

**The Effect of Activating Prior Knowledge Strategies on
Enhancing Law Students' Text Comprehension and
Engagement in English Class**

By

Inst. Nada M. Hindi, MA

College of Law & Political Sciences, Diyala University

Nada.hindi87@gmail.com

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Abstract

Language learning process builds on prior knowledge and what learners already know about certain topic, including terms and concepts, provides them with a foundation base for moving forwards and construct meaning. Making such connections to the text they are reading increases comprehension and helps them to be metacognitive. Such a process can be best achieved through applying a variety of classroom strategies for activating prior knowledge, or schema, which helps set a stage for new terms, concepts to be presented. Moreover, such strategies would help increase learners' engagement in classroom activities which involve their participation.

This study imposes the following questions: (1- What is the effect of activating prior knowledge strategies on enhancing law college students' text comprehension in English class?), (2-To what extent do activating prior knowledge strategies affect students' engagement in English class?), and (3-Is there a statistical significant difference in the level of students' engagement between the experimental group and the control group?).

It is hypothesized that (1-Activating prior knowledge strategies have a positive effect on enhancing students' text comprehension in English class), (2-Activating prior knowledge strategies have a positive effect on enhancing students' engagement in English class), and (3-There is a statistical significant difference in the level of students' engagement between the experimental group and the control group).

In order to test the hypotheses, an experimental design has been adopted. Ninety participants from second stage Law Department, College of Law and Political Sciences, Diyala University, for the academic year (2016-2017), have participated and randomly divided into two groups (the experimental and the control). The experiment has been applied to the experimental group and has lasted for 15 weeks through which a variety of strategies has been used. The experiment is followed by a comprehension test and a self- report scale for engagement and the following results have been revealed:

- 1- As far as the comprehension test is concerned, the computed t-value (8.271) is higher than the table t-value (1.98) at a degree of freedom(88). This indicates that there is a positive significant effect of the prior knowledge strategies on enhancing students' text comprehension in favor of the experimental group.

- 2- The computed t-value for the level of engagement of the experimental group is (10.02) which is higher than the table one(2) at a degree of freedom (44). This indicates that there is a positive significant effect of prior knowledge strategies on enhancing students' engagement in English class in favor of the experimental group.
- 3- Concerning the difference in the level of students' engagement between the two groups, the computed t-value (10.951) is higher than the table one (1.98) at a degree of freedom of (88), which is statistically significant in favor of the experimental group.

On the basis of the study results, it is concluded that:

1-The activating prior knowledge strategies have an effective role in enhancing law students' text comprehension in English class, particularly when learners have limited background knowledge to build on, and this is the case with law students encountering new legal terms in their textbook.

2-Applying such strategies in classroom before a new material is introduced, would increase students' engagements in the variety of activities instead of the traditional method they are used to in previous lessons and that would facilitate learning.

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Problem of the Study

Language learning is a dynamic process which includes making sense and meaning from a new information and connecting it to what is already known (Barkley, 2010:94). This process, which relies on what is stored in the memory, helps learners remember and recall information stored, referred to as schema or prior knowledge (Cohin, 2008:182). Schema theory assumes that learners add new information to an existing schema, consequently, they construct meaning and build connections and inferences (Cooper et al, 2015:61), forming something like "a bridge" which makes learning easier (Castillo, 2003:1). This connection and integration of new knowledge with prior knowledge is a prerequisite in learning; therefore, relevant prior knowledge must be activated to make it available for learning (Clark & Lyons, 2011:86), particularly if readers of a new text encounter unfamiliar words due to the insufficient background knowledge or the lack of academically based prior knowledge (Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002:96).

As far as this study is concerned, ESP (English for specific purposes) learners may face difficulty in comprehending specialized text because their already existing schema is limited or have little background knowledge to draw on (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013:11).

Accordingly, activating prior knowledge strategy is considered effective in teaching since it affects comprehension, permitting inferential elaboration of text, facilitating recall of text, as well as affecting interpretation (Almasi & Fullerton, 2012:147). In addition, the process of building connections between the new information and what is already known is considered the cornerstone in language learning and hence keep learners engaged in a welcoming and nonthreatening atmosphere through which they can learn how to write, read and speak in the new language (Haynes & Zacarian, 2010:9).

