



Pedagogical Approaches for Improving English Pronunciation in Higher Secondary School Students

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Abstract

The primary aim of English education is to enable pupils to communicate proficiently. Teachers place a strong emphasis on vocabulary and grammar, and pronunciation is kept at low priority. This study examined the viewpoints of secondary school English instructors concerning pronunciation and its instruction, along with their individual techniques in teaching pronunciation. The study was descriptive, focusing on thirteen public higher secondary schools, which were the sole accessible institutions. A cohort of thirty-nine educators was chosen for data collecting. A semi-structured interview and an observational checklist were created in accordance with the study objectives and enquiries. These instruments were administered to all 39 educators from government higher secondary schools. Pilot testing was performed on thirteen teachers not included in the sample group to verify the reliability of the instruments. Validity was improved by expert evaluations, and multiple items were modified according to their suggestions. The researcher conducted on-site visits to the schools to gather data, having obtained prior authorization from the respective administrations. Research indicated that educators utilized effective pedagogical strategies to promote clear and consistent pronunciation, highlighting the need of delivering feedback and correction to facilitate student advancement. Consistent practice and repetition were emphasized as essential for enhancing pronunciation skills. Nevertheless, the study determined that although educators exhibited a robust basis in language education, they frequently did not execute these tactics effectively in their classrooms. It is advisable to improve English language acquisition by embedding pertinent situations in English textbooks, integrating technology, and employing pronunciation applications or online resources for supplementary practice.

Keywords: Pronunciation, Teaching Practices, Higher Secondary School

Introduction

The role of teaching English pronunciation to higher secondary students is to help them become more proficient language users and better communicators. Teaching is a cognitively linked practice. During learning activities, teachers and students both go through a mental procedure. Instruction is a mental movement, besides instructors make decisions in the classroom based on their views. The English language is regarded as the only vital instrument still in use for the advancement of the modern world. The goal of this study is to discuss contemporary English

teaching practices by presenting evidence from classroom activities language education at the primary level and the barriers to applying them in higher secondary school level schools. Furthermore, this study draws attention to the lack of attention given to the difficulties, roadblocks, and issues English teachers encounter when teaching the language in the classroom instruction. Notably, this study's primary focus is on teachers' professional development and the absence of technological integration. The majority of higher secondary school students struggle to keep up with difficult coursework in higher education and lack basic language acquisition skill (Vančová, 2019).

Intentionally extending the teaching of English involves a number of factors, including the attitudes, strategies, obstacles, and forms of instruction used by teachers. In light of this, it's critical to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning techniques in public elementary schools, where teachers and students must overcome a number of challenges, such as a shortage of supplies, integrating technology, having qualified staff, and creating a welcoming learning environment. Elementary schools handle issues related to substantive English language learning (Szyszka, 2016). The increasing need for English language skills has driven the global economy. In recent years, the government, as well as the government of Pakistan in general, has begun to prioritize the instruction and acquisition of the English language. However, the academic success of English-language instructors and students the level of English performance has continued to be below expectations. A lot of work is done in this aspect, yet some institutions continue to portray a vile perspective on how students are doing in the English course. Gaps are still present the bulk of students are declared in between the document and reality as appears to be inept in the acquisition. (Foote et.al 2016).

Teaching and learning second languages are a sophisticated mental process. Active, thoughtful decision-makers, teachers base their instructional decisions on composite, practically-oriented, individualized, and context-sensitive networks of ideas, beliefs, and information. It's true that educators hold a variety of complex views regarding pedagogic issues, including views about students and learning. These ideas, which are claimed to be based on a teacher's unique personality, school procedures, and past experiences, constitute an organized system of principles (Makhmudov, 2021).

Students can comprehend English sounds more precisely with the aid of an instructor with solid training in English phonetics. They can devise exercises and activities to help students overcome their challenges using their phonetic knowledge to pinpoint the areas in which pupils are having difficulty (Abercrombie et al., 2019). English pronunciation experts in the classroom can serve as role models for their students. This implies that they can give examples of how to pronounce particular sounds, words, and sentences properly. Then, in an effort to enhance their own pronunciation, students can strive to mimic their teacher's pronunciation (Tegnered, & Rentner 2021). Feedback a knowledgeable teacher can offer advice to students on how to pronounce words clearly. They are able to listen intently to their students and pinpoint areas that require development. Experienced educators can generate a safe learning environment for their students. They can urge pupils to work on their pronunciation without worrying about criticism or judgment. Students may feel more assured and willing to take chances when speaking English as a result of this (Wang & Lee, 2012).

