Investigating The Use Of Student Teams Achievement Division In Teaching English First Additional Language In Kwazulu-Natal Secondary Schools

Article · March 2014

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ABSTRACT
The Department of Basic Education (DBE) emphasizes inclusivity as a central part of organizing, planning and teaching at school (DBE, 2010). This calls for teachers who are well equipped and are able to exhibit a sound understanding of teaching techniques in order to overcome the barriers to learning through diversity in teaching. One learning technique that can guarantee effective teaching and learning and that caters for all learners in the English First Additional Language (EFAL) class is the Student Teams Achievement Division (STAD). Hence this research looks into how EFAL teachers apply the technique in their classrooms. A sample of 262 EFAL teachers from four districts in the Kwazulu-Natal Province participated in this study. The cross-sectional survey approach was used in this study, allowing for the use of a likert scale survey questionnaire to be used for data collection. Result of the research indicated STAD is established as the strongest cooperative learning strategy and thus beneficial in the teaching of EFAL.

Keywords: Student Teams Achievement Division. English First Additional Language. Cooperative Learning. Learning Technique. Learning Strategy.

Introduction
In the words of Van Wyk (2007): “This cooperative technique is at present the most researched cooperative learning model in especially Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Art and other subjects. The main purpose of [Student teams achievement divisions] STAD is to drastically improve and accelerate learner performance.” Van Wyk’s assertion obviously brings to the fore the importance of STAD as a cooperative learning technique and its benefits in the teaching/learning environment. Several authorities share the sentiments of Van Wyk and postulate that STAD has established itself as the most researched into and most widely used technique under the cooperative learning approach that has been assessed on academic achievements, attitudes, social interactions as well as the interpersonal relationships (Tarim and Akdeniz 2008; Nagib 2003; Johnson & Johnson 1998; Johnson et al. 1983; Slavin 1990; Kagan 1994).

Apart from being the most extensively researched technique in cooperative learning, STAD is also accepted as the simplest form compared to the other cooperative learning techniques which makes it an effective instrument for teachers who are new in using the cooperative learning technique (Slavin 1990). In the light of the buildup so far, this study seeks to establish STAD as an effective learning technique for both students and teachers in a cooperative learning situation by taking a deep dive into STAD in terms of exposing the model upon which STAD, as a cooperative learning technique, is grounded and also do an exposition on the background to the technique as well as various definitions that have been given by different writers.

Apparently, there are many factors that may cause a student to lose interest in school in this era of high competition in the job market. However, one factor that is likely to stand out is the teacher factor. It is therefore of little surprise that both Haskins and Loeb (2007) and Sanders and Rivers (1996) all agree teacher quality is the most dominant factor that affects students’ academic achievement at school. What makes the teacher the most important factor is that though the teaching/learning process has over the years changed from teacher dominance to learner-centredness, the teacher is in a position to select teaching strategies that would work well for the benefit of all learners and this can be done by accepting that what works for one set of learners may not work for others (Berliner & Biddle, 1995 cited in Tresner, 2010). It therefore makes much sense in agreeing with Brimijoin (2005) that teachers need foundational skills in differentiation to understand how each student best learns the curriculum.

In close relation to the above, it must be noted that even when both teachers and learners are present in the classroom, as in the ‘normal’ face-to-face practice in regular classrooms, there can still be
what Moore (1993) explains as a distance which is pedagogical rather than geographical between the teacher and the learners. To this end Amponsah (2010) explains that there is the need for special organization and teaching procedures in any educational programme as a way of bridging the pedagogical distance that may be created in the classroom. He further states that transactional distance can be overcome by ensuring that the medium of the delivery [of teaching] has direct effect on the teaching outcomes and also the quality of the dialogue need to be fine-tuned to suit the teaching/learning environment.

