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21st Century Linguistics and Language Teaching:

Bridging Diversification and Equality in the Classroom

PROCEEDINGS OF THE APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGE TEACHING CONFERENCE 2021

EDITORS: WAFA ZOGHBOR &
SUHAIR AL-ALAMI

21st Century Linguistics and Language Teaching: Bridging Diversification and Equality in the Classroom

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Note from the Editors

We are delighted to present this volume on *21st Century Linguistics and Language Teaching: Bridging Diversification and Equality in the Classroom*. This collection features selected papers from the Third Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching (ALLT) Conference, which took place virtually from 18 to 20 March 2021 and was organized by Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates. The chosen papers highlight contributions that explore theory, research, and pedagogy in the field of ALLT in the Arab Gulf region and beyond. The volume comprises eight chapters that address two key themes: best practices in teaching languages in the 21st century, and the role of language education and applied linguistics in enhancing learners' performance in the current era.

The first chapter, by **Alla Savelyeva**, discusses *the implementation of project-based language learning (PBLL) in first-year writing courses*. The chapter addresses the criticism that higher education often fails to adequately prepare students for future careers and proposes PBLL as a solution. PBLL encourages collaboration, flexibility, and critical thinking, bridging the gap between academic curricula and employer expectations. Alla demonstrates how PBLL involves students in creating real-world products in the target language, leading to the acquisition of practical skills and knowledge through hands-on experience. She focuses on integrating PBLL into first-year writing and information literacy courses, which provide an ideal environment for enhancing students' writing, social, technological, and literacy skills. By implementing PBLL in these courses, educators may potentially enhance students' autonomy, soft skills, and intercultural communication abilities, despite challenges such as workload and varying levels of student readiness for collaborative work.

In Chapter Two, **Bothaina Abou Elmagd** introduces approaches to teaching Shakespeare's plays to college students. In *Approaches to the Teaching of Shakespearean Drama,* Bothaina highlights the key aspects that educators should focus on along with the essential knowledge required for teaching Shakespeare effectively. Given the wide range of themes in Shakespeare's works, there are multiple strategies for teaching his plays. Students benefit from gaining insights into Shakespeare's cultural background, the historical context of the theaters he wrote for, and the fundamental elements of his plays to enhance their comprehension. While traditional teaching methods are still prevalent, incorporating more interactive techniques such as acting, language exercises, and technology can prove to be more engaging and impactful. Bothaina argues that a thorough analysis of the text is crucial, and students should also be exposed to various critical theories to deepen their appreciation and interpretation of Shakespeare's literary masterpieces.

Chapter Three by **Christine Coombe** and **Lana Hiasat** addresses a prevalent issue in education where many teachers lack the necessary skills to conduct or comprehend research in their classrooms. The chapter, *Getting English Language Teachers Research Ready: Resources for Research Literacy*, aims to evaluate the current level of research literacy (RL) in English Language Teaching (ELT) as understanding research has become increasingly important in the field. The authors define RL and emphasize its significance for teachers, while also discussing the barriers that hinder educators from developing research literacy. Furthermore, Christine and Lana

introduce various professional development programs designed to improve RL among English language teachers in the field.

In Chapter Four of the series on best practices in language education, **Hedieh Najafi** and **Winona Smith** examine the 14 different types of questions in the IELTS reading section. They argue that while none of the question types explicitly ask for the main idea, many implicitly require it. In their chapter on *Teaching the Main Idea Using a New Strategy: Implications for the IELTS Reading Section*, Hedieh and Winona emphasize the importance of identifying the main idea when preparing for IELTS reading questions. They introduce a new strategy for teaching the main idea to ESL/EFL students, which involves three phases: raising awareness, student practice, and feedback. The authors provide examples of student and instructor work to demonstrate how the strategy can help students identify the main idea effectively.

In Chapter Five, **Juwaeriah Siddiqui** sheds light on the issue of low motivation to learn Arabic, especially in online classes. Her study, *Expanding Arabic Language Pedagogy to Support Online Engagement*, qualitatively examines a 5-week online Arabic language course. Juwaeriah introduces a 3-step engagement model to improve proficiency by focusing on skill-building and interaction. The results show a correlation between interaction levels in live sessions, video submissions post-class, and overall student satisfaction. The chapter suggests strategies to enhance interactive engagement during live classes and beyond to enhance Arabic language usage, vocabulary acquisition, interaction, and proficiency in online learning environments.

Chapter Six by **Mutaib Alotaibi** suggests three practical ways to teach writing to new English learners. In *Three Effective Steps for Teaching Writing Skills to Novice Arab Learners of English*, Mutaib explains each step. First, brainstorming helps students understand the main ideas of a given topic by writing them on the board. Then students are urged to keep track of their writing errors over time by using a portfolio. Finally, Mutaib implements freewriting to encourage students to write continuously to practice the writing process, rather than just producing finished pieces. Throughout the chapter, the author explains how these steps improve students' writing performance and foster their English learning in vocabulary and grammar.

Chapter Seven, *Lifelong Learning via Digital Literacy Tools and Skills* by **Rania Jabr**, emphasizes the significance of digital literacy skills for lifelong learning, particularly in enhancing English language proficiency. Rania argues that using digital tools for reading, writing, and online engagement is crucial as these skills enable students to learn flexibly, at their own pace, and from any location. By honing critical thinking, collaboration, problem-solving, creativity, and communication skills through digital literacy, students can effectively navigate and contribute to the contemporary world. Rania also introduces the implications of digital literacy for teachers and curriculum developers in the realm of English as a Foreign Language.

In Chapter Eight about *Attitudes Towards Technology Integration Implementation Among Gaza University Students: Acceptance and Procrastination*, **Yahya Al Khoudary** examines how Gaza University students feel about using technology in ESL classes. Yahya looks at how students view combining technology with regular teaching to make learning more effective. For example, he compares Google Classroom with Moodle for activities students do outside of class. The research promotes blended learning as a key strategy to improve learning quality at Gaza University. In his study, Yahya uses qualitative methods and applies Fleming's (2001) pedagogical theory based on

students' abilities. It involves 60 ESL students and 10 English language teachers through interviews and observations. Overall, the study emphasizes the importance of integrating technology in university ESL classes, despite challenges.

The editors extend their sincere appreciation to Julie Riddlebarger for her exceptional professional copyediting services on these proceedings. We are grateful for her meticulous attention to detail and commitment to enhancing the quality of the content.

Wafa Zoghbor and Suhair Al-Alami

Editors' Profiles

Dr. Wafa Zoghbor is an Associate Professor of Applied Linguistics at Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates. Her research interests include phonology, translanguaging, English as a medium of instruction (EMI) in higher education, sociolinguistics, and English as a lingua franca (ELF). Dr. Zoghbor has published in journals such as System, Intellectual Discourse, World Englishes, and Asian Englishes. She also serves as a reviewer and editor for refereed and Scopus-indexed journals and has co-edited books and conference proceedings, including "Linguistic Identities in the Arab Gulf States" (Routledge, 2022).

Dr. Suhair Al-Alami earned her PhD in English Applied Linguistics from Aston University in the United Kingdom. She is a faculty member in the English language department at Skyline University College in Sharjah. Al-Alami has published numerous research papers in international journals, co-edited nine publications, reviewed articles for refereed journals, and presented research at various conferences. She has received awards for her teaching, research, professional development, and community service. Her research interests include fiction, stylistics, translation, language acquisition, and teaching methodologies.

Contributors' Profiles

Alla Savelyeva is the head of the Writing Center and a Senior Lecturer of writing and information literacy at ADA University, Azerbaijan. She has taught English as a foreign language and English composition in Azerbaijan and Russia. Her interests include second language pedagogy and project-based learning.

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Christine Coombe holds a PhD in Foreign/Second Language Education from The Ohio State University. She is currently an Associate Professor in General Studies at Dubai Men's College, Higher Colleges of Technology. Christine has published 60 academic books throughout her career and served as President of the TESOL International Association (2011-2012).

Hedieh Najafi, PhD., has recently joined the American University of Afghanistan, where she teaches online classes in the Department of Social Sciences and Humanities. She has presented at various national and international conferences and has multiple scholarly publications. Her research interests include ESL classroom practices, multilingualism, and language policy.

Juwaeriah Siddiqui is a PhD candidate at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada. She founded Arabically (www.arabically.com) to nurture creative Arabic language connections for children. Her research at the intersection of Applied Linguistics and Systems Science Engineering explores the motivation and challenges faced by non-Arabic speakers learning Arabic in the UAE. Juwaeriah integrates dynamic systems theory to understand the complexities of second language acquisition and advocates for critical pedagogy to shape children's linguistic identities. Her expertise includes innovative language teaching and second language acquisition beyond traditional classroom settings.

Lana Hiasat, PhD., a Senior Lecturer in educational leadership with a focus on educational technology, currently leads programs at Dubai Men's College, Higher Colleges of Technology. A Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (SFHEA) and certified in future foresight and intercultural intelligence, Lana specializes in emotional intelligence, Kaizen Creativity, and smart learning. Her published work covers future foresight, artificial intelligence, and educational leadership. Lana actively shapes UAE social sciences curriculum, directs international conferences, conducts interdisciplinary research, and designs executive courses on emotional intelligence and authentic leadership.

Mutaib Alotaibi is an English language teacher at the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia. His research interests include language teaching, writing skills, research methodology, and pedagogy.

Rania Jabr, Senior Instructor II at the American University in Cairo, received the Board of Trustees Award in 1995 and the Excellence in Teaching Award in 2013. An active conference presenter and teacher educator, she serves on several EFL journal editorial boards. Her expertise spans course design, materials development, skill integration, student autonomy, and technology in teaching, reflected in her extensive publications. Rania also chaired the NileTESOL conference in 2012 and co-chaired in 2018 and 2021.

Winona Smith has been teaching in the UAE since 1986. She is currently teaching English to staff at Kanad Hospital. She has a BS degree with an emphasis in elementary education and an MEd in ESL. She has taught grades 1 to 8, college students, and adults. Her research interests include changes in education, especially with cultural changes and technology.

Yahya Al Khoudary, PhD., specializes in applied linguistics, integrating technology in education, phonetics and phonology, lexical semantics, and psychometric tools for mental lexicon research. He serves as assistant professor at Al Aqsa University, Palestine, and is affiliated with TESL Ontario, Canada. A certified reviewer for Arabian Gulf journals, he has received the Sheikh Hamdan bin Rashid Award for distinguished research in the UAE and the Emerald Literati Reviewer's Award. He has authored numerous publications in leading journals and three books on linguistics and translation.

CHAPTER 01

Implementing Project-Based Language Learning in First-Year Writing: Benefits and Challenges

Alla Savelyeva

Abstract

Higher education often receives criticism for not nurturing the competencies that students need for future careers. Project-based language learning (PBLL) fosters collaboration, flexibility, and critical thinking skills, and, therefore, boasts the potential to bridge the gap between the curriculum and employers' expectations. PBLL learners acquire skills and knowledge as a result of having done and experienced something new, such as creating a needed public product in the target language. First-year writing and information literacy courses would be a suitable context to implement PBLL to improve learners' writing, social, technology, and literacy skills. Experimental PBLL module in first-year writing and information literacy course demonstrates that PBLL curriculum can benefit learners' autonomy and soft skills, facilitate learners' exploration of their identities, and present more opportunities for intercultural communication. When implementing PBLL in writing, teachers should consider challenges of increased study load and learner (under)preparedness for collaboration.

Introduction

Higher education receives criticism for not nurturing the competencies that students need for future careers. Students may successfully pass exams and tests, but they do not necessarily develop the skills that will make them successful in the professional world. The competencies the students need but are not sufficiently exposed to in a classroom include collaboration, flexibility, adaptability, social, and cross-cultural skills (ACTFL, 2014). By failing to nurture these skills, higher education institutions impede students' future professional opportunities. Some even argue that "providing a rigorous, thought-provoking curriculum is nothing less than a social justice issue" (Behizadeh, 2014, p.102). To bridge the gap between employers' expectations and curriculum, higher education institutions should advance the type of instruction that brings authenticity to learning activities.

One way to enhance student engagement and foster 21st-century skills is teaching through Project-Based Learning (PBL), a teaching approach that echoes learning by doing and the project method (Gibbes & Carson, 2014). In PBL, learners acquire skills and knowledge as a result of having experienced or done something new (Fragoulis & Tsiplakides, 2009). In the past several decades, PBL has been successfully applied beyond the STEM subjects and has an immense potential to improve learning outcomes in language classrooms. Project-based language learning (PBLL) is the application of PBL in language instruction that embraces student-centered pedagogy and collaborative and experiential learning (Gibbes & Carson, 2014). PBLL is founded on "an articulated series of activities, motivated by real-world needs and driven by the learners' interest, whose common goal is to improve language learners' communicative competence in the target

language through the construction of products" (NFLRC, 2018). The six tenets of PBLL developed by the National Foreign Language Resource Center (2018) include the following: learning includes real world activities; student-centered instruction; the instructor's role as facilitator; collaboration; assessment to guide the process and measure progress; and a real-world product and real audience. These principles allow PBLL to align its goals with the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines which state that learners need to use the target language in authentic contexts to engage with the content of other disciplines and enhance critical thinking and social skills in order to achieve high levels of language proficiency (NFLRC, 2018). Proven to be effective in teaching languages, the new pedagogy effectiveness may be highly relevant in teaching writing and information literacy and other types of first-year writing courses.

Related Studies

Investigations of PBL and PBLL have included studies in secondary and higher educational institutions and largely center on the benefits for students' learning outcomes. These benefits include more student voice and authenticity in the learning process, positive attitudes towards learning, better learning outcomes, and stronger 21st-century skills. Several studies report on the challenges of implementing PBLL for teachers and the associated change in teacher identity that is required to guide students effectively in the realities of the new pedagogy. Virtually no studies examine the support teachers need in transition to PBLL, including institutional support and issues of teacher well-being.

Examining existing scholarly work suggests that PBL's effect on student learning is far greater than the traditional, "students as empty vessels that need to be filled with knowledge" approach as PBL empowers student voice and authenticity (Shideler, 2016) and fosters critical thinking (Gibbes & Carson, 2014; Behizadeh, 2014), communication (Lee & Lim, 2012), time management and group work (Fragoulis & Tsiplakides, 2009). Lee and Lim (2012) emphasize PBL's potential in closing the gap between the employers' and professors' perceptions of the core competencies for college and university graduates. Their study points out that employers value their employees' social skills higher than their academic knowledge, whereas professors report students' social skills as the least important critical ability, with academic knowledge being at the top of the list. Similarly, the U.S. Department of Labor highlights social skills as critical for employees to achieve high performance (Moss & Van Duzel, 1998). A common Soviet joke to a recent graduate on her first day on the job was, "Forget everything that you learned in university." Sadly, this saying may still be reflective of the discrepancy between post-Soviet higher education outcomes and what employers expect in the workplace.

Due to the positive learning outcomes, PBL continues to gain influence in teaching methodology. PBL learners are reported to be more skilled and competent in comparison to traditional learners because the interactive nature of the pedagogical approach contributes to retaining knowledge long-term (Mammadova, 2020) and developing social competencies that employers consider critical (Lee & Lim, 2012). Moss and Van Duzel (1998) state that the PBL setting pushes learners to "plan, organize, negotiate, make their points, and arrive at a consensus about issues such as what task to perform, who will be responsible for each task, and how information will be researched and presented" (p. 2). PBL yields a great number of benefits for learners, and it is critical for higher education institutions to promote project-based instruction.