Changing the curriculum to meet the needs of the students: competent teachers are able to make adjustments to their lesson plan to meet the needs of specific students. They are able to identify each student's individual areas of weakness and create workouts and activities that particularly address those areas. As a result, students' pronunciation can considerably improve (Clapper, 2010). The teacher should provide pupils plenty of opportunities to listen and repeat while also modeling proper pronunciation of words and sounds. According to (Murphy, 2014) the instructor should speak clearly, concisely, and consistently. Students can better understand the articulation of sounds, stress patterns, and intonation with the aid of visual materials like charts,

graphs, and films. Additionally, useful is giving students textual phonetic transcriptions. To practice pronunciation, try some tongue twisters. They assist students in concentrating on the language's sounds and rhythm. Different tongue twisters that concentrate on particular sounds or intonation patterns might be used by the instructor. Recording and playback can be a powerful tool for civilizing pronunciation. The teacher can record pupils speaking and then play it back for them to listen to and assess their own pronunciation. Different tongue twisters that concentrate on particular sounds or intonation patterns might be used by the instructor. For progress, regular feedback on pronunciation is crucial. To assist students, advance, and teachers should correct errors and offer helpful criticism. Make learning entertaining and engaging by using games and activities, such as pronunciation races, tongue twister competitions, and phonetic bingo (Iannuzzi, 2017).

Rationale of the Study

The manner ESL teachers instruct has an impact on how well their pupils learn. The poor quality of instruction is due to the poor quality of teaching practice. An English language instructor must be an authority in their subject and possess pedagogical skills. Both of these elements have an impact on effective teaching methods. The high rate of failure in English classes at the secondary school level is evidence that teachers neglected to take linguistic concerns into account when lesson planning and failed to adequately take into account the diverse learning preferences of their students. The current study is widely used for two main reasons. The use of teaching methods and procedures that are inappropriate for the goal of developing spoken English competency is one of the major causes of failure in the study of English. In order to recommend potential changes in teaching and learning practices with the support of effective teaching practices, it was desirable to investigate and analyze the present methods used by English language instructors' secondary schools.

Statement of the Problem

With a focus on teachers' perceptions of English pronunciation at the secondary school level, this study intends to explore and investigate the perspectives of teachers on pronunciation. This study also investigates how English teachers feel about teaching pronunciation and whether they concur or disagree that this topic needs to receive greater attention.

Objectives

The objectives of the study were:

1. To investigate English teachers teaching Strategies to overcome pronunciation errors at higher secondary school level.
2. To investigate the views of English teachers in secondary schools regarding pronunciation and pronunciation instruction.
3. To investigate the English teachers' own practices in pronunciation instruction.
4. To suggest some guidelines regarding English pronunciation.

Research Questions

The research question of the study was

- 1) What are the perspectives of secondary school English teachers on pronunciation and its instruction?
- 2) What methodologies and approaches do English teachers in secondary schools employ in teaching pronunciation?
- 3) What guidelines can be proposed to enhance English pronunciation instruction?

Significance of Study

It is obvious that language acquisition abilities are essential for learning the English language. It shows that secondary school is not where pupils' learning skills are developed. This research study is very significant since the end results show what kinds of teaching strategies work best

for overcoming pronunciation issues and also for teacher education as it aimed to explore and provide an in-depth understanding of teachers' practices in English language learning and teaching. In the literature on education, this study is a significant undertaking. Examined issues in the context of Pakistan may benefit the nation's educational system. Thus, this research could aid in the development of new tactics or recommendations about how to handle particular teaching deficits or strengths techniques used.

Review of Literature

Teaching Practices

A pupil educator's time expended teaching at a school as part of their training is known as teaching practice. Teaching and learning have been exciting and entertaining. The primary factors are students' disinterest and teachers' outdated methods of instruction. Sadly, English is taught in Pakistani secondary schools in a way that is very disconnected from reality, and it is officially designated as the language of tests, or lingua franca. From kindergarten until matriculation, English is taught with great emphasis; nonetheless, students—especially those from rural backgrounds rarely feel confident in their ability to speak the language (Alghazo, 2015).