The buildup so far makes it imperative for teachers to cater for individual differences in their classrooms in order to ensure that they do not go by a one size fit all policy in terms of content and methodology. To ensure equity, it is a matter of prudence on the part of teachers to make use of teaching strategies that would be beneficial to all learners, thus bringing all inclusive education to bear and this can best be done by adopting one of the most researched and guaranteed teaching approaches called cooperative learning.

The Department of Basic Education (DBE) emphasizes inclusivity as a central part of organizing, planning and teaching at school (DBE, 2010). The DBE acknowledges that inclusivity can become a reality when all teachers exhibit a sound understanding of recognizing and addressing the barriers to learning and also with the ability to plan for diversity. Planning of diversity should take into consideration individual differences and therefore different strategies that can be applied in the teaching process to ensure positive results are obtained at the end of the day. In a similar vein, Althuler and Schmautz, (2006) add that the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in the United States of America in 2001 sought to ensure that schools improved in order to meet the demands of an unpredictable world that required an educational system that is capable of delivering world-class learning students.

In this regard, Van Wyk (2007) posits that “In recent years, South Africa has experienced an important paradigm shift in education: a teacher-centred approach has been replaced with a learner-centred approach. Put differently, the emphasis is now on an outcomes-based education (OBE) approach as the key underlying principle of the NCS” (p.4). To add to this Effandi (2005) cited in Effandi and Iksan (2011) established that cooperative learning [in the case of this research, STAD] has caused a paradigm shift in the teaching/learning environment where the focus has shifted from teacher-centered to a situation where small groups become the focus, making it learner-centered. This situation is believed to offer excellent opportunities where learners have the chance to engage in problem solving with the help of task members which makes the STAD technique an efficient one to put learners in the center of affairs in the classroom.

Emanating from the studies, there is a high correlation between the quality of education that teachers provide to learners and what the teachers do in the classroom. Thus, in preparing the students of today to become successful individuals of tomorrow, teachers need to ensure that their teaching is effective. Teachers should have knowledge of how students learn and how best to teach. Effandi & Iksan (2011) concurred that changing how and what to teach are continuous professional concerns and for that matter efforts should be made to shift the focus of teaching from the traditional to a more student centered approach. It can be added that the STAD as a cooperative learning technique caters for student centered learning.

Based on the ongoing, it is justified to agree that education today must enable students to meet the challenges ahead and demands of the work environment and of daily living because this will shape their need not only for knowledge, but also for communication skills, problem solving skills, creative and critical thinking skills in the years ahead, which are all synonymous with the main components of the STAD technique. An American Association for the Advancement of Science (1989 cited in Effandi 7 Iksan, 2011:36) report that: “…the collaborative nature of scientific and technological work should be strongly reinforced by frequent group activity in the classroom. ...Similarly, students should gain experience sharing responsibility for learning with each other” (p.36).

In summation, Van Wyk (2007) opines that learners’ performance is influenced by the environment in which learning takes place, which therefore means that the teacher has to make deliberate efforts to create a learning environment that is free and at the same time will challenge and motivate learners. He concludes up by noting that the learning environment must promote a learning culture. It is therefore worthy of note that, as many researchers have identified that one strategy that works well in the teaching/learning environment is cooperative learning and for that matter, the STAD technique is the most effective in this regard. Hence, this technique can be used in teaching of English First Additional Language (EFAL) in the KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) Province in South Africa.
Literature Review

Without a shred of doubt, anyone who has ventured into the use of cooperative learning will readily agree that STAD has been widely researched and applied more than any other cooperative learning technique and for that reason a lot has been written about this technique. To start with Slavin (1986) described STAD as a model that works best with material that has single, correct answers which is most likely to be used in areas such as mathematics computation, spelling, language usage, mechanics, and grammar. Eight years after, Slavin (1994) expanded his description for the technique by pointing out that STAD is not meant to be a comprehensive teaching method, but it is rather a way of organizing classes, with the main aim of accelerating the achievement of all students. By this later explanation Slavin was to a large extent doing justice to misconceptions people might have had about STAD, due to its effectiveness, by way of narrowing it to where it rightly belonged - a cooperative learning technique and not an approach in itself.