1.2 Aims

The present study aims to answer the following questions:

1-What is the effect of activating prior knowledge strategies on enhancing Law college students' text comprehension in English class?

2-To what extent do activating prior knowledge strategies affect students' engagement in English class?, and

3-Is there a statistical significant difference in the level of students' engagement between the experimental group and the control group?.

1.3 Hypotheses

It is hypothesized that:

1-Activating prior knowledge strategies have a positive effect on enhancing students' text comprehension in English class.

2-Activating prior knowledge strategies have a positive effect on enhancing students' engagement in English class, and

3-There is a statistical significant difference in the level of students' engagement between the experimental group and the control group.

1.4 Limits

This study is limited to:

1-Activating prior knowledge strategies.

2-Second year Law students, College of Law & Political Sciences, Diyala University.

3-The academic year (2016-2017).

1.5 procedures

The procedures to be followed in this study are:

1-Conducting an experiment for 15 weeks on 45 law students through which a variety of activating prior knowledge strategies are adopted.

2-Administering, for data analysis, a comprehension test and a self-report scale for engagement.

3-Using statistical methods to obtain and tabulate the results, and

4-Drawing conclusions and presenting some recommendations.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The study is supposed to be valuable to:

1. English language teachers, in general, and those who teach English for specific purposes (ESP), in particular, to highlight the importance of activating students' prior knowledge to facilitate learning.
2. English language learners to raise their awareness of the importance of the background knowledge as a base on which to build information and construct meaning.

2.Theoretical Framework

2.1 Prior Knowledge or Schema: Definition & Theory

Prior knowledge or schema is considered one of the effective elements in the understanding of reading comprehension. The term schema, also referred to collectively as prior knowledge or background knowledge, attempts to explain "how knowledge is represented in the mind and how these representations facilitate comprehension and learning"(Harris & Sipay,1991:559 as cited in Schumm, 2006:227). It describes the existing knowledge that learner brings to a learning situation before instruction begins which includes elements like reading ability, content information, and metacognitive learning strategies as explained in the constructivist learning theory(Murray, 2008: 12). Or it describes what a learner already knows and which is available before a certain learning task, such as knowledge of vocabulary, syntax, the first language or a background knowledge of a topic(Richards & Schmidt, 2002:419).

According to schema theory, it is essential that learner brings to the task the important elements of knowledge required such as concepts, propositions, episodes, production rules, procedures etc. which are interrelated i.e. new concepts are built upon the foundation of older ones(Brien & Eastmond, 1999: 56-57).

2.2 Significance of Activating Prior Knowledge to ELLs

Activating prior knowledge, or schema, is one of the strategies identified as key reading comprehension and learning. When students learn to make connections between what they already know and the topic to be learned, they have a foundation upon which they can place new concepts, ideas, and facts(Keene & Zimmerman, 1997, as cited in Teachervision, 2015:1). Such theory assumes that learners are not "empty vessels of knowledge" rather they come to class with prior knowledge which is based on their personal, linguistic, cultural, and academic knowledge(Haynes & Zacarian, 2010: 9).

To facilitate students' learning, their prior knowledge must be assessed by the teacher which is essential to promote learning and foster students' engagement and critical thinking(Gee, 2015: 1). Then students' prior knowledge need to be activated before a task in order to validate knowledge while empowering and increasing students' self-confidence. That can be achieved through a variety of strategies which teachers can use in class to activate prior knowledge like webs

of knowledge, k-w-l, pre-reading prediction about a text, concepts maps, etc.(McMahon et al,2006: 188). If students have little or no background knowledge to be activated about a certain topic, then teachers much spend more time to build background knowledge i.e. introducing concepts that are new to students(Cottler et al, 2008: 99).

2.3 Importance of Prior Knowledge to Text Comprehension

It is agreed that learners can not be expected to comprehend a text when they lack sufficient prior knowledge, since prior knowledge or schema provides frameworks to organize text information by making connections between what is known and the new information in the text, and when these information are attached, the existed and the new, comprehension is achieved(Schumm, 2006: 227).