According to research, instructors' behaviors and practices about teaching and learning are closely related to one another and have a big impact on each other. Teachers' practices can, to a large extent, affect how they modify or alter their instructional ideas. The distinction between instruction and practice supports the idea that instructors' views are only hypotheses, whereas practice has always been the true foundation of the learning environment. The general performance of students is significantly influenced by teachers' individual views on language and language learning. The opinions of teachers are directly tied to the academic performance of students. According to this, students perform better academically the more a teacher values language acquisition. A study was conducted to determine how a teacher's own teaching and learning experiences impact their practices in a language classroom. Pre-service instructors served as the subjects of a comparable study. To learn what practices they have and how these practices are manifested in actions (Burri, 2023).

Teachers' Instructional Practices and Competence

Successful language education requires both classroom practices and the competency of educators especially at the elementary school level, where students significantly depend on the experience and knowledge of their teachers. Additionally, contend that the methods and thinking of English teachers are essential to the subject. They stress how crucial it is to increase instructors' capacity. Through expert instruction and acquainting students with global language education tools in order to improve performance in the practices of English. In the same vein, carried out an exhaustive analysis of teachers' participation in the classroom and proficiency According to the evaluation, in order for ELT teachers to provide high-quality ELT, they need further practices and professional development (Imran et. al.2024).

Historical Perspective of Teachers' Practices

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Importance of English Language Teaching Methods in Pakistan

Being able to communicate in English is crucial for success in Pakistan, especially in the international marketplace. In light of this, numerous scholars have highlighted the significance of instructional methodologies and difficulties associated with teaching English in order to call the attention of higher authorities and policymakers to this issue. Effective English language instruction in Pakistan, for example, is hampered by a number of factors, such as a lack of opportunities for teachers to grow professionally, inadequate infrastructure, packed classrooms, reliance on antiquated testing methods, teachers' excessive workloads, and a lack of professional credentials (Imran, 2024). Cain (2012) draws attention to a discrepancy between teachers' professed views on learning and their actual methods in the classroom. Teachers' capacity to apply their views in the classroom is greatly impacted by variables including personal circumstances and situational limitations. Personal characteristics can sometimes improve how well beliefs and classroom procedures align. However, instructors frequently struggle to convert their views into effective classroom instruction due to organizational impediments such as institutional limits and a lack of support (Al-Azzawi & Barany, 2016).

Techniques in Teaching English Pronunciation

There were many teaching English techniques used for English language.

Phonetic Transcription

A coding made up of phonetic characters is called phonetic transcription. Each symbol corresponds to a certain sound, which is distinct from a letter of the alphabet. Despite the fact that it is possible to acquire the articulation deprived of utilizing the encryption, numerous linguists believe that it is beneficial for learning a foreign sound system. Learning the code has the obvious advantage of enabling one to look up the pronunciation of strange words in a dictionary. The student must be familiar with phonetic symbols because they are employed in good modern learners' dictionaries to depict pronunciation (Arifin et.al, 2024).

Visual Reinforcement

Drills and rhymes are better suited for children, while this approach is more suitable for adult learners. On sound charts, which are divided by a line, vowels are at the top and consonants are at the bottom. Diphthongs have two colors, but pure vowels only have one (Field, 2005). It makes it easy for the reader to distinguish between the various noises. Students can more easily comprehend stress patterns by making a chart with annotated stress syllables. Summer, report, lovely, suggest usually, a dot or capitalized stress syllables are used to indicate the stress sounds. Patient, gratified, reply.

Auditory Reinforcement

The tactics used in this method typically focus on production and try to improve students' spoken English. Many tactics make advantage of minimum pairs, which are words with numerous meanings but only a single pronunciation difference. Minimal pair drills were first used in the Audiolingual era and are still used today, both in isolation (at the word level) and in context (at the sentential level). The method's listening and discrimination exercises can aid students in becoming aware of irritating noises. Minimal pairings are groups of words or sentences that differ from one another only in one sound. As a result, the teacher makes sure that the students are aware of the basic relationships between each sound in the target language. In order for the kids to understand the difference in sounds, the teacher selects words that differ by a single sound and repeatedly drills them in class. Both your oral production and listening comprehension are improved by participating in these activities (Rashidi & Moghadam 2015).