Beckett and Slater (2005) define PBLL as a teaching method that simultaneously promotes language acquisition, engages learners with the content of other disciplines, and enhances critical thinking and social skills. PBLL receives positive feedback from language educators and students as it supports the use of the target language for real-world purposes, aligns language learning to students' interests, and, thus, improves their motivation. Fragoulis and Tsiplakides (2009) suggest that PBLL fosters student confidence, autonomy, and positive attitudes towards learning. Indeed, experiencing and completing PBLL learning activities result in deep learning and can better prepare students for employment. That is why PBLL has immense potential to improve learning outcomes in language classrooms. PBLL in language, and specifically in first-year writing classrooms in Azerbaijan, is a great opportunity to foster the use of English through conducting meaningful projects that allow students to develop their 21st-century skills.

The existing body of research on PBL and, by extension PBLL, often characterizes the method as being challenging for both teachers and students (Gibbes & Carson, 2014; Lee & Lim, 2012; Moss & Van Duzel, 1998; Oh, 2020). Student course evaluations, peer evaluations, and reflections served as a basis for research on PBLL. Learners report a heavy study load associated with project learning. Reported stress may indicate that learners lack previous experience of group work or have not equally distributed the workload within their group. Gibbes and Carson (2014) suggest that some learners find it difficult to rely on others and prefer individual work. Fragoulis and Tsiplakides (2009) argue that the teacher role should transform into that of an advisor and coordinator when projects "move away from school and become interventions, connecting the school to the community and real life" (p. 115). This points to the critical role of a PBLL teacher in facilitating skills such as teamwork and guiding the learning process.

When a new teaching method is introduced, a change in teachers' understanding of learning and teaching is necessary. A review of the literature shows that, although PBLL includes numerous traditional teaching practices and reframes them to suit the project context, educators may fear PBLL because it grants teachers less control over the learning process. Nunez et al. (2020) suggest that to ensure successful project- and problem-based learning, teachers should rethink their roles: they are no longer experts and authorities but rather guides and facilitators. Similarly, Oh's study (2012) emphasizes that while implementing project-based instruction, teachers become consultants, guides, counselors, leaders, monitors, and assistants. Learners retain more knowledge and acquire higher-order skills as a result of "the successful facilitation of project-based strategies and scaffolding" (Mammadova, 2020, p. 81). Such scaffolding is part of facilitation in successful in PBLL, and the teachers' role becomes one of ensuring that sufficient scaffolding and guidance are in place.

Other studies on PBLL also commented on the fact that adapting to the new mode of instruction is challenging as it calls for a profound change in the role of a teacher. Nunez et al. (2020) argue that in shifting to project-based instruction, teachers go through a challenging process of re-evaluating their old roles as "sole experts and authorities in their interactions with students and colleagues, adjusting classroom structure and dynamics, and changing assumptions about learning" (p. 27). They recommend developing clear strategies to train teachers and encourage them to assume the new roles, which may be extremely challenging for ESL and writing teachers in the post-Soviet states, where the teaching culture has largely remained aligned with the teacher-centered approach. They conclude that when it comes to teachers' transforming role, "issues such as ego, control, power and relationship with colleagues and students" (Nunez et al., 2020, p. 31)

should be explored and discussed. At the same time, no major framework has been dedicated to understanding what factors influence teachers' sustainable transition to PBL.

Some teachers report that PBLL is time and effort consuming as it requires a great deal of preparation and strong class management skills (Gibbes & Carson, 2014). Indeed, PBLL requires careful planning and flexibility. At the project design stage, project partners, end products and other components may change. Therefore, PBLL teachers should be flexible and ready to facilitate student learning under conditions of uncertainty. Fragoulis and Tsiplakides (2009) adopt an enthusiastic approach and suggest that teachers being eager to experiment with non-traditional learning practices can help achieve increased student motivation and better language learning outcomes.

At the other end of the learning process, PBLL can be challenging for learners because project execution may require more preparation outside of class, and final public products need rigorous revision and editing. PBLL research indicates that learners often do not expect the heavy study load that is associated with project learning. Among other challenges of PBLL, learners perceive less focus on the target language and report specificity of vocabulary and increased stress levels as a result of groupwork (Lee & Lim, 2012; Gibbes & Carson, 2014). Reported stress may indicate that learners lack previous experience of groupwork or do not equally distribute workloads within groups. Gibbes and Carson (2014) suggest that some learners find it difficult to rely on others and prefer individual work. Another study points out that social loafing may upset learners in groupwork associated with PBLL (Lee & Lim, 2012). The authors also suggest that the problem can be remedied by carefully designed peer evaluations throughout the project, as learners show surprisingly fair judgment in evaluating their peers' social competencies that are hard for teachers to observe, since they typically assess the end public product (Lee & Lim, 2012).

Based on the review of existing literature on PBL and PBLL, it is critical for teachers to align PBLL project design with the NFLRC principles and help students enhance their critical thinking and social skills while producing a public product for an authentic audience, not a report or essay for their teacher. Many students have little to no experience with collaborative learning; therefore, teachers should devote adequate time to explaining to students what study load to expect and how to effectively collaborate. Students can be assigned specific roles in which they feel they have a valuable contribution. Another critical aspect in team-based learning is assessment. Peer evaluations can be employed to assess the project progress and process, while teachers assess the final public product and other high-stake assignments.

PBLL in Teaching Writing: Theory

PBLL has potential to be effectively implemented in teaching first-year writing to university students. PBLL fosters the use of authentic language and greater learner autonomy, which are among the objectives of university writing programs' curricula. Gibbes and Carson (2014) cite research in which English language learners reported a PBLL project had helped them conduct research and succeed in other courses. Their own study reported students' more natural use of language, extensive speaking practice, richer vocabulary, and non-linguistic benefits of PBLL such as better understanding of the target language culture, an opportunity to meet new people, and

improved cooperative skills (Gibbes & Carson, 2014). Given that first-year writing is a skill-based course, it may serve as a suitable context to implement PBLL to foster the above-mentioned skills.

Foulger and Jimenez-Silva (2007) emphasize the complexity of writing as a skill as it requires students to simultaneously pay attention to grammar, vocabulary, organization, and style. Their study on the use of technology in PBLL recommends teachers apply the following principles to teaching writing: 1) the real reason for writing; 2) genuine audience; 3) access to role models; 4) safe environment; 5) sense of community; 6) using technology for authentic communication and online curriculum-related discussion platforms (Foulger & Jimenez-Silva, 2007). Existing scant research in PBLL in association with writing suggests that it is worth experimenting with project-based pedagogy in first-year composition courses to achieve better learning outcomes and increased learner motivation.

PBLL in Teaching Writing: Practical Application in Azerbaijan

A four-week PBLL module was implemented in the first-year writing as part of a Writing and Information Literacy (WRIT 1202) course with undergraduate students at ADA University in February of 2020. Having time constraints and curriculum goals in mind, the teacher conceptualized public product ideas that could help the students develop and showcase their writing and information literacy skills – that is, written texts. Designing the module included aligning the project with the curriculum goals; pitching the project idea; and planning lesson activities, milestone events, and teaching materials. Throughout the module, learners were asked to provide feedback on how they felt about the project progress, self-evaluation, and evaluation of group performance.

In the module, learners took on a project to produce a written text that provided accurate information about student life at ADA University and in Baku, Azerbaijan's capital (see Table 1). Whilst information was available on the Internet, most of it was for tourists; very little was to be found for prospective students on the life in the city. With more information, international and exchange students would have realistic expectations and get the most out of their experience at ADA University and in Baku. More information would mean informed choices and more positive experiences for international students and the university community overall. In creating a public product, students in the project attempted to look at their daily life and life in Baku from a different perspective and help promote their university internationally.

Table 1. *Product Square: Discover with ADA*

Public audience	**Purpose**
Potential international and exchange students in ADA University, tourists and people interested in studying and living in Baku, Azerbaijan.	Brief and accurate information about the campus life and life in Baku, Azerbaijan.
Challenging problem or question	**Public product**
Lack of information in English about studying at ADA University and living in Baku. What is it like to study and live in Baku, Azerbaijan?	An electronic booklet
What interests and needs students have that connect them to the project?	
Local students would like international and exchange students to have more information about the university, city and country, and enjoy their time in Baku. With more information, more students will visit and/or study in Baku for a semester abroad or full-time.	

PBLL pedagogy aims to focus on learner-centered activities and reflect learners' interests. In the project module, the learners' brainstormed the subtopics of *Campus Life, Culture,* and *Life in Baku* and formed teams based on their preferred subtopic (see Table 2).

Table 2. *Future Public Product Subtopics: Discover with ADA*

Campus life	**Life in Baku**	**Culture**
Academics	Accommodation	Exploring the country
Student services	Transport	Azerbaijani language
Activities and organizations	Weather	Azerbaijan's history
Networking	Banking	Etiquette
Internships and jobs	Safety	Socials
Campus dining	Shopping and dining	Culture shock
	Healthcare and fitness	

Scholarly research on PBLL shows that to complete projects and solve problems in real life, learners must build up their knowledge of content to the situation. For this they would search, retrieve, and organize information. In this PBLL module, the nature of the final product encouraged students to find, evaluate, compile, and communicate information and, thus, practice their information literacy skills.

Implementing the module demonstrated several benefits of PBLL for students. PBLL pedagogy invites learners to explore their identities in relation to the context, cultures, and communities. The impact of PBLL's benefits for students' self-awareness and learning was evident in their post-project reflections. The learners in the module reported they had become more knowledgeable about their own city, country, and university community. Working towards the final public product made the learners reflect on what information would be important for them if *they* studied abroad. The learners also reported they enjoyed the project because they interacted with more international students than they usually would in the first year as well as working with writing consultants and a marketing specialist. Moreover, the learners reported improved editing and proofreading skills

and having acquired more attention to detail for editing and proofreading. The fact that real people would use the product made the learners feel more responsible and their work more meaningful rather than the teacher reading and grading their work. None of the learners reported language specificity as the topics they worked with were rather general and did not require specialized vocabulary.

The first-year writing module reiterated the pedagogy's challenges for students and considerations for teaching PBLL. Gibbes and Carson (2014) highlight that the challenge of implementing PBLL "is to capture and comprehend a mode of working, which seems to be simultaneously difficult and beneficial for students involved" (p. 185). In this module, many learners reported the time and effort had been greater than they expected or were ready to commit. The learners also had different levels of commitment to the project. Moreover, some learners reported they did not feel adequately prepared for the groupwork associated with PBLL. They experienced "unnecessary stress," reported frustration with the division of labor, and expressed the desire to work independently. This highlights the importance of the teacher modelling class activities and training learners. Finally, most learners reported collaboration within their work groups but not necessarily with other learners in the classroom. For teaching PBLL, the module outcomes demonstrate the importance of recognizing the difference between true collaboration and division of tasks and of encouraging genuine learner collaboration.

Conclusion

In recent decades, PBLL has attracted many educators because it allows students to acquire knowledge through social learning. When correctly implemented, PBLL improves learning outcomes by bringing students face to face with real world situations. With PBLL curriculum, students can advance in both the linguistic and non-linguistic competencies necessary for future professional life. The review of the existing literature on PBL and PBLL demonstrates it is critical to align project design with the PBLL principles and help students enhance critical thinking and social skills while producing a public product for an authentic audience. Based on PBLL scholarly literature and project implementation in first-year writing course, the following notions are reinforced: a) PBLL teachers need to be flexible and provide adequate guidance to their students; b) teachers should devote adequate time to explaining to learners what study load to expect; c) teachers should model collaboration strategies to students; d) aligned with the principle of learner-oriented instruction, students could be assigned specific roles in which they feel they have a valuable contribution.

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CHAPTER 02

Approaches to the Teaching of Shakespearean Drama

Bothaina Abou Elmagd

Abstract

Shakespeare's message is universal, and his works are timeless. This paper aims at exploring various approaches that can be used in teaching Shakespearean drama to undergraduate university students. It pinpoints the aspects that teachers should focus on and what teachers should be acquainted with when teaching Shakespeare. As Shakespeare's works carry diverse themes, approaches to teaching his drama are diverse. To understand Shakespeare's plays, students should be introduced to his culture, his theatre, and the basic elements of his drama. Although teachers have acquired technology, many still adopt traditional desk-bound techniques. Depending on more active techniques, teachers can employ performance, language activities, and technology. However, text analysis should always be provided. The multiplicity of Shakespeare's critical perspectives evokes diverse ways when teaching his work. Therefore, students should be knowledgeable of some critical theories to enrich their understanding of Shakespeare's plays.

Introduction

This paper explores various effective approaches to teaching Shakespeare's drama at university. It pinpoints the methods teachers can adopt to help their students understand and enjoy his plays while also acquiring literary critical thinking. In this context, the paper shows the various critical perspectives through which teachers and students can explore Shakespeare's plays. This paper also highlights the use of Shakespearean texts to promote students' language skills.

Approaches to the Teaching of Shakespearean Drama

Since Shakespeare's time, his plays have been interpreted and performed in an astonishing variety. As Shakespeare's plays have inspired different performances and interpretations, teachers can explore them in many ways. As actors, directors, and critics construct their vision of the Shakespearean play, so do teachers; they try to develop their methods of teaching his drama. Nonetheless, no teaching method of Shakespeare is universally acknowledged. This paper explores approaches to teaching Shakespearean drama at an undergraduate university level.

Studying Shakespeare is "like the attempt to explore the riches of an ocean," and unless you are "a master mariner ... you will be caught and tossed by the waves and nearly lost" (Iyengar, 1984, p. 1). The reason is that Shakespeare is unique in many ways. His plays demonstrate the timeless truth of human nature in all its variety, and his message is universal. He is distinguished for his extraordinary gift for metaphor and his talent for creating characters. In his drama, the individual and the universal are surprisingly fused. Moreover, his work offers opportunities for interpretation and reinterpretation for all generations. Also, Shakespeare's plays are an invaluable source of

linguistic richness, and students can learn much from them in terms of vocabulary and English expressions.

Teachers should first be knowledgeable of the objectives of the Shakespeare course and what they should achieve in it. In fact, the aims and goals of teaching Shakespeare are the same as those of teaching literature in general. Reading and learning literature mainly helps students develop an appreciation and enjoyment of works of art. However, when it comes to Shakespeare, the aims and goals are diverse. Shakespeare's themes, stories, characters, and language have been a source of meaning and significance for every generation. His plays explore important moral and ethical questions and offer endless opportunities for interpretation and local application for familiar human relationships and passions. In short, as Ben Jonson (1623) puts it in a poem prefacing The First Folio of Shakespeare's works, "Shakespeare was not of an age, but for all time."

