ABSTRACT

In this information age, reading and writing permeate all walks of human life. Improving reading comprehension and written expression has always been an area of concern for teachers and researchers who are working in the field of language education. Their efforts have resulted in the emergence of new theories and practices that has changed the domain of teaching of reading and writing. In the last few decades there is a shift from traditional behaviourist based approaches to cognitivist and constructivist approaches. It resulted in the emergence of cognitive strategies to promote reading and writing. The present study explored the effectiveness of semantic mapping strategy that was designed by following the principles of constructivism and social constructivism, in developing students’ reading comprehension and written expression in English.

The present study is a quasi experimental one where in pre test post test non equivalent group design was adopted. An intact group of 9th standard students were taught 5 lessons in English using the semantic mapping strategy by the investigator where as the controlled group was taught the same lesson by the regular teacher using the conventional method. The duration of the intervention was 13 weeks. Both descriptive and inferential analyses were carried out. ANCOVA was used for inferential analysis.

The result of the study revealed that, the semantic mapping strategy is effective in developing reading comprehension and written expression in English. The findings further show that, the semantic mapping strategy is effective in developing reading comprehension of different types of texts – ‘argumentation and persuasive text’ and ‘expository text’. The strategy is proved to be effective in developing
reading comprehension at literal and inferential level, but at critical level it was not found effective. It was also interesting to see that the delayed post test results suggest that the effect of the semantic mapping strategy sustained over a period of time.

The semantic mapping strategy also proved to be effective in developing students’ written expression in English. It was found to be helpful in improving students’ writing for various communicative purposes like – ‘to persuade’ and ‘to explain’. It was not found to be effective in developing the students’ ability to write for the communicative purpose ‘to convey experience’.

The findings of the study have wider implications. As the results suggest that the semantic mapping strategy in the new paradigm was effective in developing students reading comprehension and written expression English, it can be used in language classroom to promote reading comprehension and written expression. The syllabus developers and text book writers can think of incorporating the semantic mapping strategy to facilitate students’ reading comprehension and written expression in English.