Problems in Pronunciation Teaching

The issue that keeps coming up in questionnaire research is the lack of confidence in instruction and resistance to start pronunciation instruction, which is often linked to a lack of training, a lack of teaching resources, and the difficulty of pronunciation assessment. Both native English speakers (NES) and non-native English speakers (NNES) teachers experience this consequence, which appears to be more or less consistent across nations. For instance, found that pronunciation instruction was not well-received by half of the Japanese junior high and high school teachers polled, which had an adverse effect on classroom instruction (Uchida & Sugimoto 2018).

English-Speaking Teachers' Problems

Although it is now commonly acknowledged that most non-native English speakers cannot achieve native-like pronunciation, many NNES teachers and preservice teachers still set this as their pronunciation objective. Nine phonetic characteristics were offered to Japanese junior high school instructors, but only four "phonetic symbols," "phonemes," "phonics," and "chunking" showed strong relationships between frequency of instruction and knowledge or skill level. However, the relationship between teachers' expertise and actual in-class instruction has not been fully elucidated, in part because not enough aspects have been examined. For instance, there may have been additional subcategories for the feature (Rukh & Raza, 2024).

Conclusion of Literature Review

The literature that has been examined and discussed merely indicates that there is a strong correlation between english pronunciation problems and teaching practices for english pronunciation, however, because there are a variety of factors that can either strengthen or weaken this relationship, it is not always evident in the real world. These variables include academic time frame, cultural background, and environmental variance. If educators truly want to integrate or put their principles into practice, they must have control over these variables. Teachers' beliefs and the material they teach have a big impact on teaching. That's why it would be simple to guarantee excellent instruction if one had a solid understanding of their views. Teachers who are able to effectively translate their convictions into actions are a towering presence in the classroom.

Examining studies on how language instructors' professed ideas and actions align Understanding instructors' affective and evaluative responses as well as whether or not educators then their pupils have comparable views nearby education and knowledge have driven certain investigations. The need to comprehend the origins of teachers' beliefs and the degree to which concepts that encounter in education courses impact instructors instead of their own experiences as learners has spurred other investigations. According to a review, beginning teachers' conceptions of teaching second languages were mostly shaped by their personal experiences as language learners, which they carried into their teacher preparation courses.

Motivated by the desire to provide an explanation for practice, additional research on educators' opinions examined the theoretical orientations of ESL reading teachers and discovered that the teachers manifestly identified with specific organizational methods besides that the lesson tactics they created also aligned with these methods. Language instructors' lessons were videotaped, and the instructors were afterwards interviewed to get their justifications and explanations for their methods. Researchers discovered that while teachers connected some ideas to different activities, they also shared some principles. Implicit beliefs are held subconsciously and can only be deduced from behavior, whereas endorsed or explicit beliefs are those that a person may easily state (Rahman & Pandian 2018).

It is well acknowledged that teachers' practices influence and direct their decisions, as well as serve as a foundation for action. It is acknowledged that the link is interactive in that while experiences and introspection on actions influence behavior, beliefs may also be added to or changed as a result of those experiences. Nonetheless, teachers' professed ideas are not usually a "very reliable guide to reality." discovered a relationship between teachers' planned lessons and their professed methodological philosophies, as a result, the teachers' beliefs seemed to be a trustworthy indicator of future practice. However, a study found that there was little correlation between rookie instructors' chosen orientations and their practicum practices, as observed in hindsight (Basturkmen, 2012). Three teachers in one setting were the subjects of another study that looked into the association among their practices besides ideas concerning form emphasis. In communicative lessons, where the main goal is to exchange messages, "focus on form" refers to moments when teachers and students addressed linguistic form issues, like grammar and terminology (counting mistake improvement), that ascended parenthetically and were therefore a comparatively unintentional aspect of teaching practice (Basturkmen, 2012).

Moreover, it has been future that the results of the partial communication among teachers' opinions and practices might be the result of research practices, such as the use of questionnaires and other self-report processes, or the challenge to assess teachers' opinions using pen and paper approaches. Classy procedures, though, don't continuously offer an earlier match. A study created on many bases of data on both opinions and performs originate no obvious correlation between teachers' opinions about teaching research skills, as created in self-descriptions and replications and collections of video excerpts, and the practices of teaching research classes, as assessed by students and outside observers (Basturkmen, 2012).