Mainly, the purpose of teaching Shakespeare is to increase students' independent facility with complex texts and provide them with tools that promote their critical thinking. In this respect, the teacher should realize the many pleasures of studying Shakespeare. Besides appreciating and enjoying drama as a genre, with all its subdivisions and techniques, teachers should develop in their students an awareness of Shakespeare's language and the poetic richness of his text. As teachers plan to frame their approach to a Shakespeare play, they should be acquainted with Shakespeare's culture through the political, ethical, philosophical, and social aspects of the drama, for instance, how the plays are related to the mental climate of the time. Shakespeare is a man of his age; his plays provide ideas of the world order prevalent in Elizabethan England and described in E. M. W. Tillyard's *The Elizabethan World Picture* (1962). Thus, students should be introduced to this world to understand the plays. In addition, Shakespeare's plays explore moral and ethical questions that students should comprehend. Exploring the depth of human truth and relevant universal themes like loyalty, ambition, jealousy, passion, hatred, and betrayal, Shakespeare also helps activate the imagination. In this way, students can see how each play is relevant to their lives. Finally, the personal goal is important in that studying a Shakespeare play develops students' imaginative ability and promotes their ability to understand man's dilemma as well as their ability to think and analyze a complicated literary text.

Teacher-Centered and Student-Centered Approaches

Having such diverse goals in mind, approaches to teaching Shakespearean drama can take diverse styles. Although teachers have acquired technology tools, many still use the traditional desk-bound method which is mostly conducted by the teacher. This teacher-centered technique is "deeply flawed," as students become almost completely reliant on the teacher and "incapable of forming their opinion" (Purewal, 2017, p. 30). Moreover, as Dulaney (2012) argues, "students' experience is static" when they just sit and read or listen (p. 38). As S. Baker suggests, modern classroom diversity of cultures results in students' need to learn in a variety and assortment of ways" (p. 2). Hence, a more effective and engaging teaching technique, which makes Shakespeare's work vital and more comprehensible, is the student-centered method which takes the class away from teacher-centered expertise towards a collaborative style of learning. This method is introduced by Ayanna Thompson and Laura Turchi in their book, *Teaching Shakespeare with Purpose* (2016). Depending on this approach, a teacher might engage students through more practical methods such as

performance, exploring rhythm, versification, language activities, making use of dramatic props, and incorporating technology. However, text analysis should always be included.

Performance

Baker argues that today's classrooms' diversity of cultures and backgrounds requires that "students must all learn in a variety and assortment of ways" (2021, p. 2). As drama is mainly a dynamic text, teachers might engage students through performance. It is inherently collaborative and motivates interpretation skills as it offers "very different goals from those of traditional Shakespeare pedagogy" (O'Brien, 1984, p. 621). It promotes text understanding and enhances critical thinking. As Gibson (1998) observes, it is the technique through which "the plays are most appropriately understood and experienced" (p. xii). Teachers can, thus, let their students perform an important scene, like *Hamlet*'s soliloquy, "To be or not to be." They can divide their class into groups, assigning each to write an essay in which students trace Hamlet's arguments throughout the soliloquy. How does he think through his question? What excuses does he use? What are his fears? What are his options? What resolution does he come to?

In this respect, exploring rhythm and versification is an aspect that students should understand to perform scenes from Shakespeare. Let students explore the rhythm to feel the energy of Shakespeare's language. This means understanding iambic pentameter, the verse rhythm that Shakespeare often uses in his plays. Moreover, exploring the imagery helps to find the depth of a character and the real sense in the situation; to Hamlet the very air he breathes is a "foul and pestilent congregation of vapors." Images such as *ulcer*, *madness*, *murder*, and *adultery* help to reinforce the central idea that Denmark is dying and allows students to compare the circumstances to a more familiar situation, thus highlighting the extent of Hamlet's dilemma.

Language Activities

Language activities can become one of the tools that help in teaching Shakespeare's drama. Interestingly, such activities help to develop students' language knowledge and skills. Teachers can make the text fascinating and activities engaging by the introduction of the Shakespearean language, focusing on phrases, vocabulary, expressions, and grammar. They can choose the most attractive parts of the text for analysis and use them with multiple tasks. Again, the famous Hamlet soliloquy "To be or not to be," for instance, can become a part of this method. Students can guess the meanings of Shakespeare's rich vocabulary, figures of speech, and expressions from the context and at the same time develop their critical thinking by being divided into two groups. In the activity, one group is tasked with proving why Hamlet should do something and the other with explaining why he should not. Students are allowed to find words that describe the characters and the plot and express their opinions. Video scenes from a play or illustrations can help to activate lexical knowledge and associations. Students should always be encouraged to read the Shakespearean text, not to depend on a paraphrase, translation, or comic version of Shakespeare. Such simplified versions deprive the students of the poetic richness of the original text and deny them the experience of Shakespeare's language.

Dramatic Props

A teacher can also make use of dramatic props that represent significant symbols and conflicts in the text like a skull, plastic dagger, candle sticks, and a handkerchief, and encourage students to think of the significance of these tools. Dulaney (2012), as a teacher of Shakespeare, emphatically stresses the fact that these "tangible items … represent significant symbols, conflicts, and characters" and "specifically support each text and serve as a catalyst to unearth students' inherent and emotive knowledge of symbols and their meanings" (p. 39). The skull, for instance, would prompt students to contemplate death as it brings "emotive knowledge and memory to this experience," thereby engaging a personal understanding of the Shakespearean text (Dulaney, 2012, p. 41).

Incorporating Technology

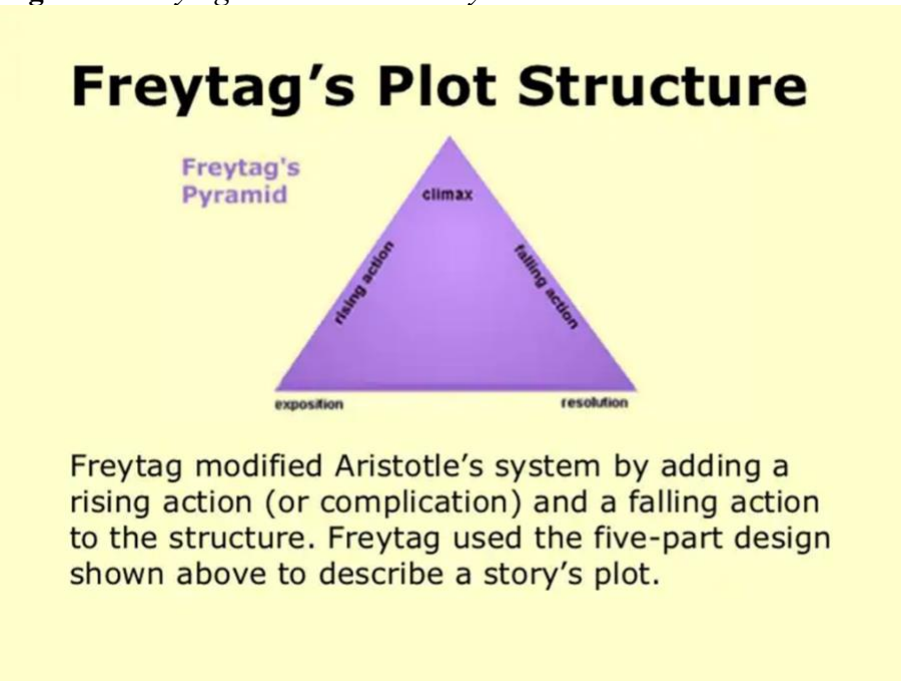
Technology should be incorporated into the classroom, such as showing filmed productions of Shakespeare's plays, or at least asking students to watch them at home. In this way, the text will come to life and students can then be divided into groups, each to prepare an interpretation of the assigned acts, scenes, or characters. Teachers are recommended to find the BBC production of plays or a good alternative as close to the original play as possible. Even multiple versions of plays would allow students to realize the extent of different interpretations. Students can be asked to do this before they come into class on the basis that they will be asked to describe, as thoroughly as they can, what they have seen and heard. Here the teacher can create in the students "the basis for analysis" (Gilbert, 1984, pp. 607-608). In this respect, Gilbert further points out that "[f]rom a detailed description one can move to a discussion, either with the class or by means of an assigned paper, about how the details created the interpretation and whether that interpretation seemed a plausible extension of the text" (p. 607). This often provides a fascinating experience that enhances students' critical thinking as well as language skills.

Shakespearean Critical Perspectives: The Literary Method

Shakespearean drama can be read from many critical perspectives. To explore the analysis of the whole text, the focus is to be on the basic elements of the literary text as follows:

- Plot – the connective tissue that links events or actions to reveal their dramatic, thematic, and emotional significance. Period, setting, source, and treatment of source can be added to the plot. According to Aristotle (2008, pp. 8-13), the plot must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. However, Shakespeare's plot often resembles the Freytag pyramid dramatic structure outlining the six key steps in successful storytelling: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution, and denouement (Figure 1).
- Genre: – the category (tragedy, comedy, tragicomedy, history). The characteristics of each genre should be discussed.
- Characters
- Dramatic technique
- Dramatic structure
- Theme

Figure 1. *Freytag's Plot Structure Pyramid*



Shakespeare's Characters

Character study has been the central preoccupation of Shakespeare's critics from the 18th century to the 1930s. Among major modern critical approaches to Shakespeare's characters are those of Bradley, Knight, Stoll, Greenblatt, and Bridges. Bradley in his *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904) discusses the character considering Aristotle's principles of the *tragic flaw*. However, Bradley was criticized for the absence of free will. Wilson Knight set a new standard for Shakespeare's criticism in his books *The Wheel of Fire* (1931), *The Crown of Life* (1947), and *The Imperial Theme* (1951). He avoids using the term *character*, believing that Shakespeare goes deeper than the character and depicts our true self. Knight discusses Shakespeare's characters as if they were alive. Historical critics like Stoll (1933), Greenblatt (1988), and others insisted on the need to see Shakespeare in the context of his age; his characters cannot be seen in isolation from their society. They are projections of the psychology of the time; the ambition of Macbeth and the philosophic meditation of Hamlet had strong social foundations. Other critics such as Bridges (1966) gave way to a new approach and demanded the discussion of Shakespeare that considered his audience and their influence on the playwright, as the Elizabethan audience played a significant part in aligning Shakespeare with the norms and values of England at that time. Such multiplicity of critical perspectives shows not just the diversity of ways to approach Shakespeare but also how his art evokes different responses throughout time.

Shakespeare's Dramatic Technique

In discussing a Shakespearean play, teachers should introduce the students to Shakespeare's Globe Theatre: its shape and capacity, stage, costumes, and how women's roles were played by boys. Students should also be introduced to the life of the 16th century. When the text is approached, teachers should make clear Shakespeare's dramatic techniques, such as:

- Speech devices, like monologues, a long speech by a single character to an audience within the play (e.g., Antony's speech "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears" from *Julius Caesar*); soliloquies, voicing one's thoughts aloud to oneself (e.g., "To be or not to be" from *Hamlet*); and asides, an individual speech to the audience, not heard by other characters, to reveal feelings and provide background information necessary to the plot (e.g., in *Macbeth*, the title character's "From this moment /The very firstling of my heart shall be/ The firstling of my hand" leads us to understand that he has lost his moral values).
- Dramatic irony, using language that signifies a different meaning of which the character is unaware, but the audience knows that something is going to happen.
- Creative uses of entrances and exits to build tension.
- The off-stage technique: when events happen off-stage, we are forced to use our imagination to fill gaps).
- Recurring imagery and symbols help create vivid pictures in the mind of the audience and connect ideas and themes.
- Lighting, sound, and clothing for dramatic effect.
- Contrasting light and darkness for dramatic effect.
- Play-within-play, in which a play performed in the confines of another play usually carrying a hidden message; for example, in *Hamlet* this is used to reflect the details of Claudius and Gertrude's treachery, or for comic relief in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The Structure of Shakespearean Drama

The dramatic structure of Shakespearean drama should also be discussed with the students. It is a five-act structure. A Shakespearean tragedy traditionally follows the Freytag pyramid of dramatic structure which consists of five parts. Freytag's analysis is derived from Aristotle's poetics which had a three-part view of a plot structure. The five parts are:

- Exposition: An introduction to the setting, the characters, and the basic conflict. It ends with the inciting moment.
- Rising action: The action in which the basic internal conflict is complicated.
- Climax: Turning point which marks a change, for better or worse, in the protagonist's journey towards a goal.
- Falling action: The action that comes after the climax and takes us toward a resolution.
- Denouement: In a comedy, it leaves the main character off, while tragedies end in catastrophe, (Figures 2, 3).

Figure 2. *Freytag Pyramid*

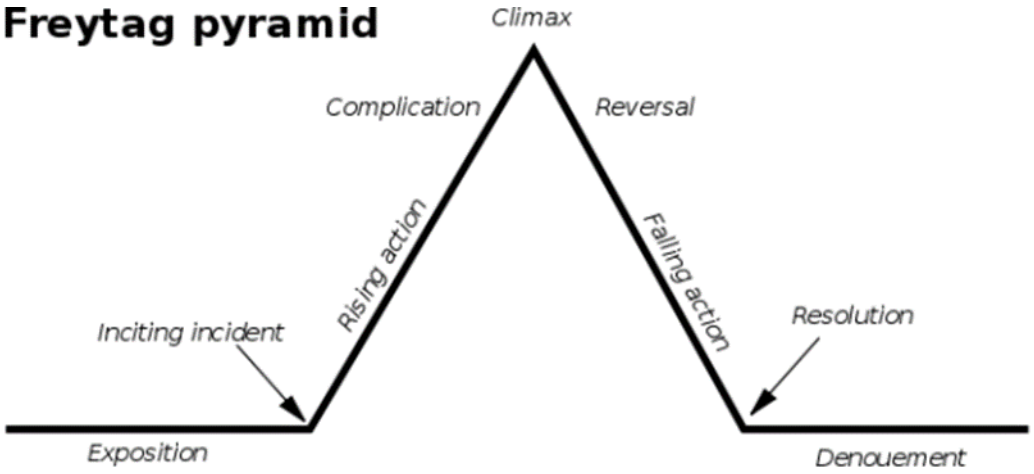
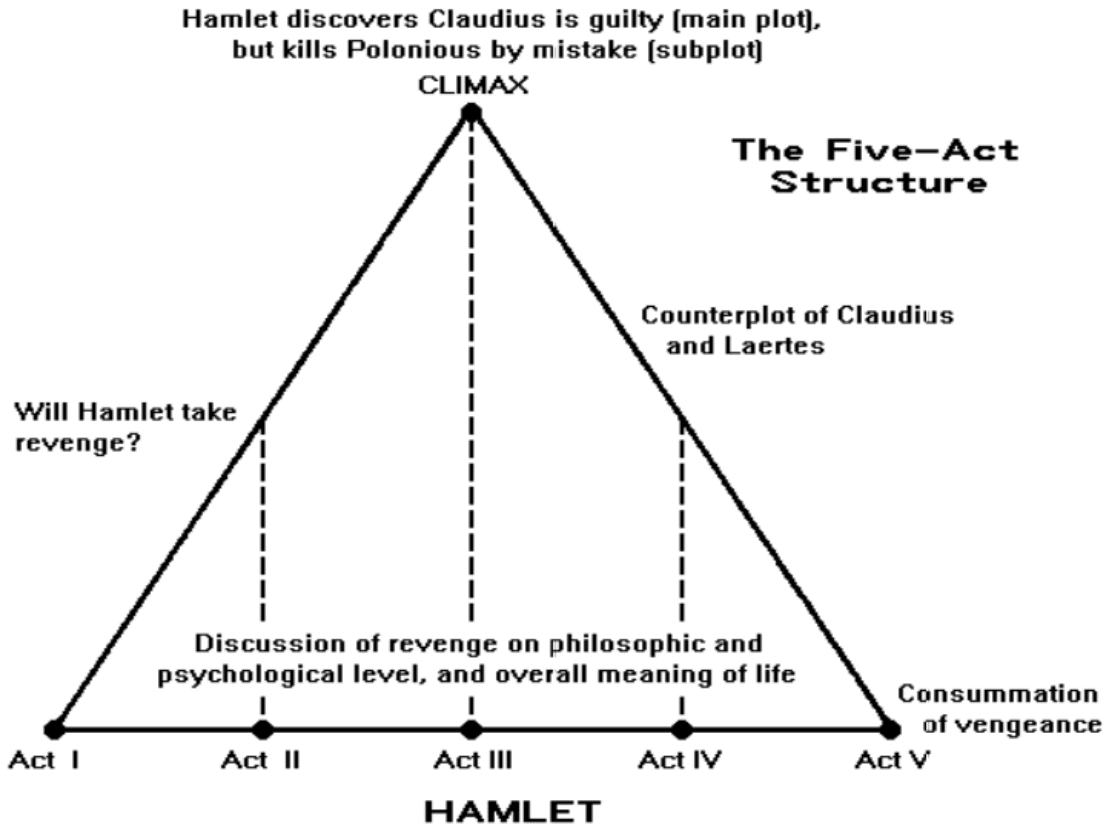


Figure 3. *The structure of* Hamlet



Theme

The theme is the main idea or underlying meaning a writer explores in a literary work. The theme is conveyed through characters, setting, dialogue, plot, language, or a combination of all these elements. In Shakespeare's drama, themes are the ideas he explores dramatically through the experience of his characters. The themes and ideas that run through Shakespeare's works are universal and are as relevant today as on the day they were written. Issues of race, power, betrayal, gender, and class are all still relevant to us today. Adopting an active approach in the classroom, teachers can let students explore how the theme of a particular Shakespearean play is relevant to present-day society. As Purewal (2017) argues, "Reading his works, can give students an opportunity to explore their cultures, and themselves, in new and meaningful ways" (p. 28).

