulary that will enable them to speak fluently both in social and academic environments. Academic vocabulary is acquired in the classroom as students learn academic topics, while non-academic vocabulary, which is the vocabulary students need for everyday use, must develop in informal settings. The syntactical and rhetorical devices of language cannot be ignored. Wong-Fillmore and Snow (cited in Vialpando et al. 2005, p. 9) claim that language acquisition without input of linguistic structures could result in persistent long-term grammatical errors. Therefore, teachers must provide opportunities for students to use the language as well as to learn about the language.

6.3 Creating an English Speaking Culture

The most effective way to develop Bhutanese students' oral proficiency in English is by creating an English speaking culture in school and in university colleges. Teachers and lecturers are the models for their students and from whom students draw their inspiration for effective language use. They must first develop good habits of effective English use amongst themselves. The habit must be cultivated through consistent effort and it must be made visible to the students so that the teachers' or lecturer's collective habit of English makes a positive impact on the organization's English-

speaking culture. The simple logic is, even if the teachers' level of proficiency in English is high, if they do not use the language consistently with their students, very little is transferred to them. Hence, they must use English with their students at all times and not restrict it to transmitting academic contents in the classroom. Being immersed in the language encourages the learners to communicate without resorting to their native language. Since most Bhutanese students in schools and university colleges come from non-English speaking homes, school or college is the place where they learn the target language. Since teachers are the students' main source of learning English, the former must create rich pedagogical experiences and opportunities for the latter to learn the target language. For example, the value of good modeling must be recognized.

6.4 Professional Development for Language Teachers

The fact that the quality of student learning depends on the quality of teaching must be recognized clearly. Good teaching must be supported by professional development experiences and opportunities for the teachers. Professional development programmes must build on the teachers' pedagogical philosophy, positive communicative classroom practices and strategies that will maximize the learners' meaningful use of the language. In addition to pedagogy, programmes that enrich and enhance the teachers' own language proficiency must be considered. Students must be exposed to and learn from effective users of English as models of excellence. So, the quality of the teacher's language use is more important than the quantity of its use. If the teachers' English is frequently marked by errors, it can do more harm than good to students (e.g. see Consolo, 1996) even if they use it a lot in school. Therefore, educational agencies committed to quality (e.g. CAPSD, EMSD, BBED) must attend to raising teachers' competency in English through rich and authentic professional learning experiences and opportunities at the school level.

6.5 Building Teachers' Oral Fluency

Language learners must interact with people who are fluent in the language (Vialpando et. al. 2005., p. 1) and who understand the nuances of the language well. Since teachers are expected to be orally proficient in English -- the language in which most school and university curricula are taught, it is imperative that they develop the habit of using English with the students and amongst themselves in academic and social environments. The development of oral fluency must be emphasized in pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes. The curricular and extracurricular programmes of the colleges of education in Samtse and Paro must encourage student-teachers to develop oral proficiency in English so that they are able to transfer their learning to the schools and help them build positive English language environments in Bhutanese schools. A good or bad oral English culture in the colleges of education can easily permeate the English language culture in schools, and actually come back to its place of origin.

7. Conclusion

In a globalised world the need to be proficient in English is high and will continue to be so. Although Bhutanese students are taught English in schools and university colleges, lack of oral fluency continues to be an issue. It is in schools and university colleges where the gaps can be identified and filled. The role of teachers and lecturers is vital. Students' oral fluency in English supports their academic performance. Schools and colleges must recognize that good teachers use the language of the discipline effectively and consistently with their students -- in the classroom and outside. If students are to develop and acquire high levels of proficiency in English, schools and colleges must have rich English-speaking cultures on their campuses. Educational institutions must model

best practice. In sum, in order for students to be orally proficient, a good balance of input and output of the target language is necessary. The teachers' input encompasses maximizing the use of the target language, teaching linguistic structures (e.g. grammar, sentence pattern, vocabulary, and rhetorical devices), and creating opportunities for the students to practice English in a language-rich environment. The amount of input by the teachers will not be wasted if the learners get opportunities to use English meaningfully and productively (output). Students must be encouraged to use English for a wide range of academic and social purposes and helped to overcome inhibitions about using English in all academic and social situations. It is only by using English that students will learn English and develop fluency in it.

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Positive Student-Teacher Relationship A Greater Student Well-being and Success

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Most cognitive theorists argue that learning is a social event, and studies have proven that both teachers and students will pay the price if teachers neglect to form emotionally warm, supportive relationships with and among their students. To improve students' chances for academic success, educators must strive to form meaningful personal relationships with students. (Forming Positive Student Teacher Relationship)

When students are underachieving, school policymakers often examine class size, curriculum and funding, but University of Missouri researchers suggest establishing relationships may be a powerful and less expensive way to improve students' success. In a review of the research they show that students with positive attachments to their teachers and schools have higher grades and higher standardized test scores. "In this era of accountability, enhancing student-teacher relationships is not merely an add-on, but rather is fundamental to raising achievement," said Christi Bergin, associate professor in the MU College of Education. "Secure student-teacher relationships predict greater knowledge, higher test scores, greater academic motivation and fewer retentions or special education referrals. Children who have conflicted relationships with teachers tend to like school less, are less self-directed and cooperate less in the classroom." (Student-Teacher Relationships Improve Student Success, June 2009)

They found that student attachment influences school success through two routes: indirectly through attachment to parents which affects children's behavior at school and directly through

attachment to teachers and schools. Children with healthy attachment are able to control their emotions and are more socially competent and willing to take on challenging learning tasks in the classroom. “To be effective, teachers must connect with and care for children with warmth, respect and trust,” said David Bergin, associate professor of educational psychology. “In addition, it is important for schools to make children feel secure and valued, which can liberate them to take on intellectual and social challenges and explore new ideas.” (Student-Teacher Relationships Improve Student Success, June 2009)

Preventing acts of childhood aggression has become a major focus for schools throughout the world but their efforts may be lacking a critical ingredient to their success, say Texas A&M University psychologists. A study by psychologists Jan N. Hughes and Timothy A. Cavell shows that a warm, close relationship between a child at risk for behavioral problems and his or her teacher reduces the chances of aggressive behavior in the future. Unfortunately, such supportive teacher-student relationships are missing for many children with conduct problems. A focus on teacher-student relationships is missing in school-based prevention efforts, says Hughes. This “apparent oversight,” she adds, may be due to the fact that current prevention efforts focus on discipline techniques, classroom management or children’s social skills. Teacher-student relationships are not deemed important within this mix, Hughes adds (Teacher Student Relationships: A Supportive One Can Reduce Aggression).

Positive student-teacher relationships have been described as relationships that are mutually respectful and supportive. Open communication, as well as emotional and academic support that exists between students and teachers is another way to describe a positive relationship between teachers and students. These relationships have also been identified as a relationship as one

with empathy, warmth, and genuineness. Positive student-teacher relationships have also been characterized by mutual acceptance, understanding, warmth, closeness, trust, respect, care and cooperation. (LePla, 2010, Pianta, 1999)

Trust is one of the most important components which determine healthy teacher-student relationship. A study conducted by Corrigan and Chapman (2008) points out that mutually beneficial element to the instructor-student relationship is trust. “Trust provides a sensation of collegiality that rebels from the bland acceptance of the ideas and values of the ‘public’ and challenges each student and teacher to formulate, discover and test, through dialogue, their personally transforming relationships to knowledge, self and the other” (Curzon-Hobson, 2002, p. 268). Past research identified trustworthiness to be positively correlated to student satisfaction and positive evaluations of the teacher (Jaasma & Koper, 1999). When a student feels that the instructor has a sincere interest in the student’s welfare and viewpoints, an excellent catalyst is provided for higher education performance and contributions to knowledge (Govindarajan, 1991). Students’ trust for teachers is very important for stimulating purposeful interactions between the teacher and student (Govindarajan, 1991). When the instructor and student consistently experience positive dyadic interactions, trust should increase over time (Rubin, Palmgreen, & Sypher, 1994).

Developing Positive Environment in the Classroom

To develop good relationships with students, teachers can give students autonomy and opportunities for decision-making by giving them choices in assignments, engaging them in developing classroom rules, and encouraging them to express their opinions in classroom discussions. It is also important to get to know your students by learning what they enjoy to do outside of school, such as hobbies or sports. Other methods of improving methods of

positive relationships between students and teachers could be to organize nonacademic extracurricular activities for students and teachers to participate together, have students and teacher eat lunch together in small groups a few times a week, having homeroom teachers act as advisors for students, and develop disciplinary policies that carry high expectations for students while fostering caring relationships (LePla, 2010)

Developing Good Relationships

Specific actions in developing good relationships can be summarized as follows:

Show the student he or she matters by:

- ☞ greeting by name, smiling, showing an interest by comments and questions.
- ☞ finding something about the most challenging student to like or admire and commenting positively on qualities and strengths. This may position them and their behaviour differently – attributing to them resourcefulness, humour, protectiveness, spirit in the face of adversity etc. This may give the student an alternative self-concept to work towards.
- ☞ giving regular positive feedback that is specific, genuine and brief.
- ☞ showing belief, trust and high expectations.
- ☞ showing that their success, safety and well-being is of concern.

Show acceptance of the person but not their behaviour by:

- ▶▶ stating what students are expected to do rather than what they shouldn't be doing – information is much easier to hear than accusation.
- ▶▶ using 'I' statements rather than 'you' statements which

comment on behaviour.

- ▶▶ not labeling people.
- ▶▶ offering comfort in distress.
- ▶▶ giving choices which give the student some control and promote self-efficacy.

