INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF INNOVATIVE RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE

ISSN-2213-1356 www.ijirk.com

English Language Communicative Teaching and Learning of the Association of Schools of the Augustinian Sisters (ASAS): A Basis for Communicative Approach-Based Enhancement Program

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Abstract

This research assessed the use of Communicative Approach in teaching Communication Arts English in selected ASAS Schools. The result of the data analysis was used as basis toward developing a Communicative Approach-Based Enhancement Program of the ASAS Schools. Using the descriptive-survey method, the respondents of this study were the students, Subject Area Coordinators, and Teachers of English from the eleven (11) ASAS schools. A questionnaire and classroom observations were used as data gathering tools by the researcher on the assessment on the use and effectiveness of communicative approach in teaching Communication Arts English. The communicative needs of the high school students in Communication Arts English as to the four communicative language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, listening as perceived by the students and the subject area coordinators are to a Great Extent except for the skill in listening that is to a Very Great Extent. The use of communicative approach and the degree of effectiveness in teaching Communication Arts English based on the classroom observation of the Subject Area Coordinators and the perception of the student-respondents respectively as to the role of the teacher on the use of the communicative approach, instructional materials utilized and strategies and techniques employed resulted a Moderate Extent and Effective respectively for both group of respondents.

Key Words: English language teaching and learning, communicative approach, descriptive survey method, communicative approached-based enhancement program, Philippines

Introduction

Communicative competence is a concept that eludes exact definition. Scores of studies have underlined teachers' apparent confusion on what encompasses communicative competence. Richards (2006) explains that grammar competence, as the previously prevalent methodology in language instruction, emphasizes linguistic units from phonology to syntax. However, the use of language in the pragmatic sense is not tapped into grammar competence, and is best reflected within communicative competence.

CLT was basically a reaction to the rigorous and trite procedures of form-focused instruction prevalent with the focus on grammar competence. As such, syllabus and other products of instructional design were formed in such a way to reflect the shift of focus to more dynamic and collaborative authentic language activities. Linguists like Hymes preceded with the concept of communicative competence, and Chomsky built on this concept to arrive at linguistic concept, which was later criticized for mimicking the same rote and mechanistic style of the pedagogy it initially revoked (in Fazal, Majoka and Ahmad, 2016). Later on, as language teaching methodology would thrive on constant innovative studies, differences between native and non-native speaker classes emerge.

The proponents of CLT developed a methodology that aimed at bringing authentic materials into the language classroom. However, content mastery was not given focus. Some maintain that "communicative" only meant speaking abilities, ultimately ignoring other skills like reading and writing. On the other hand, some people believe that by limiting the abilities available to students would defeat the idea of CLT, which is to increase learner autonomy.

Non-native speakers, dealing with these contending beliefs, also had to consider linguistic competence. Traditional methods had to be present in the language classroom, owing to students' low English skills. More recent studies would solve this problem by combining Grammar Translation Method with Communicative Approach to develop the Communicative-Grammar Translation (CGT) method (Faizal, Majoka and Ahmad, 2016). Another study advocates an similar approach to CGT, which incorporates the "creative integration of meaningful communication with relevant declarative input and the automatization of both linguistic rules and lexical items" (Dornyei, 2009). This approach, coined as the Principled Communicative Approach, consists of seven principles that merge the importance of authentic classroom engagement, exposure to these engagements, and the mastery of language to function in such engagements.

Another emergent idea in CLT is intercultural communicative competence. While CLT in itself aims to improve the learners' communicative competence, the increasing flow of cross-cultural communication has risen in the past years. Not only is linguistic competence assessed by the relevance of its activities, but also for its ability to introduce cultural sensibilities to learners (Cetinavci, 2012; Alexandru, 2012).

David Nunan lists five prominent features of Communicative Language Teaching: "an emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language; the introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation; the provision of opportunities for learners to focus not only on language but also on the learning management process; an enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning; and an attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom" (from Banciu and Jireghie, 2012).

