

Effective Student Engaging Strategies to Enhance Academic Learning in Middle Eastern Classrooms: An Action Research Approach

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Abstract : The curriculum at General Sciences department in Prince Sultan University includes 'Physical science' for Computer Science, Information Technology and Business courses. Students are apathetic towards Physical Science and question, as to, 'How this course is related to their majors?' English is not a native language for the students and also for many instructors. More than sixty percent of the students come from institutions where English is not the medium of instruction, which makes student learning and academic achievement challenging. After observing the less enthusiastic student cohort for two consecutive semesters, the instructor was keen to find effective strategies to enhance learning and further encourage deep learning by engaging students in different tasks to empower them with necessary skills and motivate them. This study is participatory action research, in which instructor designs effective tasks to engage students in their learning. The study is conducted through two semesters with a total of 200 students. The effectiveness of this approach is studied using questionnaire at the end of each semester and teacher observation. Major outcomes of this study were overall improvement in students attitude towards science learning, enhancement of multiple skills like note taking, problem solving, language proficiency and also fortifying confidence. This process transformed instructor into engaging and reflecting practitioner. Also, these strategies were implemented by other instructors teaching the course and proved effective in opening a path to changes in related areas of the course curriculum. However, refinement in the strategies could be done based on student evaluation and instructors observation.

Keywords : group activity, language proficiency, reasoning skills, science learning

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