Modern Critical Theories and Shakespeare

Every Shakespearean play offers rich material from which varied critical analyses can be generated. Assignments in this field promote writing fluency as well as a thoughtful reflection of the ideas, themes, language, and characters. Literary critical approaches to Shakespeare's plays are activities that in many ways enrich the understanding of the text. Therefore, students should be knowledgeable of some modern critical literary theories to help promote their critical assessment of the plays. Some critical theories and approaches (see Groden, et al., 1994) which could be used in studying a Shakespearean play are:

- **Reader Response Theory** encourages each reader to interpret the text differently.
- **New Criticism** eliminates historical, social, and political backgrounds; the text is independent of its author. It encourages students to seek hidden meanings behind the text and investigate how it is related to issues of identity, culture, gender, political power, ethnicity, class, race, and religion.
- **Structuralism** focuses on the linguistic aspects and structure rather than literary aspects.
- **Moral Philosophical Approach** asks students to think about the moral values in the work.
- **New historicism** seeks to reconnect a work with the time in which it was produced and identify it with the cultural and political movements of the time. It assumes that every work is a product of the historic moment that created it.
- **Psychoanalytic Theory** is influenced by the method of psychoanalysis begun by Sigmund Freud.
- **Feminist Literary Theory** responds to the way women are presented in literature.
- **Postcolonial Theory** deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies and those societies' responses.
- **Interdisciplinary Approach** sees shakespeare's plays as models of openness allowing the text within several critical/scientific approaches such as New Historicism, Psychoanalytic Theory, Feminism, and Colonial Theory. An analysis of *Hamlet,* for example, can be conducted from various critical perspectives: psychoanalytic, feminist, new historicist, moral, philosophical, and linguistic.

Thus, by the end of the course, students should be able to analyze and evaluate all the features of a Shakespearean play and apply appropriate critical theories to it. Finally, as Marder (1964) suggests, it may be easier to have in mind all the aspects of a play by drawing an open cube and

labeling an aspect on each side of the cube (p. 482). In this way, the cube's sides would carry labels such as *source*, *treatment of source*, *period*, *setting*, *plot*, *language* (imagery, versification, prose), *dramatic structure*, *characterization*, *theme*, *philosophy*, and *catharsis*.

Conclusion

Shakespeare's message is universal, and his themes and ideas are timeless. Teachers can therefore create a memorable shared experience with their students. To create an enriching experience of Shakespeare in the classroom, teachers should first be knowledgeable of the objectives of teaching his drama. In this respect, teachers should realize the pleasures of studying Shakespeare's dramatic works. As the aims of teaching Shakespeare are diverse, approaches to teaching his drama can take varied techniques. Active approaches to Shakespeare in the classroom, where all students collaborate, indicate effective teaching. In this student-centered method, a teacher might engage students through active techniques such as performance, exploring rhythm and versification, using dramatic props, engaging in language activities, and incorporating technology. Text analysis, however, should always be included. To explore Shakespeare's drama, teachers can focus on the elements of the dramatic text: plot, genre, characters, dramatic technique, dramatic structure, and theme. As Shakespeare's plays address human issues that provide rich material for varied critical analysis, students should be aware of modern literary critical theories.

When teachers work with texts effectively, they can promote language awareness and cultural knowledge in their students. The themes and emotions that run through Shakespeare's plays are timeless and allow the students to explore life in new ways. Issues in his drama such as race, power, ethnicity, and gender still resonate. Therefore, Shakespeare's dramas can be taught in a way that is relatable to present-day events, thereby enhancing students' understanding of the text and promoting critical thinking. Thus, through active teaching approaches, teachers can offer their students the chance to understand the text and develop critical thinking. Moreover, students will develop a wide range of language skills, knowledge, and creative abilities.

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CHAPTER 03

Getting English Language Teachers Research Ready: Resources for Research Literacy

Christine Coombe and Lana Hiasat

Abstract

Research literacy (RL) has become a critical topic in ELT. This is mainly due to the fact that many English language teachers are not research literate. In other words, many English language teachers lack the knowledge and skills to conduct research with their students in their classrooms or to understand how the research of others affects their teaching and their students' learning. The purpose of this chapter is to critically examine the status of RL in ELT. After defining RL, we discuss why RL is important for teachers, and we examine some of the barriers to teacher research literacy. We then provide several professional development initiatives designed specifically to improve RL amongst English language teachers in the Gulf region.

Introduction

Within the field of EF/SL teaching and learning, research has many different meanings and interpretations. Some four decades ago, research in our field meant studies like linguistic analysis, case studies, or quantitative research; however, in the intervening years, the variety of research types has expanded. The authors have seen new developments in quantitative research methods and significant expansion in the options available in qualitative research methods, as well as the appearance of mixed methods studies. However, there is a dearth of research done in the Gulf with regards to understanding teacher research literacy in higher education institutions.

Background Literature

Defining Research Literacy

In the Introduction to Coombe et al (2012), the authors addressed the issues involved in the notion of *assessment literacy*, which is a topic with a large and well-developed literature. The authors of the present study investigated whether any work had been done about a parallel concept that might be termed *research literacy*. In a review of the literature, they discovered very few books and articles; those they did find were at best tangentially related, focusing on statistical literacy, and the separate methodological frameworks of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. There was only one volume by Brown and Coombe (2015) that centered around helping language teaching professionals and students develop their research skills (Coombe & Hiasat, 2021, p. 415).

The Importance of Research Literacy

According to Shank and Brown (2007):

> [P]eople who are research literate can read many types of research reports and articles, and benefit in a variety of ways from the practice. One of the prime benefits is to extract

> information, namely to be an effective and efficient consumer. We begin with the process of mastering the art of being a research consumer, and then build upon these skills until we are able to read critically. (p. 22)

They also describe four basic principles that are essential to research literacy (Shank & Brown, 2007, pp. 8-13):

- It takes skill to read educational research reports;
- Educational research operates within a broad foundation of ideas;
- Literate consumers of research know how educational research is created;
- The article is the basic form of educational research writing.

Stiggins (2007, p. 2) discusses the skills required to be assessment literate. Drawing on those ideas and our own experiences with research, especially in writing this chapter, we came up with a similar list of the skills that we believe are necessary for language teaching professionals to be considered research literate. These are the ability to:

- Understand what data-gathering strategies can be used to collect dependable and valid information for research;
- Recognize well-formulated research questions and how they differ for qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research;
- Know how data can be analyzed in various research traditions in order to address such research questions adequately;
- Recognize sound research interpretations that are justified by research results;
- Understand the general differences between sound/unsound research and read critically;
- Communicate effectively with others about research results that they have read;
- Use research and research results to maximize the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Teacher Research Engagement

The Benefits of Doing Research (Coombe & Hiasat, 2021; Sheetz & Coombe, 2015)

Advocates of teacher research cite its many advantages and describe it as a valuable form of professional development. Zeichner (1999) favors teacher research as it allows teachers to become better at what they do. Also, it helps teachers become more flexible and open to new ideas. Another advantage is that it narrows the gap between teachers' aspirations and realization. Zeichner (1999) went on to state that teacher inquiry heightens the quality of student learning and stimulates positive changes in the culture and productivity of schools. Teacher research also raises the status of the teaching profession in society. A final advantage is that teacher research produces knowledge about teaching and learning that is useful to teachers, policy makers, academic researchers, and teacher educators (Xerri & Pioquinto, 2018).

The literature clearly shows that language teachers who have carried out research often report significant changes to their understanding of teaching (Richards & Farrell, 2005). Studies have also found that teachers who have engaged in research have experienced professional and personal growth and a decrease in feelings of frustration and isolation (Goswami & Stillman, 1987; Noffke, 1997). Research by Boudah and Knight (1996) reported positive effects from participation in

teacher research in terms of improved teacher attitudes toward research, increased feelings of self-efficacy related to low-achieving students, and increases in positive interactions with students. Finally, teacher research processes may also help to create a positive school culture—one that is supportive of teacher reflection and experimentation (Francis et al., 1994).

For many of us, improving our practice is the primary reason or motivation for involvement in research projects. Teachers are interested in research because it encourages them to reflect on their practice which ultimately leads to professional growth.

The Barriers that Hinder Teacher Research Engagement (Coombe & Hiasat, 2021; Sheetz & Coombe, 2015)

Despite widespread agreement on its importance, research is often a neglected area in teaching practice especially in the Gulf higher educational sector. There are a number of possible reasons for this neglect, one of which deals with problems of terminology (McGee, 2007). McGee feels that one reason teachers often *fear* research is that the terminology used in association with research philosophies is often confusing, contradictory, and not easily accessible to the average practitioner. For example, Khun's term *paradigm* (1970) has been widely used and cited in the social sciences, and he suggests various meanings of *paradigm*, which include ideas such as a set of symbolic generalizations, shared commitments to models of shared values about theory, and science in general. However, Seliger and Shohamy (1989) use the term *parameters* for similar ideas in association with conceptual frameworks. Moreover, in second language research, terms such as *parameter* and *paradigm* are often used to refer to research methods or strategies.

Borg (2003, 2006) points to several factors that hinder teachers' research efforts and engagement. He cites the following as some of the major inhibitors to teachers successfully engaging in research:

1. Inaccessibility
2. Lack of Local Relevance
3. Lack of Narrative
4. Lack of Ownership
5. Lack of Credibility
6. Pressure
7. Implied Inadequacy
8. Self-image
9. Lack of Recognition
10. Lack of Technical Knowledge

Borg notes that "teachers often feel that research is inaccessible to them" (2003, p. 1). They believe that researchers often write for other researchers rather than for the teachers they are trying to help. This results in much of the published research being not accessible conceptually or linguistically to the teachers.

Another reason for the lack of teacher engagement in research is the feeling that much of the research does not relate to the teachers' own teaching/learning contexts. There is some empirical evidence to suggest that teachers are most convinced by research that "is (a) specific; (b) contextualized; (c) observable; and (d) testable" (Borg, 2003, p. 2). Research conducted by

researchers often lacks specificity and does not enable teachers to relate it to their own contexts. To this end, teachers are less likely to be convinced of its relevance and therefore less inclined to read it.

Lack of ownership in the research process is cited as another major inhibitor of teacher research engagement. When teachers are not involved in the research process from the outset, the process can come across as a top-down one in which teachers feel no ownership. This lack of ownership can result in disinterest or even negativity on the part of the teachers.

A lack of the previous three factors (relevance, narrative, and ownership) can contribute to a general lack of credibility which research often has in the eyes of teachers. Teachers often feel that researchers — because of their lack of classroom experience — do not have the credibility to make decisions and recommendations for classroom practice. Such sentiments are based on the belief that researchers live in an *ivory tower* which is far removed from the classroom and have no real knowledge about what happens in the classroom on a day-to-day basis. This sentiment is reflected in research conducted by Crookes and Arakaki (1999) which found that "many participants articulated a strong, stereotypical image of researchers as living in an ivory tower and tended to feel that only working teachers could have credible opinions about good teaching" (p. 16). This sentiment has been echoed by others (for example, Goswami & Stillman, 1987; Mouhanna, 2009).

Another major factor cited by teachers which limits their research engagement is time pressure or time constraints. Many teachers simply feel that they do not have time for research as they are too busy coping with the ever-increasing daily demands of their jobs (Mouhanna, 2009).

Implied inadequacy is yet another reason many teachers do not conduct research. In fact, it is believed that classroom research in particular takes place to find solutions to problems that exist in the classroom and that the very idea of doing research is an admission of a problem. As Borg (2003) puts it:

> [T]he suggestion that teachers engage in research, by implying they are inadequate in some way, can in fact be construed as a threat to their competence. When such attitudes prevail, research is seen as an undesirable activity to engage in. (p. 5)

Another obstacle to teacher research involvement is teacher self-image. According to Gurney (1989), teachers see themselves as *knowledge implementers* or those that put into practice the ideas created by others. Researchers are often viewed as *knowledge generators*. The belief that *there's nothing worth studying in my classroom*, and *why would anyone want to hear about it?* contributes to teachers' feelings of low self-image.

A feeling that academics do not take teacher research seriously is another factor that discourages teachers from conducting research. These stereotypic beliefs stem from popular generalizations about what research is. There is *Research* with a capital *R*, which is used to refer to empirical studies, with control and experimental groups, such as those published in journals like *TESOL Quarterly*. There is also *research* with a small *r*, to designate the studies and projects that are often carried out by classroom teachers without training in skills needed to conduct research such as statistical analyses (LoCastro, 2000). Teachers' efforts to contribute to the knowledge base in the field are often undervalued if such a view of research exists in their institutional contexts.

Others simply feel they lack the technical knowledge required to effectively carry out research on their own practice. For example, they may lack knowledge about research design or data analysis techniques.

A final yet very serious obstacle to research engagement might be the intimidation teachers feel by the process itself and by the ethical procedures necessary to conduct quality research. Understanding and being able to implement ethical processes such as getting permission from their local institution, obtaining human subject review, and informed consent are often daunting for a novice researcher and as such could prevent teachers from further research engagement.

Language teachers who involve students in their research will inevitably encounter ethical issues. These teachers already have a duty of care towards their students and should simply exercise professional judgement when planning research that will result in innovations in their teaching. Thus, in our opinion, the vast majority of teacher research projects likely require no additional ethical permissions.

