

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF PROBLEM BASED LEARNING STRATEGIES REPRESENTED BY SHERLOCK HOLMES

A. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Views of Learning and Education

There are various things that could be learned from Sherlock Holmes related to learning, educations and especially problem solving. Those lessons could be analyzed through Sherlock Holmes' saying, act and interactions with other characters and other character's opinion towards him in the story.

An author of the novel conveyed his/her ideas in their works which means the content of the novel or short stories will always portrayed the idea of the author itself. There are various points of view of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle which reflected by Sherlock Holmes. They are:

1. Learning is a Continuous Process of Human's Life.

"Education never ends, Watson. It is a series of lessons with the greatest for the last." (Sherlock Holmes vol. 1: 2003, p.387)

Sherlock Holmes believes that education is never end. Human always learn as they develop regardless of their reason to do so. Sherlock Holmes also grew tremendously for his reason of accepting a case. He always accepted a case for the case itself. He neither accepted the case for the rewards nor the fame. Sherlock Holmes always thinks that someone should always learn from something new or hard case.

"To the man who loves art for its own sake it is frequently in its least important and lowliest manifestations that the keenest pleasure is to be derived." (Sherlock Holmes vol. 1: 2003, p.492)

Sherlock Holmes insisted that one should devote his work for the continuous learning process and should not get distracted by the reward of the work. A continuous learning also will help someone in future.

There is a strong family resemblance about misdeeds, and if you have all the details of a thousand at your finger ends, it is odd if you can't unravel the thousand and first. (Sherlock Holmes vol. 1: 2003, p.17)

Each problem has its own characteristics. Thus, by learning history and previous problem, one could study the pattern and the characteristic of each case and those experiences would make someone easier to solve similar problems in the future.

2. Observe, Do Not Just See.

Sherlock Holmes had taught himself to observe on a regular, almost superhuman basis. For him, taking note of the myriad inputs from his surroundings was a matter of course. He always observing and get in touch with his environment.

“You see, but you do not observe. The distinction is clear. For example, you have frequently seen the steps which lead up from the hall to this room.”

“Frequently.”

“How often?”

“Well, some hundreds of times.”

“Then how many are there?”

“How many? I don’t know.”

“Quite so! You have not observed.....” (Sherlock Holmes vol. 1: 2003, p.241)

People usually failed to observe their surroundings. They see things, yet they are ignored the details. There is a dialogue in the novel where Holmes showed a clear example of Watson’s lack of observation. Sherlock Holmes asked Watson if he ever step on the stairs of their house, and certainly Watson answered that he stepped on it many times since it is the only access in or out. But, Watson is left stunned when Holmes asked him how many ladder-steps are there. Holmes’ advices are clear; go beyond seeing and into the realm of observing. Take note of what’s around. Take note of how or why it affects. Those observations would make a difference to the quality of decisions.

3. One Should Have a Wide Ranging Studies

“Breadth of view is one of the essentials of our profession. The interplay of ideas and the oblique uses of knowledge are often of extraordinary interest. You will excuse these remarks from one who, though a mere connoisseur of crime is still rather older and perhaps more experienced than yourself.” (Sherlock Holmes vol. 2: 2003, p.225)

“All knowledge comes useful to the detectives” (Sherlock Holmes vol. 2: 2003, p.174)

Sherlock Holmes insisted that one should have a wide ranging study. Wide range studies means opening the mind to new inputs, however unrelated they may seem. Thus this allows someone to examine a case from different point of view.

4. Do Not Burden the Mind with Unimportant Matters

“I say now, as I said then, that a man should keep his little brain attic stocked with all the furniture that he is likely to use, and the rest he can put away in the lumber-room of his library, where he can get it if he wants it.” (Sherlock Holmes vol. 1: 2003, p.344)

One must have a wide ranging study. However, Sherlock Holmes tends to think that the learning process should be concentrated to things that important for one’s field of mastery.

In the novel, it could be easily found that Sherlock Holmes is great at things that would really help him in his job. He knows how to distinguish the cigarettes only by looking at its

ash or distinguish a bike from its tire tracks. In the other hand, he does neither know anything about astronomy nor philosophy. It is simply because he knows that the field is useless for him.

Dr. Watson also made the list of Sherlock Holmes' capability and incapability. In the Novel: *A Study in Scarlet*, Watson wrote that:

Sherlock Holmes - his limits:

1. *Knowledge of Literature - Nil.*
2. *Knowledge of Philosophy - Nil.*
3. *Knowledge of Astronomy - Nil.*
4. *Knowledge of Politics - Feeble.*
5. *Knowledge of Botany - Variable. Well up in belladonna, opium, and poisons generally. Knows nothing of practical gardening.*
6. *Knowledge of Geology - Practical, but limited. Tells at a glance different soils from each other. After walks has shown me splashes upon his trousers, and told me by their color and consistence in what part of London he had received them.*
7. *Knowledge of Chemistry - Profound.*
8. *Knowledge of Anatomy - Accurate, but unsystematic.*
9. *Knowledge of Sensational Literature - Immense. He appears to know every detail of every horror perpetrated in the century.*
10. *Plays the violin well.*
11. *Is an expert singlestick player, boxer, and swordsman.*
12. *Has a good practical knowledge of British law.* (Sherlock Holmes vol. 1: 2003, p.14)

The list made by Dr. Watson shows that Sherlock Holmes is only learning something that useful to his work and avoids the useless. Sherlock Holmes shows that there is no use of burdening the mind with unimportant matters. It would be better to train the mind for details and principles.

