



EFFECT OF SELF ACCESS CENTRE IN LEARNING ENGLISH

Dr. Chirag Darji

**Asst. Professor , Waymade College of Education ,
Vallabh Vidyanagar.**



ABSTRACT:

With a view to providing language exposure to the students of ESL and EFL for learning the foreign language, the researcher created a self access centre at the institute and collected the responses from the students. The students were oriented about the self access centre, its practices, functions, activities and importance prior making them to use the SAC. The students made the optimum use of self access centre and its resources during their stay at the college. All the necessary resources (printed, no printed, authentic resources and computers) are kept in the SAC properly. The programme or strategies for learning the language using the resources were decided by the students. Most of the students in the beginning referred the interesting books and articles. Since the aims of the SAC are to provide language learning exposures and motivating the ESL and EFL learners for autonomous learning, it was not forced by the teachers to make any compulsion for using the SAC resources. Students were allowed to decide the time, course, style of reading etc. The paper talks about the concept, types and features of SAC and its effectiveness on learning the language among the students. Students were asked to share their feedback at the end of the year. It can be concluded that such practices require proper planning and direct support to the rural ESL learners in India. Effectiveness of SAC also depends upon the discipline and work culture of the institution.

KEYWORDS : *Autonomous Learning, Access resources, Language development*

Abbreviations: **SAC:** Self Access Centre. **EFL:** English for First Language Learners, **ESL:** English for Second Language Learners.

INTRODUCTION:

Education system of present time has been changed in almost all the dimensions. In the 21st century education, teacher is playing the role as a facilitator. S/he is only facilitating students by giving them some tasks/activities and students learn the language contextually. Ample of materials are available for students in which they can learn individually and can improve their language under the guidance of the facilitator.

Independent/self access language learning (centre) is learning the language through the use of self contained learning environment which provides an independent study program with readily accessible materials. It makes available a form of help either through answer keys or through counselling, and possibly offers the latest technology. That is, students are offered an environment in which they are active participants rather than passive recipients of information.

In this type of environment students should basically frame their own curriculum. In which they have to analyze their own strength and weaknesses and frame their own objectives. After that students will use suitable materials according to their level and objectives. Time management is the major features of this centre because students have to decide when and what to read? There is a system of record keeping

indicating their progress. And finally they can evaluate their learning and if some changes are required than they can do.

Self access centre is educational facilities designed for student learning that is at least partially, not fully self directed. Self access language learning promotes the approach where students study independently choosing from among different resources that are available. The theory behind this style of learning is that students, especially foreign language students, learn better if they have to say how to learn. It is related to learner centered approach. Learners' autonomy and self directed learning as all focus on student responsibility and active participation for his/ her learning. This style of instruction is most often done in the setting of a self contained learning environment or self access centre.

AIMS OF SELF ACCESS CENTRE

1. To increase the exposure of students to the target language, i.e. English
2. To provide students with guidance and advice so that they can create their own individualized programme of study English
3. To provide resources for on line practice

RESOURCES AT SELF ACCESS CENTRE

The SAC is equipped with cassette recorder and headphones, TV and video and computers with internet. Following types of materials can be put in SAC.

- Text books, Story books, Work books, Activity books, Different language tasks
- Newspaper cutting,, Post prayer talk, Language games, Authentic materials
- CDs, Audio – video cassettes, Student's contribution, Magazines, Different types of books of literature, Articles on specific subject, Books on general knowledge,,

TYPES OF SELF ACCESS CENTRE

1. **Fully independent learning self access centre:** In this type most extreme form is self directed learning in which students set their own method curriculum and goals, self accessing their own progress. Teachers function only as a counsellor who gives feedback after their learning/work is over.
2. **Semi Guided Learning:** To address students' problems the use self access centre is necessary, some centers make tutors available to give academic and a kind of psychological support. Students may or may not choose how self directed or tutor dependent they choose to be. While the academic effectiveness of a semi – independent study course has not been proven, Student response to such a scheme in Hongkong was very positive.
3. **Online self access centre:** Online self access, also often referred to as online language support, is an increasingly common type of self access learning. In its most basic form, online self access involves institutions language learning materials available online to students.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SELF ACCESS CENTRE

1. **Variety of Materials:** Self access centers can be as simple as a classroom set aside with dictionaries and shelves of paper based exercises to state of the art digital centers with various types of computer and internet based resources. What type of resources are available and how students are guide to use them depend on the financial resources available and how much learner autonomy an institution decides to give students.
2. **Learner centered Classroom:** The most important thing is that classroom is not the teacher centered classroom. The teacher's role is only providing the some situations for learning. He is the only facilitator in the classroom. Students learn by their own self and discuss with each other. IT brings the traditional classroom. It is totally student's centered classroom.