An agreement and disagreement arise when the assertions by Johnson & Johnson (1999a) is put in perspective. First of all, they agreed that cooperative learning results from healthy interaction skills, success of the individual student and group members, formation of personal and professional relationships which are all in line with what STAD was established for. A disagreement however arises when they mention that STAD is an approach because that notion had been discredited by Slavin in 1994. Nonetheless, the principles of the technique hold for both authorities and the strategy being accepted as a technique has come to stay over time.

In moving on, STAD in the lenses of (Nagib, 2003) is the use of heterogeneous teams for study and practice. A further explanation is that individual quizzes are given to teams on content to obtain team points so that if students want their team to earn some form of team recognition, they help their teammates learn the material. To corroborate Nagib’s assertion, Rai and Samsuddin (2007) declared that STAD is one of the many strategies in cooperative learning which helps promote collaboration and self-regulating learning skills. What can be learned from Nagib and Rai Samsuddin’s opinions is the fact that they both dwell on cooperation which makes their case a strong one as far as STAD as a cooperative learning technique is concerned.

Although different people have shared their views on STAD by way of defining or describing it, they all seem to pivot on the same issue - cooperation. For instance Seifert and Sutton (2009: 204) are quoted that in STAD:

Students are placed in small groups (or teams). The class in its entirety is presented with a lesson and the students are subsequently tested. Individuals are graded on the team’s performance. Although the tests are taken individually, students are encouraged to work together to improve the overall performance of the group.

Similarly, (Zhuo, 2011: 987) stated “STAD operates on the principle that students work together to learn and are responsible for their teammates’ learning as well as their own, and emphasizes having team goals that are dependent on the learning of all group members”. Zuo's definition has so much resemblance to that of Tiantong1 and Teemuangsai (2013: 86) who in a similar vein describe STAD as a collaborative learning strategy in which small groups of learners with different levels of ability work together to accomplish a shared learning goal.

From the ongoing, which considered what various writers have stated on the technique chronologically from 1986 to 2013, STAD can be said to operate when and where there is positive cooperation among team members who embark on a mission with a vision. STAD can therefore be described as a cooperative learning technique in which small groups are formed irrespective of background, ability or any classification to ensure that each team mate puts in maximum effort (synergic effect) in helping one another so as to ensure that the aim of the team is achieved at the end of the day.

Furthermore, Kagan (1992) established that there are more than fifty forms of cooperative learning. By this statement Kagan was talking about the various techniques/strategies of the cooperative learning approach which started in the mid 1960’s by Johnson and Johnson as learning together. A common denominator in all the cooperative learning strategies is that they share a common concept which is students learning together and each taking personal responsibility for himself/herself and the group members, which is akin to the STAD technique.

Historically, the STAD technique came into being as a way of effectively addressing the key components of cooperative learning [students learning together]. The technique was developed at John Hopkins University in 1978 by Robert Slavin and his team as part of a student learning approach with
other cooperative learning techniques, which included Teams-Games-Tournaments, Jigsaw II and Team Assisted Individualization which were developed by Devries and Edwards in the early 1970s, Aronson and Associates in the late 1970s and Slavin and Associates in the early 1980s respectively. As established by Zhuo (2011), STAD was developed by Slavin in the late 1970s. Till date, the cooperative learning technique that has been mostly researched into is STAD and it is also very adaptable to almost all subjects and grades.

STAD was compared to Team-Groups-Tournament (TGT) by Slavin in 1986 and his opinion was that STAD works best with material that has single, correct answers and is most likely to be used in mathematics computation, spelling, language usage, and mechanics. He further contended that as in TGT students are placed in four-member heterogeneous groups for teacher directed instruction and for assisting one another in mastering the basic material. The main difference that came out between the two techniques was that instead of tournaments as in the case of TGT, individually administered quizzes were used in STAD and in the case of the later, members were not allowed to assist each other. However, a similarity was identified between the two techniques in the sense that both STAD and TGT were aimed at providing grade level instruction in basic skill areas at the same general pace for all students.