Develop a sense of inclusion and belonging by:

- ▶ ensuring that there are experiences which guarantee success – however small.
- ▶ ensuring that there is fairness – giving each their turn.
- ▶ framing behaviour in terms of equity rights eg. ‘You are not allowed to hurt another student and other students are not allowed to hurt you’.
- ▶ encouraging students to take a responsibility and giving positive feedback for this.
- ▶ using the word ‘we’ and ‘our’ to include not to exclude.
- ▶ avoiding unfavorable comparisons or put downs.
- ▶ avoiding self-fulfilling prophecies.
- ▶ doing everything possible to avoid sanctions that are about exclusion.
- ▶ welcoming students back if they have been absent.
- ▶ speaking about the student positively to others. (LePla, 2010)
- ▶ Learning as much as possible about students’ personal interests and backgrounds. Trying to connect their personal interests with classroom work, where possible. Also, learning about students’ cultures and religious backgrounds may help you relate to them more effectively.
- ▶ Including journal-writing activities, weekly student-teacher meetings, and class discussions, which enable students to voice and teachers to address concerns.
- ▶ Implementing social emotional learning opportunities, which improve students’ abilities to understand their own and others’ emotions.

- Being aware of classroom dynamics. Try to diffuse tensions that may exist between students.
- Being patient with those students who are disruptive and disrespectful. Bonding with disruptive students may improve their behavior in the classroom.
- Modeling appropriate behavior. Students are very sensitive to teacher's attitudes towards the school and the class in general; therefore, teachers must be extremely self-reflective, making certain that they are modeling positive behaviors for the class. Videotaping several class sessions may make teachers aware of any negative feelings they may be projecting towards their students (Forming Positive Student Teacher Relationships)

Improving Student-Teacher Relationships

- ▶▶ *Don't try to be their best friend.* While it is good to have a positive relationship with your students, you are the authority figure and you need to act like it to gather the respect you deserve. By trying too hard to be their friend, you send a signal that it's okay to treat you like they treat their friends. This probably is not what you really want. It may be hard to discipline the students if they are used to palling around with you.
- ▶▶ *Don't be a task master.* The Authoritarian teaching style is one of the least effective according to most research. If you are too busy yelling or being stern, you miss many opportunities to listen and earn respect. No one really wants to be that teacher all the students fear. Stick to your guns, but don't be totally inflexible.
- ▶▶ *A little small talk goes a long way.* Greet your students at the door and ask them how their day is going. This technique

only works if you are sincere when you ask. Make them feel like you really do care about them.

- ▶▶ *Smile at them and actually listen.* Eye contact is a great way to show them that you respect them and their respect for you will grow as well. When you are talking with a student, put all other things aside to let them know that what they have to say is important to you.
- ▶▶ *Respect is reciprocal.* You may think that being a teacher automatically means the students must respect you and your ways. This couldn't be farther from the truth. While it would be ideal, you need to earn the respect of your students just as you respect them if they earn it as well. (LePla, 2010)

According to Leitao, there are many aspects that influence the quality and nature of personal relationships. However, it is possible to simplify these connections by creating a theoretical model and building into it a selected number of aspects that are considered most important. Each of these three areas is seen to be a key aspect likely to impact on a teacher's ability to develop relationships with the students in their classroom. The model showing the three key aspects is depicted pictorially in Figure 1. Teachers who demonstrated the expected mechanisms were seen to be working towards achieving the key aspects in their relationships with students (Leitão and Waugh, 2007),

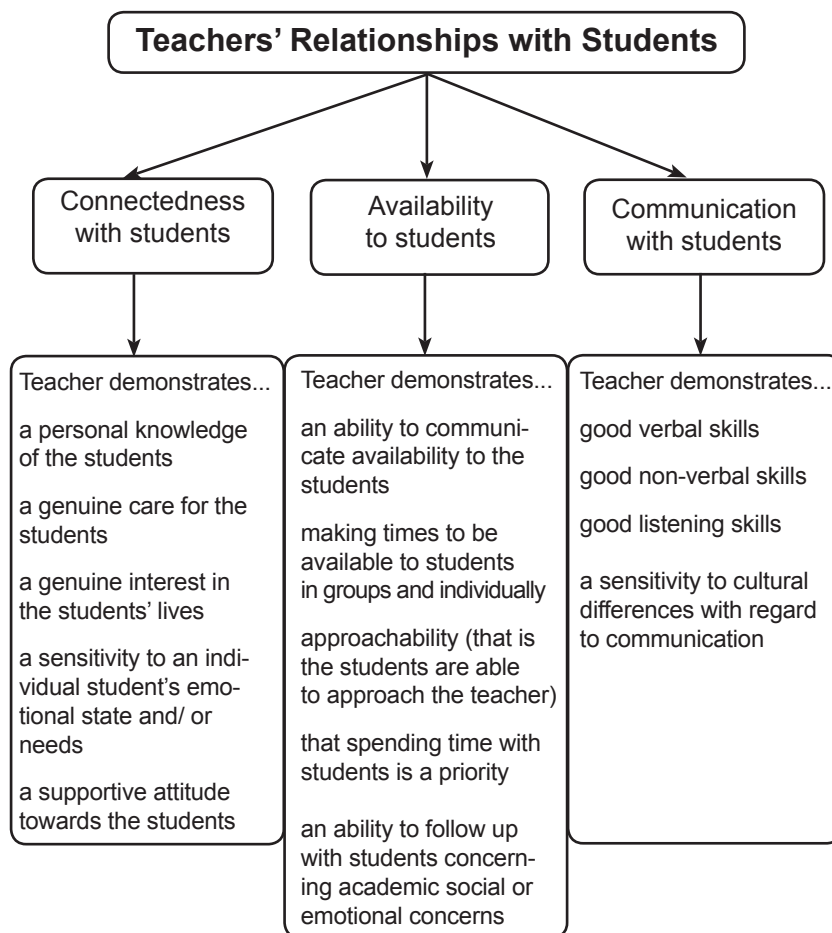


Fig. 1

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1. Teachers who demonstrated the expected mechanisms were seen to be working towards achieving the key aspects in their relationships with students (Leitao and Waugh, 2007)

Figure 1. Theoretical Model: Teachers' Relationships with Students.
Source: Created by Natalie Leitão (2006)

Therefore, positive student-teacher relationships are an important component of creating a positive classroom climate. This term is also used frequently in conjunction with the term Person Centered Education (PCE), Looping, and Student Centered Learning.

Effectiveness of Positive Student-Teacher Relationships

The success of any interpersonal relationship is dependent to a large extent upon input from both parties. In the classroom setting, it is the teacher who has the opportunity, and indeed, the responsibility, to initiate positive interpersonal relationships. The teacher who is pro-active in demonstrating acceptance, understanding, warmth, closeness, trust, respect, care and cooperation towards his or her students not only works at initiating positive teacher-student relationships, but also increases the likelihood of building strong relationships that will endure over time (Barry & King, 1993, Krause et al., 2006; McInerney & McInerney, 2006; Smeyers, 1999 cited in Leitão and Waugh, 2007)

Teacher-student relationships are important for several reasons. Teacher-student relationships greatly influence a student's ability to adjust to school, to do well at school, and to relate to peers. Teacher-student relationships have an impact on classroom management and affect learning progress. From a developmental perspective, the establishment of a positive teacher-student relationship aids a student's cognitive, social and emotional growth and enhances their mental well-being. Stable teacher-student relationships impact positively on a student's developing

sense of self and promote resiliency in them. Furthermore, the benefits of positive teacher-student relationships extend to teachers, contributing to an improved sense of job satisfaction. (Pianta & Walsh, 1996; Rutter, 1979, Entwisle & Hayduk, 1988; Howes, Hamilton, & Matheson, 1994; Pianta, 1999; Klem & Connell, 2004; Sztejnberg et al., 2004; Brazelton & Greenspan, 2000; Lynch & Cicchetti, 1992; Weare, 2000, Goldstein & Lake, 2000 cited in Leitão and Waugh, 2007).

Teachers who take the time to develop positive relationships with their students will see improvement in their students both academically, behaviorally, and emotionally. Students tend to put forth more effort in class and as a result improve their academic achievement. Teachers also see improvement in their student's behavior when they take the time to develop positive relationships with their students (LePla, 2010). Students who feel highly connected to classes or instructors would report relatively low anxiety regarding the class, class assignments and exams, whereas students who felt threatened in these relationships would report more stress and anxiety. (Creasey, Jarvis, Knapcik 2009). Further, students who report close relationships with instructors are more confident and self-directed than students who perceive their instructors to be less supportive or threatening (Pintrich, Roeser, & De Groot, 1994).

In an article entitled Relationships Matter, Stipek reports that adolescents “work harder for teachers who treat them as individuals and express interest in their personal lives outside school.” (cited in LePla, 2010). By building positive relationships with students educators, “can provide the motivation, initiative, and engagement which are essential for success. (Pianta, Stuhlman, & Hamre, 2002 cited in LePla, 2010). When teachers have positive relationships with their students, it affects the student's behavior in relation to school. Students who perceive their teachers as highly supportive have better attendance and avoid problem behavior. Rosenfeld,

Richman, & Bowen, (2000) state that positive student-teacher relationships involving students with high-incidence disabilities have a positive effect on conduct problems, delinquency, anxiety, and depression. (cited in Murray, C. & Greenberg M. T., 2006) Positive relationships between children and mentors were related to reduced levels of teacher-reported externalizing behavior (LePla 2010). As this is a general goal of academic culture, it makes sense that more effort is needed to foster a similar sense of connectedness in the classroom context specifically (Creasey, Jarvis, Knapcik, 2009).

However, Rosenfeld, Richman, & Bowen, (2000) point out that perceived teacher support alone is not effective; teacher support must be perceived in combination with perceived support from parents or friends, albeit the best combination is perceived support from all three providers. Building positive relationships with students is essentially as simple as finding a common interest, discussing that commonality, and then following up on that commonality as often as one can. To be a quality educator one must be able to build positive relationships with students, as well as maintain that positive relationship over time (cited in LePla 2010).

Baker, Pianta and Birch point out that past research on teacher-student relationships has focused heavily on instructional aspects of the relationship, and largely ignored the social and emotional aspects of teacher-student relationships. As such, research into social and emotional aspects of teacher-student relationships is relatively new (cited in Leitão and Waugh, 2007).

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Special Education in Bhutan Possible Next Steps

-Dr. R. Greenwood, and N. Simpson

This report reviews the development of Education and specifically Special Education in Bhutan and makes suggestions as to what could be done next to help students with Learning Disabilities and in turn addresses some of the concerns of retention and repetition of students in Bhutan.