3. **Comprehensive:** Self access centre includes materials for all the skill like L. S. R .W. In self access centre there are CDs for developing the skill of listening, newspaper for developing reading skill; post prayer talk develops their speaking skill.
4. **Computer Teaching:** Online self access, also often referred to as online language support, it is an increasingly common type of self access learning. In its most basic form, online self access involves institutions making language material available online to students. More elaborate forms include opportunities for supporting learners online, tools for collaborative learning, e- portfolios, and monitoring of student performance by the software.
5. **Increase in Confidence:** The increase in confidence is another factor influencing learners' positive attitudes. This finding is supported by the questionnaire in which 301 students agreed to an increase in confidence after the Self access mode of learning. A typical comment collected in student interviews was, " I was confused and suspicious of learning in the self access mode in the beginning, but I am motivated now , less afraid to study on my own." It appears that the initial feeling that the self access mode was.
6. **Independent Learning:** The main aim of the self access centre is student learn by own. In the SAC, there are plenty of materials which she/he can sue for learning. It is the self directed learning; students set their own curriculum and goals, self accessing their own progress. Teachers function only as "counsellors" Who give feedback after students evaluate their learning.

PROCEDURE OF SAC AT THE INSTITUTE

The researcher established a fully independent learning SAC at the Waymade College of Education for the students of the academic year 2016-2017. All the necessary recourses are kept in the SAC. The students were informed in the beginning about the objectives, functions and importance of SAC. Students were made free to access the SAC as when they are free. There was no compulsion of any kind. A fully democratic environment of learning the language was created through SAC. Students can decide the resources, timings, course, objectives of the study on their own. Researcher used to guide the students as and when students needed support. The students were asked to share their feedback at the end of the year. The reflections of the students were both negative and positive. The researcher also reflected some suggestions to make the SAC effective.

STRENGTHS OF SAC

The Students found the following positive points/strengths of the SAC.

1. The major advantage, thereafter, is flexibility, with the purpose of giving the students themselves the opportunity to tailor the course more to their learning needs and styles than a more traditional mode of teaching.
2. Use of multiple technologies in a more independent setting has been shown to improve motivation and increase students' ability to work independently by taking more responsibility for their own learning. Students also report feeling more "empowered" by such modes of instruction.
3. Some of the advantages of this form of learning are that students at the very least set the pace of their work. Depending on the individual centre, students can also set the level and content of their work. Students can use this centre voluntarily or can have assignments to complete there.
4. Individual becomes responsible for developing his/her own language.
5. It provides wide range of exposure of learning language and literature.
6. Since there is no compulsion of any kind, students can learn at their own pace.
7. It motivates both the Learners of EFL and ESL in developing their language.
8. Since, the materials are to be selected by the students, it caters the needs of all the types of English language learners.
9. It enables the students to know various types of learning resources and types.

CHALLENGES/WEAKNESSES OF SAC

B.Ed. students made use of SAC throughout the year and reflected the following challenges, weaknesses or demerits of SAC.

1. Timing to access the SAC should be allotted in the regular time table.
2. Every year 30 % old materials should be replaced with the new materials.
3. Some students just read story books and news paper articles only. There is a possibility that they use SAC for fun and entertainment.
4. Many students are not used to working independently. At least in the beginning, they require some kind of direct support or guidance to access such resources.
5. For teachers, the 'letting go' of control can be equally disorienting and it may seem that giving students such control depreciates teachers' skills and experience.
6. Sometimes, the resources are difficult to understand. Students require teacher's explanation.
7. It may not be so effective for the EFL learners since they are given constant language exposure of English.
8. If the ESL learners don't follow the basic of English language then this practice would require constant support of the teacher.
9. It is altogether an autonomous learning where learning on the student part is not to be evaluated afterwards, so the effect of SAC on student language achievement is difficult to present.
10. Since, the teacher is not making a regular follow up, it is difficult to track the progress of the students and motivate them.
11. Some resource materials are so outdated that the students don't get motivation to even touch them.
12. Students may misuse the materials or carry at home.
13. Some of the students reflected that there is a minor difference between library and SAC.
14. Since there is diversity in learning abilities of the students, teacher will have to use various techniques to develop language.

Students are expected to work in "lock-step" with the teacher orchestrating what students do to a very high degree. Teachers, in turn, rely on textbooks that allow little variation. Use of self access centre materials steer students way from the rigidity and security of this paradigm, causing teachers to lose their all powerful and all knowing position. This can cause problems integrating a self access centre due to political and institutional constraints.

SUGGESTIONS

- Some kind of direct guidance to be given to the students otherwise students will take it for granted.
- Innovative and latest language learning materials to be placed in the SAC.
- Let some of the students to be in charge for the SAC to sustain the practice.
- Follow up must be done by the teachers after some intervals to track the progress of the students.
- Teacher should make the judicious use of language and techniques for the effectiveness of SAC.
- Students should also be allowed to contribute some learning materials for SAC.
- Online SAC should also be created to augment the needs of highly competent students.

CONCLUSION

Self Access centre is one of the most important practice for providing autonomous language learning exposures. The students can design the course of study on their own. It does not only helps to develop the language but also develop knowledge among the students. Results of learning the language depends upon the types, materials and facilitator's role. The more you care the better results you may receive.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Best J.W. and Kahn J.V. (2004), *“Research In Education”*, Prentice-Hall of India Private Limited, New Delhi-110 001

Littlewood, W. (1981). *Communicative Language teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

NCERT (2000). *National Curriculum framework*. New Delhi: NCERT

Vekateswaran, S. (1995). *Principles of Teaching English*. New Delhi: Vikas Publication House Pvt. Ltd.