Emphasis is made that in a STAD setting, students are assigned to four- or five-member learning teams and the composition of the team is high, average, and low performing students, and of boys and girls of different racial or ethnic backgrounds. The essence here is that STAD teams absorb every individual in the learning situation, making it highly nondiscriminatory which may be a possible reason for its effectiveness when applied in different situations at different levels and for different subject areas. On the part of the teacher, the following five steps are to be followed:

- Introduce new material to be learned
- Let team members study worksheet on the material until they master the material
- Let individuals take quizzes on the material
- Combine the scores to create team scores
- Give recognition to members of the winning.

STAD as a cooperative learning technique has three central concepts (Slavin, 1994 and 1995). The three central concepts as identified by Slavin are: team rewards, individual accountability and equal opportunities for success. The explanations to the concepts are given below;

**Team rewards:**
- These can take the form of certificates or other rewards which are given if a STAD team achieves above a designated criterion.
- The teams are not in competition with each other but rather, all or none of the teams can achieve rewards depending on their score.

**Individual accountability:**
- The success of the team depends on the individual learning of all team members.
- The activity focuses on team members tutoring one another and making sure that everyone in the team is ready for the quiz (or other assessment) that students take individually.

**Equal opportunities for success:**
- What students contribute to the team is based on their individual improvement from their own previous success.
- Ensures that high, average and low achievers are equally challenged to do their best and that the contributions of all members are equally valued by the team.

In tracing the background of STAD, which led to taking snapshots of how the technique operates, one issue continually stands tall and that is realising over and over again how the technique directly or indirectly weaves into the bigger approach -cooperative learning- and how the core principles of the technique and that of the approach overlap in ensuring that task teams work both individually and as groups in order to pull strength together (synergy) for the success of the members (individually) and the group collectively.

In summing up, Trilling & Fadel (2009) established that good teaching and learning need to be able to draw more students’ attention, serve different groups of learners, and emphasize more on skill practice, thinking process and situational management. They added that in the 21st Century where learning consists of core subjects and themes that revolve around three core skills, viz: life and career...
skills, learning and innovation skills, and information media and technology skills. It is their firm belief that these three skills will aid learners in acquiring knowledge and for that reason it behooves on teachers to create a situation where learners are prepared for future jobs, products yet to be invented and new skills geared towards their creativity and innovation. What Trilling and Fadel are calling for goes even beyond the learning and teaching being focused on now. They actually foresee life after learners have been taught today, so they are calling for exactly why STAD continuous to be a force to reckon with and so to go by what they established means making use of the technique in order to equip learners with skills and knowledge for today and the future.

Problem and Purpose of the Study
In shedding light on the use of STAD, Trilling & Fadel (2009) identified that good teaching and learning need to be able to draw more learners’ attention, serve different groups of learners, and emphasize more on skill practice, thinking process and situational management. What they emphasized on is basically the use of a cooperative learning approach that builds the learner holistically. They added that in the 21st Century where learning consists of core subjects and themes that revolve around three core skills, viz: life and career skills, learning and innovation skills, and information media and technology skills. It is their firm belief that these three skills will aid learners in acquiring knowledge and for that reason it behooves on teachers to create a situation where learners are prepared for future jobs, products yet to be invented and new skills geared towards their creativity and innovation. What Trilling and Fadel are calling for goes even beyond the learning and teaching being focused on now. They actually foresee life after learners have been taught today, so they are calling for exactly why STAD continuous to be a force to reckon with and so to go by what they established means making use of the technique in order to equip learners with skills and knowledge for today and the future.

The South African Department of Education (DoE, 2007: 1) outlines in the EFAL subject guidelines the following as the reasons why EFAL is important as a fundamental subject that holds to the success of all other subjects that are taught and examined in English. It is stated that learners should study EFAL as it:
- Sets a foundation for learning and is a life skill.
- Promotes literacy and comprehension, both verbally and non-verbally.
- Contributes to a holistic approach to learning and personal development.
- Develops critical thinking skills and higher level cognitive skills.
- Empowers learners to communicate confidently and effectively in social and workplace contexts.
- Contributes to forming and maintaining healthy and positive relationships.

