

The Impact of Class Size in Teaching and Learning of English

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Abstract:

This study of research is focused on the Influence of Class-Size in Teaching and Learning of English among different levels of students by which we have to find out that how the size of class plays role, in learning or teaching process does it effect on teachers or students only and as per length of class how much educational output can be achieved. The effect of class size on teaching and learning English as a foreign language (EFL) has been through a contentious debate among researchers for a long time. Before the 1950's the concern about the effect of class size and the learning outcomes of students in such classes waned for some time. Therefore, through reviewing the existing literature on this area and examples culled from the teachers' experience, the aim of the present study are twofold: (1) to ascertain the impact of large classes on the teaching and learning outcomes, and (2) to suggest appropriate strategies for English teachers to utilize in their large classes to facilitate English learners. It has also been figured out that large class size creates hurdles in managing and taking out positive educational output but it remains economical as per financial expenses. While small class size is easy to control and also gives positive educational results but it needs huge financial resources for setting up numbers of classes and teachers as well.

Key words: EFL, large classes, learning outcomes, Educational Institute, Sub-continent

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

With the end of slave trade in Nigeria at the starting of the 19th century, British Colonial interest converted to agricultural production from exportation to Europe. During this period, precisely in 1842 and 1846 {2009 Britannica encyclopedia} the first missionary stations were established in Badagry (near Lagos in the South West) and Calabar (in the South-East) respectively. At the same time Same colonial arrangements were made in sub-continent as the British Colonial government felt the needs of Asians who were literate in English language, British authorities tried to create such kind of atmosphere where English language could become compulsory for this purpose different financial and political benefits were kept for the learners of English Language ,because of the weak financial condition of that time in the society it became a source of rewarding for people so English language learning and Teaching became more important than any other language, in such condition the huge majority of young generation overwhelmingly tempted towards English learning, resulting which the class size issue emerged first time in sub-continent.

As per the mentioned above historical facts the issue of overcrowded classes became a challenge for the educationist of that time and different questions, suggestions were raised to fix the issue. Multiple theories were presented from very old time up to now, some people consider class size a very usual and minor issue which does not matter in learning or teaching process while for some educationists and researchers it depends upon the historical, cultural and native behavior of learner to get educational goal in small or large class as per their personal educational perception. it is undeniably apparent that in teaching and learning of English language the class size plays very important role as different educationists and researchers admit the class size as a core issue as per ". Adeyemi (2008) defined class size as an educational tool that can be described

as an average number of students per class in a school, while Hoffman (1980) described it as the number of students per teacher in a class. Kedney (1989) described it as a tool that can be used to measure performance of the educational system. A lot of arguments have gone about the impact of class size on performance some fingering over-bloated class size as the main factor liable for falling standard of education, most particularly in the elementary or secondary level of English, however some others consider this as the part of an issue not a whole and core issue in the failure of education standard.

Here the example of a private American university can clarify the importance of relationship in between class size and students' achievement. A new dean of business at this university of California allowed professors who were already teaching three sections of a course per semester to "super-size" the same sections into two larger sections, of roughly equal total number of students. For example, a typical super-sized course went from three sections of thirty students to two sections of forty-five students. The stimulus for this policy was an effort to decrease the use of assistant faculty and a low cost means of lowering the teaching loads of faculty. This practice persisted for approximately six years, until a new dean arrived at the faculty. With an eye on the new *BusinessWeek* undergraduate business rankings, which is a function of average class size, the dean eradicated the use of super-sizing and resumed those faculty to three sections. This ordinary research permits us to compare students' outcomes before, during, and after significant changes in class size as a outcome of the policy change and later reversal. It shows the vital role of policy change about variation in class size as per students' achievement .

LITERATURE REVIEW

As mentioned above there is a vast literature available about the role of class size in student's achievement. The bulk of this

literature focuses on whether class size is instrumental in improving learning and academic achievement at the elementary school level. The most popular, authentic and comprehensively investigated experiment in class size is the Tennessee STAR program which is widely used for solid research references.

This program from 1986 to 1989 and casually assigned children entering kindergarten into classes of 15-17 students, 22-25 students, or 22-25 students with a teacher's aide. These students kept studying in these class sizes through the third grade, and then they were returned to regular sized classes for the fourth grade. By multiple studies it was examined that the results found that the students in the smaller classes performed significantly better on standardized tests in English reading and mathematics in kindergarten through the third grade (see Word et al. (1990); Finn et al. (1990); Nye et al. (2000 and 2001)). Additional research (Nye and Hedges (2001); Finn (1998); Mosteller (1995)). An additional field experiment was performed in North Carolina in 1991, partly in response to the dissatisfaction of the STAR program design. Students were assigned to classes of either 15 or 25 students in first through third grade. Achilles et al. (1995) finds that students in the smaller classes achieved test scores that were .45 and .56 standard deviations higher than their peers in the larger classes. Economists seem to be divided in their opinions as to whether a policy of class size reduction is a sensible use of resources, and continue to debate whether the marginal benefits of class size reduction outweigh the marginal costs. In practice it is extremely difficult to determine.

DEBATE AND DISCUSSION

Many researchers consider that large classes offer few chances to teachers to provide standard teaching and learning atmosphere for learners (Blatchford et al., 2002; Hattie, 2005; Pedder, 2006). Zhang (2002) examined the impact of large

classes among college students and suggested that problems are one of three or all. First, discipline problems. Second, students' and teachers' exhausted. Third, effectual learning. Same result was also revealed by Yu (2004) who arranged a comprehensive study on college students as well studying in large classes. The study displayed that individuals' variant is ignored and nervousness is a class predominant. She also pointed out the fact that only limited practice activity was done for the targeted language because of the huge number of students stuck students from perceiving and getting skilled in their level of oral English. Such findings also emerged in a study conducted by Fauzia (2009) confirming that over populated classes bring problems to the teaching and learning procedure in general and to teachers and students in particular as due to the large class size. Okoro (1985) has the opinion that “few pupils per class are uneconomical, here it means that full utilization of the available place cannot be carried out as its due benefits just like space and teaching materials” While The National Council of Teachers of English of United States (NCTE, 1990), nominated a small class-size as a class where the communication in between teacher and student can easily be organized and it may remain economical for all stakeholders by this they got full positive results.

CONCLUSION:

Synthesizing the all previous discussion and views it can be said that all arguments go in the favor of small class size except one positive point that is called economical aspect because in large class less financial resources are utilized while in small class size full space utilization cannot be carried out because of which it remains uneconomical. The issue of large classes is not firmly a pedagogical dilemma as the impediments found in over populated classes raise more demands and actions from English teachers in large classes compared with their counterparts teaching smaller ones. As per over all findings we can say that

class size has a vital role in the teaching and learning process with the students' achievement. Therefore, it is important to find out various methods and apply effective strategies to minimize the problems of large classes and elevate the teaching and learning level to its highest standard. Though the efficacy of any method may vary from one context to another as it depends upon, seriously, on different features such as students, teachers and facilities available in a certain school. The teachers of the large class-sizes equally find it difficult to discharge their duties as a result of the superfluous population of students in the class.

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