A shift from the traditional form of education in Bhutan occurred during the late 1950's early 1960's with the introduction of a more westernized system by Father Mackey a Jesuit priest from Canada. Prior to this, formal education in Bhutan occurred in the monasteries. Since the introduction of a non monastic education system there has been a dedicated effort to expand the development of education in Bhutan. Growth has been rapid as a strong education system is seen as the key to the success of the country.

Until the introduction of modern, western form of education in 1950s the only form of formal education available in Bhutan was monastic education. While monastic education continues to be an important part of the national culture, western education has been promoted and expanded since first Five Year Plan in 1961 to address the basic educational needs, and develop human resources required for the socio-economic development of the country. Within a period of four decades, the government has been able to expand the modern education system from about 11 schools prior to the first Five Year Plan in 1961 to 447 schools and institutes in 2004, spanning from community primary schools to tertiary institutes (Ministry of Education Thimpu, Bhutan, 2004)

The expansion has been purposeful and rapid and continues to be a priority of His Royal Highness and the Royal Government of Bhutan. With the establishment of democracy, which came into effect in 2006, the emphasis on further developing the education system within Bhutan in a global context has continued.

The following chart from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs demonstrates this rapid development from 1990 to 2005.

Education indicators	1990	2002	2003	2004	2005
Adult literacy, %	not known	66	not known	not known	59.5
Primary school enrolment	63%	71%	81%	84.2%	96.9%
Number of schools	192	397	412	433	458
Number of students	68.013	123.283	129.160	135.987	141.388

(Denmark Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2008)

The numbers clearly illustrate the success of the country's efforts to develop the capacity to educate by increasing the number of schools as well as the success at educating a greater number of citizens. The pattern of growth continued between 2005 and 2008. The number given in the National Report in Bhutan 2008, for the total number of schools is 523, with a total school enrollment of 157,112. (Zam, 2008)

Bhutan, with its Buddhist culture, guided by the philosophical and practical framework of Gross National Happiness (GNH) is involved in trying to develop the best education system it can. In doing so all those involved in education are acutely aware of the progress that is being made along with the implications it creates for Bhutan.

Moreover, while the strategies for increasing access have been successful until now, it may now be necessary for new interventions to reach the last percent that are out of school. This also includes the need for strategies to reach those children with special needs such as children from disadvantaged and poor backgrounds, disabled children, and children with learning difficulties among others. (Zam, 2008)

Bhutan's desire and motivation to extend learning opportunities

to all children is recognized by others outside the country. Both governmental and nongovernmental organizations from western nations like Canada, Denmark, Japan, Australia and others have supported the development of Bhutan's education system. Many of the educators from this landlocked Himalayan country have had the opportunity to pursue further education internationally. These western trained individuals have returned to help modernize the Bhutanese education system through the delivery and development of curriculum in the cultural context of the country. In light of the goal for expansion of access to education one of the areas now recognized as requiring expertise is Special Education

As the new democratically elected government of Bhutan continues with the Tenth of its five year plans, 2008-2013, "(t)he national goal is to achieve near 100 % enrolment at primary education by the end of the Tenth Plan" (Royal Government of Bhutan, 2009) there have been some roadblocks recognized that will have to be overcome.

One of the fundamental challenges in the future is to enrol and retain the last 10-12 % of school age children who, for various reasons, have been unable to enter school. These include those living in very remote parts of the country, children with disabilities and children facing learning difficulties (Royal Government of Bhutan, 2009)

The Royal Government of Bhutan has established a policy of all-inclusive education and in an effort to meet this goal the Education system has begun to address some of the needs of students with physical disabilities and learning difficulties. A Ministry Unit was established and Special Education programs were initiated in Bhutan in 2000. The mandate emphasized inclusion of all the students with special needs with the goal of having students attend their community schools. Some developments in meeting the needs of children with disabilities have been made in the country. As noted in a paper focussing on activity in Bhutan given

at the Regional Workshop on Monitoring the Implementation of the Biwako Millennium Framework for Action towards an Inclusive, Barrier-free and Rights-based Society for Persons with Disabilities in Asia and the Pacific (BMF) Bangkok, Thailand, 13-15 (October 2004)

Progress has also occurred with respect to achievement of the Dakar Framework for Action's goal of eliminating gender disparities in primary & secondary education. Steps have also been taken towards the implementation of the convention of Rights of the Child (CRC). Many significant achievements were made:

- Special Education unit in the Education Ministry has been established.
- A significant step towards the integration of Special Education for the disabled children into mainstream education.
- Establishment of a Special Education resource unit at Changangkha Lower Secondary School under the personal initiative of Her Majesty the Queen Ashi Tshering Pem Wangchuk, the president of the Youth Development Fund. The school will cater to the educational needs of children with mild to moderate sensory, intellectual and physical impairments.
- A program to provide education to deaf children is also being initiated with facilities built at Drukgyel Lower Secondary School.
- Development and documentation of Bhutanese sign language is underway.
- Incorporation of Curriculum of Special Education in the pre-service Institutes.
- Braille production unit has also been established
- School screening
- A National Policy on Early Childhood Care & Development (ECCD) has been formulated and integrated into the current 9th Five Year Plan and the Vision document for 2020. An ECCD section within the Ministry of Education has also

been created

- A school for the visually impaired is in existence since 1972. (Phub, 2004)

In the capital city of Thimphu the physical accessibility issues were addressed through a retrofitting of one large school, Changangkha Lower Secondary School. In the 2010-2011 school year there were 24 students with special needs integrated into this Child Friendly School (CFS) with a population of over 1,000. However, at this time, none of these SEN children were wheelchair users. In addition, the staff in the rehabilitation unit of the Referral Hospital in Thimphu has had considerable involvement with the education of students having physical challenges through providing support to children, their families and educators. There was specialized training provided to staff at the newly accessible school and with that an increased awareness of the capacity to expand the education to that population. Schools have also been established to meet the needs of specific populations. The first was established in 1973 in Khaling Trashigang, the National Institute for the Blind (NID), which provides specialized instruction for students in a residential setting and acts as a training and liaison centre for staff working with that population. Another specialized school was established in 2003 with the goal of providing education to deaf students. Since its inception the Lower Secondary School for Deaf in Drukgel has begun a project to develop sign language indigenous to Bhutan. With the co-operative efforts of a group of deaf adults, a researcher and supportive teachers the Deaf community within Bhutan will have their own common form of communication as well as access to education. Draktsho Vocational Training Centre was also established in Thimphu to support older students with intellectual challenges and has recently opened another Training Centre in the east of the country. Further,

the Ministry of Education is also currently piloting the Child Friendly Schools concept. It is expected that piloting and ultimately scaling up of the child friendly concept will eventually lead to

inclusive education in all the schools in the near future. With regard to special needs education, the Ministry has established a Special Education Unit under the Department of School Education to work towards the development of programmes geared toward reaching those children with special needs. One of the activities under this unit will be a study on the prevalence of disabilities in the country. Based on the study, five special education resource centers will be established in regular schools to provide education for disabled children in regular schools. (Zam, 2008)

This study of disabilities will result in the establishment of a data base of individuals with disabilities in Bhutan. This is a first step in an analysis of needs for people with disabilities and the capacity of the education system to meet those needs. The survey will not however, take into account the entire range of disabilities related to learning. Individuals with learning disabilities, which are invisible, will not be included in this survey. If students with learning disabilities could be recognized and given the necessary support to meet their needs there is evidence that this could help reduce the high dropout and repetition rates in Bhutan.

As stated above “it may now be necessary for new interventions to reach the last percent that are out of school” (Zam, 2008) and to increase the retention rate of those students who are in school.

Knowing that teachers are absolutely crucial to the implementation of a truly inclusive system of education some work has been done to explore the capacity of educators to deal with special needs within the regular classroom. As part of a Master of Philosophy in Special Needs (Tshering, 2004) surveyed teachers opinions of Inclusive Education. He found that 90 % of teachers felt it was the right of students to attend their local school but only 55% supported having students with a disability in the same class as non disabled students. The model that 58% of those surveyed supported was were the student with a disability had some lesson with non disabled students and also had separate special classes.

Many, (70%) stated that they needed to acquire skills that would help them work with students with disabilities. As Tshering states in his thesis “Although there are a host of Disability types, ... (the) only ones relevant to my study and in Bhutan, keeping in mind the types of disability, (are those) which are accessing or are going to access education in Bhutan. These disabilities are: Low vision, blindness, hard of hearing, deafness, physical disabilities and mental retardation” (p.27). This is the group of Special Education students that are presently receiving support within the education system in Bhutan.

There appears to be an understanding by teachers that further education and training is needed to work with students with special needs. Presently the expertise within the country is concentrated in the specialized schools while other classroom teachers have received minimal if any training in the area of Special Education. Most classroom teachers have not taught students with identified disabilities and may be apprehensive about the impact on the learning of other students. In fact, Tshering, a former Principal of a specialized school, articulates in his thesis his hope that the study may provide a “modest base and starting point” for the development of teacher curriculum.

A truly inclusive system requires that the teachers have the skills and the confidence to meet the needs of all of their students.

It was noted in a baseline survey of pre-service teachers that “they did not come across students with learning difficulties, slow learning students or bright students. This seems rather unlikely as every mainstream classroom represents learning diversity” (Heijnen, 2005, p. 37). The extent of that diversity has yet to be determined in Bhutan. Universally there is a range of student needs and teachers in Bhutan need to understand and be able to address the needs of all the students in their classrooms.