The question that will naturally be in the mind of anyone who goes through the points outlined by the DoE will be: how is it going to be done? The answer is that it is for such reasons that, in teaching and learning, successive South African curricula have put learners in the centre of affairs instead of the teacher and have strongly advocated for teaching techniques that will ensure that learners come out of school well equipped for the job market and for the society at large. To bring the curtain down, STAD as a cooperative learning technique supports and promotes what has been outlined by the DoE in promoting EFAL as a fundamental by applying the technique appropriately. Hence, the purpose of this research is to investigate how EFAL teachers are using STAD as a cooperative learning strategy in teaching the subject in secondary schools in the KwaZulu-Natal Province.

Research Methodology
Research design
The authors employed the quantitative cross-sectional survey design in order to collect data from a large group of respondents to give a snapshot of how they make use of the STAD cooperative learning technique in teaching EFAL.

Sampling
The KwaZulu-Natal Province Department of Basic Education (KZNPDBe) is made up of 12 education districts, making it not feasible to conduct this study in all the districts as far as money, time and energy to be expended are put into consideration. The researchers therefore opted to use the the
simple random sampling technique, specifically, the lottery system to select four out of the 12 districts for data collection. The use of the simple random sampling emanates from the assertion by Bailey (1978) that the sample size needs to reflect the population value of a particular variable which depends both on the size of the population and the amount of heterogeneity in the population. Considering the time and energy at hand and the assertion by Bailey; Ilembe, Sisonke, Ugu and Vryheid are the four districts that were selected through the lottery system in order to gather data for this study.

In KZNDBE there are 1585 high schools (EMIS, 2012), with 3170 teachers in charge of English (FAL). To get a sample that is representative enough, 50 percent (50% = 262) of the teachers were selected from the four districts for the study, using the multistage sampling technique. The number was deemed representative in view of the assertion by Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun (2012:102) that a sample should be as large as the researcher can obtain with reasonable expenditure of time and energy.

**Table 1: Proportional Allocation of Schools**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Schools per district</th>
<th>Sent questionnaires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ilembe</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sisonke</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ugu</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vryheid</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>523</strong></td>
<td><strong>262</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data collection instruments and procedures**

The survey questionnaire was used to collect data for this study because it is a widely useful instrument for collecting survey information and providing structured, often numerical data. It can also be administered without the presence of the researcher, and because it is often straightforward to analyse (Van Wyk, 2007) also made it a good and useful instrument for collecting data. The questionnaire as a data collection tool also allows respondents in a study to respond to the same set of questions on a particular topic in a predetermined way (Fraenkel et.al., 2012), that is, if it is highly structured or strictly closed-ended.

The field work started after the researcher had obtained clearance from the KZNDBE, the researchers visited the districts selected one after the other and used the accidental, snowballing and purposive methods in reaching the number of schools that had been randomly picked during the sampling process. The reason for the use of the three methods emanate from the fact that any school within the district that the researchers came into contact with was a point to start with (accidental sampling) as far as the school was selected in the sampling process. From then teachers were asked for directions to nearby schools (snowballing) and once the first and second methods had been used the researchers handed over two questionnaires to the teachers (purposive sampling) responsible for teaching EFAL. The researchers then asked teachers to complete the questionnaires and hand them over to their Principals or Heads of Departments (HoDs) for collection after one week. The survey questionnaires were administered from early October to the middle of November 2013 and they were collected from the Principals and HoDs after one week. The data collected was edited, coded and analysed using the Statistical Product for Service Solution (SPSS). The results were then presented as descriptive and inferential statistics.