However, given the prevalence of CLT in existing studies and practice, the method still faces a number of challenges in implementation. For one, the comprehensiveness and/or vagueness of the scope of CLT presents a challenge in designing and operationalizing tests. It is important to note how CLT's emphasis lies heavily on

techniques and lacking details in most aspects, including assessment. Another challenge was a concept embedded in Hymes' model of communicative competence, which is the "ability for use". This concept is put into question, as not only linguistic capability can be construed but also other abilities like reasoning, emotional states and the likes (Harding, 2014). A response to these challenges, as a study proposes, is to endorse the idea of "adaptability" in CLT classrooms, or "a test-taker's need to deal with different varieties in English, to use and understand appropriate pragmatics, to cope with fluid communication practices of digital environments, and to notice and adapt to the formulaic linguistic patterns associated with different domains of language use." Innovation is not lost in the studies that come after the time of CLT. Approaches like context-based methodologies aim for more student-centered activities (Bax, 2003).

English is considered the dominant language of all the fields: be it in electronics, medicine, space technology, international business, radio, advertising television and film. Moreover, it is the official language used at meetings of countless international organizations. The present era is called the age of technology, thus members of the society should be competitive in all aspects especially in the field of communication. The task then of the language teacher is to prepare his students for this competitive world so they get employed with their knowledge and skill in English.

Schools have the responsibility to guide and help the students to become effective speakers of the language. Considering the vital role that the school plays in developing the youths to be proficient and skillful in communication, the study was conceived to assess the use of communicative approach in teaching and learning Communication Arts English in selected Association of Schools of the Augustinian Sisters (ASAS).

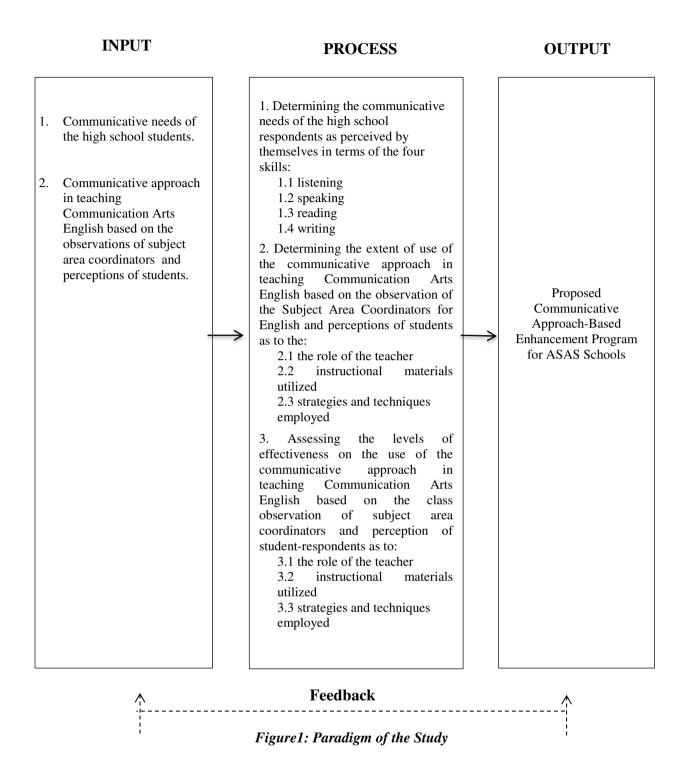
The study drew theoretical support from Razmjoo and Riazi (2006) who advocated that the ability to use language communicatively entails both, knowledge of or competence in the language and the ability to implement or to use this competence.

In view of the abovementioned theory, the study espoused the Input-Process-Output Framework described in Figure 1. This could be well understood through the Input-Process-Output Model of McLeod, Jr. and Schell (2001) which is a system of elements that are integrated with the common purpose of achieving an objective in which input resources are transformed into processes and these processes are transformed into output resources. The resources flow from the input element through the output element and to the output element. A control mechanism is connected to the resource flow by means of a feedback loop which obtains information from the system output and makes it available to the control mechanism. The control mechanism compares the feedback signals to the objectives and directs signals to the input element when it is necessary to change the system operation.

The study was designed to assess the communicative language teaching and learning in selected ASAS schools. For more understanding of the study, the framework was diagrammatically presented containing various variables in each of the three boxes.

The first box of the paradigm showed the input which reflects the communicative needs of the high school students. It also included the communicative approach in teaching Communication Arts English based on the observations of subject area coordinators and perceptions of students.