5. Be Imaginative

In many ways, Sherlock Holmes is almost a forerunner of a computer: taking in countless data points as a matter of course, analyzing them with startling precision, and spitting out a solution. But Holmes has one element that a computer lacks, and it is that very element that both makes him what he is and undercuts the image of the detective as nothing more than logician par excellence: imagination.

Holmes often faults those who lack imagination. In "Silver Blaze," he dismisses Inspector Gregory's attempts at a solution to the mystery of the missing horse and murdered trainer, telling Watson:

"Inspector Gregory, to whom the case has been committed, is an extremely competent officer. Were he but gifted with imagination he might rise to great heights of his profession. On his arrival he promptly found and arrested the man upon whom suspicion naturally rested." (Sherlock Holmes vol. 1: 2003, p.527)

Sherlock Holmes added that:

"See the value of imagination. It is the one quality which Gregory lacks. We imagined what might have happened, acted upon the supposition, and find ourselves justified. Let us proceed." (Sherlock Holmes vol. 1: 2003, p.535)

Holmes also faulted Inspector Lestrade for the same reason after he finished his reasoning:

"It strikes me, my good Lestrade, as just a trifle too obvious. You do not add imagination to your other great qualities, man, but if you could for one moment put yourself in the place of this young man, would you choose the very night after the will had been made to commit your crime?" (Sherlock Holmes vol. 1: 2003, p.790)

Lack of imagination can thus lead to both faulty action and to the lack of proper action. If only the most obvious solution is sought, the correct one might never be found at all.

Sherlock Holmes respects the imagination highly. He even said that the imagination is mother of all truth. In addition to imagination, Holmes also stated that instinct and intuition are also takes part.

6. Importance of a Partner

"At least I have got a grip of the essential facts of the case. I shall enumerate them to you, for nothing clears up a case so much as stating it to another person, and I can hardly expect your co-operation if I do not show you the position from which we start." (Sherlock Holmes vol. 1: 2003, p.523)

Dr. Watson is Sherlock Holmes' partner. Sherlock Holmes often discussed matters with him. As could be seen in the quote above, Sherlock Holmes highly regarded the cooperative learning.

It may be that you are not yourself luminous, but you are a conductor of light. Some people without possessing genius have a remarkable power of stimulating it. I confess, my dear fellow, that I am very much in your debt." (Sherlock Holmes vol. 2: 2003, p.4)

A partner is important piece of learning. When stymied, a partner could stimulate or inspired someone to continue his learning. This applies to the language learning as well which having partner is somewhat essential.

B. Sherlock Holmes' Strategies of Problem Solving

1. State the Problem Clearly

Clearly state the problem in its simplest form. This is essential since all of the processes are built on top of this.

"Let us consider the problem in the light of pure reason. This man's reference is to a book. That is our point of departure." (Sherlock Holmes vol. 2: 2003, p.167)

Understanding the problem completely will facilitate someone to the next phase. There are various Holmes' saying and action that indicate this.

"Let us get a firm grip of the very little which we do know, so that when fresh facts arise we may be ready to fit them into their places." (Sherlock Holmes vol. 2: 2003, p.474)

"There's plenty of thread, no doubt, but I can't get the end of it into my hand. Now, I'll state the case clearly and concisely, and maybe you can see a spark where all is dark to me." (Sherlock Holmes vol. 2: 2003, p.357)

"At least I have got a grip of the essential facts of the case" (Sherlock Holmes vol. 1: 2003, p.523)

Having a clear state towards the problem will make it easier to decide the next move when the new data has been found.

2. Avoid Preconception: Do Not Judge Without Complete Data

As a logician, Sherlock Holmes always avoids to make an assumption of a case without proper data. Almost in every story, Holmes always gathered as much data as he can do. It is simply because the data acted as the foundation which the analysis was built.

"Data! Data! Data! I can make no bricks without clay!" (Sherlock Holmes vol. 1: 2003, p.501)

When Holmes calls for data, for his "clay," he is, in essence, warning Watson of the dangers of jumping to conclusions when what we should be doing is gathering some facts to base those conclusions on. Of course, there is room for some speculation—clearly, Holmes knows something is off and knits his brows at the problem—but any theory that may arise must, as the detective has said repeatedly, cover all of the known facts.

Thus, Holmes would not start his reasoning before he gets the data, and he forbid one to do that. Sherlock Holmes gets at one of the central elements that set him apart from most everybody else: his constant, habitual discipline of not theorizing before gathering all of the evidence. He will not theorize before the evidence is in hand. He understands the necessity of gathering it in as open-minded and unbiased a way as possible.