**Ethical Considerations**

Punch (1986) suggests that field researchers exercise common sense and moral responsibility, always putting subjects first, the study next and then themselves [researchers] last. Heeding to the guidelines by Punch as well to KZNDBE and Unisa College of Education Ethical clearance requirements, the researchers adopted the following measures during the course of the study to ensure the study passed all ethical requirements and considerations. The researchers negotiated with the KZNDBE, heads of schools and EFAL teachers to ensure access to the various schools was obtained. The purpose of the study was explained in official letters to conduct the research. As part of the structured questionnaire for teachers, the researcher provided a preamble at the beginning of each questionnaire that informed respondents about the background of the researcher, the purpose of the
study, assurance of confidentiality of biographic information and experiences relating to their work as
teachers. Prior to each qualitative phase of the data collection process, the researcher sent a consent letter
to inform each of the participants to introduce the purpose of the study, assured them of confidentiality
of information to be given as part of the study and secure their voluntary participation by means of the
consent form which was read and signed by each participant before the commencement of each focus
group discussion. Furthermore, the researchers ensured that all information solicited from participants in
all data collection phases were kept confidential and used solely for the purpose of conducting this
doctoral research and not disclosed to any party for whatever the reason might be. Finally, the researchers
tried hard to acknowledge the source of all secondary materials used for the compilation of this research
report, so as to avoid falling victim to plagiarism.

Results

Emanating from the findings of this research, it is identified that the application of the STAD
technique is embedded in its benefits in line with Slavin and Tanner’s (1979) assertion than that
collaborative efforts among students result in a higher degree of accomplishment by all participants. The
following gives the bigger picture in the form of the results of the study. First of all, a mean test to
establish the impact of teachers’ qualification and/or training on teaching and learning proved there is
very minimal impact. It was identified from the study that there is an average mean=1.26 (SD 0.525) to
mean =1.37 (SD 0.571). The average is slightly above p=0.05 for significance, hence, a very minimal
impact as stated earlier.

A probe was done to re-affirm the application and benefits of STAD to teaching and learning of
EFAL by considering the subject outcomes. In answering this probe, 41.6% of respondents believe it is
very important to use strategies to deliver messages and reply appropriately to sustain dialogue, 37.6%
believe it to be important, 15.3% believe it to be moderately important and 2.5% believe it to be of little
importance while 3% were unanswered. Overall, 79.2% of the respondents are in agreement that STAD
enables task team members to use strategies to deliver and reply messages appropriately.

A clear indication was given that 36.6% of respondents believe it is very important to use reading
and viewing strategies to determine meaning, 45% believe it to be important, 12.9% believe it to be
moderately important and 2.5% believe it to be of little importance while 3% were unanswered. It was
also evident that 38.6% of respondents believe it is very important to use strategies to write for a specific
audience, purpose and context, 42.6% of respondents also believe it to be important, 13.9% of
respondents also believe it to be moderately important and 2% believe it to be of little importance while
3% were unanswered. In short, almost all the respondents are of the view that it is important to use
strategies in writing for a specific audience, purpose and context. The use of a strategy or strategies
become imperative in view of the belief by Vakalisa (2011) that teachers need a broad repertoire of
teaching methods in order to create an environment conducive for effective learning.

In this study, most respondents were of the view that the STAD technique enabled them to
access and use suitable resources to improve learning. Up to 39.1% of respondents each believe it is very
important or important, 15.3% believe it to be moderately important, 3% believe it to be of little
importance while 0.5% believe it to be unimportant and 3% were unanswered. Additionally, a combined
total of 87.7% agree that extra attention by EFAL teachers lead to improved performance of learners,
while 10.9% disagree. The remaining 1.5% were unanswered. In essence, a large majority agreed that extra
attention offered by EFAL teachers lead to learner improved performance.

