

**F-04: “From a blank sheet of paper to a mindful of ideas”: learning science**

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This study was done with the dual purpose of gaining a training in undertaking qualitative research, and to investigate methods and strategies used in the teaching methodology component of the minor course--Science Education for undergraduates in a Sri Lankan university. This component consisted one eighth of the subject matter content of the minor course, and was taught in 11 lessons during an academic term. The undergraduates and the 3 postgraduate students attended the lessons. The whole class was divided into 3 groups and each postgraduate student was in charge of a group. The postgraduates observed what happened in the classroom and detailed notes were taken including non verbal cues. At the end of each lesson there were discussions between the postgraduates and the instructor in keeping records. Undergraduates were interviewed and their written reflections collected. Analysis was done by triangulating data gathered from various sources.

It was found that the undergraduates liked to do group activities. They were able to develop their thinking and communicating skills, personality, patience, mutual understanding and to respect others through this engagement. Because of the advantages in using group work to enhance student centred teaching, it should be used in all the educational institutions. If the teachers in our schools are trained to undertake research on their teaching, it will be of immense use for the improvement of the teaching, learning process in science.