A group of students that have not yet received support in Bhutan

are students that are referred to as Learning Disabled. Learning disabilities is a broad category of disabilities that includes students who have difficulty in learning. Broadly speaking a learning disability is a disorder that inhibits or interferes with the skills of learning. A learning disability can cause problems in; speaking, listening, reading, writing and mathematical ability. Characteristics of students with learning disabilities may vary with the student's age and subject area. Typically a student appears to be performing academically below what the teacher would expect from the student when working with the student alone. As described by Teaching LD, typically, a student with a learning disability in Primary school has difficulty; understanding the rules of conversation, retelling stories, remembering newly learned information, playing with peers, expressing themselves verbally or in writing, following directions, or understanding how to play age-appropriate games to name a few. At the Secondary level students that have a learning disability often have difficulty; staying organized, getting along with peers, following directions, using basic skills such as reading, writing, spelling, and math, or using proper grammar in spoken or written communication, remembering and sticking to deadlines, expressing thoughts verbally or in writing and understanding what he or she reads. (Teaching LD)

The incidence of students having a learning disability is difficult to determine as there is not a standard definition of what is meant by this term and different criteria are used in the diagnosis of a learning disability however:

(R)esearchers estimate its true prevalence at between 8% and 15% of the school population. Research also indicates that approximately 6% of the school population has difficulties in mathematics which cannot be attributed to low intelligence, sensory deficits, or economic deprivation (Pierangelo & Giuliani, 2006)

This rate if applicable in Bhutan could account for a large proportion of the drop out and repeat rates of students in Bhutan schools. The following chart taken from Education for All shows the number of repeaters and dropouts:

Number of Promotees, Repeaters and Dropouts for class PP-X, 2000-2006

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Enrolment	108,398	114,071	118,355	122,857	128,771	133,288	138,389
Promotees	82,624	88,625	92,883	98,218	105,384	113,948	118,256
Repeaters	13,814	14,183	14,767	13,604	12,206	9,266	8,743
Dropouts	4,831	5,590	6,421	6,533	5,267	5,557	6,289

(Education for All, p. 68)

The following table illustrates the repeat and dropout rate as a percent of enrolment:

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Repeaters	12.7%	12.4%	12%	11%	9.4%	6.9%	6.3%
Dropouts	4.4%	4.9%	5.4%	5.3%	4%	4.1%	4.5%

There has not been a significant decrease in the number of students dropping out yet the percentage of students repeating seems to have been reduced. These statistics do not take into account the number of children who have never for numerous reasons enrolled in school.

Like all governments, Bhutan is concerned with the failure and dropout rates. Not only is this a concern because of the money that it costs but also the impact upon the learner. In Bhutan:

The government has always been concerned with high wastage in the education system caused by the high numbers of repeaters and drop-outs. In 1990, about 7% of students were dropping out from

every grade every year. Similarly, about 21% were repeating a grade every year. It has been planned to reduce repetition and drop-out rates to an average of 5% and 10%, respectively, by the year 2000. (International Bureau of Education)

The above changes illustrate that much progress has been made in reducing the repeat and dropout rates in Bhutan. As the country expands its education system to include all students there will be a greater diversity of student abilities and skills in each classroom and therefore a potential increase in these rates. An understanding of why students drop out or repeat would enable teachers to better address student learning needs and potentially further reduce the repeat and dropout rates.

The reasons for student dropout and high failure rates have been studied extensively. For example:

The St. Paul Public Schools conducted a retrospective examination of the records of 4,500 students in attendance between 1974 and 1977 who left school prior to graduation. They found that up to 80% of the youths who dropped out may have been eligible for special education services. Hippolitus (1980) cited the Bureau of Education for the Handicapped as documenting the dropout rate for special education students at five to six times the rate of youths without handicaps...

In addition, Levin, Zigmond, and Birch (1985) found that the dropout rate for students in Pittsburgh with learning disabilities approached 51%, which far exceeded the 36% reported for the general population during this period. (Lichtenstein, 1988)

Perhaps the “new intervention” as mentioned by Zam (2008) is to address the needs of students in Bhutan that may have learning disabilities. The suggestion of the authors of this paper is that the incidence of learning disabilities may account for a significant proportion of the students who are repeating or dropping out of school. This would strongly support interventions to address this population.

Since the emphasis in modern education is based on the skills of reading and writing any child who has difficulties mastering these skills because of a learning disability will perform below their cognitive capacity.

The challenge is how to effectively address the needs of this group of students in the Bhutanese context. One of the first steps is to make teachers aware that there are students with such disabilities and then teach them how to work with these students. The strategies that will help students with learning disabilities are also strategies that will help other students in the class be successful in their academic studies and in turn life.

One strategy that would enhance the capacity of the system especially for students with learning difficulties and their teachers is the support of an Education Assistant or Teacher's Assistant in the classroom. The Teacher's Assistant is another individual that is in the class to help the teacher with the students, especially those students with some type of Special Education need. However when the teacher is working with the student with the special needs the Teacher's Assistant is available to supervise or help the rest of the class. The role of the Teacher's Assistant is to assist the teacher and help students with Special Education needs.

A factor that would also help teachers meet the needs of these students is the reduction of class size. SEN students may require more of the teachers' time. A smaller class would allow the teacher to address individual needs within the class for students with and without a disability and ensure that students are given appropriate individual time. If as stated "(a)ll children with disabilities and with special needs – including those with physical, mental and other types of impairment – will be able to access and benefit from education" (Planning Commission of the Royal Government of Bhutan, 1999, p. 36) then further interventions will have to be taken to ensure that these students are not only "included" but are given the necessary support to be successful at school. This

should include full access to the curriculum, participation in extra-curricular activities and access to cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activities.

The authors of this paper suggest that the proportion of students repeating classes or dropping out of school in Bhutan closely aligns with the recognized incidence of learning disabilities in the general population. Recognizing this group of learners and addressing their invisible disabilities and learning needs will go a long way in meeting the needs of all children in Bhutan and help Bhutan achieve its educational goals as set out in the latest Five Year Plan.

More than ever before there is a need to carefully plan and strategically use resources to meet the needs of children with learning disabilities. The first challenge will be teaching teachers to recognize students with learning disabilities and develop a common understanding of identification practices. The next and greatest challenge will be to develop the skills and strategies used by teachers to teach these students. Both teachers presently in the classroom and those in training need to develop an awareness of the meaning of learning disabilities. Teachers must understand that these students will be in their classes and that they need a different approach to teaching the curriculum to these children. The methods of teaching students with learning disabilities though different than teaching regular students will also help other students in the class. This then would be a benefit to all the students in the class. Just as there are different paths to Enlightenment there are also different paths to learning.

It will also be important for teachers to learn how they can accommodate students with learning disabilities. This could be as simple as allowing students to have extra time to complete a test or assignment so that they are able to show the teacher what they have learned, not how fast they can write. Students with learning disabilities require a different approach by teachers in the way

students are assessed and evaluated as well as in the way they are instructed. The understanding and acceptance by teachers, the education system and parents in Bhutan of individual student differences is necessary for there to be a shift in the ways to measure student understanding and skills. Extra time, access to scribes, opportunities for oral assessment and perhaps the use of computers, where available, are some of the methods that will allow students with learning disabilities the opportunity to demonstrate their learning. These accommodations for students need to take place not only in the everyday classroom tasks, tests and exams but also need to be incorporated into the country wide exams in class 6, 10 and 12. The use of these strategies as part of regular practice will have a positive impact on the retention rate of students in the educational system of Bhutan. The efforts to support the changes must be well coordinated and communication between the large numbers of stakeholders in Bhutan must be made a priority so that efforts and resources are not duplicated.

There are tremendous challenges facing those working in the area of education in Bhutan. More than ever before there is a need to co-ordinate resources and training for the development of an education system for all. The government is committed to expanding the access to education to all children in the country until class 10 and to include children who have previously not attended school. As the student population across the country increases so will the range of learning needs and the diversity of student abilities. To ensure that all the human capacity within Bhutan is fully developed and not wasted, there is an increased demand for teachers to be trained to meet the needs of all the students in Bhutan.

It is by recognizing all students with disabilities both visible and invisible that Bhutan will be able to “maximize the happiness of all Bhutanese and ... enable them to achieve their full and innate potential as human beings” (Planning Commission of the Royal Government of Bhutan, 1999, p. 47)

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How can I improve my behavioral strategies in the classroom to encourage students' participation?

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Abstract.

An Action Research was undertaken with the research question of 'How can I improve my behavioral strategies in the classroom to encourage students' participation?' This was adopted as my action research question after observing minimal participation in one of the class that I taught at Samtse College of Education. Participants were trainee teachers from B.ED. (P) I Science (3 years) of Samtse College of Education. Data was gathered mainly through observation; however questionnaire was also used to identify the problem and obtain insight into the participants' views. Baseline data was collected and analyzed and after those behavioral strategies were adapted from the suggestions given by the students and the literature review were prepared. After three weeks of intervention process, data was once again gathered and compared with the baseline data. Result showed significant improvement in the students overall level of participation.

Introduction

Research is an important element of any institution and especially when it comes to an educational institution. Lack of research could impede the quality of education. Therefore, for Bhutanese education system to continue to develop, it is important that a research culture be promoted and encouraged.

Recently action research has become popular among the educationalist in Bhutan as it is more suitable given the limited time and budgetary constraints of the country (Rinchen, 2008).

According to Johnson (1993), action research is an approach to introducing problem identification, action planning, implementation, evaluation, and reflection into your teaching. Action research includes learning and creation of knowledge through critical reflection on experiences, and testing the knowledge in a new situation. Often action research is a collaborative activity among colleagues addressing and working towards solving and improving everyday classroom problems focused towards student achievement (Ferrance, 2000). Because action research is normally classroom focused and done on a smaller scale, it is more viable for educationalists in Bhutan given their heavy teaching load and limited funds and recourses (Rinchen, 2008).

According to Maxwell (2003), action research is spiral in nature. It is a cycle of planning, observation, and reflection on the part of researcher with the goal of finding a solution to specific classroom problems. Action research requires thorough reconnaissance (Maxwell, 2003). Reconnaissance is derived from the French word *reconnoiter* which means to 'look at'. According to Maxwell (2001) reconnaissance consists of three parts namely situational analysis, analysis of the people involved, and literature. This provides an overview of the situation in which the action research is carried out, the competence of the researcher, and the connection of the research with the previous related literatures.

Situational analysis

I was placed at Samtse College of Education for my teaching practice for the month of August 2009. I was assigned Learning Process and Child Development as my teaching subjects. I choose first year primary science students as my subject for my action research. These student teachers take Learning Process as one of their professional development subject and come from various higher secondary schools located around the country. The class had 17 student teachers with the age range of 20 to 25 of which 4 were female. These Student Teachers will graduate after

3 years in the college and they will be placed in different schools as teachers, therefore it is important for them to learn the skill of encouraging student's participation in the classroom.

