Enhancing of Achievements of Grade 05 Students in Subject of Islam through Group Scaffolding Learning Teaching Strategies

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Abstract:

The studying of religion in schools is important for generating a moral and value based society. The teaching of the subject of Islam at primary level helps to inculcate religious values among Muslim students. However, the effective teaching of Islam in Muslim schools in Addalaichenai Education Division has, among the other things, emerged a challenging task and that needed an innovating methodology. The major objective of the study was to assess the effectiveness of Group Scaffolding Techniques in enhancing the performance of Grade 05 scholarship students in the subject of Islam studied at school which comes under the purview of Addalaichenai Education Division. This was an experimental study and a sample of 30 low performing Grade 05 students studying at AK/ T.B. Jaya Vidyalaya, Addalaichenai was elected by using purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using Achievement Tests. The findings of the study revealed that Group Scaffolding Techniques was effective in enhancing the achievement of the subject of Islam among the students.

Key words: Efficacy, Group Scaffolding, Strategies, Achievements

Introduction

Mathematics is one of the significant subjects which support learning of the abilities and skills. Learning of mathematical skills at the preschool level helps the development of cognitive and psychomotor skills of the children even at primary and post primary levels. In this respect, learning of mathematics are given priority even at the preschool levels unprecedentedly.

In developing of the mathematical fluency of preschools children, several conventional methods and approaches are used at preschools. It is observed that most of the preschool teachers are using play methods, lecture methods, etc. in Addalaichenai division. They are not employing the innovative techniques. One such an effective technique is peer scaffolding techniques which is used in post primary classes in other countries.

The word "scaffolding" might remind you of construction, referring to the supports that assist construction workers to reach higher in order to build a complete structure. In education, it refers to various instructional techniques that support you move your students forward to stronger understanding of what they are learning in the classroom with a greater independence in their own learning processes and development. Much like a construction

scaffold supports a construction worker while they build, educational scaffolds can be added, modified, and removed according to the needs of the students an educator is working with (Sawyer, 2006).

Scaffolding supports students in the mastery of various tasks to optimize the learning outcomes, and makes the student more independent in the learning process. This theory is grounded in the work of Lev Vygotsky, a psychologist and educator who coined the term "zone of proximal development," an abstract mental region where what students already know intersects with what they do not yet know. Vygotsky argues that learning is most effective when the learning process calls students to this zone. He theorized that when students are given a task that is just out of the reach of their competence, but are able to secure the support of others, it is likely that they will accomplish the task in a more successful fashion than if left alone to struggle with it. With scaffolding technique, the teacher can break down tasks within this reach, and offer guidance on how tasks can be completed. By participating in a concrete learning process, the students can more easily complete their tasks that seem abstract or confusing when they are first introduced (Sawyer, 2006).

One type of scaffolding technique is the process scaffolding. It breaks a comsplex task down into smaller, more manageable parts that slowly increase in cognitive complexity to form a cohesive whole (University of Waterloo and Schroeder, 2012). By breaking down major assignments into several components, it can focus on the skills of students or the knowledge of students require to successfully complete the larger assignment, and support them in a way where student engagement is increased, rather than assigning a single assignment that might be initially confusing and overwhelming (Ibid). This process allows students to see the bigger picture, and allows the teacher to empower students to work towards it independently.

Another type of scaffolding technique is critical thinking scaffolding where students develop critical thinking skills with the support they receive. The critical thinking scaffolding assigns work in a way that allow students to move gradually from lower order critical thinking skills to more complex, higher order critical thinking skills. Lower order level assignments may consist of abstracts, summaries, or descriptions, to reinforce skills such as remembering and understanding concepts. Higher level skills such as applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating, can be reinforced through assignments storytelling, mind-mapping, etc. according to the level of the students (Ibid).

