

A PEDAGOGICAL ANALYSIS OF DOK-BASED INSTRUCTION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract. The Depth of Knowledge (DOK) framework's pedagogical value and practical application in English language teaching (ELT) are examined in this article. DOK provides an organized method for encouraging deeper cognitive engagement, critical thinking, and communicative competence, whereas traditional instruction in EFL/ESL classrooms frequently emphasizes rote learning and surface-level knowledge. The study investigates how instructional tasks that support language development across reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills can be created using each of the four DOK levels. The article demonstrates how DOK-based instruction can promote higher-order thinking, improve linguistic proficiency, and support learning transfer in a variety of English language learning contexts through a pedagogical analysis of classroom activities, assessment strategies, and learner outcomes. The main point is that it's important to put DOK ideas into lesson planning,

Keywords: Depth of Knowledge (DOK), English Language Teaching (ELT), cognitive skills, task design, higher-order thinking, communicative competence, language instruction, assessment, pedagogy.

Introduction

Modern education wants students to be good at critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving, not just memorizing grammar rules and single words. In English teaching, this means teachers need to use systems that encourage deeper thinking and real-life use of the language.

The Depth of Knowledge (DOK) system, created by Norman L. Webb (1997), is a great tool for figuring out how hard a thinking task is. It helps teachers design activities that push students past simple understanding. This way of teaching only focused on correct grammar and simple recall, DOK makes students analyze, judge, and use language in real conversations.

The DOK system has four levels that get harder step-by-step:

1. Recall and Reproduction: Just remembering facts.
2. Skills and Concepts: Using rules and ideas.
3. Strategic Thinking: Planning, reasoning, and solving problems.
4. Extended Thinking: Big projects that need deep investigation.

When DOK frame is used in English classes, it helps teachers make tasks harder and slowly. (scaffolding). This lets teachers give different tasks to students and makes sure activities meet both communication and thinking goals. Because schools are now focusing on what students can *learn*, DOK is very important.

Using DOK can improve a student's English skills, help them become more independent learners, and raise their scores on tests. But there are problems, like making sure teachers truly understand DOK, having enough teaching materials, and making tests that match the DOK levels. This article analyses the teaching benefits and uses of DOK in English classes.

Methodology

This study used a way of looking at things (qualitative pedagogical analysis) to see how the DOK framework could be used well in English teaching. The research looked at how DOK ideas guided the making of lessons and how students reacted when they did the DOK-based schoolwork.

The study included 45 students learning English at an intermediate level and three English teachers from a high school. The teachers all had at least five years of experience and learned the basics of DOK before the study began.

Data was collected over six weeks. During this time, the teachers taught lessons that had tasks at all four DOK levels, covering all four language skills. The student work ranged from easy memory tasks to activities that needed long-term thinking and real communication.

The researcher watched the classes regularly and used a checklist to record how much students were involved, how complex their thinking was, and how well they spoke English. Teachers were interviewed about how well the DOK teaching worked. Students also wrote short notes after classes about how hard they thought the tasks were and how motivated they felt. All the information gathered was sorted by topic to find common patterns and ideas for teaching

Results

The results show that using the DOK system in English teaching had a good effect on how students learned and how their language skills improved. When students did tasks designed at DOK Levels 3 and 4, they showed a clear increase in their critical thinking, better analytical answers, and more creative language use.

Their ability to communicate got better because they talked more in groups and focused on the meaning of what they were saying, instead of just using sentences they had memorized. Students said that they felt much more confident and enjoyed solving problems that felt real, which suggests DOK teaching helped students feel motivated and learn something on their own.

Teachers also stated that the DOK model helped them check how difficult the tasks were more precisely and encouraged them to use different teaching methods. While they decided that harder tasks were valuable, they noted challenges with the time

needed to design them and their own need for more practice. In general, the findings support the idea that using the DOK system helps students learn more deeply, get more engaged, and use English better in class.

Discussion

The study's main point to the teaching benefits of adding the DOK framework to English classes and demonstrate how difficult thinking helps language development. The higher participation and communication seen in students suggest that activities with higher DOK levels make students use English for meaningful reasons instead of just declaiming memorized facts. This emphasis on thinking, not just form, matches modern teaching where interaction and student focus are important.

One major finding is the value of slowly making tasks harder (strategic scaffolding). DOK lets teachers guide students step-by-step from simple memory toward analysis, synthesis, and real-world application. As students move through these thinking stages, they become more independent and willing to try new language two vital parts of good communication. Also, the framework helps combine different language skills in mentally challenging activities, which helps students remember and use knowledge long-term.

In spite of these good results, the study found that using DOK successfully needs confident teachers and support for the curriculum. Some teachers felt unsure how to tell the difference between the DOK levels and struggled to create activities that tested students correctly. This means that without good training, teachers might go back to easier tasks, which reduces DOK's effect. Time restrictions and lack of materials were also problems mentioned.

The findings conclude that for DOK-based teaching to work best, teachers need both the theory and the practical tools for planning lessons and testing. Teacher training, collaboration among educators, and adding DOK principles to school curriculum could

help solve these problems. With this support, DOK can make language learning a process that is more mentally inspiring and motivating.

Conclusion

We can conclude that the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) framework gives teachers a powerful construction for increasing higher-order thinking and communication skills in English classes. By helping teachers plan tasks that go beyond memorizing and basic understanding, DOK encourages students to analyze, evaluate, and apply language in context.

The results presented clear improvements in student involvement, language skills, and independence when DOK levels especially Levels 3 and 4 were used purposely. Although the benefits are obvious, effective use depends greatly on teacher preparedness, access to resources, and school support. Teachers need training to correctly figure out how hard a thinking task is and to confidently design activities at different DOK levels.

Nevertheless, with regular training and curriculum changes, DOK-based teaching can improve the overall quality of English teaching and help create more meaningful, student-focused learning environments. Finally, DOK makes the connection between thinking development and language learning stronger, helping students not only master English but also become critical thinkers who can use their knowledge in real-life situations. The findings suggest that DOK should be used more widely in English programs to improve learning results and create more active classroom experiences.

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