Materials and Methods

Research Design

For an in-depth study, the researcher used qualitative research design by using checklist, structured interview, to determine the teaching practices involved in English pronunciation. The qualitative research method was also applied for expressing the wisdom, depth of emotion, and experience of teachers regarding english teaching practices for language learning (Nishino, 2012).

Population of the Study

The term "population" refers to the complete collection of people, things, or events that a researcher is interested in studying. It encompasses all the members that possess the characteristics that the researcher wants to investigate and for whom the findings are intended to be applied (Gay et al., 2012). Population of study comprised of all the teachers in higher secondary school of Islamabad. Whereas, the target population of the study consisted of teachers at thirteen public higher secondary schools in the district of Islamabad.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample is a subset or a smaller representation of the population that is selected for study observation or analysis. It is drawing out the larger population to estimate or provide information about the whole population (Gay et al., 2012). The sample of the study was 13 higher secondary schools in the district of Islamabad. The total sample size of the study was 39 teachers. Simple random sampling techniques were used for this purpose.

Research Tools

Research tools are devices that are used to gather information in order to evaluate the accuracy of a theory or hypothesis. Depending on the nature of the research issue and the kind of data that must be gathered, they come in a variety of shapes and sizes (Gay, et al., 2012). A semi structured interview and observational checklist were designed for English teachers.

Interview

A semi-structured interview was created to meet the research objectives and was conducted with 39 teachers from government higher secondary schools in different districts. The interview included 10 questions, explained in detail, and was grouped into themes and sub-themes. The goal of the interview was to learn about how teachers approach teaching English pronunciation in higher secondary schools.

Observational Check List

A checklist for observations was also created with the goals and inquiries of the research in mind. The checklist has fifteen steps in all, each of which is further explained by a statement. 39 classrooms from each of the districts were personally visited by the researcher. Thirteen higher secondary schools in the Islamabad district were sampled in total for the observation checklist. The given action and stated statement in the checklist were scored on a Yes/No scale by the teachers. In order to find out about instructors' pedagogical practices in a classroom setting, observational studies gather data from educators.

Pilot Testing

Pilot testing was done to ensure the validity and reliability of instruments. Six teachers were selected for observing validity of interview schedule and observational check list.

Validity

The degree to which a test accurately assesses what it is intended to measure is known as validity. According to (Cohen et al. 2017) a test is legitimate if it can be used to make predictions or significant judgments. For the validity of the interview the researcher personally visited to different educational research experts and supervisor with the help of expert's suggestion the researcher omit irrelevant and repeated statement from interview initially the interview items of the teachers were 20 items .on the recommendation of the experts' 10 questions were removed from interview only 10 total number of the statement were included in interview.

For check list validation the researcher visited different experts and supervisor after as well as the assertions' spelling, grammar, and syntactic difficulties difficulty as well as difficulties with the phrasing and syntax of the remarks' recommendation. The questionnaires that were distributed to the students contained 27 questions. Similarly, two additional questions about teachers' methods that were part of the students' questionnaire were also eliminated. Lastly, there are a total of 15 question items in the questionnaires given to teachers and pupils.

Reliability

The regularity or dependability of a test or measurement is referred to as reliability. If a test yields consistent findings across time and among several raters or observers, it is said to be

trustworthy. Because a test cannot be relied upon or utilized to guide decision-making, reliability is crucial (Cohen et al., 2017). The reliability of the interview was 0.960 for reliability and the results of the study, the researcher used alpha-Cronbach for reliability.

Table 3.1: Cronbach alpha Reliability

No of Items	Cronbach Alpha Reliability
10	0.960

Collection of Data

The organized procedure of collecting figures or data from various bases is known as data collection. It entails gathering unprocessed information or facts that are pertinent to a specific research project (Bell et al., 2019). With the prior consent of the relevant principals, the researcher conducted in-person visits to several specially chosen higher secondary schools within the Islamabad in order to gather data. Building a rapport with the interview subjects prior to conducting the interviews was crucial. In light of this, the researcher met with the teachers who had indicated that they would be willing to participate in an interview. The interview subjects were thoroughly informed about the goals of both the study and the interview. The researcher conducted a casual chat with each interviewee individually, covering the significance of English language in the contemporary context as well as the role that teachers play in fostering English language proficiency. The significance of instructors' practices for teaching English was also discussed, and a number of problems pertaining to their teaching practices in the classroom were brought up.