For English language learners, word knowledge correlates with comprehension and the size of their vocabulary 'bank' indicates their level of achieving comprehension, thus, good readers bring prior knowledge to bear on new, related content, while poor readers may face difficulties to do so(Calderon, 2007:18). In other words, having sufficient prior knowledge about the topic to be read and the related vocabulary knowledge are essential for successful reading comprehension, and the more readers know about a topic, the better they are able to construct meaning from a text(Carrasquillo & Rodriguez, 2002: 96).

2.4 Activating Prior Knowledge and Learners' Engagement

The concept of 'engagement' can be described as a state of emotional commitment and willingness to participate and interact in a task or learning goal. Engagement is measured by students on- task behavior which includes attending to the activities of the class(Harris, 2011: 3-4) and also paying attention, responding to questions, discussing, problem solving, planning, creating etc.(Johnson, 2012:1). Thus, teachers need to do more and spend less time talking to get students engaged and take active role in their learning through the various activities teachers use in classroom(Young, 2015:1).

Since activating prior knowledge strategies involve students' participation in the activities which include reading, discussion, critical thinking etc., then it has an essential role in increasing and creating active engagement(Myers, 2012:111). Activating students' prior knowledge engages them more actively in

learning, generating and leading their own questions, particularly when the teacher decides what prior knowledge needs to be activated(Cole, 2008: 30).

3.Methodology

3.1 Participants

The participants of the study are 90 second stage Law students, College of Law & Political Sciences, Diyala University. Forty five of them represent the experimental group, whereas the other forty five are assigned to be the control group. The purpose of choosing second stage is that they have studied a variety of terms and concepts at their first stage and need to be activated to facilitate comprehension and learning by making connection with the new topics currently being taught.

3.2 The Experiment

In order to verify the aims of the study and its hypotheses, an experimental design is conducted to evaluate whether activating prior knowledge strategies in teaching ESP to Law students are more effective than the traditional teaching method. Experiment design refers to how participants are allocated to the different conditions in an experiment(McLeod, 2007: 1). Participants are divided into two groups, the experimental and control group. The new teaching method, which lasted for 15 weeks, is used in teaching the experimental group and it consists of a variety of activities to brainstorm and activate students' prior knowledge, whereas the traditional method is used with the control group which includes reading the subjects, translating them and memorizing. Then test scores of the two groups are compared to evaluate the effect of the new method. The strategies adopted in the experiment are stated in the following table.

Table (1)

**Activating Prior Knowledge Strategies Applied to the
Experimental Group**

Activating Prior Knowledge Strategies	Description
1-K-W-L	The teacher begins the lesson with three columns. The first entitled(what I know), the second(what I want to know), and the third(what I learned). Each student having his/her own paper, is asked to fill the first and

	second column about a certain topic as(the constitution). At the end of the lesson the third column is filled
2-Quick Write	The teacher introduces terms and concepts on the board like (law, administration, legislation etc.) and asks students to quickly write what they know or the meanings of the terms.
3-Brainstorming	The teacher poses questions or statements as(how can you define constitution in your own words?) or(the constitution does not operate in vacuum) and give students time to think and answer.
4-Think-Pair-Share	The teacher divides the students into groups and then, after posing questions, they can share their ideas, discuss information they already know then answer individually.

(Bongolan, & Moir, 2005:4-5 ; Lewis & Thompson, 2010:1-4)

3.3 Data Collection Instruments

In order to achieve the aims of the study and its hypotheses, two main instruments are used. First, a comprehension test has been conducted to assess how well students have understood the material been taught and the legal texts they have studied. The test consists of 20 items in terms of four questions(as shown in Appendix A). The total score is 20, 1 for the correct answer and 0 for the incorrect one. Secondly, a self-report scale for engagement has been administrated to assess to which level students are engaged in English class, i.e. to measure how students report that they act, think, or feel(Jackson, 2012:63). The scale is a likert type including 15 items, four options for each. The grade ranges from(1 strongly disagree) to (4strongly agree). The total score of the scale is 60(as shown in Appendix B).

3.4 Validity

After constructing measuring instruments, the next is to find out whether or not the instruments are valid. The kind of validity that is assessed is content validity. Content validity is the representativeness of the content of a measuring instrument. If it contains a representative sample of the universe of the subject matter of interest, then content validity is achieved. It can be determined by using a panel of persons(see Appendix C) to judge how well the instrument meets the standards(Krishnaswamy et al, 2006:256). The experts have given

their notes and remarks concerning the appropriateness of the items of both instruments.