What probably is important, given that most teachers do not have a background in research, is that teachers have some guidance on ethical issues they might not have considered and a clear pathway to seek advice if ethical issues arise as part of their research projects. Therefore, it would be useful for schools to have guidelines laid out in advance, especially a clear, straightforward policy on research ethics, agreed upon by the school and shared with teachers.

There are three main areas of ethics in research that teachers may need to consider when planning research projects: minimizing harm, informed consent, and confidentiality. Perhaps the most important ethical rule in research is *do no harm*. Thus, research is deemed ethical if no physical, emotional, or mental harm comes to the participants. Participants should be given sufficient information about the research so that they can make an informed decision as to whether they want to take part. The permission that they give the researcher to use their data for research purposes is called informed consent. Confidentiality is an area where most schools or institutions already have some policy in place. As such, most teacher research projects will simply need to comply with these already existing policies.

Research on Teacher Motivators and Barriers to Research Involvement (Coombe & Hiasat, 2021)

Despite the prevalence of research studies highlighting the importance of research in teachers' careers, there is substantially less focus on teachers' beliefs about the factors which encourage and/or inhibit teacher research (Coombe & Hiasat, 2021). In a study by Kennedy (1997), teachers found that much of the research lacked authority, was often irrelevant, and did not address teachers' concerns. Another finding pointed to the fact that research findings in general were often too difficult for teachers to understand.

In a study by Mouhanna (2009), teachers in an intensive English program in the Gulf were asked to identify motivating factors as well as obstacles for conducting research in their contexts. His findings indicate that most teachers were motivated by intrinsic factors to conduct research. More specifically, teachers reported that their main motivations for conducting research were self-

managed professional development, to improve the teaching situation, and to solve practical problems in their own classrooms. Those same teachers reported that the main obstacles they faced when involving themselves in research were overcoming time constraints and a workplace culture that didn't encourage research.

Developing Research Literacy amongst English Language Teachers

Having defined the concept of RL and provided a rationale for its importance for language teachers, in the next section we provide teachers with learning opportunities to increase their research literacy.

Graduate and Post-Graduate Programs

One of the most effective places for teachers to learn about research is when they do a research project for their master's or doctoral degree programs. More commonly in this era of graduate education, master's degrees are based on taught modules and other programs that are research based. We have found in a focus group discussion on research literacy that the majority of those teachers who participated chose a taught master's degree rather than a research-based one. Therefore, based on this research, few teachers, even recent graduates, have research experience and lack research literacy even after a master's degree in their fields.

Pre-Service or In-Service Training

One of the best places to learn about research is professional development courses offered from your institution. Many higher education institutions in the Gulf have an online professional development portal for faculty to receive training to develop their research literacy skills. One such training at our own institution is the Research Forum series. Our institution, a major federal higher education institution in the Gulf, has initiated a Research Forum series where once a week, faculty share their research projects with their fellow teachers and students. Such events have helped faculty to learn about research projects in different departments and to initiate interdisciplanry collaborations.

Other training on offer is through LinkedIn Learning where teachers register and complete online courses. Teachers have the option of learning at their own pace through video lectures and online courses. There are over 6,966 courses on research skills (as of June 29, 2021). LinkedIn Learning offers several learning paths on topics such as "Advance your skills as a user of research," "Data science skills," and "Five pathways to train IT specialists to understand how users interact with their design applications." A search for qualitative research yielded 88 course results which focused on a variety of different qualitative topics (as of June 28, 2021).

Online Courses

A study by Fan et al. (2011) found that a web-based model helped in-service secondary teachers improve their assessment knowledge and enhanced their perspectives on testing. We predict that similar online trainings could help teachers with their research literacy. Online trainings aimed at improving teachers' research literacy include, but are not limited to:

- *Coursera:* The highest rated courses on research include topics on the following areas: evaluation, analysis, data anlysis, data structure, research, writing, ststistics, statistical analysis, data collection, data clusting algorithems, data collection, research design, research methods, statistical methods, and sampling statistics. Available at https://www.coursera.org/courses?query=research&
- *Udemy:* Udemy is another popular online learning platform. Some research related courses include Research Methodology: Complete Research Project Blueprint; How to Write a Successful Research Paper; Writing & Publishing a Research Paper: Research Paper Guide; and Research Methods and Statistics: An Introduction. Available at https://www.udemy.com/courses/search/?src=ukw&q=research

Books on Research

There are many books that teachers will likely find useful in developing their research literacy skills. A look in all the current book catalogs from the major publishing houses in ELT will turn up a wide variety of both practical and research-oriented volumes. Some of the classics that the authors find both comprehensive and accessible and are found in their own personal professional libraries (both print-based and free, Open Access) are presented in the Appendix.

Research Journals

As noted by Coombe and Hiasat (2021), the average classroom teacher would likely find it difficult to comprehend articles in many research journals, and the content may be too specialized. However, as a teacher's research literacy skills develop, they may find major journals of our profession, like *TESOL Quarterly, Language Testing* or the *Modern Language Journal* useful and informative. A more accessible journal like the *ELT Journal* features research-based articles that are directly linked to practice.

Research associations and/or organizations

Most teachers join professional associations and/or organizations relevant to their field of expertise and interest. Within these associations and organizations, teachers often have the opportunity to join Special Interest Groups (SIGs) devoted to developing their knowledge and skills in certain areas. Teachers can develop their research skills and knowledge by joining associations such as the following:

- Social Research Association, https://the-sra.org.uk/
- Government Research Association, https://graonline.org/why-join-gra/
- World Education Research Association, https://www.weraonline.org/

Research Literacy Resources Project at a UAE-Based University

To address the perceived lack of research literacy skills within English language and General Studies faculty at our institution, a large federal university in the UAE, a team of faculty (led by the chapter authors) decided to conduct a study on teacher research engagement and research literacy. To this end, we developed a focus group protocol on research literacy and engagement.

Initial focus groups were held with those faculty who we defined as being *research ready*, defined as those who want to conduct research and feel favorably about it but feel they do not as yet have the requisite skills. Data from these initial focus groups was used to compile a tentative list of the resources needed for research ready faculty to get started on their research journey.

The purpose of this research was threefold: 1) to investigate what research-ready, Gulf-based faculty members in General Studies and/or Arts and Humanities programs know and understand about the research process; 2) to investigate what resources research-ready Gulf-based faculty need to better facilitate their research engagement; and 3) to investigate what skills research-ready Gulf-based faculty members most need to move them forward in the research process (Coombe & Hiasat, 2021).

The research team is in the process of developing a number of resources for research literacy which include the following (hosted on our A to Z of Research Literacy website which can be found at https://research-literacy.weebly.com/).

- A diagnostic assessment entitled "How research literate are you?"
- An infographic on characteristics of a research-literate teacher
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about how to conduct research
- Training materials on research related topics (PPT, screencasts, short videos, etc.)
- A glossary of research terms written in understandable and non-technical language
- A manual on how to do research written for faculty who want to engage in research
- A series of edited volumes featuring research-based studies conducted by Gulf-based faculty
- A website featuring research-related resources
- A number of short events (3-6 hours) on various aspects of research literacy
- A conference on faculty research engagement and literacy
- A research activities book of lesson plans that can be used for teaching research
- Mentoring program of partnering experienced with less experienced and/or novice researchers
- The creation of a research network or a community of practice
- A creation of a journal to assist with the dissemination of research

Progress on the above-mentioned resources is ongoing but what follows is a description of a sample of the resources that are in the process of being created.

An A to Z of Research Literacy (Coombe et al., 2018)

We firmly believe that learning the terminology and jargon of a field also means understanding the concepts represented by these terms and understanding how they are interlinked and interrelated. This glossary on research literacy contains 226 terms and their respective definitions. The definitions represent the collective knowledge of 43 teachers from 17 different countries who responded to a call for contributions.

An A to Z of Research Literacy is the first resource developed as part of our research literacy project. It is part of a collection of resources designed to increase teacher research engagement and to help teachers increase their knowledge about research. These resources are specifically designed

for teachers with all levels of research literacy, especially those interested in becoming more involved in the research process. A sample of the online, hyperlinked glossary is presented in Figure 1. A pdf form of the glossary can be found at our website on research literacy (https://research-literacy.weebly.com/).

Figure 1. *Research Literacy Glossary*

A

Abstract

1. Abstracts are short paragraphs that are usually found at the beginning of journal articles. They provide a summary of the article.

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2. A brief summary of a paper that helps the reader quickly ascertain the purpose of the entire paper.
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Accidental sampling

Grab sampling, convenience sampling, opportunity sampling

A form of sampling that involves randomly selecting participants from a group that is convenient to reach.

Accountability

A central issue in research aimed at promoting ethical research practices through responsibility, integrity and authenticity.

Naziha Ali Raza

research also helps in determining effective ways and means towards achieving outstanding teaching and learning.

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Action research refers to self-reflective inquiry undertaken with the aim of exploring challenges and/or issues. The aim in action research is to help practitioners develop solutions and be more effective at what they care about most - their teaching and the development of their students.

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Aggregate

Combining a lot of parts/elements together.

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Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA)

Short for Analysis of Covariance, ANCOVA is a combination of ANOVA and linear regression. If a researcher wants to study the effect of an independent variable with two or more levels on a continuous variable and further remove the

A Handbook of Research Literacy Classroom Activities

Contributors to this book are asked to create activities on one or more of the following themes and write to a specified lesson plan template:

1. Defining and understanding research and research concepts
2. Preparing yourself for research
3. Understanding the different types of research, methodological frameworks & data collection techniques
4. Teacher Action Research
5. Technology and Research
6. Engaging students in research
7. Analyzing research results
8. Disseminating your research

Conclusion

The lack of research literacy amongst English language teachers worldwide is a major concern that 21st ventury English language teaching specialists need to help address. The ongoing quest to help teachers improve their knowledge about and experience with different types of research is a crucial one and one that can be enhanced with some of the professional development activities and resources that we have discussed in this chapter. It is hoped that these resources will help research ready teachers get started on their research journey.

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Zeichner, K. (1999). *Teacher research as a professional development activity for P–12 educators*. U.S. Department of Education.

Appendix: Research Books

Print-Based Resources

Avineri, N. (2017). *Research methods for language teaching: Inquiry, process, and synthesis (Applied linguistics for the language classroom)*. Macmillan Education.

Brown, J. D. (1988). *Understanding research in second language learning: A teacher's guide to statistics and research design*. Cambridge University Press.

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Free Open Access E-Books

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CHAPTER 04

Teaching the Main Idea Using a New Strategy: Implications for the IELTS Reading Section

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Abstract

The purpose of this chapter is to present educators and students with the importance of finding the main idea when preparing for the questions in the IELTS reading section. The paper looks at all 14 different types of questions in the IELTS reading section and shows that although none of the question types explicitly ask for the main idea, a considerable number implicitly ask for the main idea. This paper intends to bring attention to the importance of teaching the main idea as finding the main idea can potentially increase the chances of finding the correct answers in the IELTS reading section for questions that implicitly ask for the main idea.

To this aim, we propose a new strategy consisting of three phases: raising cognizance, student skating, and feedback. We also share student and instructor sample work to show how this strategy works. The chapter is organized as follows. First, an introduction and literature review regarding the main idea is presented. Then the methodology and theoretical framework of our suggested strategy is presented. The implications of our new strategy and students' samples come next, followed by the conclusion and suggestions for further studies.

Introduction and Background

Based on personal experience from years of teaching IELTS classes and other English as a Second Language (ESL) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes, we realized that not much attention was paid to teaching the main idea of a paragraph. This is important as finding the main idea not only can enhance reading comprehension, but it also can be helpful in finding the correct answers to reading questions in IELTS tests.

Jacobowitz and Tomitch (cited in Wilawan, 2012) stated that there had not been much progress in the research regarding the instruction of finding the main idea especially to ESL students. However, there have been studies focusing on the instruction of finding main ideas to English native speakers.

Elashhab (2013), in her study on the connection between reading comprehension awareness strategies and their use in foreign language reading, concluded that there was a correlation between reading strategy awareness and main idea comprehension. Her study looked at four Arabic ESL readers and showed that when reading strategies that employ techniques such as focusing on the main idea and underlining keywords were supported by the instructor, students demonstrated higher levels of text comprehension. In the same article, she also observed that students did not

comprehend the reading texts because they could not differentiate between the main idea and supporting ideas, or they would introduce ideas that were not stated in the original reading text.

Stevens et al. (2019) cited Brown and Day (1980) who stated that finding the main idea was a challenge even for college students. Their research concluded that intervention in teaching summarizing and main idea improved the reading comprehension of poor readers.

Boudah (2013) introduced the main idea strategy that, if used as an intervention, could improve the reading comprehension of poor readers. In his main idea strategy, Boudah showed his support for clarity of instruction as well as feedback to the students. In a different study, Kucukoglu (2013) also observed that teaching reading strategies, such as summarizing that involved finding the main idea, improved the reading comprehension skills of the students in an intermediate level integrated skills class.

Marqomah (2018) showed that 60% of the 59 participants in her study had difficulties finding the main idea of a paragraph due to their poor reading strategies.

Based on the literature review as well as our own personal observations, finding the main idea improves reading comprehension. There is a need for a revamped main idea strategy that is targeted towards ESL students. These observations were the impetus for this study.

In this study, we looked at the 14 different kinds of IELTS reading questions and analyzed their focus and the skill they target. The chapter reports the findings of our analysis of these questions. In addition, we propose a new strategy for teaching the main idea to ESL/EFL learners.

IELTS Question Analysis

The 14 different types of IELTS reading questions that are seen in sample IELTS tests were analyzed. These question types are: matching headings; true, false, not given; yes, no, not given; matching paragraph information; summary completion; sentence completion; multiple choice; list selection; choosing a table; categorization; matching sentence endings; table completion; flow chart completion; diagram completion; and short answer (IDP IELTS, n.d.) (see Appendix A for further explanation of these question types). Based on the focus of these questions, and the skills that were recommended for answering these questions, it was observed that out of the 14 question types, none explicitly asked students to find the main idea while 35% implicitly asked for the main idea. Thirteen percent of the 14 question types recommended main idea recognition as a skill needed to answer these questions. Considering that 35% of all question types implicitly address the main idea, and only13% of the questions explicitly recommend main idea as a skill, students and educators might not consider finding the main idea to be of much importance for answering 22% of the questions that can be answered by finding the main idea. Therefore, we suggest that teaching and learning how to find the main idea of a paragraph be taken more seriously and taught more explicitly and more often in IELTS reading classes. In addition, we suggest a new strategy for teaching the main idea to IELTS reading students or any other ESL reading student.

In the following section we present five different types of questions with examples from the IELTS test from *Cambridge English IELTS 12 General Training* (Cambridge, 2018) that are not explicitly

asking for the main idea, but finding the main idea can potentially help students answer these questions. Later, in the next section, we introduce our proposed strategy for teaching main idea.

Question 1 is an example of a matching question where there is no specific mention of finding the main idea in the tips or skills (see Appendix A). However, the correct answer to this question, number 1, is indeed the main idea of paragraph B. The noun *suitcase*, its synonyms, or pronoun referring to *suitcase* occur four times in this paragraph (*bag, buy, a suitcase, it*), making *suitcase* the topic of the paragraph's main idea. Supporting ideas and opinions such as *trimmed in leather*, *gold details*, *renowned fashion house*, *truly indulgent buy*, *investing this much*, and *amazing holiday*) all refer to an adjective such as *expensive*. Thus, if the student were to write the main idea of this paragraph, they would write a sentence such as, "This suitcase is expensive." This is in line with the correct answer of the test: "This suitcase is for those who wish to purchase expensive luggage." Thus, knowing how to find the main idea can help a student to find the correct answer in a matching question.