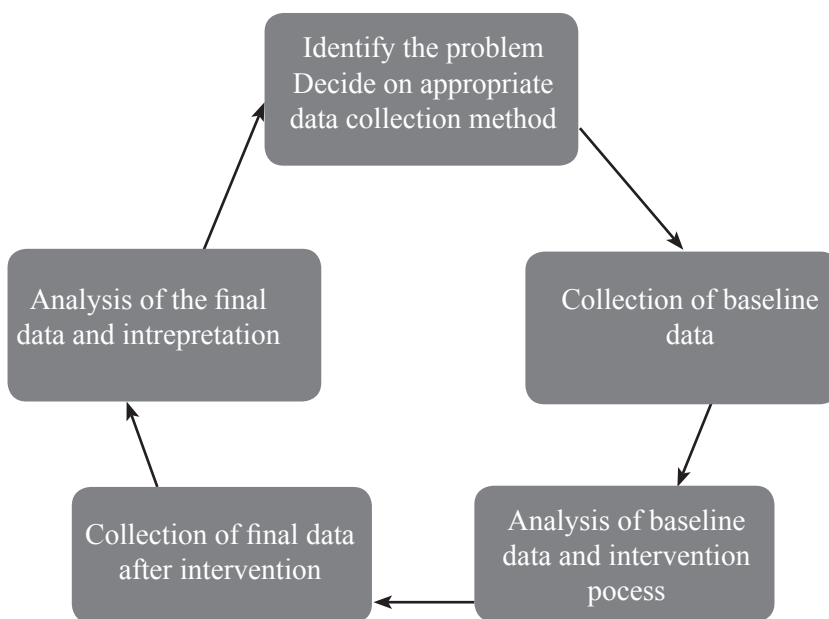
I decided to chose "how to encourage students' participation in the classroom teaching and learning through changing my behavior approach" as the topic of my action research after witnessing a significant number of student teachers lacking active participation in the classroom activities. I realized that there could be a significant effect on the students if they were taught by teachers who lack skills on how to evoke student's participation in the class. Thus to address this issue in my own way I decided to work with them and use the knowledge, skills and technique I explored after going through some of the literature related to the context.

Competence

The participants in this study were not new to the classroom situations lacking active participation from the students as they had already been in the teaching field for one year. They would have encountered many students who wouldn't participate in the classroom. Therefore, I am very sure they will have experienced similar situations. This I consider as an important competence in my participants.

Participants also possess sound knowledge of skills and strategies involved in encouraging student participation in the classroom as they learnt teaching skills and strategies during their first semester.

Action plan



Literature review

In the words of Flanders (1970), teaching behavior is an act by the teacher which occurs in the context of classroom interaction.

It is the consensus of many scholars that how teachers approach students in the classroom is vital in increasing student's response and participation in the classroom. Therefore, it is important to identify the probable behavior of teacher that is most likely to increase student's response in the classroom.

One of the most effective behaviors reflected in many literatures is the need to reinforce students for their response. Skinner observed that "if you give flowers to your girl after you have quarreled with her, you may very well strengthen her tendency to quarrel. Better to give her the flowers after she has been sweet to you" (cited in Cecco and Crawford, 1988, p.186). If you want the sweetness

to recur in the future, better give flowers after the response. This statement by Skinner clearly reflects the need to reinforce students for their response in the classroom if the teacher wants to strengthen the student's participation. Reinforcing the students for their participation also encourage other students to participate in the classroom activity.

Teacher's motivation is also an important factor in encouraging student's participation in the classroom activity. If a teacher can motivate students, they are more likely to participate in the class activities and less likely to get off task and contribute to disruptive behavior (Burden, 2000).

Teachers need to be aware of two broad categories of motivation- intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation could be something like arousing the students curiosity by asking thought provoking questions and avoiding 'yes' and 'no' questions. Intrinsic motivation contributes towards student's internal satisfaction which develops their feelings of growth and competence. Teachers could ensure intrinsic motivation by making everything they teach as intrinsically interesting as possible and avoiding handing out material rewards when they are unnecessary (Lepper, 1983 cited in Burden, 2000).

Extrinsic motivation is motivation from outside the learner and has to do with external rewards from the teacher for completion of a task or for participating in the classroom activity. Words of praise from the teacher, a privilege, and a higher grade in a paper are some examples. Rewarding students for participation in an exciting activity is not necessary, but extrinsic rewards may be needed after an activity that students find less intrinsically interesting and satisfying (Burden, 2000). Hence, exhibiting motivating behavioral and using encouraging words by the teacher seems vital in increasing student's participation.

Sharma's (1997) proposes that desirable behavior will increase as it gains attention. Hence it is important for the teachers that they pay attention to the students when they cooperate and show active participation in the learning activities. A study by Marzano (2003) emphasizes that teacher-student relationship as a major factor which influences the behavior of the students in the class. As teachers are said to be the role model, they are expected to show desirable behavior in the class. By desirable behavior, I mean behaviors which are rational, such as not losing one's temper when they encounter disruptive behavior, handling problems intelligently and professionally, accepting their drawbacks and acknowledging the students effort. Such kind of professionalism will gain students trust and maintain healthy relationship with the students. As such the students will cooperate and take interest in class activities.

Friedman (2008) proposed two strategies found to be effective in preparing students to participate in the class activity. The first technique is termed 'speak up'. Here teachers are supposed to share their guidelines and expectations to the students through encouraging words and instructions. In the class, the teacher encourages students to at least speak two times per class. The teacher needs to instruct students on the importance of speaking in the class on building self confidence and not to be used as a means to monopolize class discussion.

Friedman's (2008) second point concerns the student's general tendency to worry that they will not sound brilliant when they speak. Here the teacher's job is to make students realize that even brilliant people do not sound brilliant all of the time. However, most teachers and classmates will respect the student who has come well prepared and tried his/her best which ultimately leads to learning and not of sounding brilliant.

Flanders (1970), in his book *Analyzing Teachers Behavior* emphasizes

the patterns of teachers behavior in the classroom. He states that it is in the classroom that patterns of thinking should be set, attitudes should be shaped, and participation can influence the growth of independence and self-direction. Teaching behavior is the most potent factor that can alter learning opportunities in the classroom. Equalizing opportunities and increasing class participation in the class depends on how often the teacher ask questions, what kind of questions teachers ask and how teachers react to the ideas expressed by the students (p.10).

Collaborative learning is also an important aspect of classroom behavior that teachers use to foster classroom participation. It is a separate strategy that encompasses a broader range of group interaction such as developing learning communities and stimulating student discussion. While doing so first divide the students into groups. Assigns them a task for discussion in the group, make sure the size of the group is small. Teachers' main role here is to go around the group and pay attention and guide the activity. This strategy ensures maximum and equal participation from the students (Kochhar, 1985).

Another strategy proposed by Barry and King (1997) is the guided discovery strategies. This strategy helps students to develop a better understanding of ideas and concepts. Its major purpose is to have students actively involved in their own learning and problem solving. Set the task for the students. Let them discover the problem and guide them when they are working. This strategy if adopted by the teachers not only requires students to participate in the class but also contributes towards students analyzing power and problem solving.

It is also important for the teachers to consider nonverbal behavior such as use of the space, body movement and position, facial expression and how long the teacher looks at a particular student and pauses between lectures and questions. It is a human nature

that students prefer interacting with teacher who is jovial and energetic. Therefore it is important that teachers smile at times, show enthusiasm through body posture and avoid intimidating looks. All these factors determine the level of students' participation in the classroom.

An action research is most viable for this study because the behaviors and strategies teachers considered best may not necessarily be the students preferred method of inspiration to participate in class.

Based on the above literature and the situational analysis I put forward the following question:

How can I improve my behavioral strategies in the classroom to encourage students' participation?

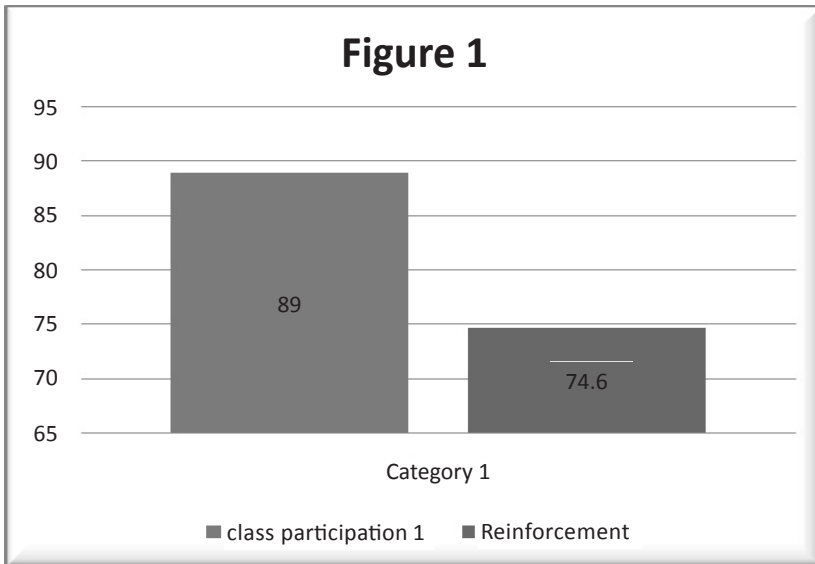
Method of data collection

Data was mainly gathered through observations. Students were observed during the usual one hour class and a tick was marked against their name whenever they participated in the class activity or asked questions. They were observed without informing in order get authentic observable responses. The same procedure of data collection was followed after the intervention to get the final data.

Questionnaires were also used to collect base line date. Participation in the survey was voluntary for all students; they were asked to fill in the forms at home and return only if they are interested. This was done anonymously for ethical reasons and also to get genuine information from the interested participants. Out of seventeen students, fifteen students returned the questionnaire.

Baseline data and participant's responses.