The second box presented the process which is directly related to the use of communicative approach, instructional materials, strategies and techniques



Determining the communicative needs of the high schools respondents as perceived by the students themselves, Subject Area Coordinators, and Teachers of English. Determining the extent of use of the Communicative Approach in teaching Communication Arts English based on the observation of the Subject Area Coordinators for English and perceptions of students as to the role of the teacher, instructional materials utilized and strategies and techniques employed. Another process is assessing the levels of effectiveness on the use of the communicative approach in teaching high school English based on the class observation of subject area coordinators and perception of student-respondents as to the role of the teacher, instructional materials utilized and strategies and techniques employed.

The third box presented the output which is a Proposed Communicative Approach-Based Enhancement Program for ASAS Schools. The objectives of this program are development of communicative competence, more opportunities for students in both oral and written communications, richer students' knowledge and understanding on language and language acquisition, and improved teachers pedagogic competence.

This research endeavored to assess the communicative language teaching and learning approach in selected ASAS Schools.

Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

- 1. What is the extent of the communicative needs of the high school student-respondents in Communication Arts English as perceived by the students themselves, Subject Area Coordinator and Teachers in English in terms of the four skills:
 - 1.1 listening,
 - 1.2 speaking,
 - 1.3 reading,
 - 1.4 writing?
- 2. What is the extent of the use of Communicative Approach in teaching Communication Arts English based on the classroom observation of the Subject Area Coordinators and the perception of the student-respondents as to:
 - 2.1 the role of the teacher on the use of the Communicative Approach
 - 2.2 instructional materials utilized; and
 - 2.3 strategies and techniques employed?
- 3. What is the degree of effectiveness on the use of the Communicative Approach in teaching Communication Arts English in selected ASAS schools based on the classroom observation of the Subject Area Coordinators and the perception of the student-respondents as to:
 - 3.1 the role of the teacher on the use of the Communicative Approach
 - 3.2 instructional materials utilized; and
 - 3.3 strategies and techniques employed
- 4. What Communicative Approach-Based Enhancement Program may be proposed and adopted by ASAS schools in teaching Communication Arts English?

Method

Since this study assessed and described the use of Communicative Approach in teaching Communication Arts English in selected ASAS Schools, the researcher made use of descriptive-survey method. This method was chosen to be appropriate based on the explanation of Acero and Leuterio (2006), that the descriptive research is concerned with the conditions or relationships that exist or trends that are developing. Adanza (2009) likewise mentioned that the descriptive method is designed for the investigator to gather information about the present conditions, status or trend, and in dealing with what is prevailing. In addition, according to Fraenkle and Wallen (2010), in a descriptive research, information is collected from a group of people in order to describe some aspects or characteristics such as abilities and or knowledge of the population of which that group is a part. In this kind of research, the information is collected through asking questions and the answers to these questions by the members of the group constitute the study. Information is collected from a sample rather than from every member of the population. The process of descriptive survey, however, goes beyond mere data gathering and tabulating of data. It involves an element of analysis and interpretation of the meaning and significance of what is being described. It is from these perspectives that the descriptive research was set to be most appropriate for used in this study.

The descriptive research involves collecting data in order to test hypotheses and answers questions concerning the current status of the study. It involves description, recording, analysis, and interpretation of conditions that now exist. The descriptive method ascertains the actual existing strategies and techniques and instructional materials used in the Communicative Approach and how these are performed, utilized as perceived by the students, subject area coordinators and teachers of English.

Locale of the Study

The study was conducted in the selected ASAS Schools, all non-stock, non- profit academic institutions run by the Augustinian Sisters of Our Lady of Consolation.

There are twenty two (22) academic institutions comprising the ASAS Schools. Eleven (11) are located in Luzon while the remaining eleven (11) schools are situated in the different provinces of the Visayas.

The Order of St. Augustine (OSA) School is a link in the chain of Augustinian Schools in the Philippines. It is a system of education which is based on the educational mode of the Congregation of the Augustinian Sisters of Our Lady of Consolation and on the comprehensive system of Catholic Education in the Philippines.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of this study came from the eleven (11) schools of ASAS located in Luzon namely: 1. Assumpta Academy (Bulacan); 2. Colegio de BuenConsejo (Pasig); 3. La Consolacion College (Caloocan); 4. La Consolacion College (Deparo); 5. La Consolacion College (Binan); 6. La Consolacion College (Manila); 7. La Consolacion College (Pasig); 8. La ConsolacionCollege (Tanauan); 9. La Consolacion College (Valenzuela); 10. La Consolacion School (Balagtas) 11. La Consolacion University Philippines (Malolos City)

There were three (3) groups of respondents which composed of twenty six (26) Teachers of English, eleven (11) Subject Area Coordinators of English, who were on total enumeration and three hundred nine (309) Grade 10 students who were randomly chosen using the Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error.