Question 1: *A Review with a Description (Cambridge, 2018)*

Instructions	Look at the seven reviews of suitcases, A-G. For which suitcase are the following statements true?
Question/text	B. Mulberry Scotchgrain Trimmed in brown leather, with gold details, this bag from the renowned fashion house is a truly indulgent buy. If you're investing this much in a suitcase, then you'd better be planning an amazing holiday to go with it.
Answer	This suitcase is for those who wish to purchase expensive luggage.

In Question 2, the best title for the paragraph needs to be chosen from a list. If the student starts by attempting to find the main idea of the paragraph, after the first step the student can recognize the correct answer. *Customization* and its synonyms (*customizable*, *design*) are mentioned four times indicating the topic of the main idea. In addition, a variety of examples are signalled in the paragraph by mentioning "two examples." At this point before the student attempts to write the main idea, just by finding the topic of the main idea, they have found the correct answer: "D: Examples of customization."

The skills recommended for this type of question are scanning and identifying specific information as well as understanding the writer's opinions. These are related to the main idea indirectly. However, finding the main idea, would be beneficial in answering this type of question.

Question 2: *Choose a Heading from the List To Match Each Paragraph (IELTS-up, n.d.)*

Instructions	Choose a heading from the list which matches a section or paragraph in the article.
Question/text	Customizable online furniture was also very much in vogue at this year's festival. But rest assured, weird and unreliable software or off-the-wall designs sent to a 3D printer somewhere and arriving months later, seem to be a thing of the past. Customization may finally have come of age. Two examples were Scandi-brand Hem that combined good design by the likes of Luca Nichetto, Form Us With Love and Sylvain Willenz with affordable price points. The fact that the brand opened a pop-up store in Covent Garden during the festival is a recognition of the importance of both physical and online spaces that work seamlessly together.
Answer	Examples of customization

Question 3 is an example of a True/False question where the recommended skills are scanning and finding information. Although the skills and tips do not recommend finding the main idea as a skill for this question, finding the main idea in this question directly leads the student to the correct answer. The student will recognize that the first sentence of the paragraph has the main idea. Therefore, the student might come to the conclusion that the main idea of the paragraph is a sentence such as, "There are similarities between Canadian and British English, subtle as they may be." This main idea is exactly in line with the given statement: "According to the paragraph, Canadian English is pretty similar to British, with some minor differences." Thus, the student will choose *true* as the answer to this question.

Question 3: *Choosing True/False/Not Given for Each Statement (IELTS-up, n.d.)*

Instructions	Do the following statements agree with the information given in the Reading Passage? In boxes 1–5, chose TRUE if the statement agrees with the information FALSE if the statement contradicts the information NOT GIVEN if there is no information on this According to the second paragraph, Canadian English is pretty similar to British, with some minor differences.
Question/text	Canadian does exist as a separate variety of British English, with subtly distinctive features of pronunciation and vocabulary. It has its own dictionaries; the Canadian Press has its own style guide; the Editors' Association of Canada has just released a second edition of Editing Canadian English. But an emblematic feature of Editing Canadian English is comparison tables of American versus British spellings so the Canadian editor can come to a reasonable decision on which to use… on each occasion. The core of Canadian English is a pervasive ambivalence.
Answer	True

Question 4 shows a question that asks students to choose the correct title. Although the question asks about a title for the paragraph and not about the main idea, recognizing the main idea will help the student to find the correct title for the paragraph, hence the correct answer. In other words, the student needs to find the main idea of the paragraph in order to choose the best title for the paragraph. In this question, *dining together* or other forms of the word *dine* are mentioned five times. Reasons such as *kid's happiness*, or *their unlikelihood of using drugs and alcohol* are discussed a few times, leading the student to write a main idea such as: "Dining together as a family benefits the children." This main idea and the correct title are similar, enabling the student to choose the correct option.

Question 4: *Choosing the Best Title (IELTS Cambridge, n.d.)*

Instructions	Read the following article and choose the best title from the list below.
Question/text	A new survey reveals that a family sit-down at dinnertime may reduce a teenager's risk of trying or using alcohol, cigarettes and drugs. The study surveyed more than 1,000 teens and found that those who dined with their families five to seven times a week were four times less likely to use alcohol, tobacco or marijuana than those who ate with their families fewer than three times a week. A recent UK survey also found that dining together as a family is a key ingredient in ensuring a child's happiness. Children in the survey reported higher levels of happiness when they dined together with their families at least three times a week. "Contrary to the popular belief that children only want to spend time playing video games or watching TV," said researcher Dr. Maris Iacovou of the University of Essex, "we found that they were most happy when interacting with their parents or siblings."
Answer	Why families should dine together

Question 5 asks the student to determine the summary of the paragraph, not the main idea. However, in order to do this, the student needs to find the main idea first, which will lead the student to the correct answer.

The use of the word *plan* (and its other forms) four times and its synonym *designed* leads the student to conclude that the paragraph is about planning communities. The paragraph also mentions dates and places, such as *4th century B.C.*, *1666*, and *18th century* along with the cities of *Washington, D.C.*, *New York City*, and *St. Petersburg, Russia*. This allows the student to conclude that the main idea of the paragraph is a sentence like "Urban planning has a long history." This main idea will lead the student directly to the correct answer, *the history of urban planning*.

Question 5: *Summarizing paragraphs (Cambridge, 2014)*

Instructions	Read the paragraph and choose the best summary.
Question/text	The notion of planning entire communities prior to their construction is an ancient one. In fact, one of the earliest such cities on record is Miletus, Greece, which was built in the 4th century, BC. Throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, various planned communities (both theoretical and actual) were conceived. Leonardo da Vinci designed several cities that were never constructed. Following the Great Fire of London in 1666, the architect Christopher Wren created a new master plan of the city, incorporating park land and urban space. Several 18th century cities, including Washington, D.C., New Your City, and St. Petersburg, Russia, were built according to comprehensive planning. A. Past, present, and future examples of urban planning. B. The history of urban planning. C. Problems associated with urban planning.
Answer	The correct answer is B

As shown above, there are several types of IELTS questions where the students would benefit from knowing how to find the main idea in a paragraph.

Teaching the Main Idea

In their study of four basal reading series (*Pathfinder,* 1978, Allyn & Bacon; *Basics in Reading,* 1978, Scott Foresman & Company; *The Holt Basic Reading System,* 1977, Holt, Rinehart & Winston; *Scott Foresman Reading,* 1983, Scott, Foresman & Company), Chou Hare and Milligan (1984) observed that there was no explicit way to teach the main idea to students. According to the basal reader teachers' manuals, teachers would tell students (who were native speakers of English) to find "the important thing" or "what stands out," and that would be the main idea.

There were also texts and exercises where the paragraphs did not contain any important information, and teachers would accept anything as the main idea. Later in their paper, Chou Hare & Milligan (1984) concluded that students could not recognize the "important thing" until and unless the instructors could explicitly explain to the students how they themselves would find the important thing, that is, the main idea. This conundrum is even more considerable when it comes to ESL students who are culturally and linguistically different from native English speakers. In her 2012 study, Wilawan also attributed the difficulty that ESL learners have regarding finding the main idea, to their lower proficiency in lexical, grammatical, and discourse knowledge. Therefore, it is essential to teach finding the main idea of a paragraph as a strategy that would compensate the

ESL students for their cultural and linguistic differences. Such a strategy would show the students how to recognize and where to find that "important thing" – the main idea.

Since finding the main idea is an essential part of summarizing, we propose using the same three-phase strategy used by Najafi (2020) for teaching summarization to teach main idea in IELTS classes and, by extension, in other ESL/EFL classes. This strategy is especially useful for students taking the IELTS test because many of the steps of this new strategy involve the skills of scanning and skimming that are highly recommended as needed skills for the IELTS test. Although Najafi (2020) considers summarization as a skill related to writing, many scholars see summarization as a strategy for enhancing reading skills (Boudah, 2013; Elashhab, 2013; Stevens et al., 2019; Jitendra et al., 2000).

In her 2020 paper, Najafi proposed using the three phases of raising cognizance, student skating, and feedback as a strategy to teach summarization. The next section explains the implications of these phases in the classroom when teaching the main idea of a paragraph:

- Phase One: Raising Cognizance. In this phase, the instructor clearly shows the students how to find the main idea of a paragraph by showing them exactly what to search for.
- Phase Two: Student Skating. In this phase, the instructor explicitly shows the students what to do with the information they found in phase one while providing them with a checklist (see Appendix B). The students can avoid "predictable mistakes" by referring to the checklist before handing in their assignments. The checklist acts as the skates for the students.
- Phase Three: Feedback. The instructor uses the same checklist to provide the students with meaningful feedback that could translate into student's self-correction in later assignments and hopefully further in reading for life.

Implications of the Three-Phase Strategy of Teaching Main Idea

In step one, the instructor first explains what is meant by the main idea of a paragraph. Later, she shows and discusses a few sample paragraphs and their main ideas. The instructor can bring attention to the main idea by asking questions such as, "What is this paragraph about? What does the writer think about the topic? How does the writer show her opinion or feelings regarding this topic?" By asking and brainstorming answers to such questions, students get a feel for the kinds of questions they should be asking when looking for the main idea of a paragraph.

At this point, the instructor shares a paragraph with students and asks them to highlight in yellow the noun that is repeated the most in the paragraph. The instructor needs to bring to the students' attention that this should include all the pronouns that replace the noun as well as all of its synonyms or antonyms. This is the topic of the paragraph. Then as the students read the paragraph for the second or third time, they need to highlight in blue all the details and opinions of the writer regarding the topic. This marks the end of phase one (raising cognizance). Students have successfully been shown what to look for when they read a paragraph.

In step two, the instructor asks the students to write a sentence regarding the topic in yellow and the opinions and details in blue. Table 1 presents a sample response with instructor feedback, while

Table 2 shows a student's second response incorporating feedback. It is important that the instructor let the students know that an example or a detail cannot be the main idea of a paragraph. The examples and the details are in the paragraph to support an opinion that is either explicitly or implicitly stated in the paragraph. If the main idea is explicitly stated in the paragraph, students can just underline it. However, if the main idea is implicitly stated, then the students need to infer it (Boudah, 2013). Then the instructor provides the skates. She asks the students to check their work by writing *true* or *false* in front of the statements in the checklist (Appendix B). If they can comfortably write *true* in front of all the statements, then they can submit their work to the instructor. If even one statement is false, then they must go back and modify their work, so all the statements become true. This is the end of phase two (student skating) and a segue to the next phase.

For step three, the instructor uses the same checklist to provide feedback to the students regarding their main ideas (Table 2). Since both students and instructor use the same checklist, students understand clearly where their mistakes lie; they will also have a road map to correct their mistakes. The goal is for the students to gradually move away from the checklist, that is, for the skates to be removed from them, as they internalize the steps of finding the main idea of a paragraph. Table 3 presents the student's second attempt. Table 4 shows the instructor's response, using the same checklist previously used by the student (see Appendix B).

Instructors can use this strategy to teach main ideas in IELTS classes or reading classes for ESL students. This strategy helps IELTS students to recognize the main idea in different kinds of questions as usually they are not required to write the main idea. However, by learning how to write the main idea of a paragraph, they can also recognize the main idea when they come across it.

Table 1. *A Student's Sample, Attempt 1: Form the Main Idea of a Paragraph*

Student's sample main idea	Instructor's feedback
The first attempt	1st round
Magazines - a regular shopping or subscription item.	You have found the correct topic. Good job on that. "Regular shopping or subscription item" are supporting an implicit opinion that the writer has about magazines. You need to write a sentence that can be supported by these details. Your sentence has no verbs. Try one more time.

Table 2. *Using the Same Checklist First Used by the Student To Provide Feedback.*

My main idea is short.	✓
My main idea is not an example.	✓
My main idea is not a detail.	False
My main idea is a sentence.	False
My main idea is not one word.	✓
My main idea is not a fragment.	False
My main idea is supported by the details in the paragraph.	False

Table 3. *The Second Attempt of the Student To Form the Main Idea of the Same Paragraph.*

Student's sample main idea	Instructor's feedback
The second attempt	2nd and last round
Many magazines are read by many people.	This sentence shows the main idea well. Good job.

Table 4. *The Instructor's Use of the Same Checklist To Provide the Last Round of Feedback*

My main idea is short.	✓
My main idea is not an example.	✓
My main idea is not a detail.	✓
My main idea is a sentence.	✓
My main idea is not one word.	✓
My main idea is not a fragment.	✓
My main idea is supported by the details in the paragraph.	✓

It is important to note that the paragraph included in the question (see Appendix C) was from an IELTS student book, and the original exercise in the book was a multiple-choice question to find the main idea of the paragraph. The main idea that the student generated in the second attempt corresponds with the correct answer in the book: "A lot of people are still reading magazines." (Jakeman & Mcdowell, 2014).

Based on our observations, the students who generated the correct main ideas easily recognized the correct main idea in the multiple-choice exercise.

Conclusion

To sum up, this chapter looked at all 14 different types of IELTS questions (see Appendix A) and concluded that although none of the questions directly asked for the main idea, 35% of all questions asked for it implicitly. This was in contrast with the skills recommended for IELTS reading questions where only 13% of questions recommended finding the main idea as a skill needed to answer the questions correctly. By teaching and focusing more on finding the main idea as a useful skill in answering the IELTS reading questions, students can potentially answer more questions correctly. This contrasts with students and educators focusing only on the 13% of questions that explicitly mention main idea as a recommended skill. Students can potentially answer 22% more questions correctly as these questions are implicitly looking for the main idea in the reading section. We showed five specific types of questions that do not explicitly ask students to find the main idea; however, finding the main idea can potentially help students choose the correct answer to these questions. Those question types were matching paragraph information; list selection; true, false, not given; matching headings; and summary completion.

We proposed a new strategy for teaching main idea to ESL/EFL students that consists of the three phases of raising cognizance, student skating, and feedback. We also presented student and instructor samples to show how our strategy worked and resulted in students finding the main idea.

We believe that teaching the main idea should receive more importance in IELTS classes as it can enhance the chances of students choosing the correct answers. We also believe that our proposed strategy for teaching the main idea is one that is effective and meaningful to ESL/EFL and IELTS students. Our new strategy employs the essential skills of scanning and skimming to teach students the covert essential skill of finding the main idea of a paragraph. However, this strategy has to be tested on a bigger scale with instructors who have never used the strategy as well as with a larger number of students. A pretest and posttest with students taking the IELTS would be helpful in clarifying the effectiveness of this strategy. Also, having control groups and comparing their IELTS reading scores would be beneficial.