3.5 Pilot Study

In order to find out and identify most of the problems that may affect the quality of the results, a pilot study is designed (Blessing & Chakrabarti, 2009: 114). The pilot study is used to assess the reliability, item discriminating power, and difficulty level of test items (comprehension test and self-report scale for engagement). Thirty participants were randomly chosen from the second stage to represent the pilot study for the self-report scale, whereas other 46 participants were assigned for the comprehension test. The results of the pilot study have revealed the following:

1. *Item discriminating power & item difficulty level*: As for the item discriminating power and item difficulty level of the comprehension test, the items have shown acceptability, as shown in the following table:

Table (2)
Item Discriminating Power & Difficulty Level of the Comprehension Test

Item No.	Item Discriminating Power	Item Difficulty Level
1	0.43	0.52
2	0.57	0.63
3	0.43	0.57
4	0.57	0.76
5	0.40	0.40
6	0.43	0.61
7	0.57	0.40
8	0.43	0.22
9	0.61	0.39
10	0.43	0.63
11	0.43	0.54
12	0.40	0.52
13	0.52	0.37
14	0.57	0.37
15	0.45	0.63

16	0.61	0.67
17	0.40	0.39
18	0.57	0.50
19	0.50	0.63
20	0.61	0.65

- 1- *Reliability of the comprehension test*: The reliability of the comprehension test is 0.65, by using Pearson correlation coefficient, and 0.79 by using Spearman Brown correlation coefficient.
- 2- *Internal consistency*: The items of the self-report scale for engagement show high internal consistency with each other and they are positively significant. Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.361, as revealed in the following table:

Table (3)

Reliability & Internal Consistency of Self-Report Scale Items

Item No.	The Computed (r)	The Table (r)	Significance
1	0.499	0.361	Positively Significant
2	0.509		
3	0.583		
4	0.636		
5	0.604		
6	0.603		
7	0.592		
8	0.629		
9	0.567		
10	0.525		
11	0.468		
12	0.633		
13	0.568		
14	0.560		
15	0.467		

- 3- *Reliability of self-report scale items*: The reliability of the self-report scale items, using Alpha Cronbach is 0.85.

- 4- *Efficiency of incorrect items*: The efficiency of the incorrect options of the second question of the comprehension test is revealed in the following table:

Table (4)

The Efficiency of the Incorrect Options of the Comprehension Test

Item No.	Group	Options			Efficiency of Options		
		A	B	C	a	b	c
1	higher	3	3	17	0.17-	0.09-	√
	lower	7	5	11			
2	higher	6	11	6	0.04	√	0.17-
	lower	7	6	10			
3	higher	10	8	5	√	0.26-	0.17-
	lower	0	14	9			
4	higher	4	7	12	0.09-	0.17-	√
	lower	6	11	6			
5	higher	3	17	3	0.04-	√	0.22-
	lower	4	12	8			

- 5- *The mean scores and the standard deviation of the self-report scale items*: the following table shows the mean scores and the standard deviations of the self-report scale items.

Table (5)

Mean Scores & Standard Deviations of Self-Report Scale Items

Item No.	Upper group		Lower group		Computed t	significance
	Mean score	Standard deviation	Mean score	Standard deviation		
1	3.53	0.52	2.87	0.83	2.63	significant
2	3.33	0.72	2.47	1.19	2.41	
3	3.27	0.80	2.20	1.08	3.07	
4	3.73	0.46	2.40	1.06	4.49	
5	3.47	0.83	2.07	1.10	3.93	
6	3.47	0.64	2.53	1.13	2.79	
7	3.13	0.83	1.87	0.92	3.96	
8	3.40	0.91	2.47	1.13	2.50	

9	2.93	0.96	2	1.20	2.36	
10	3.67	0.62	2.73	0.96	3.17	
11	3.27	0.80	2.27	1.16	2.75	
12	3.80	0.41	2.33	1.23	4.36	
13	3.53	0.74	2.40	1.12	3.26	
14	3.40	0.99	2.20	1.08	3.18	
15	3.20	0.86	1.93	1.03	3.65	

3.6 Final Application

The two study instruments are applied to the two groups (the experimental and control). Ninety participants(45 in each group) have participated in the comprehension test and the self-report scale for engagement. The two instruments have been conducted separately and the time determined for each one is 45 minutes.