I used two methods of data collection. To collect the baseline information I used a questionnaire consisting of ten questions which mainly asked multiple choice and open-ended questions concerning students' views and preferences on the strategies used by teachers in the classroom. The first question in the questionnaire asks students to rate their view of the importance of participating in the classroom activity from 0 (not important) to 10 (very important). Their response showed an 89 percent average, which is very convincing. The third question asks students to rate their feelings after receiving reinforcement from the teacher. 74.6 percent of the students showed a favorable attitude towards reinforcement. The following figure illustrates students' average response for the 1st and 3rd questions:

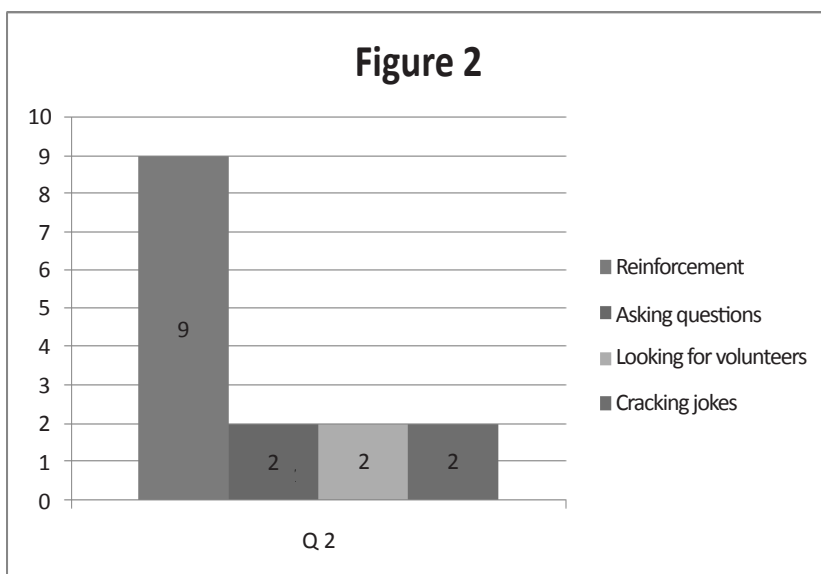


It is evident from the above graph that 89 percent of students rated class participation as very important. The graph also shows that 74.6 percent of students feel inspired when they are reinforced by their teacher.

The second, fifth, sixth, eighth and ninth were a multiple choice questions. The second question in the questionnaire asks students to choose one factor from four factors which influence their participation the most. The four factors are as follows:

- ▶▶ Reinforcement
- ▶▶ Asking many question by the teacher
- ▶▶ Looking for volunteers to answer question.
- ▶▶ Telling jokes by the teacher.

Out of 15 students, 9 students rated reinforcement as the most influential factor. 2 went for the second option, 2 preferred the third option and the remaining 2 rated cracking jokes by the teacher as an important factor in motivating students to participate in the class. The following graph illustrates the above findings:

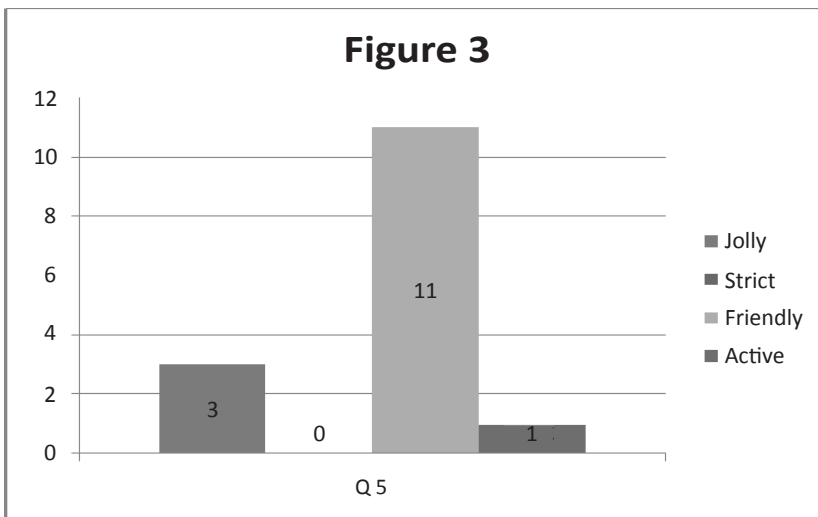


The above figure clearly shows that the majority of the students prefer reinforcement as a source of inspiration for class participation.

The fourth question is an open ended question and asks students to write their view on the kind of teacher behavior that enhances class participation. Most of the students rated teacher's attention, reinforcement skills, and giving activity as an important factor. Some students reflected friendly and approachable nature of the teacher as an important factor in enhancing student's participation in the class.

Fifth question ask the participants to choose the type of teacher which motivates them to ask question. The choices offered are as follows:

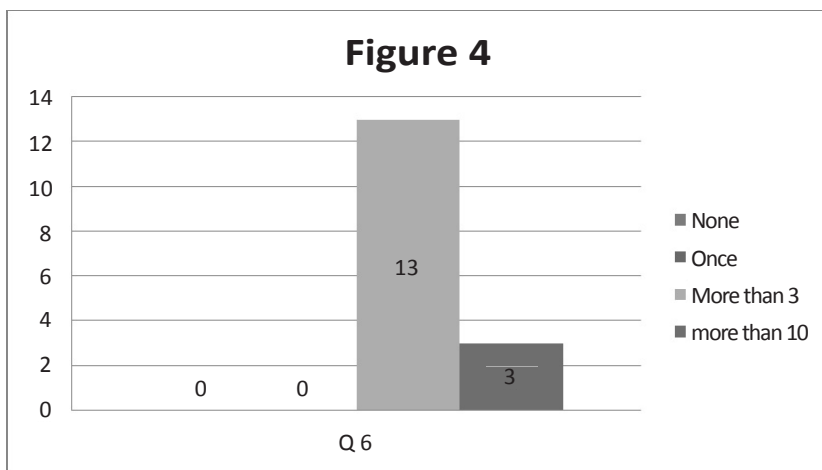
- Jolly
- Strict
- Friendly
- Active



3 participants preferred jolly, none of the participant's preferred strict teacher, 1 participant preferred active and the rest of the 11 participants went for friendly teacher.

Question number six asks participants to rate the number of times they had been reinforced in the past week. The choices are as follows:

- ➔ None
- ➔ Once
- ➔ More than 3 times
- ➔ More than 10 times



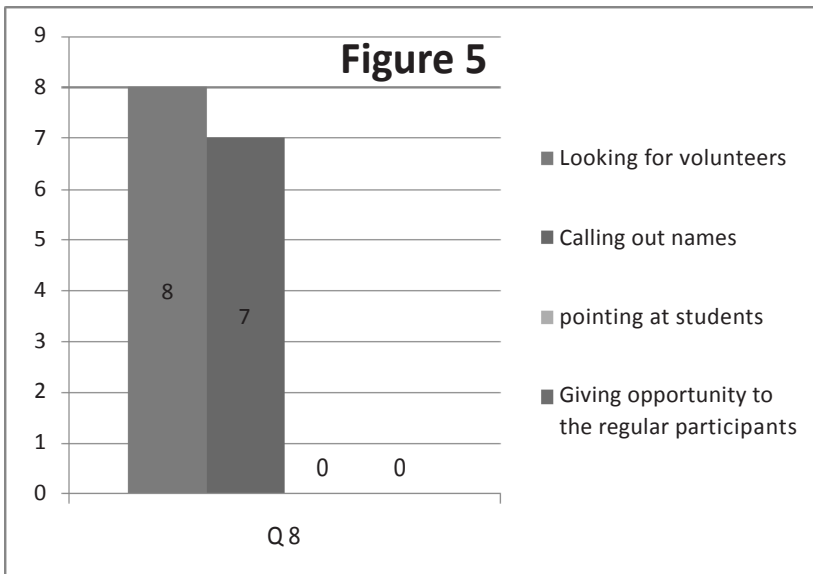
13 participants circled the third option (More than 3 times) and the rest 2 participants circled the fourth option (More than 10 times). This shows that majority of the participants received reinforcement in the past week.

The seventh question is also an open ended question and asks participants to write their view on how reinforcement influenced their willingness to participate in the classroom. The responses were fairly favorable where more than half of the participants saying that reinforcement influenced their level of participation in the class.

Question number 8 ask the participants to rate their preferred method used by teachers to gain students participation. Following are the choices:

- ▶▶ Looking for volunteers
- ▶▶ Calling out students name
- ▶▶ Pointing at students
- ▶▶ Giving opportunity to students who always participate in the class.

8 participants preferred teachers looking for volunteers and rest 7 preferred calling names by teacher. This shows the importance of the teachers to address their students by their names. Following graph illustrates the findings:

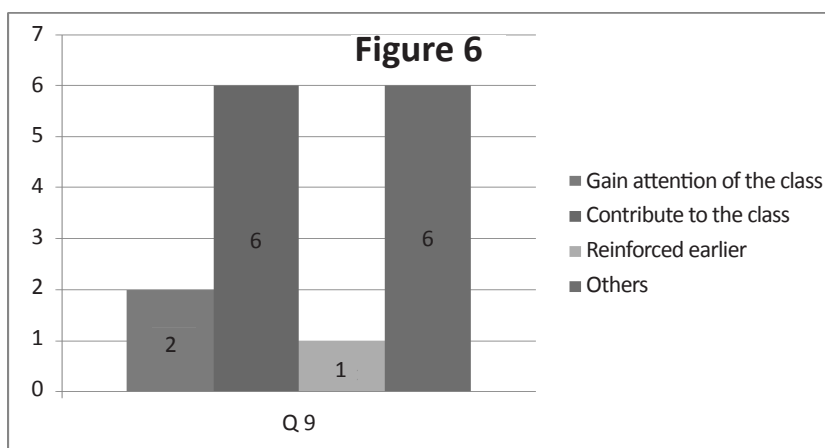


Question number 9 asks the participants to give reason why they participate in the classroom. Following are the choices offered:

- ★ To gain attention of the class
- ★ To contribute to the class

- ★ Because you were reinforced earlier
- ★ Others

2 participants circled the first option as their reason for participating in the class. 6 participants choose the second option, 1 participant cited the third option and the rest 6 participants cited various reasons such as creating learning atmosphere, share knowledge, gain confidence etc as their reason for participating in the class. Refer the following graph:



The last question asks the participants to share their view about teacher centered and student centered learning. A significant number of students advocated student centered learning. Some followed the middle path and few advocated teacher centered learning.

