

## **Effective Study Skills Instruction in English for Academic Purpose (EAP): Facilitating Positive Mindset for Student-Centered Learning in Tertiary Education**

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Transition from secondary education to tertiary education pose a major challenge to many students who undergo not only a change in the medium of instruction but also a pedagogical shift from traditional Teacher Centered Learning (TCL) in the classroom to Student Centered Learning (SCL). In Sri Lanka, English language, generally perceived negatively as ‘kaduwa’, being the current Academic Lingua Franca further discourages many students who have previously studied in their mother tongue, Sinhala or Tamil. Particularly, during the first semester of the academic year, as cited in Hassanbeigi et al (2011), students often encounter problems related to concentration, memory, note taking, test strategies, test anxiety, motivation and attitude, reading and selecting major ideas, organizing and processing information and time management which result in underachievement and failure. In this context, the research aims to determine the implications of effective Study Skills instruction to foster positive academic mindset towards SCL in First-year students.

In this action research, a sample group of 150 first-year students from Higher National Diploma in English course of Advanced Technological Institute- Kegalle, a statutory tertiary education body, were selected from two batches. Initially a Study Skills self-assessment test was given to the participants followed by a series of lectures conducted on note taking, critical reading and essay writing and presentation skills. Simultaneously, scores of two assignments given for two course modules in the first-year first semester were evaluated. The same procedure was repeated for the participants for the next batch followed by practice sessions with more emphasis on collaborative learning. At the end of each semester, a post self-assessment test was conducted along with face to face interviews with six lecturers of the particular modules. Majority of the participants perceived Study Skills as a positive step in enhancing academic performance and self-confidence of students. While Study Skill instruction with lectures failed to bring a significant change in the assignment scores, with practice sessions including collaborative learning activities the participants managed to improve considerably. Therefore, it was evident that Study Skill instruction coupled with collaborative learning is more effective in creating a positive attitude towards learning in SCL environment and enhancing academic performance of the students in their first semester of the academic year.

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