Data Gathering Procedures

To ensure the proper conduct of the study, the data were gathered following certain procedures.

The researcher requested permission from the Superintendent of ASAS Schools through a letter to conduct the study. Upon the approval of the Superintendent, permission to float the questionnaire was sought from the respective principals and the presidents of the ASAS schools through a letter. The researcher personally administered the questionnaire to the student-respondents, Subject Area Coordinator and Teachers of English to ensure one hundred percent retrieval.

The researcher requested the Principal to allow the Subject Area Coordinator to conduct classroom observations at least once a week for the two (2) grading periods using the class observation and evaluation form prepared and devised for this purpose. The researcher personally observed the actual classroom teaching to make his own assumption. His observations were not included, however, in the research data.

Instruments

The following instruments were used as data gathering tools which were used by the researcher on the assessment on the use and effectiveness of communicative approach in teaching Communication Arts English:

1. Questionnaire

To determine the extent of the communicative needs of the students, the research instruments used is a checklist for Subject Area Coordinators, Teachers of English, and students. Two sets of questionnaires

adopted from the Trainor's Handbook for Language prepared by the Language Study Center of the Philippine Normal University and the Department of Education were used to determine the Communicative needs of the fourth year students. Separate sets of questionnaires were answered by the two groups of respondents. One set of questionnaire was answered by the Subject Area Coordinators and Teachers of English and the other set was answered by the Grade 10 students.

Important items of the questionnaire on the extent of use and effectiveness of the communicative approach in teaching Communication Arts English were based from the practicum paper on the Communicative Approach by Fernandez (2006). These were answered by the students and the Subject Area Coordinators of English

Another set of questionnaire which was answered by the Subject Area Coordinators and Teachers of English was devised to assess the problems encountered by the English Teacher on the use of the communicative approach in teaching English.

2. Classroom Observation

Twenty (20) Classroom observations were conducted within the last two grading periods particularly the third and fourth grading periods by the Subject Area Coordinators to assess the effectiveness on the use of the instructional materials, strategies and techniques used in the communicative approach in teaching Communication Arts English using a prepared observation form.

Results

The communicative needs of the high school students in Communication Arts English as to the four communicative language skills such as listening, speaking, reading and writing, listening as perceived by the students and the subject area coordinators are to a Great Extent except for the skill in listening that is to a Very Great Extent.

While the student-respondents perceive the need of the use of English in specific places, specific activities and specific people in school with whom they speak to in English, including reading and writing, they did not perceive the great need for the development of skills in listening. They, however, need to develop further their skills in speaking, reading and writing.

The extent on the use of communicative approach in teaching Communication Arts English from the classroom observations of the subject area coordinators and teachers and perceptions of the students as to the role of the teacher shows the teacher's responsibility which is different from that of the traditional English teacher being a lecturer. In the Communicative Approach the teacher is more of a facilitator and a cocommunicator, providing more opportunities for the students to learn the language with more students controlled activities rather than the teacher's activity, thus, making the learning atmosphere student centered not teacher centered. The role of the teacher as a general overseer of the students' learning, a language teacher, consultant or adviser and co-communicator on the use of the Communicative Approach is very important in the development of students' competence in order to produce competitive learners. The teacher teaching Communication Arts English helps a lot in the successful management of the program as a facilitator as well as a participant so that the students would be able to learn the English language better to have an access to world information as well as to the cultural materials, that will enhance the quality of life and nation.

As to instructional materials, the extent on the use of communicative approach in teaching Communication Arts English based on classroom observations of the Subject Area Coordinators can be enhanced by their availability in school, be it in the library or in the classroom.

As to the use of strategies and techniques, the teachers do not have a thorough knowledge and training on the different strategies and techniques which may serve as their guidelines in the implementation of these

strategies in the classroom. Not too many among the teachers have also finished a graduate course related to language teaching and learning.

The degree of effectiveness on the use of the communicative approach as to the role of the teacher, as to instructional materials and as to teaching strategies and techniques are all Effective with the role of the teacher ranking first. It reflects that to the students that the role of the teacher counts most. This further implies that in the communicative approach, the students look forward to what the teacher does in enhancing learning. Instructional materials, strategies and techniques redound to the skills of the teacher in using these to enhance learning.