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Appendix A. A list of IELTS reading questions, their required skills, and recommended tips
(Cambridge.com/ielts-reading questions)

Question Type 1	**Matching Headings**
Task	From a list, choose an appropriate heading that matches the paragraph or section.
Skills	• understand the aims/purpose of each paragraph or section • distinguish the difference between the *main idea and supporting details • understand the idea/gist of each section/paragraph
Tips	• read the headings before you read the article • take note often more headings than are needed are listed • think critically about the headings before matching them. • note answers do not come in order
Question Type 2	**True, False, Not Given/Yes, No, Not Given**
Task.	Be able to tell if the information or writer's opinion (in the question) is found in the article
Skills:	• scan specific information and understand it • understand opinions
Tips:	• understand the meaning of each choice for an answer: o Yes/True – the information is in the article o No/False – the information in the article is opposite (to what is in the question) o Not Given – the information is not in the article • paraphrase sentences before looking for them • answers come in order
Question Type 3	**Matching Paragraph Information**
Task:	Match information given with the correct paragraph in the article
Skills:	• locate/identify specific information by scanning
Tips:	• paraphrase the question (information) • find information in the article • answers do not come in order • not all paragraphs may be used
Question Type 4	• **Summary Completion**
Task	Finish a summary by choosing words form the article or words in a box
Skills	• scan for specific information, understand ideas and supporting points, choosing relevant words
Tips	• determine what type of word (Part of speech – noun/verb/adjective) is needed – grammar must be correct • check the directions to see how many words can be used • answers usually come in order
Question Type 5	**Sentence Completion**
Task	Finish the sentences, choosing words from the article
Skills	• scan for specific information and understand it • choose correct words
Tips	• determine what type of word (Part of speech – noun/verb/adjective) is needed – grammar must be correct • find information in the article • check the directions to see how many words can be used • answers usually come in order

Question Type 6	**Multiple Choice**
Task	Select the correct answer (from 3 or 4 choices)
Skills	• scan and understand information
Tips	• paraphrase and find precise information • answers come in order
Question Type 7	**List Selection**
Task:	Choose the correct option from a list of words or names
Skills	• scan for information and understand it • identify ideas that relate to others
Tips	• paraphrase the list • identify key words in the questions • answers come in order
Question Type 8	**Choosing a Table**
Task	Select the best title from a list
Skills	• identify the aim/purpose of the article • differentiate between details and main idea
Tips	• take note of the differences in the suggested titles • pay attention to the openings and closing paragraphs
Question Type 9	**Categorization**
Task:	Decide which category the information belongs to from a list
Skills	• locate information for categorization
Tips	• find the information and decide which categorization the information belongs to. • look for paraphrasing.
Question Type 10	**Matching Sentence Endings**
Task	Finish each sentence by matching the beginnings and the endings (from a list)
Skills	• find and understand the information
Tips	• read each sentence part (beginnings and endings) • think about paraphrases • pay attention to grammar • sentence beginnings follow the order of information in the article • usually there are more answers than are needed
Question Type 11	**Table Completion**
Task	Fill in the Table with the correct word from the article
Skills	• find specific information in the article • understand detail
Tips:	• read the column headings in the table • identify the type of word/part of speech (noun, verb, adjective) needed • scan for information • answers are often in a specific part of the article • check directions for how many words you can use
Question Type 12	**Flow Chart Completion**
Task	Fill in the flow chart using words from the article
Skills	• find specific information
Tips	• understand details and main ideas • pay attention to the direction arrows to follow the information
Question Type 13	**Diagram Completion**
Task	Label a diagram
Skills	• locate the information relating to each part of the diagram • choose appropriate words
Tips	• identify the type of word/part of speech (noun, verb, adjective) needed • Find the information needed (usually in a specific paragraph or two

	• Take note of the number of words you can use (in the directions) • answers are not always in order
Question Type 14	**Short Answer**
Task	Answer questions about details in the article
Skills	• identify the type of word/part of speech (noun, verb, adjective) needed • paraphrase words • scan for information • Take note of the number of words you can use (in the directions) • answers are often in order
Tips	• No Tips given

Appendix B. Main Idea Handout

How?

1. Read the paragraph. Highlight yellow the noun that is most repeated. (Scanning and skimming)
2. Read again. This time highlight yellow the pronoun (s) that refers to the same noun, its synonymous phrases as well as its antonymous phrases. (Scanning and skimming)
3. Read the paragraph. This time highlight blue the opinion of the writer about the noun. This can be adjectives, numbers, details, and adjective clauses. (Scanning and skimming)
4. Use the noun in yellow and the author's opinion in blue to form a sentence which will be the main idea of your paragraph.

Remember!

1. The main idea is short. Probably one sentence for one paragraph.
2. An example can never be the main idea. (If the sentence has words, such as example, instance, like, etc, and instance, it is probably an example and not the main idea.)
3. The main idea cannot have a topic that is not in the paragraph.
4. A supporting idea cannot be the main idea.
5. Details cannot be the main idea. (If the sentence has details, such as numbers, and percentages, it is probably a detail regarding the topic, Hence, not the main idea.)

Checklist (True or False?)

My main idea is short.
My main idea is not an example.
My main idea is not a detail.
My main idea is a sentence.
My main idea is not one word.
My main idea is not a fragment.
My main idea is supported by the details in the paragraph (highlighted in blue).

You should confidently mark "true" all the points of the checklist before you hand in your main idea. If you mark any one of them as "false," you need to go back to the paragraph and revise your main idea until you can confidently mark all the statements as "true."

Appendix C. Main Idea Assignment

The report also shows that many magazines in Europe continue to enjoy circulations in millions. Although there are more and more television channels, whether cable, satellite, terrestrial, analogue, or digital, and despite the incursion of the Internet, magazines are still a regular shopping or subscription item (Jakeman & Mcdowell, 2014).

CHAPTER 05

Expanding Arabic Language Pedagogy to Support Online Engagement

Juwaeriah Siddiqui

Abstract

Non-native speakers of Arabic have low motivation to study Arabic (Taha-Thomure, 2008) despite studying the language formally in school for several years in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The global pandemic (COVID-19) has resulted in an unexpected shift and overdependency towards remote learning platforms since early 2020 and has impacted pedagogical practices in second language acquisition (SLA) which relies extensively on live interaction between the teacher and students in the SLA classroom. While there are several challenges pertaining to Arabic language education in private schools in the UAE such as lack of resources, quality of teaching, traditional techniques, and unqualified teachers (Taha-Thomure, 2008), the additional transition to online learning has further reduced the quality of engagement in Arabic language classrooms for non-native Arabic learners in the region. Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1981) emphasizes "negotiation of meaning" as a means to improve interpersonal and presentational communication among the second language (L2) learners (as cited in Eckerth, 2009). This qualitative study examines an online L2 Arabic classroom for a duration of five weeks incorporating a 3-step engagement model with a focus on improving proficiency by maximizing skill-building and interaction to enhance the quality of student engagement. The results reveal a link between the rate of interaction during live instruction, post-class video submission, and overall satisfaction from the course. The implications for online Arabic language classrooms are discussed, including strategies to adopt interactive engagement both during the live instruction as well as post-class to help increase Arabic language usage (including vocabulary acquisition), interaction, and improve proficiency in Arabic classrooms online.

Introduction

In early 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic forced a sudden closure of in-person activities including schools, colleges, and universities, thereby enforcing the transition of educational units to online platforms (Putri et al., 2020). According to the World Economic Forum (2020), the educational sector was hugely impacted by this online transition, wherein 1.6 billion children in over 180 countries were affected by school closures. Several schools across the globe implemented abrupt measures to ease online teaching and support remote learning. For example, Gewin (2020) highlights the importance of creating focused lessons for online learning, utilizing live-video conferencing as a follow-up to self-learning modules, and not depending entirely on live-video conferencing due to variability in connections by learners across the world. This is further reiterated by other studies on online learning (Cook & Dupras, 2004; Gewin, 2020; Putri et al., 2020) that emphasize the need for learners to be able to interact with the course material for effective online learning. Interacting with the course material can happen at different stages, based on the duration of the course, the learner's ability to process information, and the support they require to engage with the material. As such, the need to interact while designing a supportive

remote learning experience is crucial to the online transition. Evidence from one recent study (Donnelly et al. 2021) analyzing the impact of COVID-19 on education suggests "the lack of personal interaction between teacher and student" as one of the limitations of abrupt remote learning. Studies such as Maldonado (2020) observed the effect of school closures on standardized student test in Belgium, Engzell et al. (2020) looked at learning loss during the pandemic, and Christodoulou (2020, cited in Donnelly et al., 2021) looked into setbacks in secondary school writing, highlighting the impact of COVID-19 on education across Europe during mid-2020, further indicating the loss in learning and increase in inequality owing to the school closures and shift in online learning platforms. This was especially true among households where parents have less education or low socio-economic status.

Moreover, while certain sectors of the educational institutions were better equipped to transition to a remote learning platform, some sectors which might have technology embedded in their in-person classes but are not predominantly established in the e-learning environment found it extremely difficult to upgrade their teaching and learning to an online medium in such a short period. One such scenario was the Arabic language classroom environment in the UAE. Recent studies reveal the lack of resources and facilities for online learning in most if not all Arabic language departments and Arabic teaching methodologies in the UAE (Taha-Thomure, 2008; Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011; Belhiah & Elhami, 2015). Such outdated conditions and the inability to adapt to new technologies have posed extra challenges to Arabic language classrooms, including second language learners in the UAE who were forced to transition to online classes. According to Al-Issa and Dahan (2011), most private schools in the UAE have English as their prime medium of instruction while Arabic is reduced to twice a week during the Arabic language, Islamic studies, and sometimes social studies classes. Furthermore, all the remaining subjects are taught in English thereby rendering Arabic as a language not suitable for scientific advancement (Taha-Thomure, 2008; Al-Issa & Dahan, 2011; Belhiah & Elhami, 2015). English remains the language of preference for most Arabs and non-Arabs in the region, and children are often not encouraged to study Arabic as a way to become bilingual.

Additionally, not all students are accustomed to online learning and are unable to seek help at home, as they come from non-Arabic-speaking families (Calafato & Tang, 2019). For parents whose first or second language is not Arabic, supporting their child's mandatory study of Arabic in school often poses challenges. Additionally, many teachers and lecturers are not yet proficient in teaching Arabic using internet technology. Given the shift in teaching, it is interesting to see how research can expand Arabic pedagogy to maximize online interaction time and use it towards improving the often-overlooked component of Arabic teaching, that is, communicative skills (Issa & Dahan, 2011).

The purpose of this study was to maximize student interaction in an online environment by improving engagement in second language classrooms with a focus on communication skills among the second language (L2) Arabic learners in the UAE. The current study is aimed at exploring the interaction of these L2 Arabic learners during a 5-week Arabic course designed to maximize skill-building during the times of COVID 19. The research question guiding the study was, "How can we incorporate intentional skill-building among L2 Arabic learners online?"

Literature Review

The role of interaction in second language acquisition (SLA) has been crucial to the discourse on L2 education (e.g., Gass et al., 1998; Pica et al., 1986). When we talk of interaction, we find Long's (1981) Interaction Hypothesis emphasizes negotiation of meaning as a means to improve interpersonal and presentational communication among L2 learners, the reason being when L2 learners engage in negotiation of meaning, they increase their exposure to comprehensible input, receive feedback, and work collaboratively to attain an understanding of the target language. This brings about a positive effect in their ability to communicate in the target language, improving their grammar, vocabulary, and overall communicative skills (McDonough, 2005; Mackey & Gass, 2015). In this study, the interaction was observed through engagement with the course content, during the live instruction and post-instruction through submissions.

According to Connell and Wellborn (1991), "[E]ngagement is particularly important because it functions as a behavioral pathway through which students' motivational processes contribute to their subsequent learning and development" (as cited in Jang et al., 2010, p. 588). While motivation is a trait that is subjectively measured and is hidden in the classroom, engagement is more objectively observable and can be considered. Hence, being able to draw a pathway to understand engagement as an outcome of a language learner's motivation is essential (Muir & Dornyei, 2013).. The engagement model was assessed using a three-stage model (Context-Support-Process) keeping in mind the main ideas discussed by Leslie Grahn in her ACTFL webinar on how language educators can maximize *prime time* instruction to intentionally build students' language skills needed to progress to the next proficiency level" (Grahn, 2020). The process of implementing this three-stage model will be elaborated below.

Interaction Hypothesis

Gass and Mackey (2007) state that "Interaction refers to conversations that learners engage in" (cited in Shrum & Glisan, 2000, p. 176). This is particularly true among individuals when they are negotiating meaning or working to prevent a breakdown in communication. Interaction is a valuable way to increase acquisition (Eckerth 2009) and necessitates the need to provide learning opportunities for the L2 learner to hear the language, cooperate with others in using and negotiating the L2, and experience an environment that supports the student's self-expression (Shrum & Glisan, 2000, p. 176). Shrum and Glisan further stated that "proficiency should serve an organizing principle to design course objectives and course content" (p. 176) rather than being considered as a fixed instructional process. Hence, designing an online Arabic classroom by adapting a proficiency-oriented teaching style will increase the use of the target language, as evidenced by Rollman in a German L2 classroom (Rollman, 1994). Language learning may be seen merely as input, but it requires favorable conditions offered by an interactive context. As such, interaction is a necessary condition for acquisition, which outweighs input received in any other way (Eckerth 2009).

Student Engagement

A study by Fredricks and McColskey (2012) on measuring student engagement by using comparative analysis of various self-reporting methods concluded that most current methods lack the ability to trace the dynamic and interactive nature of engagement. This calls for a need to view

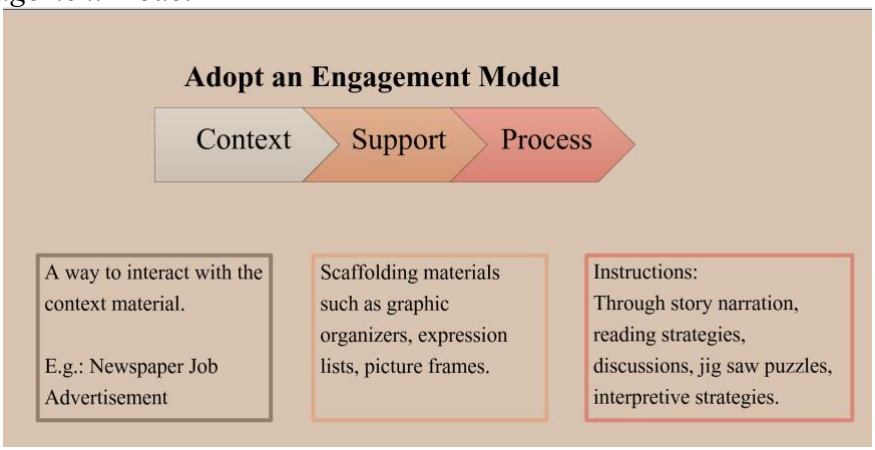
engagement through a dynamic, changing lens where the emerging changes (behavioral, emotional, and cognitive realms) within a student's engagement as well the interconnectedness between these realms can be carefully studied. While this study (Fredricks & McColskey, 2012) measures the student engagement of students in upper elementary through high school years and performs the comparative analysis on self-report measures due to its increasing popularity, it does not relay information on teacher reports or observation methods. Furthermore, we draw on the work by Lee and Brophy (1996) which emphasizes "the need to integrate learning and cognition with motivation in the classroom" (p. 303). Student engagement is considered to play a crucial role in students' achievement through their active involvement in tasks, assessed through the emotional quality and behavioral intensity (Connell & Wellborn, 1991). Research on engagement has usually focused on three main constructs: behavioral, cognitive, and emotional with a recent addition of the agentic engagement construct.