In peer scaffolding techniques, the students are motivated to get the help of their peers who are very close and familiar to them. These approaches clearly deviate from mundane peer work or group work. In scaffolding techniques, both process scaffolding and critical thinking scaffolding are involved so that the students can master their skills and ability of completing challenging mathematical tasks easily and freely without any compulsion.   In these strategies, the students are assigned to do the activities which are supported and scaffolded by their peers in learning teaching process. The practices of scaffolding even promote the affective domain of the preschool students in addition to their developments of cognitive and psychomotor domains.

Need and significance of the Study

Teaching of religion is important for the spiritual development of the students. The Muslim students should be taught the subject of Islam from the primary classes. However, the students reading at Grade 05 are giving more priority in learning the subjects which are related to the scholarship examination than other subjects including the subject of Islam. This trend affects the ideal of generating a moral healthy society.

Most of the teachers who are teaching the subject of Islam have studied at Arabic Colleges where the new teaching techniques are rarely used. These teachers are found to be using the conventional methods in teaching the subject of Islam following the steps of Arabic Colleges.

Though the prospective teachers who are trained in using new methodology teaching the subject of Islam in Teachers College and Colleges of Education, they are not using the new methods and the performance of the students is relatively poor compared to other difficult subjects such as Mathematics and Language.

A review of related literature has revealed that the group learning strategies are widely used in teaching in secondary and primary classes in Sri Lanka and abroad. However, the group scaffolding strategies, which are innovative learning teaching methods are very rarely used in Sri Lankan schools, particularly for leaning teaching of the subject of Islam in primary classes, these strategies are somewhat used for teaching other subjects. There is little previous studies found focusing on the instructional studies using group scaffolding strategies for teaching the subject of Islam in Sri Lankan context. That is why, this study was planned to fill this gap.

Objectives

The objectives of the Study are to

1. Identify the students whore are poor in achievement in the subject of Islam studying at Grade 05 class.

2. Design and Implement Group Scaffolding Strategies among the students

3. To assess the effectiveness of the Group Scaffolding Strategies in enhancing the performance of Grade 05 students in the subject of Islam

Hypothesis

There exists significant difference between the pretest score and posttest score among the sample with regard to the performance of the subject of Islam

Methodology

Method

In this study, an experimental method was adopted with pretest treatment posttest design.

Population of the Study

The population of the study constitutes all the Grade 05 school students studying at AK. T.B. Jaya Vidyalaya in Addalaichenai

Sample of the Study

A sample of 30 Grade 05 students studying at schools in Addalaichenai AK/ T.B. Jaya Vidyalaya, Addalaichenai who were identified poor in the performance in the subject of Islam was selected for this study by using purposive sampling technique.

Tools for the Study

1. **Second Term Test:** This is an achievement type test conducted in second term. As it was a standard test, the scores in the test were used to identify 30 low performing students in the subject of Islam.

2. **Pretest:** This is an achievement type test to ascertain the entry level of the performance of the students which contained the both Multiple Choice Question and Structured Essay Questing evaluative of the Subject of Islam. The content and face validity of the test was established by the opinion of subject experts. For establishing the reliability of the tool, test – retest method was used. The co-relation coefficient was .83 and that it was used.

3. **Post Test:** This is an achievement type test to ascertain the entry level of the performance of the students which contained the both Multiple Choice Question and Structured Essay Questing evaluative of the Subject of Islam. The content and face validity of the test was established by the opinion of subject experts. For establishing the reliability of the tool, test – retest method was used. The co-relation coefficient was .86 and that it was used.

4. **Group Scaffolding Learning Teaching Package:** For implementing the Group Scaffolding Learning Teaching Strategies, Group Scaffolding Learning Teaching Package which contained leaning activities to be used with Group Scaffolding Learning Teaching Strategies. The content validity of the package was established by the experts and pilot run conducted at AK/ Al- Arham Vidyalaya, Addalaichenai.

Intervention Strategy- Group Scaffolding Learning Teaching Strategies

In this study, Group Scaffolding Learning Teaching Strategies were used for improving the achievement of the students in the subject of Islam. These Group Scaffolding Strategies are the techniques of involving, motivating, and facilitating the students in groups in doing their activities in the classroom by their mutual supports among them in the group.