3.7 Scoring Scheme

Scoring is the procedure followed for giving scores to the responses of a test(Richards & Schmidt, 2002:471). The comprehension test is an objective one, thus the correct answer of the item is given (1) mark whereas the incorrect answer is given (0). Accordingly, the total score is 20. As far as the self-report scale is concerned, the scale consists of 15 items, four options for each ranging from 1 to 4 according to the choice of the option. The score of the scale ranges from 15 to 60 marks.

4.Data Analysis & Discussion

4.1 Statistical Analysis of Students' Performance(Two Groups) in the Comprehension Test

The first aim of the study imposes a question which reads" what is the effect of activating prior knowledge strategies on enhancing Law college students' text comprehension in English class?". In order to find out if there is a positive effect, students' responses have been analyzed using t-test formula for two independent samples. It has been found out that there is a positive significance in favor of the experimental group, the computed t-value (8.271) is higher than the table one (1.98). That indicates , there is a positive effect of the strategies on enhancing students' comprehension in favor of the experimental group, as shown in the table below.

Table (6)
Statistical Analysis of the Two Groups Performance in the Comprehension Test

Groups	Sample size	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Computed t-Value	Table t- Value	Degree of freedom	Significance
Experimental	45	15.18	2.21	8.271	1.98	88	Significant in favor of the experimental group
Control	45	11.36	2.18				

1.2 Statistical Analysis of the Experimental Group Performance in the Self-Report Scale for Engagement

As far as the second question imposed by the study is concerned," to what extent do activating prior knowledge strategies affect Law students' engagement in English class?", students' responses have been analyzed using t-test formula for one sample and results have revealed that the strategies followed in the experiment affect positively on students' engagement in English class. The computed t-value (10.2) is higher than the table one (2) as seen the table below.

Table(7)

Statistical Analysis of the Experimental Group in the Self-Report Scale for Engagement

Group	Sample size	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Theoretical Mean	Computed t-value	Table t-value	Degree of Freedom	Significance
Experimental	45	46.22	5.85	37.5	10.02	2	44	Positively significant

1.3 Statistical Analysis of the Two Groups (Experimental and Control) in the Self-Report Scale for Engagement

In order to answer the third question of the study which states "is there a statistical significant difference in the level of engagement between the experimental and control group?", t-test formula for two independent samples has been used, and results have shown that there is a significant difference in the level of engagement between the groups, in favor of the experimental group. The computed t-value(10.951) is higher than the table one (1.98) as revealed in the table below.

Table (8)

Statistical Analysis of the Two Groups in the Self-Report Scale for Engagement

Group	Sample size	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Computed t-Value	Table t-Value	Degree of Freedom	Significance
Experimental	45	46.22	5.85	10.951	1.98	88	Significant in favor of the experimental group
Control	45	31.89	6.54				

5. Conclusions & Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

On the basis of the study results, it is concluded that:

1-The activating prior knowledge strategies have an effective role in enhancing law students' text comprehension in English class, particularly when learners have limited background knowledge to build on, and this is the case with law students encountering new legal terms in their textbook.

2-Applying such strategies in classroom before a new material is introduced, would increase students' engagements in the variety of activities instead of the traditional method they are used to in previous lessons and that would facilitate learning.

5.2 Recommendations

According to the results obtained, some essential recommendations can be presented:

1-The teacher plays a crucial role in facilitating students' learning. Thus, whenever a new material is to be introduced, the teacher must use a variety of classroom activities to activate students' prior knowledge to make connections with the new material.

2-It is essential that the teacher, before introducing new concepts, words, assesses students' prior knowledge about certain topic. If their knowledge is limited or they lack the knowledge necessary for learning, then the teacher need to spend more time building prior knowledge.

3-No matter the time it would take the teacher, it is important to brainstorm students with activating prior knowledge activities in order to increase their engagement in classroom and also increase their critical thinking as these activities increase students' opportunity to participate in negotiation, discussion, thinking, answering questions etc.