"I have not all my facts yet but I do not think there are any insuperable difficulties. Still, it is an error to argue in front of your data. You find yourself insensibly twisting them round to fit your theories." (Sherlock Holmes vol. 2: 2003, p.337)

One of the other reasons of Sherlock Holmes' act is simply that he believes that when someone tried to analyze something without proper data, his mind will likely bend the facts to his own theories. Often, *people's* mind conflates the world and their own interpretation of it without much thought. They simply assume that the way they see is the way it is. When people see it that way, they would tend to fit the details into their own assumptions instead of analyzing the data and draw out a conclusion out of it.

3. Eliminate the Irrelevant Details

Once the data was gathered, one of the important steps is to omit the irrelevant data to narrow the analysis of the problem. Eliminating the irrelevant details is often the trickiest part, because sometimes the small detail is actually the key to the problem solving. Figuring these details out is a big challenge to the analyzer. The small unimportant matters are usually left out because people tend to ignore them.

Holmes shows an example of this in one of the stories:

"Is there any point to which you would wish to draw my attention?"

"To the curious incident of the dog in the night-time"

"The dog did nothing in the night-time"

"That was the curious incident" (Sherlock Holmes vol. 1: 2003, p.540)

That famous dialogue shows that Holmes was capable of finding the most crucial part of the problem that seems like just an unimportant matter to the officer: a dog's bark. But what is so important about a dog's bark? A dog will usually barks at the people they do not know. So when a thief is occurred and the dog was did not bark yet it is a healthy one, it could be easily concluded that the thief is someone that familiar to the dog.

4. Rearrange the Details, Look it From Various Point of View

Once the data are collected, the next step is to arrange them in its proper places. The more data one has, the easier one will solve a problem.

Details are important, often crucial. But focus exclusively on the details, without taking a step back, and one run the risk of getting lost in minutiae – and more likely than not, of missing any actual importance the details might contain. Holmes reminds repeatedly to avoid the rooky mistake, and even shows how one might best be able to do so.

Sherlock Holmes often insisted that one should not analyze a problem from a specific point of view. The differences of point of views really matter. Holmes showed a clear example of it in the novel *The Valley of Fear*.

The novel is a mystery about the murder of a man who calls himself by the name of John Douglas. A sawed-off shotgun blast to the head carried out the gruesome killing. John Douglas was found in his study, face mangled on the floor with a card laid beside his body and a hammer laying feet from the crime. John Douglas and his wife lived in the Manor

House of Birlstone which surrounded by water acquired a draw bridge that was raised at sunset every evening. Every night Douglas did his rounds checking the house's safety through every room. Around 11 p.m, when Douglas made his round to the study he was shot dead. A bicycle was found near the crime scene and several people witnesses the curious manner of the rider with the yellow coat in the past days so he was suspected.

Detective MacDonald tackles it in the most logical and straightforward way possible: tracking the bicycle's owner. He ignored other possible ways to approach the investigation. Of course, he gets exactly nowhere; a bicyclist wearing a yellow coat is spotted in just about every region, from Leicester to Liverpool, and there appears to be little hope of pinning down the right suspect.

Holmes suggests that he should abandon the case altogether. But from bewilderment, his mood quickly escalates to anger, when the detective appears to veer entirely off topic in discussing his reading of an old book on the history of Manor House. Mac responded angrily: "You are making fools of us, Mr. Holmes!"

In this novel, Sherlock Holmes solved the case with a twist: the victim is the bicycle rider with the yellow coat himself and the house owner is the killer while defending himself from a murder tries and then hiding in the secret hideout in the house which is part of the facilitation of the house in the old times.

5. Always Look for Alternative Solution

Analyzing the data from various points of view may lead someone to conclusion. But the solving the problem should not be done using only one solution. One should provide various potential solutions to be considered of. Sherlock Holmes said that the first rule of criminal investigation is "always look for a possible alternative, and provide against it".

Various potential solutions are always helpful as they are providing multiple options to solve the problem. Throughout his well-known adventures, Sherlock Holmes has proven time and time again that the most obvious solution to a problem isn't always the correct one. There are many situations involving the genius detective where the solution to a crime was improbable and hidden in plain sight.

C. Pedagogical Implications of Problem-Based Learning Strategies Employed By Sherlock Holmes In Language Teaching

Problem-based learning has much to offer to language teaching. First, it encourages student to have extensive reading by using the text that they interested in. When students has interest in a text either novel or short stories, they would engage themselves in an extensive reading which could be extended to intensive reading.

Second, it could provide guidance for the teacher for his/her selected passage with Problem-Based Learning in reading comprehension. The selected text can be an option for teacher to practice the strategies.

Third, students are managing their own learning through planning, monitoring, problem-solving and finding solutions to the problem. As they engage in these activities, students retain information more effectively than studying from the textbook. In addition, students also learn to be creative in solving problems. Thus, they could use those activities to establish a pattern of thinking that could be used in writing activities.

Last, students are required to make connections or interactions in their group. The interactions required them to share and exchange the information and idea with their partners in the group. Those interactions would strengthen students' speaking skills.