Procedure

After obtaining the informed consents of the principal of the school, the sample was selected based on the scores obtained by the students in the second term test in the subject of Islam. Then, the Group Scaffolding Strategies were developed and validated. After wards, the other tools, pretest and posttest were constructed and validated. Subsequently, the Group Scaffolding Strategies were employed among the sample. The teacher of the class who was trained by the investigator on how to use the group scaffolding strategies implemented the new strategies among the students. Before and after the intervention, an achievement type of pretest and posttest were administered respectively to find out the achievement level of the sample in the subject of Islam.

Results and Discussion

For assessing the effectiveness of group scaffolding strategies in enhancing the achievements of Grade 05 students in the subject of Islam, the hypothesis of the study, "there exists significant difference between the pretest score and posttest score of the subjects in the performance of the subject of Islam" was tested. For this, the mean scores of pretest and posttest, and

standard deviations which needed to calculate 't' value are calculated and presented in table

Table 1: *Means, SD and 't' value for the Performance of Islam Subject of Grade 05 Students*

Performance Test	N	Mean	SD	't' value
Pre-Test	30	34.6	5.17	8.42
Post-Test	30	68.5	6.43	

**p< .01

Table 1 shows mean, standard deviation, and the 't' value of the performance of the subject of Islam in pretest score and posttest score of Grade 05 students. The means of pretest score and posttest scores are 34.6 and 68.5. and the standard deviations are 5.17 and 6.43 separately. For testing hypothesis of the study, 't' value was calculated and it was 8.42. This calculated t value is more than the table value of 2.89 at 0.01 significant level. This indicates that the hypothesis of the study has been confirmed. Thus, the Group Scaffolding Strategies have enhanced the attainment of the subjects in the subject of Islam.

From the data gathered by observation in the classroom while the intervention strategy was being implemented, it was found that the sample who was under treatment of Group Scaffolding Strategies showed improved confidence, activeness and interest in doing the tasks. They were collaborative, friendly and helping each other in the class.

It is revealed from the analyses of the findings of the study that strengthen the results of the previous researches done. Beckman (2012) found in a similar study on effectiveness of peer scaffolding strategies in improving the subject of Islam among primary students that the scaffolding strategies were helping improve the subject knowledge of Islam among the students. Further it revealed that the students should be given appropriate activities to improve their religious studies of Islam by using the new learning and supporting strategies. However, the peer scaffolding techniques is rarely used in primary schools and that there needs more researches to test their ability of leaning the subject of Islam in wider context.

The results of the study carried out by Runesson, and Marton (2002) showed that the scaffolding instructions were more effective than conventional methods. Similarly, Shulman

(1986) concluded that approaches of giving peer assignments which were more effective than conventional methods in developing language and the subject of religion for slow learners.

However, according to Runesson, (2006) the uses of peer approach or group scaffolding techniques are very low and many teachers are still using the conventional methods. He says this the new approaches of scaffolding and peer work approach need more researches focusing primary, secondary and advanced level classes.

By and large, the various previous studies have strengthened the findings of the present study and vice- versa. Hence, this is an important attempt in search of an appropriate method for teaching the subject of Islam in primary classes

Conclusion

The results of the study revealed that the Group Scaffolding Strategies have significantly enhanced the achievement of students of Grade 05 in the subject of Islam. The subjects have, during the implementation of the new strategies of Group Scaffolding Strategies, shown positive attitude. They were curious, supportive, and interested in doing the activities when the new strategies were implemented.

The conclusions drawn imply that the Grade 05 students should be taught the even the subject of religion like Islam using modern strategies such as Group Scaffolding Strategies. The teachers who use such method should be encouraged and supported. A special training could be arranged for the teachers of Islam subject to use these strategies effectively for the improvement of the subject of Islam among primary students. Though these new techniques have been used for the students with poor achievement in the subject of Islam, the other students with average and higher level of performance in Islam can be taught using the new techniques given the interest shown by the sample.

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