I used the information gathered from the above questionnaire as the basis of my intervention strategies and also to gain insight into the participants preferred method of teaching.

In addition, I used observation as my main source of data. While teaching I made a mark besides the students name whenever they participated or responded in the class. Following is the tabulated observation data: refer next page....

Observed on August 10th and 11th 2009 from B.ED. (P) I Science (3 years).

Participant No.	Response (Day 1)	Response (Day 2)	Total response
1	3	2	5
2	1	3	4
3	1	3	4
4	1	0	1
5	0	2	2
6	1	2	3
7	2	3	5
8	0	1	1
9	1	1	2
10	0	1	1
11	3	2	5
12	1	2	3
13	2	1	3
14	1	2	3
15	7	4	11
16	4	4	8
17	2	0	2
Total	30	33	63

Observed on august 10th and 11th 2009 from B.Ed(P) I Science (3 yrs)

Note: Day 1 response= D1, Day 2 response = D2, Total response = TR.

“D1= 30, “D2= 33, Total responses in two days =“ total responses= 63 responses in two days.

Mean = “TR/No. of students.

Mean participation rate of the class before intervention = $63/17= 3.7$

From the above table we can figure out that total number of response in the class during the first observation is 30 and during the second day observation is 33. The mean participation rate of the class is 3.7 per student. This information serves as the main baseline data. The next step in Action Research is to implement the strategies suggested by the students in their questionnaire and the theories proposed in the literature and increase the student's response and participation in the class.

Intervention

I used the following strategies taking into consideration the strategies suggested in the literature review and the information collected through the questionnaire:

- Using varied reinforcement techniques
- Setting out lesson objectives and giving clear instructions
- Briefing students on importance of speaking in the class and how it contributes to confidence building and learning.
- Reminding students that it is acceptable to make mistakes
- Encouraging them to ask questions
- Ask for the views of the students before I start a new topic
- Being friendly with students.
- Giving group work and walking around the class to make sure everyone is participating in the group.
- Guided discovery.

After collecting the baseline date through the questionnaire and observation, I made a great effort to implement the strategies suggested in the literature and also the views provided by the students in the questionnaire. Before starting my lesson I always set out the lesson's objectives and explained the expectations to the students. I also used various verbal reinforcements such as 'very good', 'excellent', 'well tried' 'keep it up', 'good effort' etc. Before giving any class activity or asking any questions, I always brief students on the importance of speaking in the class and how

it contributes to learning. When the students are doing activities I make sure that I move around the class and go to every group to clarify their doubts and give them equal importance. I also make sure that I call students by their name.

Before starting any topic I always give the students an opportunity to share their view and relate it to their real life experience. This encouraged students to speak and share their knowledge and experience with the class. After using these interventions I observed the following improvement in the level of participation from the students.

Final observational data (phase 2/after intervention).

Observed on August 10th and 11th 2009 from B.ED. (P) I Science (3 years).

Participant No.	Response (Day 1)	Response (Day 2)	Total response
1	5	4	9
2	2	2	4
3	4	2	6
4	5	6	11
5	3	2	5
6	3	3	6
7	1	2	3
8	3	2	5
9	2	2	4
10	3	4	7
11	5	4	9
12	2	3	5
13	4	3	7
14	3	2	5
15	8	6	14
16	5	5	10
17	2	2	4
Total	60	54	114

Note: Day 1 response= D1, Day 2 response = D2, Total response = TR.

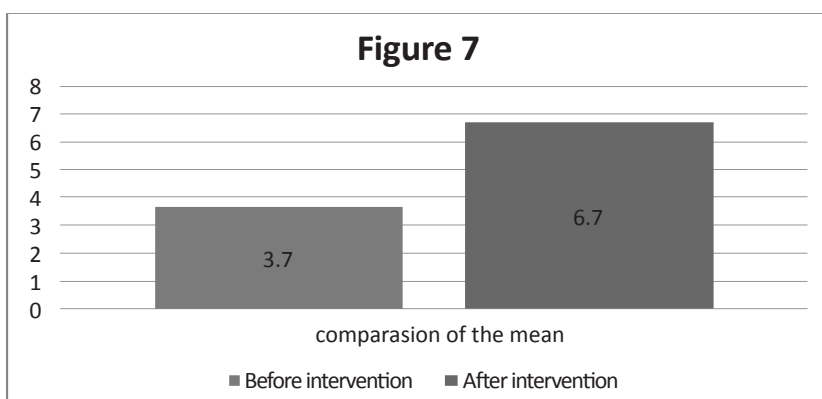
“D1= 60, “D2= 54, Total responses in two days = “total responses= 114 responses in two days.

Mean = “TR/No. of students.

Mean participation rate of the class before intervention = $114/17= 6.7$

From the above table we find that total number of response in the class during the first observation is 60 and during the second day observation is 54. The mean participation rate of the class is 6.7 per student. Compared to the baseline mean, the mean after intervention process is nearly doubled.

The following graph illustrates the comparison between the baseline mean and the post-intervention mean.



The above graph shows the comparison between the mean of the baseline data and the final data regarding the average participation/ response in the class. It is evident from the above findings students’ participation improved drastically after the intervention process.

Discussion/Reflection:

Our education system is greatly influenced by the Indian pedagogy; teacher dominated teaching which is practiced widely even today. Such approach has resulted students to depend on teachers and remain just as a passive receiver of knowledge (Rinchen, 2008). Students' participation is minimal in most of our classroom. They just practice and repeat the notes and lectures presented by the teachers leaving minimum room for self exploration and practical application. This practice impedes students' development of psychomotor skills. Therefore most of our students even after graduating from the college face difficulties applying the knowledge they have learnt in real life situations.

This action research enhanced my classroom behavioural skills which are required for evoking students' curiosity, interest and also enhanced my knowledge on how to develop my students' skill on problem solving and critical thinking. Therefore I consider this study a success as I could adopt many skill and strategies which are crucial in enhancing student's participation. I have begun to assist students to be more open and participative in their learning. I am also confident that I will be able to conceptualize the strategies and knowledge I reaped from my action research in the classroom situation in future.

I draw the following conclusions from this action research:

- ▶▶ Teachers' behavior in the classroom is crucial in enhancing students' ability to think critically, develop confidence, develop speaking skills, contribute towards collaborative learning and develop self-esteem.
- ▶▶ Reinforcement is crucial in increasing students' participation in the class.
- ▶▶ Teachers' overt as well as covert behavior is critical in maintaining healthy relationship with students which naturally leads to maintaining a good teaching/learning environment.

Limitations/ Future Trends:

However, there are some notable limitations with my study, such as restricted sample size and participants being only a handful of student enrolled in first year Primary science of Samtse College of Education. The result would be more valid and applicable to the general population if the participants were selected from different locations, and schools.

Nevertheless, I collected the data conscientiously and included only the valid data set to minimize the underlying confounding variables.

Another drawback the research holds is that it adopted only few strategies in data collection. I wanted to take on a critical friend to authenticate my data but due to lack of time I could not do that. The time span considered for the research is also questionable. The research suggests that a lot more could be explored and worked upon. The research leaves room for further study/ action research whereby the other factors and strategies can be taken into consideration. To gain general public consensus, further research with more data samples from the general population would be necessary to ascertain the skills and strategies necessary for maximizing students' participation in the classroom.

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Perceptual Learning Styles of Higher Secondary School Students (UDHSS)

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Abstract

Effective teaching and learning depends on the learning style of the learner. The aim of this study is to examine the perceptual learning style of Ugyen Dorji Higher Secondary School students. It is to present a practical option for a teacher in applying a constructive approach in every day lesson plans. The result showed that majority of the students preferred Kinesthetic and Group Learning Style.

Introduction

The quality of education has become an issue in our country. There are a number of factors that hinged the quality of education. Such factors could be the quality of teachers, relevancy of curriculum, types of schools, family, environment etc. One of the major factors is the learning preference of the learner to possess the information. The quality in the education may be achieved through understanding students' learning preference and delivering the need of the students as per the interest that suits the learners. As a teacher, we must understand students' learning styles to help us to create curiosity, interest and lively learning atmosphere for our dear students. Thus, it will help to achieve students' performance accomplishing the success of the students and teachers at the end of the year.

Perceptual Learning Style

Learning styles can be defined as way of reacting towards new information and skills. It differs from individual to individual. Perceptual learning styles are the process by which learners extract

information from their surroundings through the use of their five senses. Liewellyn and Blucter (1989), viewed perceptions as “Perception includes the receiving, organizing, and processing of information.”

According to Andrade and May (2004) perception is the interpretation of impulses to create meaningful internal representations of our environment. James and Gardener (1995), learning style is defined as “the complex manner in which, and conditions under which learner most efficiently and most effectively perceives, process, store, and recall what they are attempting to learn”.

According to Reid (1987), learning styles are variations among learners in using one or more senses to understand, organise, and retain experiences. Reid categorized styles of learning into six types: Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic, Tactile, Group, and Individual, Visual learners refer to seeing visual depictions such as pictures and graphs. They get more benefit from visual presentations. They learn well from seeing words in books, on the chalkboard, and in workbooks. They remember and understand information and instructions better through reading.

Auditory refers to listening. They get more out of explanations. They learn from hearing words spoken and from oral explanations. They remember information by reading aloud or moving lips as they read. They benefit from hearing audio tapes, lectures, and class discussions.

Kinesthetic refers to whole body movement. The learners learn best from movement of their large or gross motor muscles. They take information and learn best by experience, by being involved physically in classroom experiences, field trips, and role-playing.

Tactile refers to the sense of touch or grasp. Tactile learners enjoy learning by doing and learn best through “hands-on” experiences with materials. For tactile learners, working on experiments in a laboratory, handling and building models, touching and working with materials are the most successful learning situation.

Group Learning, they learn more easily and successfully by working with others. They value group interaction and class work with other students.