On the bases of the findings on the use of communicative approach in teaching Communication Arts English in selected ASAS Schools, a Communicative Approach-Based Enhancement Program is proposed for implementation.

PROPOSED COMMUNICATIVE APPROACH-BASED ENAHANCEMENT PROGRAM FOR ASAS SCHOOLS

A. ACADEMICS

To address the following problem/s encountered by teachers on the use of Communicative Approach in Teaching Communication Arts English:

• Lack of knowledge on Communicative Approach in teaching Communication Arts

KRA / Focus Area	Objectives	Activities / Strategies	Persons Responsible	Expected Output
Curriculum and Instruction	To update on new trends, approaches, and methods in the teaching of English language focusing on the use of communicative approach vis-à-vis with the DepED Curriculum Guide and ASAS Policy on Language Teaching and Learning	Review and modify the course syllabi in Communication Arts as well as the Lesson Plan / Guide in accord with the communicative approach-based instruction Conduct of formative classroom observation by the SAC	English Teacher Subject Area Coordinator	Teachers will be able to create innovative teaching strategies and techniques that would provide sufficient lessons that focus on the four macro skills – reading, speaking, listening and writing.

B. COMMUNICATION SKILLS STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES

To address the following problem/s encountered by teachers on the use of Communicative Approach in Teaching Communication Arts English:

- Lack of knowledge on Communicative Approach in teaching Communication Arts
- Student's lack of self-confidence in using the English Language
- Student's lack of good stock of vocabulary for self-expression

KRA / Focus Area	Objectives	Activities / Strategies	Persons Responsible	Expected Output
Interactive	To encourage the	Adoption of	English Teachers	Demonstration of
Conversational	use of the English	English Speaking	Subject Area	the use of English in
English Program	language in a non-	Zone in the school	Coordinator	basic daily
Using English out	threatening and	campus supported	Students	communication
of the usual	more relax setting	with concrete		activities in the
classroom setting		guidelines for		school campus
(i.e. canteen,		monitoring and		
playground,		implementation		

library, talking to schoolmates and classmates)	To help students feel more comfortable to practice the use of English help students feel more comfortable to practice the use of English language, like asking questions, seeking explanation.			
I Podcasting Program (addressing skills in listening, like news casting and the likes)	Auditory Awareness To be aware that sound exists and responds stimuli Auditory Reception To be able to derive meaning from what is heard Auditory Comprehension To be able to skillfully develop meaning from a lengthy text like: Identifying purpose of what is listened to Determining motives behind the action of the speaker Following development of ideas	Listening to popular podcats and videos Example: 1. The English We Speak A 3-minute program that introduces learning to everyday English phrases or sentences 2. 6-Minute English Program gives the opportunity to learn and practice everyday English in a wide range of topics 3. Real-life English This program aims at helping the students improve skills in language learning and guide them to get variety of information about day to day	English Teacher Subject Area Coordinator Students	The students will demonstrate ability to: ✓ Comprehend information ✓ Critique and evaluate a message ✓ Show empathy for feelings expressed by others ✓ Listen with literal comprehension

		T	T	, · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
		situations /		
		scenarios in real		
		inc		
		4. Hear and tell		
		This program		
		helps		
		develop students		
		listening and		
		speaking skills.		
Functional Speech	To determine the	Activity:	English Teacher	The students
Program	purpose of oral	Listening to	Subject Area	demonstrate ability
(developing Skills	discourse	taped	Coordinator	to:
in speaking like:		news anchored	Students	
77 - 171 - 1	To select words	by reputable		✓ Transmit ideas
- Facilitating or conduct a	that are appropriate to the topic,	newscasters and do the		and information
meeting	audience, purpose,	simulations		orally in a variety of
- Serving as	and context	in class		situations
master of		afterwards		
ceremonies	Employ vocal			✓ Use delivery
- Organizing a	variety in rate /	Introduction of the		skills suitable
school / club	pitch and intensity	following activities		to the topic,
seminar - Conducting	Employ language	as part of the program:		purpose, and audience
interviews	appropriate to the	program.		audience
	designated	1. Gap Activity		
	audience			
		A form of		
		dialogue (an interview		
		and		
		panel discussion		
		are examples of		
		this activity)		
		2. Role Play		
		The activity will		
		encourage		
		students to		
		speak		
		in real life		
		situations		
		3. Disconversation		
		Topics / Pictures		
		can be used to		
		allow free flow		
		of		
		conversation		
		4. Information-		
		Dissemination		
		Activity		
		Conduct of		
		Conduct of	l .	