A formal interview was conducted after a friendly exchange. Interview including language learning objectives, foundational language skills, teachers, the goal of English teachers' education, and their assessment and input on their methods of instruction in the classroom. At the outset of the procedure, all interviewees were advised that the maximum length of each interview was 45 minutes. this check list was complete in different 3 section and high light the teachers practices for english language learning these practices are such as phonetic, mouth and tongue placement, practices pronunciation, audio and video resources individual feedback practices phonetics, language exchange program. In order to obtain the interviewees' honest opinions about their methods of teaching English language acquisition, the interview questions were not disclosed to them in advance. Using a checklist as a guide, the researcher visited an English classroom in order to gather data and see firsthand the pedagogical approaches used in English language instruction.

Analysis of Data

Data analysis is the procedure of methodically studying and interpreting data in order to develop conclusions and extract usable information. Data must be cleaned, transformed, and moved in order to find relevant information, make recommendations, and assist in decision-making (Ali & Bhaskar, 2016). Qualitative method was used to interpret the results in light of the literature. After the interview material was transcribed and categorized into several themes and sub-themes were identified through interview analysis. Johnson and Christensen (2008) define observation as the process of analyzing the behavioural patterns of individuals in particular circumstances in order to acquire a more profound understanding of a particular subject.

Conclusions

The study's findings and the analysis of the data support the notion that effective English language teaching strategies are critical to the language's training. Excellent results can only be attained with strong, foundational teaching approaches. Without practice, teachers will surely find it difficult to teach in the real world and wind up using English more as course material than as a language.

Being proficient in the language and its associated skills is crucial for English teachers, and failing to do so could be viewed as a terrible waste of the teaching-learning process. The learning results of children can be greatly enhanced by teachers who use English language teaching strategies, but these extracurricular activities are insufficient on their own and must be used in conjunction with traditional classroom instruction. The process of teaching and learning English is enhanced when both are combined.

The study's key conclusions are as follows: To promote effective teaching practices for English language instruction, teachers expressed strong views on various aspects, including English teaching and learning, basic language skills, grammar rules, the use of the grammar-translation method, student learning, creating an inclusive learning environment, and student assessment and feedback. Teachers emphasized the importance of fostering students' critical thinking and problem-solving skills in English language learning. Regular reading activities and teaching practices were highlighted as effective strategies to improve language skills, along with increased exposure to English through media such as books, TV series, and movies. It was also concluded that while English teachers at the higher secondary school level had a solid foundation in language instruction, they often failed to implement these strategies effectively in their classrooms. Despite receiving training, refresher courses, seminars, and workshops from governmental and non-governmental organizations, the expected high level of expertise was not consistently reflected in practice. Teachers demonstrated effective classroom practices for teaching pronunciation, emphasizing the importance of clear and consistent pronunciation models. Regular practice and repetition were found to be key to improving pronunciation skills. Providing feedback and correction was deemed crucial for student progress. Additionally, integrating technology, such as pronunciation apps, was identified as a way to enhance learning. Incorporating pronunciation into other language skills, such as reading and writing, was also recommended to reinforce learning.

Teaching Methods and Strategies Although some educators use successful methods, such as giving students personalized feedback, teaching phonetics, and creating a positive learning atmosphere, there are still some areas that require development. For instance, there's a difference between what instructors really do in the classroom and what they believe about language-focused instruction. Furthermore, there is need for improvement in a few areas, such as encouraging peer practice and providing guidance on lip and tongue location. Overall, it was concluded from the teacher's observational checklist that while many teachers employ effective strategies for teaching English pronunciation, there are areas, such as mouth and tongue placement instruction and encouragement of peer practice, where improvement or increased emphasis may be beneficial. **Areas for Improvement:** Based on the findings, it appears that teaching pronunciation requires a more thorough strategy that addresses both segmental and suprasegmentally components of speech, offers lots of practice opportunities, and makes sure that teachers' ideas and their actions in the classroom are in line.

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