Individual Learning refers to studying alone; such learner understands new material best when they learn it alone. They prefer self learning.

Need and Significance of the Study

It has been seen that we used a lots of methods and strategies of teaching without understanding the actual needs of the students. Research has indicated that learning and teaching using instructional styles and materials structured to suit students’ thinking and learning styles is significantly superior to the teaching in mismatched conditions (Dunn, Beaudry & Klavas 1989; Grigorenko & Sternberg 1997; Sternberg et al. 1999).

Students learn in many different ways. Learning style preferences show how well students learn material in different situations. (Peacock 2001; Reid 1995), found mismatch between teaching and learning styles cause learning failure in both teacher and students. It’s important for teachers to know the learning styles of their students. Students enjoy learning more when they are taught in a way that takes into account their learning style preferences (Dunn et al.1989). Teachers must provide a variety of learning approaches so that learning differences can be recognized and provided in every classroom. Understanding the different ways that children learn, interact with and process information can help

teacher to modify the ways of teaching so that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed.

The researcher has decided to study about the different learning styles of UDHSS as it also contributes towards academic achievement and quality education.

Objectives

1. To find out the significance difference in the perceptual learning of boys and girls if any.
2. To find out whether there is any significance difference between the perceptual learning styles of students studying in different grade.[class eleven plus and class ten below]

Hypotheses

1. There will be no significant difference in the perceptual learning of boys and girls
2. There will be no significant difference between the perceptual learning styles of students studying in different grade. [class eleven plus and class ten below]

Methodology

The survey method is adopted in the present study. The sample selected consists of 110 students from class 9th and 11th standard. The tool Perceptual Learning-Style Preference Questionnaire (Developed by Joy Reid 1984) was used for collection of data.

The areas covers in the present study are characteristic of visual, auditory, kinesthetic, tactile, individual and group.

Statistical analyses were carried out by using SPSS statistical package. All students in the class took part in the study; however, some students filled the questionnaires incompletely and were thus omitted from the data. The respondents (N = 110) were from class XI and class IX. There were 61 female students and 49

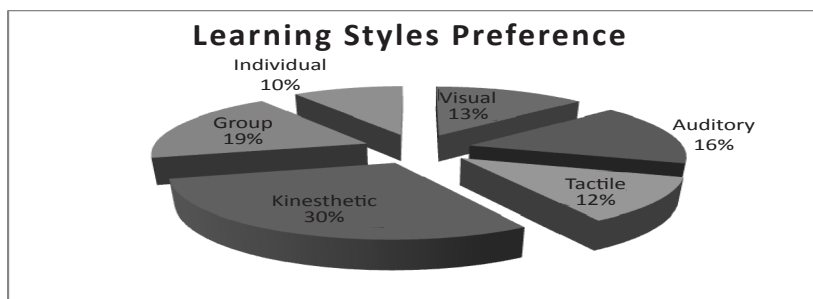
male students. The researcher collected the samples from class XI and class IX, so that results can be generalized among Higher Secondary Schools.

Analysis and Interpretation

Table: 1.Perceptual Learning Styles of UDHS school students

Learning styles	N	Percentage
Visual	15	13%
Auditory	18	16%
Tactile	13	12%
Kinesthetic	33	30%
Group	21	19%
Individual	11	10%
Total	110	100

It is found that 30% of the students were having the kinesthetic learning style, followed by group with 19%, auditory 16%, visual 13%, tactile 12% and individual 10%.



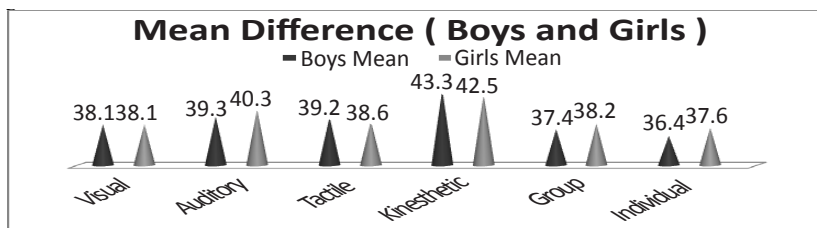
Learning styles based on gender was compared by using the test of significance of difference between means. The t-values are given below in Table-2.

Table: 2

Learning Styles	Boys N=49		Girls N=61		Calculated t- Value	Remarks at 5% level
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Visual	38.06	5.99	38.08	6.3	0,018	NS
Auditory	39.34	5.25	40.26	5.45	0.88	NS
Tactile	39.22	5.71	38.55	5.88	0.59	NS
Kinesthetic	43.30	3.67	42.52	6.05	0.79	NS
Group	37.42	6.20	38.24	7.97	0.58	NS
Individual	36.36	7.71	37.57	6.95	0.86	NS

SD-standard deviation, NS- Not Significant at 0.05 level.

It is found that there is no significant difference between the learning styles of boys and girls.



To study whether the standard influences the choice of perceptual learning styles, analysis of variance was done.

Table: 3. Type of students and Perceptual Learning Styles

Variable	Source of Variation	Sum of square	df	Mean square	Calculated F-value
Visual	Between Group	168.687	1	168.687	4.618*
	Within group	3944.732	108	36.525	
	Total	4113.418	109		
Auditory	Between Group	50.552	1	50.552	1.771
	Within group	30.83120	108	28.547	
	Total	3133.673	109		
Tactile	Between Group	79.278	1	79.278	2.391
	Within group	3580.394	108	33.152	
	Total	3659.673	109		
Kinesthetic	Between Group	5.253	1	5.253	000
	Within group	2876.218	108	26.632	
	Total	2876.218	109		
Group	Between Group	339.1	1	339.1	6.858*
	Within group	5340.363	108	49.448	
	Total	5679.464	109		
Individual	Between Group	44.8	1	44.8	0.841
	Within group	5753.055	108	53.296	
	Total	5797.855	109		

***Significant at 0.05 levels**

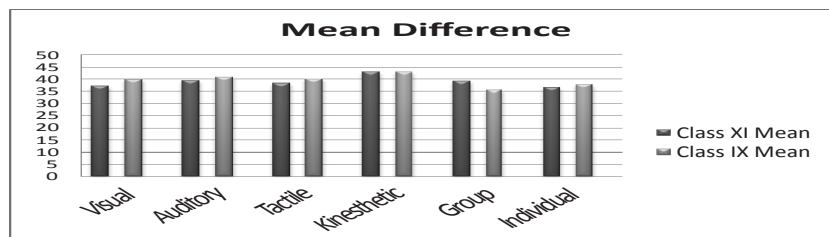
There are statically significant differences among the learning styles of the students of class XI and class IX students. F-value is significant at 0.05 levels in group and visual learning styles. The f-value is not significant in tactile, individual, kinesthetic, and auditory learning styles.

As f- value is found significant in visual and group learning styles, the t-value is calculated to find the difference between the learning styles of the students in different classes.

Table: 4.

Learning Styles	Class XI N=71		Class IX N=39		Calculated t- Value	Remarks at 5% level
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Visual	37.1549	6.4402	39.7436	5.2351	2.149	Significant
Auditory	39.352	5.8630	40.7692	4.2206	1.331	Not Significant
Tactile	38.2254	5.8802	40.0000	5.5251	1.546	Not Significant
Kinesthetic	42.8732	5.3850	42.8718	4.7194	0.001	Not Significant
Group	39.1831	6.1466	35.5128	8.4226	2.619	Significant
Individual	36.5634	7.7988	37.8974	6.2736	0.917	Not Significant

From the table, it is clear that there is significant difference between the learning styles of class XI and class IX as regards to visual and group. The mean values indicate that class IX students prefer visual where as class XI students prefer group.



Major Findings

The comparison of the learning styles revealed that 30% adopted the kinesthetic learning styles and 19% group, 16% auditory, 13% visual, 12% tactile, 10% individual. The majority respondents prefer kinesthetic learning, followed by Group learning and auditory learning.

There is no significant difference between boys and girls in any of their learning styles. The female and male students have the same learning styles preferences.

In case of class XI and IX students, there are statically significant differences in learning styles. F-value is significant at 0.05 levels in Group and Visual learning styles. The f-value is not significant in tactile, individual, kinesthetic, and auditory learning styles.

The t-value value obtained for the perceptual learning styles showed that class IX students prefers visual, and class XI students prefers group.

Conclusion

Learning styles are simply different approaches or ways of learning. Teachers who desire to be more students centered must be aware of learning styles, for better teaching and learning. Learning styles are the actions that teachers and learners display in the learning exchange. The balancing between teaching and learning is important because research suggests (Peacock 2001) that mismatch between teaching and learning styles causes learning failure and frustration, and this has implications for both learners and teachers. The teachers should help students to identify their learning styles and to become more flexible in using them because research has shown the efficiency of versatile learning styles (Kinsella 1995). The students can be taught in a manner they prefer, which leads to an increased comfort level and willingness to learn.

The teachers have to be fully effective professionals. Each student has his/her own learning styles, if the students are taught in preferred learning styles, will learn with interest and curiosity. Wangdi, P. (2009) Teacher could try out a variety of teaching methodologies like role plays, presentations, dramatization, recitation, hot seating, group discussions, explanation, demonstration, dictations,

storytelling, debate, ex-tempore speech, declamations, and outdoor teaching like field visits which will not only generate bigger interests in students but also enhance greater interaction in the class that would facilitate in developing greater concentration skills and make learning much more interesting and focused. (p.103)

It is important for teachers to understand students' learning preference for effective teaching and learning process.

Education Implication and Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The learning styles are important factor of the pupils for academic achievements and life long education. It is essential to use appropriate styles of teaching.
2. It is recommended that the teachers to design group learning activity for the classes (XI and XII) and Visual learning activities for classes IX and X.
3. The majority of the students prefer kinesthetic; therefore, it is suggested that kinesthetic learning could be adopted in the school.

Limitation of the study and suggestions for further research

The following limitations and suggestions are considered for further investigation:

1. The study is confined only in UDHSS
2. The study is limited to only in class IX and XI. Hence, it may be conducted through out the country and in all the schools and classes.
3. The study is base of questionnaires and analysis of data.
4. The study may be conducted on achievement and learning preference of the students.

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