Appendices

Appendix (A)

The Comprehension Test

Answer the following questions:

Q1 Choose the correct legal translation from the words between brackets to the following terms:

(قانونية، صلاحية، تشريع، مسؤولية، سلطة، إدارة، انقلاب، مرونة، ثورة)

1-Coup d'état

2- Liability.....

3-legality

4-authority.....

5- Flexibility.....

Q2 Choose the correct answer:

1-The constitutional rules in their essence are.....

a. social b. political c. socio-political

2-One of the following is a characteristics of the administrative law,.....

a. written law b. flexible law c. juristic law

3The constitution is a body of rules that.....

a. regulate the government of the state
b. regulate the private relationships between individuals
c. regulate the means to be followed in the application of the rules of civil law

4-The second subject of the administrative law is devoted to.....

a. the restraints to which the public authorities are subject
b. the operation of public administrative authorities
c. the organic structure of public authorities

5-One of the following is not a source of the constitution,.....

- a. legislation b. treaties c. conventions

Q3 Match the following to complete the statements:

1-As a reflection of a changing society, the constitution cannot remain unchanged, and this change

2-When the constitution confirms the existing rules enshrined in it

3-A newly emergent state requires

4-The first subject studied in the administrative law is devoted to

5-As the rules of the administrative law are not written

-
- a. they have a flexibility which permit constant adaptation to changes in the administrative life.
 - b. is brought about through amendment or abrogation.
 - c. in this case it deals with the present.
 - d. a constitution which will define its nature, goals and structure.
 - e. the organic structure of the state which includes the compositions of public authorities.

Q4 read the following statements and determine whether they are true or false.

1-The constitution is considered a world-wide phenomenon.

true false

2-The constitutional rules do operate in vacuum or isolation.

true false

3-The judicial interpretations are considered the first and foremost source of the constitution.

true false

4-The administrative law is a law balancing between public interest and private rights.

true false

5-The consultative council consists of two heads, three deputies and fifteen advisors.

true false

Appendix (B)

The Self-Report Scale for Engagement

Select one of the choices in the scale which reflects your attitude, skills and abilities.

Items	I strongly disagree	I Disagree	I agree	I strongly agree
1.when I am in English class, I listen very carefully.				
2.I enjoy learning new things in legal English.				
3.When the English teacher asks questions, I participate in the discussions.				
4.Before starting to solve problems, I plan out how to do it.				
5.If I can not understand something, I keep asking till I understand.				
6.when I have an assignment, I work very hard.				
7.I participate in answering questions even if I am wrong.				
8.When my				

teacher explain new topics, I stay alert, pay attention and make notes.				
9. When we work on something in class, I feel motivated and encouraged.				
10. I feel happy when I give my own opinion about something.				
11. I find reviewing previously solved problems to be a good way to study for a test.				
12. I think class activities are interesting and useful.				
13. I find making small groups in class and sharing ideas and opinions to be important aspect in learning.				
14. I ask myself questions to make sure I know the material I have been studying.				
15. Before a quiz or exam, I plan out how to study the material.				

Appendix (C)

The Jury of Experts

Prof. Dr. Sami Al- Mamouri, College of Basic Education, Methods of Teaching English.

Prof. Dr. Khaleel Ismael, College of Education, Linguistics.

Asst. Prof. Dr. Arwa Rasoul, College of Education, linguistics.

Inst. Dr. Liqaa Habeeb, College of Education, Methods of Teaching English.

Asst. Inst. Rafal Ghazi, College of Law & Political Sciences, Translation.

Appendix (D)

Lesson Plan Sample Followed in the Experiment

Date: Mon, 3rd, 10, 2016

Subject: Definition & Characteristics of Constitution

Stage: the Second

Time: 50 minutes

Objectives	1-To learn new legal terms. 2-To identify the characteristics of constitution. 3-To be able to explain legal subjects in a correct grammatical English.
Materials	Textbook, papers, whiteboard
Teacher's activities	1-Devide the students into groups. 2-Write a word or statement on the board as a keyword as 'constitution' to brainstorm students. 3-ask students to write what they know on their own papers, then share it with the other students of the same group.
Students' activities	1-Write what they already know about the topic on their papers. 2-Share it in their groups. 3-Discuss what they already know aloud.

