IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS IN THE CLASSROOM

Marisi Debora
Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni
Universitas Negeri Medan

ABSTRACT

This article presents the writer’s experience in the classroom in implementing the organizational skills. The article also discuss the reason for teaching organizational skills in the classroom, materials needed for the teaching and the implementation of the organizational skills in the classroom. The materials can be adjusted to the availability in the class and the students’ own stationery. The two stages of implementation later build the students’ independence which is the goal of teaching and preparing them for successful academic life.

Key Words: organizational skills, teaching organizational skills, implementing

INTRODUCTION

Organizational skills are still rare to be found in the teaching of English. Many teachers and students commonly focus their attention on the four skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and the techniques to teach them. Whereas, the organizational skills contribute to the teaching of language skills and materials required by the students. For example, the use of textbooks and handouts, the assignments, homeworks and the planning of a syllabus or curriculum. In reality, without basic organizational skills, the students seem to be having difficulties to get and apply the information the teacher is giving to them. Moreover, the spending of extra time on repeating information can create uncondusive situation to the class. For instance, when teacher asked the students to take out a handout from previous lesson, a student dug through papers and it took a long time to find it or when a student told that he/she left some questions unanswered or blank in the test paper because of lack of time.

TEACHING ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS

Teaching organizational skills is very important for students. According to Issa (2009: 8) the organizational skills of paper management and time budgeting can reduce the problems by helping students locate papers easily, see the connections between different topics and assignments covered in the class, and use them in-class and out-of-class time more efficiently. In many cases, some students may have these skills earlier in their educational career and have successfully learned them, inferred them or learned these skills in their daily life and bring to practice into their academic life. Nevertheless, some students do not have these skills. The lack of organizational skills can be a problem if a student studies in higher education. Organizational skills and language skills are actually cooperate with each other. The teaching of language skills may depends on the ability of the students’ organizational skills. “Spending time teaching organizational skills eventually saves time by facilitating the learning of content materials and creating more effective techniques for test preparation (Sedita, 2006). Since many students come from different cultural background, culture becomes one of consideration before teaching the organizational skills. Some students may come from the culture that are more collective than individual or the students may one day work in a western-style company. They should be prepared to handle large quantities of papers. For
those who have not learned skills for that tasks, handling papers can by itself become an overwhelming and confusing job.

**Materials in Teaching Organizational Skills**

When teaching organizational skills, there are materials required. These materials can be varied depend on the situation in the classroom. The materials used in my class are:

1) A book for writing important notes.
2) A zipper pouch or pens and pencils or a pencil case.
3) A paper calender or a calender in their handphone.
   A circle is used when the students write date for each notes, handouts or papers given, date of quizzes or tests.
4) A plastic folder or a two-hole plastic folder.
   The plastic folder or a two-hole plastic folder is used to keep all the materials that is used in the class. Each subject has each plastic folder. At the end of semester, the materials are taken out and they are binded into a file. Then this file is labelled with the name of the subject. The plastic folder can be used for other subject materials in the new semester.
5) A punch.
   The punch is used to make holes for the two-hole plastic folder. At the beginning of the semester, the handouts are holed by the teacher to make it easy for the students to put it into their folder. Later on, it is recommended that the students have his/her own punch or if they cannot afford to buy one, they can collect money and buy one which is used by the whole class.
6) Sticky notes or color code papers
   The sticky notes can be used as adividers for each section of the subject. While the color code papers are prepared by the teacher to mark the difference section, whether it is exercise, notes, handouts, or quizzes).
7) A box.
   There should be more than one box is prepared. One is used for the materials that are being used for the day and other are used for materials that are not used for the day. Another box is used for materials that are not used for this semester.

**Implementing The Skills In The Classroom**

Teaching organizational skills to students is a two-stage process (Issa, 2009). During the first stage, the teacher sets up an organizational system and requires the students to follow it. Then, in the second stage, the students take on more responsibilities for their own organization.

**Stage one: initiating organizational skills**

In the first stage, the teacher closely supervises this stage and includes procedures to set up, maintain, and practice the organizational system.

Setting up the organizational system can be done by telling the students what divisions they should have in their folder and have them label the divider tabs in class.

The second procedure is maintaining the organizational system. It divides into date papers, file papers and use a planner. In each activity, the teacher models how to do so to the students. For example: students are asked to write the day’s date at the top of their class
notes and handouts. The teacher models the way to do it by writing the date on the board
everytime the class begin.

When filing the papers, the students are guided step by step to locate the papers into the
right file. After that, the students are asked to locate the papers on their own at the time of the
learning process runs.

The next step is to use daily planners to write their homeworks, assignments due dates,
quizzes, and tests time. Encourage the students to make a target of how long they will finish
their assignments and follow the process of the finishing of their assignment.

It is important to have an assessment of their organizational skills to see their
understanding and the application of what have been taught to them. The assessment is done
by having random checks. At the time of random checks, ask the students to take a certain
paper from the file or have a contest to see who can take papers the fastest. The students can
decide which papers they want to locate and have a race who can take it the fastest.

**Stage two: students increase their ownership of the organizational system.**

In the second stage, the students have to work harder to establish and maintain the
organizational system on their own. Establishing the system is a two-stage progress. The first
stage is changing the way in preparing the materials for the students. The students should do
the hole punching themselves and put the handouts correctly in their folder. The second stage
is discontinuing color-coding papers and let the students to read what is the paper about and
locate it into their folder.

Maintaining the organizational skill of the students is the next step. Ask them to
consider what materials do they have at hand that could be used to help them in organizing
their papers and handouts. Do they have plastic folders, punch, paper clips, stapler or staples,
boxes, sticky notes? Another consideration is: What things they might need to organize? Do
they deal with papers, emails, or objects?. It is possible to create some situations that require
the organizational skills implementation in the classroom. This second stage is the bridge that
moves the students toward independence. They independently organize their papers and
handouts and they can easily locate the information and take it without having searching all
parts in their bag to find it.

**CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION**

Building a focus on organizational skills provides a framework to support other
information that the teacher gives to the students. They can regain information and look for
relationships between papers and handouts. By being organized, the students are prepared to
be independent learners and be independent person later in their daily and work life.

It is suggested that teachers can spend some time before the next semester begins to see
how teaching organizational skill can be applied in the classroom. Then, the teachers can
apply the skills to the teacher’s own daily life and in the classroom in order to prepare them
to be successful person in the future.

**REFERENCES**

Pearson Education, Inc.


Issa, S. T. 2009. An Approach to Teaching Organizational Skills to Adults: *English Teaching Forum Volume 47 Number 2, 2009, page 8-17*


*Sekilas tentang penulis*: Marisi Debora, S.Pd., M.Hum. adalah dosen pada Jurusan Bahasa dan Sastra Inggris FBS Unimed.