	T			
		meeting, organizing club seminar or events are parts of this activity		
Metacognitive Reading Program	To develop students' awareness of the reading program and reading strategies To encourage students to read to learn (and have an authentic purpose for reading) To encourage development of reading skills and the use of reading strategies by using the target language	Integrating Reading Strategies (using the before, during, and after reading) 1. Before reading [Plan for the reading topic] 2. During reading [Monitor comprehension 3. After reading [Evaluate comprehension and strategy used] Using authentic materials and approaches Reading aloud in the classroom Reading to learn 1. Reading to learn the language 2. Reading for content information 3. Reading for cultural knowledge	Subject Teacher Subject Area Coordinator Students	The students will demonstrate understanding of the role of reading in the language classroom and the type of texts that can be used to develop genuine love for reading.

C. TEACHING MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT

To address the following problem/s encountered by teachers on the use of Communicative Approach in Teaching Communication Arts English:

• Availability of instructional materials to be utilized in communicative approach

KRA / Focus Area	Objectives	Activities / Strategies	Persons Responsible	Expected Output
Communicative	To select existing	Selecting,	English Teacher	The language
Language	communicative	preparing, using,	Librarian	teacher will be able
Teaching and	language teaching	and developing		to prepare variety of
Learning Activities	and learning	communicative		communicative

activities available activities using the activities which a	ire
in the internet following authentic,	
guidelines: innovative,	
To prepare locally 1. Do the relevant, and	
made activities fit the gearing towards	
communicative objectives? language	
activities that suit (Purpose) proficiency of the	•
the needs of the 2. Are the students.	
students activities well	
organized? (Define	
To use available Objectives)	
teaching materials 3. Do the	
in the classroom, in activities prepare	
the library, and in the students for	
the internet communication?	
(Flexibility)	
To develop 4. Are the	
activities that activities well	
promote interaction designed?	
and communication (Diversity)	
5. Have the	
activities been	
presented in a	
technically	
appropriate	
manner?	
(Development)	
6. Do the	
activities provide	
sufficient exercises	
to enhance student's	
understand-ding and	
use of the language?	
(Content)	
7 In the patinitu	
7. Is the activity	
suitable to the	
communication	
level of the	
students? (Guide	
Learners) 8. Does the	
difficulty of the	
activities match the	
abilities of the	
students? (Evaluate	
Results)	
D RESEARCH	

D. RESEARCH

To address the following problem/s encountered by teachers on the use of Communicative Approach in Teaching Communication Arts English:

• Lack of teacher's creativity in the preparation of instructional materials

Lack of teacher's creativity in the preparation of instructional materials				
KRA / Focus Area	Objectives	Activities / Strategies	Persons Responsible	Expected Output
Research Activity	To produce an action research focusing on the effective use of communicative	Conduct of individual and group action research about the use of communicative approach in language	English Teacher Subject Area Coordinator School Administrator	The teachers will be able to produce and publish researches on development of a communicative

ap	pproach in	teaching and present	approach-based
	eaching in the	it in a colloquium	language teaching
la	anguage		
	proficiency)		
	earning of the	Publish locally / self-	
st	tudents	made instructional materials on	
		communicative	
		activities for the use	
		of other English	
		teachers from	
		different ASAS	
		schools	
		Collaborate / share	
		with other Language	
		teachers from other ASAS schools about	
		their various	
		practices, strategies	
		and methods in	
		communicative	
		teaching	
		Evaluate results of	
		the different action	
		research presented	
		for further	
		development of the	
		program	

Conclusion

Students need to use English as a means of communication every time, whether in classroom interactions or interactions outside the class to be familiar with the use of the four language skills particularly in speaking, reading and writing especially in listening in order to be competent and proficient.

Recommendations

- 1. Teachers must be updated on new trends, approaches, and methods in the teaching of the English language focusing attention on the use of communicative approach.
- 2. Students must be engaged in planning, organizing activities such as interviews, telephone conversation and situational dialogues and be able to role play them in order to develop their skills in reading, writing and speaking.
- 3. Further studies be made on the teaching of Communication Arts to discover new approaches and change the approach no longer suited for the high school students today.

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