Questions 40 to 51 of Section D on the survey questionnaire were specifically aimed at making
respondents reflect on the benefits of STAD to teaching and learning of EFAL. Table 2 indicates the
significance between the variables and the general response pattern. The section under discussion used
True or False as scales with 1=True and 2=False.
Table 2 Impact of attitude of teachers on teaching and learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40. Clears learners’ misconceptions about English (FAL)</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Gives a better understanding of concepts in English (FAL)</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>0.184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Builds learners’ social skills</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>0.264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Makes learners responsible for their learning</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44. Builds the urge to succeed in learners</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>0.207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45. Creates a spirit of team work among learners</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46. Builds mutual respect among learners</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>0.287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47. Helps slow learners to learn from fast learners</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>0.273</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48. Helps to put away shyness among learners</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49. Enables learners to make maximum use of available resources</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>0.248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50. Enables learners to tap into team members’ knowledge</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>0.196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51. Enables learners to tap into team members’ skills</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.218</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.05 for significance

With means from table 2 ranging from 1.04 (f3) to 1.09 (f1), it is evident from the table that all the responses skew towards 1 (True) which has an average of 1.5 or more. It can therefore be ascertained that there is no statistically significant difference with variables being compared since the p=1.5 > 0.05.

In summing up the benefits of using STAD in the EFAL classroom, data from this study shows that 26.2% of respondents agree they do not know what to do to get learners’ attention during English (FAL) lessons, a combined total of 70.3% of respondents disagree and therefore do know what to do to get learners’ attention during EFAL lessons while 3.5% were unanswered.

Johnson and Johnson (1994b) cautioned that group work comes with its own challenges and one of these challenges could be group composition. This research therefore delved into the challenges participants touched on in their bid to implement the STAD technique. Firstly, 26.2% of respondents admit that learners’ attitude to group work is never a challenge when STAD is used as a technique in teaching English (FAL), 25.2% find it a little challenging, 16.3% find it somewhat challenging, 22.3% find it much challenging, while 7.4% find it a great deal of challenge and 2.5% were unanswered. Secondly, there was an indication that 19.3% of respondents admit that the use of teaching and learning materials is never a challenge when STAD is used as a technique in teaching English (FAL), 24.3% find it a little challenging, 14.4% find it somewhat challenging, 16.8% find it much challenging, while 23.3% find it a great deal of challenge and 2% were unanswered.

Further, 14.9% of the respondents admit that time allocated on timetable for EFAL is never a challenge when STAD is used as a technique in teaching, 22.8% of responders find it a little challenging, 12.4% find it somewhat challenging, 24.3% find it much challenging, while 23.8% find it a great deal of challenge and 2% were unanswered. The indication is that there is a fair distribution of views as long as time allocation is considered. However, when it comes to the EFAL syllabus, 13.9% of respondents admit that English (FAL) syllabus is never a challenge when STAD is used as a technique in teaching English (FAL), 21.3% of responders find it a little challenging, 12.4% find it somewhat challenging, 19.3% find it much challenging, while 30.2% find it a great deal of challenge and 3% were unanswered.

Lastly, an ANOVA statistical test was run to compare the number of years teachers have been teaching EFAL (Q4) and their highest professional qualification (Q6) to Section F (challenges in using STAD). A summary of the responses is presented on table 2.

Table 3 Anova test on section F

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F: Challenges in using STAD</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>53.553</td>
<td>0.977</td>
<td>0.405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>151.085</td>
<td>2.758</td>
<td>0.010</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The difference is statistically significant if P < 0.05
In table 3, when question 4 is compared to the responses gathered from Section F of the questionnaire, the result is a p-value of 0.405 which is more than 0.05 indicating that there is no statistically significant difference between the number of years respondents have taught and the application of STAD. However, when question 6 was compared to the same section, the result was a p-value of 0.010 which is less than 0.05, the implication thereof is that there is a statistically significant difference between the highest professional qualification of teachers and the application of STAD.