الملخص

اثر استراتيجيات تنشيط المعرفة السابقة على زيادة استيعاب طلبة القانون للنص وزيادة اندماجهم في درس اللغة الانكليزية

م. ندى محمد هندي

كلية القانون والعلوم السياسية، جامعة ديالى

الكلمات المفتاحية: المعرفة السابقة، استيعاب النص، الاندماج

ان عملية التعلم تبنى على اساس المعرفة السابقة وما يمتلكه المتعلم من معرفة سابقة حول موضوع ما يعتبر قاعدة اساسية يمكن من خلالها المضي قدما وبناء معنى من خلال عملية ربط المعرفة السابقة بالنص الذي يقوم المتعلم بقراءته في مادة اللغة الانكليزية. ونتيجة لذلك يزداد استيعاب المتعلم للنص او المادة الجديدة. وتتحقق هذه العملية من خلال تطبيق استراتيجيات متنوعة ومتعددة لتنشيط المعرفة السابقة التي تمهد الطريق لتعلم المصطلحات والمفاهيم الجديدة كما انها تساعد المتعلم ليكون اكثر اندماجا وتفاعلا في صف اللغة الانكليزية من خلال المشاركة في النشاطات المختلفة.

يطرح البحث التساؤلات الاتية:

1. ما هو اثر استراتيجيات تنشيط الخبرة السابقة على زيادة استيعاب طلبة القانون للنص في درس اللغة الانكليزية؟
2. الى اي درجة تؤثر هذه الاستراتيجيات على اندماج الطلبة في درس اللغة الانكليزية؟
3. هل هناك اختلاف واضح بين طلبة المجموعتين (الضابطة و التجريبية) في مستوى اندماجهم في درس اللغة الانكليزية؟

اما فرضيات البحث فهي:

1. ان لاستراتيجيات تنشيط المعرفة السابقة الدور الفاعل في زيادة استيعاب طلبة القانون للنص في درس اللغة الانكليزية.
2. ان هذه الاستراتيجيات تؤثر ايجابا على اندماج وتفاعل الطلبة في درس اللغة الانكليزية.
3. هناك فرقا واضحا بين طلبة المجموعتين (الضابطة والتجريبية) في مستوى اندماجهم في درس اللغة الانكليزية.

لغرض التحقق من فرضيات البحث تم تصميم تجربة طبقت على 90 من طلبة المرحلة الثانية، كلية القانون والعلوم السياسية، جامعة ديالى. تم تقسيم الطلبة الى مجموعتين (ضابطة وتجريبية) اذ تم تطبيق التجربة على المجموعة التجريبية لمدة 15 اسبوعا، بينما تم اتباع طريقة التدريس التقليدية مع المجموعة الضابطة. وبعد اجراء اختبار الاستيعاب واستبيان اندماج الطلبة في درس اللغة الانكليزية، تم التوصل للنتائج التالية:

1. فيما يتعلق باختبار الاستيعاب فان قيمة تاء المحسوبة (8,271) اعلى من القيمة الجدولية (1,98) اي انها دالة معنويا.

2. اما فيما يتعلق باستبيان اندماج الطلبة في درس اللغة الانكليزية، فان قيمة تاء المحسوبة (10,02) هي اعلى من القيمة الجدولية (2) بدرجة حرية 44 اي انها دالة معنويا.

3. بالنسبة للفرق بين المجموعتين (الضابطة والتجريبية) في مستوى اندماج الطلبة، فان قيمة تاء المحسوبة (10,951) جاءت اعلى من القيمة الجدولية (1,98) اي انها دالة معنويا لصالح المجموعة التجريبية.

في ضوء نتائج البحث المذكورة اعلاه، توصل الباحث للاستنتاجات الآتية:

1. ان لاستراتيجيات تنشيط المعرفة السابقة دورا فاعلا في زيادة استيعاب طلبة القانون للنص في درس اللغة الانكليزية اذ تعتبر الاساس الذي يبني عليه تعلم المصطلحات والمفاهيم الجديدة.

2. ان تطبيق هذه الاستراتيجيات في الصف قبل البدء بموضوع جديد يزيد من اندماج وتفاعل الطلبة من خلال مشاركتهم في الأنشطة المتنوعة مما يسهل عملية التعلم.

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