In the nutshell, it is very important to throw light on the fact that any teaching strategy that teachers choose must put learners in a position to enable them possess the ability to be able to find solutions to problems that they may encounter in their studies by means of being creative as well as innovative in their thinking when it comes to real-life situations, what is termed praxis in educational circles (Grundy 1987) or in ordinary terms, transfer of learning should be possible after teaching has taken place as a way of ensuring that learning really means a relatively permanent change in attitude. In short, any teaching strategy that does not equip learners with skills, knowledge, experience and attitude for life outside the classroom must not be used by any teacher as such teaching strategies have no benefit for the learners.

Conclusions

Slavin (1994) opines that cooperative [STAD] team members are able to share and succeed together by explaining cooperative learning as a didactic strategy whereby small groups, each with learners of different abilities and a variety of learning activities, are used to improve the understanding of certain subjects, with each member of the group being responsible for personally learning, what is being taught and also helping other group members to learn. This assertion encapsulates the tenets of the STAD technique and what is aims at achieving. Though the picture painted puts the learner at the center of the teaching/learning environment, it still behooves on the teacher to initiate what is to be done in the teaching/learning process, hence, the need to be abreast of events so as to excel and help learners achieve their aim for being under his or her care.

Vakalisa (2011) is quoted that “effective learning takes place when the teacher has a sound knowledge of the learning content, a broad repertoire of teaching methods, as well as classroom management strategies that create an environment that is conducive to effective learning.” (p.2) In this regard, it was ascertained in this research that EFAL teachers have knowledge of the STAD technique and were implementing it in their classrooms. Responses from the teachers also gave the indication that the use of the strategy proved to be beneficial in their teaching as a large majority of 93% of respondents believed that the strategy is beneficial with as few as 6% of respondents regard STAD as not beneficial to the teaching and learning of EFAL with 1% not responding to this section.

Finally, it is understandable that though teaching leads to learning, learning does not result from teaching only and again, there are other ways of learning without being taught. This assertion is summed up by Van Wyk (2007) who indicates that “The researcher contends from a constructivist perspective that the primary responsibility of the teacher is to create and maintain a collaborative problem solving environment, where students are allowed to construct their own knowledge and the teacher serves as a facilitator and guide.” (p.341) This indication thereof is that learners be equipped and enabled to freely participate in task team by asking and answering questions, making contributions, probing and seeking clarification when and where necessary while pushing the individual and group agenda to achieve the aim set for the group.

Recommendations and Limitations of the Study

Recommendations

Firstly, teachers should be encouraged to develop skills so as to gain access to the inner world of their learners with the belief that when teachers possess the right skills, they can earn the trust of their learners. Secondly, teachers should use the active and participative teaching strategies to put learners in a more discursive mode and also to help them expand what they already know as they interact with other members of their groups. Thirdly, teachers should make sure they employ the right strategy or strategies in their teaching in order to succeed in their teaching and also aid learners to succeed alongside as the latter partake in the teaching and learning experience. Also, the technique should be employed in such a way that learners will understand they are not competing with other task team
members, but they are all learning to gain more knowledge and skills as they help their task teams to succeed in giving tasks. Lastly, to overcome the challenges teachers face in applying the technique, they should use strategies that encourage learners to find information, remember it, organize it, apply it and do creative things with it.

Limitations
It is accepted first of all that, the findings of this study are based on EFAL teachers’ perceptions, reactions and feelings, introducing the potential for distortion due to their desires to present themselves in a positive manner, or poor recall of their actual reactions to how they use the STAD technique in their teaching. Secondly, the findings of this study are based on responses of 262 EFAL teachers who took part in the cross-sectional survey. It is also noted that this research was conducted in parts of one province out of the nine provinces in South Africa. Considering the number of respondents and participants used in this study, it makes it a bit impossible to project the findings onto larger populations. Finally, the number of institutions and individuals needed to be consulted before embarking on the field work created some bottlenecks that impeded on the rate at which this study was supposed to be completed. On a bigger scale, these bottlenecks contributed in making the researchers expend more time, money and energy in getting things done compared to the timelines and budgets originally allocated. However, with passion, tenacity and endurance, the researchers were able to surmount all the bottlenecks to complete the research.

References


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