Engagement Model for maximizing skill building online

The engagement process was defined by Leslie Grahn (2020) as being comprised of three core aspects: context, support, and process. According to Grahn, online interactions should be based on a 3-part engagement model to facilitate use of target language. Context is described as "gestures, visuals, objects, connections with prior learning or experiences" that are a necessary part of a language classroom (Grahn, 2020). Support in an L2 classroom can be in the form of scaffolding materials such as graphic organizers, expression lists, picture frames that help the students engage with the authentic text and pursue the activity/task (Grahn, 2020). Process is the strategy the students apply to perform the activity such as story narration, reading strategies, or interpretive strategies (Cohen, 1996). This engagement model can be applied across online language classrooms and can serve as a means to guide students to intentionally build their language skills and build their confidence in the language by providing appropriate support and scaffolding material. In a traditional language classroom setting, students interact with the *context*, such as a piece of authentic language and are instructed to perform an activity in class under the guidance of a teacher (Ciornei & Dina, 2015). For example, if the L2 activity requires choosing three important words from the passage, the support for the activity is provided by the presence of the teacher and peers around the learner.

In the current study, the context was provided by pre-recordings (videos related to the concept taught each week) in addition to the material being shared in class during live instruction; the support was given through the presence of the teacher during the live instruction, and the student's process of understanding was assessed by the nature of submission. This three-step engagement model (Figure 1) is fluid, in the sense that each step is not linear and separate. The support can be given before or after live instruction and is not limited to live instruction time with the teacher. It can be in the form of scaffolding materials and graphic organizers, or group projects (Grahn, 2020).

Figure 1. *Engagement Model*



Methodology

The purpose of this study was to maximize skill building during live instruction in an Arabic classroom and observe the changes in interaction for the participants in the class. According to Al-Qahtani and Higgins, "e-learning might have a negative impact on the development of communication skills of learners" (Al-Qahtani & Higgins, 2013, p. 222). Hence, given the transition to online learning during COVID-19, it was interesting to observe the changes in participant interaction. Using a virtual platform to improve engagement in a proficiency-based classroom is not a simple task (Al-Qahtani & Higgins, 2013) and thereby requiring the study of the relationship between student interaction and communication skills to understand skill building.

Qualitative research studies can give new insights into learners' language experiences, especially during changing circumstances and the need to adopt new learning practices. This qualitative design was used to observe the online interaction of students in an Arabic classroom and gain real life insight during COVID-19. The advantage of observing online recordings is that the student's interaction could be noted so as to understand their engagement. Furthermore, one could assess if there exists a relationship between in-class interaction and post-class submissions. Additionally, a feedback form was sent to the parents of the participants towards the end of the course as the participants were too young to report their satisfaction; hence, the parents were asked to contribute.

Participants

The participants were 14 elementary aged students who had beginner skills in Arabic (able to identify and read basic letters in Arabic). They were all non-native Arabic learners between 3-8 years of age. By non-native, we mean neither parent is a native Arabic speaker. Four participants among the group study in a private school where the primary medium of instruction is English and Arabic is taught as a second language thrice a week. Apart from these four students who had been going to school for the previous three years, the remaining participants were homeschooled and had been studying Arabic at home. Table 1 provides a breakdown of participants' reported first languages. While these participants come from non-native Arabic speaking families with varying first languages (Urdu, Hindi, Tamil, etc.), the data from the feedback form revealed the

participants' primary means of communication was English. In this course, students were expected to acquire the skills and attitudes needed to communicate actively in Arabic. These participants had preliminary knowledge of identifying Arabic letters and words and lacked practice in listening and speaking activities. The study was designed to improve the participants' oral and presentational skills in Arabic by applying techniques that support proficiency (Shrum & Glisan, 2000) throughout the 5-week course. (Note: This study does not intend to equate the participants' reported L1 as their preferred language of communication or competence. Owing to the lingua franca of UAE being English, with diverse nationalities, non-native Arabic speakers are often found choosing to speak in English over their L1 or Arabic.)

Table 1. *Breakdown of Participants' Reported First Languages*

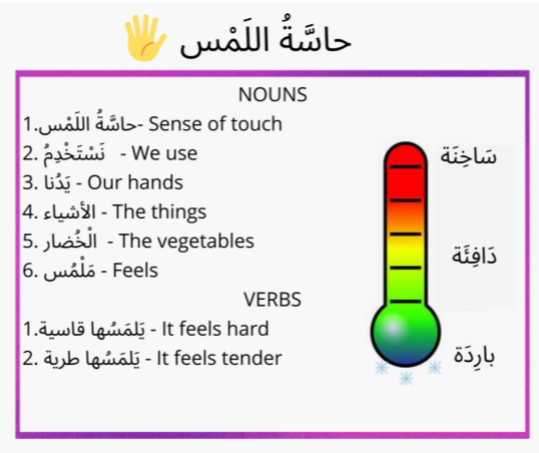
First Language	Number of participants	Percentage
Urdu	6	42.85
Malyalam	1	07.14
Tamil	3	21.43
Nawayathi	4	28.57
Total	14	-

Data collection

Over a period of six weeks, from June 2020 to July 2020, data was collected during a series of five live sessions in an online Arabic classroom setting. The online sessions were video-recorded, and the participants were made aware that the recordings may be available for viewing later, once the course was completed. Parental consent was obtained to proceed with the recordings.

In the first stage, the participants were asked to view a pre-recorded activity in the Arabic language prior to the live sessions. The participants were required to view the activity video a few times before attending the live instruction (scheduled online for a duration of 45 minutes, once every week). The aim was to have participants actively listen to the themed content, familiarize themselves with the prime vocabulary and sounds associated with the theme, and help them grasp the concept. The video recordings were supplemented with pop-up texts during the video; vocabulary sheets were provided for the parents. This would build their initial understanding of the theme and prepare them with a few words for practicing their oral skills. Figure 2 presents an example vocabulary sheet.

Figure 2. *Supplementary Vocabulary Sheet*



Each week during the live instruction, participants were asked to bring a physical object associated with the theme to the session, and each participant was given a chance to present their object in Arabic during the online class, thereby creating a safe space for engaging in meaningful conversation and exchange of ideas among their peers. The live session was designed using the same vocabulary as the pre-recordings; however, the teacher elaborated on how the word could be applied in different contexts. For example, if the activity consisted of the sentence, "I see the colour green," the learner was asked to present a fruit of their choice and talk about it and its colour. This helped the learner transfer their understanding of colour to another object, develop oral competency, and present with confidence in front of their peers in a classroom setting.

After attending the online instruction each week, the participants had five or six days to perform a similar activity (as seen in the recording) or at least attempt to communicate using the use the newly acquired vocabulary (a less-structured activity), record themselves, and submit their performance in an online group submission folder (Google doc). This stage was meant to extend the interaction post instruction by giving the L2 Arabic learner a platform to use the Arabic language, equipped with the context and support provided in the earlier stages. The learner was not time bound and could add their own understanding of the language to communicate and perform in varying contexts (Shrum & Glisan, 2000, p. 173). The impact of such a three-fold engagement model to maximize skill building during live instruction is reflected in the participants' increased ability to communicate in the target language. The findings of the study will be elaborated in the section below.

Ethical Consideration

Parental consent was taken for participation of the children and ethical considerations were ensured throughout the study. The parents were informed that the data collection during the sessions would be used for research purposes. All the data related to the participants' direct identity like names were changed to maintain privacy and the original identification was destroyed.

Observation

Each of the five sessions was recorded via Zoom and lasted for 40 minutes. The study was interested in exploring if there was a direct relationship between the in-class participation online and the rate of submission post session. Is there a trend between those who are more willing to communicate and made post session submissions? What could we tell about the students who remained silent during live instruction yet were consistent in submitting their weekly submissions? Given that most of the students do not speak the target language on a day-to-day basis, it was necessary to record the change in their interaction, ability to perform, and use the target language through video submissions.

While there are different ways of observing participation of L2 learners, the focus of the study was to find if there is a direct relationship between live interaction and post class submissions, given a lot of the process of following instructions happens outside the live instruction time. The current study employed unstructured observation techniques and did not make use self-reporting questionnaires or an observation scheme such as the one developed by Guilloteaux and Dornyei called the motivation orientation of language teaching (MOLT) in 2008. These questionnaires are usually used to assess the quality of students' motivation and teachers' teaching practice during a class. MOLT "follows the real-time coding principle of Spada and Fröhlich's (1995) communication orientation of language teaching (COLT) scheme but uses categories of observable teacher behaviors" to assess the quality of motivation (cited in Guilloteaux & Dornyei, 2008, p. 57). On the other hand, unstructured observation is preferred when one is not sure what to look for; given that this study was observing young children in an online environment to assess their motivation and engagement, applying an unstructured scheme at the beginning phase of the research seemed more appropriate. The focus of these observations was on the first two dimensions of interaction-friendly instructional practices, that is, "the general focus of attention in the classroom (i.e., student-centered, teacher-centered),… [and] the interactional dynamics within a given activity" (Zuniga & Simard, 2016, p. 137).

In a traditional L2 classroom setting, the teacher provides a task using authentic material (context). The students are instructed to interact with the material, practice, and produce results (Shintani, 2011). For example, in an L2 Arabic class, after viewing a newspaper article in Arabic, students can be asked to derive three main ideas from the text. The teacher and peers act as the support system and engage in structured production activities. In comparison, in an e-learning setting the teachers may not have appropriate time to address the students' challenges; they may/may not provide the context before the live instruction; and if the reading material is provided earlier, it is not necessarily true that the L2 learner has engaged with the text before the live instruction (Bhamani et al., 2020). In other words, skill building in an online platform requires deliberate design to ensure interaction and negotiation of meaning. Given the need to shift to L2 teaching online, a traditional classroom cannot be replicated in virtual space despite having the same instruction time. In any case, that would stipulate providing the context and instructions, all provided in the same session where the language learner is expected to simultaneously expand on their language skills. This may work in a traditional classroom setting, with face-to-face interaction and teacher support during the interaction.

During our 5-week course, keeping in mind intentional skill building, the context and opportunity to engage with the authentic material was spread over the week. The students were sent pre-

recorded activities each week prior to the live session so as to provide context for the live session. Moreover, once the live instruction was completed, learners could refer to those pre-recorded activities while creating their own videos/submissions, with the recorded sessions thereby serving as a medium of support to the learner. Similarly, the teacher provided a means to understand the context further while also modeling a few sentences and dialogues during the live session to build the learner's ability to perform and interact during the live session. Subsequently, when the student went back to creating the video submission post live instruction, they could access the pre-recordings, had attempted to use the target vocabulary during the live instruction, and had scaffolding material to support their video submission, thereby increasing their overall ability to perform in the target language.

Findings and Discussion

The participant interaction and submission were observed in the online Arabic classroom; as can be seen in Table 2, the following observations were made. Students' interaction during the live instruction ranged from low, where the student was not responsive or did not answer the questions that were asked in the class, to a medium level interaction where the participant fluctuated on how often they chose to communicate with the teacher and other peers. Students with a high level of interaction were consistent in their communication during the live instruction and were highly interactive and responsive to the tasks and questions asked in class. The students who interacted for one part of the instruction, but chose to not respond in other parts, were labelled as having a medium level of interaction.

Table 2: *Participant Interaction and Submission*

Participant number	In-class interaction	Post-class submission	Overall course satisfaction
P1	High	Medium	High
P2	High	High	High
P3	Low	Low	Low
P4	Medium	Low	Low
P5	Medium	High	High

Two major profiles emerged from the analysis of the current data set: 1) High interaction / consistent submissions / high course satisfaction; 2) Medium to low interaction / inconsistent submissions / acceptable course satisfaction.

Participants' use of the target language was observed in the post-class video submissions. The students were asked to perform in the target language by recording a short video where they expressed themselves in the target language for 1-2 minutes. This way, the students were given context in class, provided with supporting material such as vocabulary, practice communicating, and were then asked to submit post class. This ensured they had time to engage with the material and produce meaningful output. Based on the major profiles that emerged from the observations above, it is evident that there is a relationship between student interaction and their rate of submission. While we cannot prove the cause-and-effect relation at this stage, it is necessary to highlight the dynamic engagement process that is occurring in an online L2 Arabic classroom.

Mostly, students' in-class interaction ranged from medium to high during the live session with very few students choosing not to interact. They viewed the pre-recording and were prepared to hear and apply the same vocabulary during live instruction. However, moving forward, once the live instruction ended and the students had to perform, they had varying video submission rates. This speaks not only to the lack of motivation but also the inability to perform in the target language. As a result, some students (with low submissions) were unable to showcase their learning, which in turn was reflective of their overall satisfaction with the course.

Table 2. *Overall Course Satisfaction through Parent Feedback*

Parent	**Profile**	**Feedback**	**Overall Satisfaction**
Parent 1	**Profile 1** High interaction/consistent submissions/ high course satisfaction	(All praise is to God,) Kids have an increased Arabic vocabulary, can repeat sentences well with minimal encouragement, and I find them using Arabic words randomly while playing or speaking!! They also come up to me and ask me what such-and-such is called in Arabic! This curiosity to know more and for them to have direct, immersive exposure to the language, from the comfort of HOME, getting over their fear of learning a new language, has been my main intention/focus….	Yes, my child achieved the desired outcome (vocabulary, motivation, interest).
Parent 2	**Profile 1** High interaction/consistent submissions/ high course satisfaction	It was his first experience with spoken Arabic and Alhamdulillah he enjoyed it. Hopefully, this will be a boost to develop further.	Yes, my child achieved the desired outcome (vocabulary, motivation, interest).
Parent 3	**Profile 2** Medium to low interaction/inconsistent submissions/acceptable course satisfaction.	The main intention was to let go of the fear to start. After taking this course, I wanted to be able to have at least 5 sentences to say to another person.	Mostly, but I am happy with my child's outcome in this course.
Parent 4	**Profile 2** Medium to low interaction/inconsistent submissions/acceptable course satisfaction.	Good experience, I expect little more intense in the upcoming courses.	Mostly, but I am happy with my child's outcome in this course.
Parent 5	**Profile 1**	They have grown tremendously in their confidence to just get	Yes, my child achieved the desired

Parent	Profile	Feedback	Overall Satisfaction
	High interaction/consistent submissions/ high course satisfaction	themselves to speak in Arabic. They are not yet comfortable initiating a conversation but if someone else has initiated they will happily join in. Especially my 2nd child, I am amazed (All praise is to God). She is a real shy one but was always enthusiastic about attending the zoom sessions or an experiment. Initially I could sense that they wanted me around to be on standby if they needed anything or so. But now they are super chill about it.	outcome (vocabulary, motivation, interest).

Is There a Relationship between the Rate of Submission and the Overall Satisfaction from the Arabic Course?

To understand the participants' satisfaction from the course, the parents were asked for feedback regarding the child's attitude and satisfaction towards the end of the course. This is because the participants were considered too young (below 7 years) to give feedback themselves. The parents were asked the following question: *Please elaborate on how you feel about your child's overall Arabic growth with this online course*? It was interesting to observe that the participants who fit into the Profile 1 were reported by their parents to be highly motivated after the course. The parents were also satisfied by their children's growth and interest in the language. Table 3 highlights the statements generated by parents of both Profile 1 and Profile 2. As can be seen from the section below, parents of Profile 2 students, whose children were not consistent in submitting, reported having higher expectations from the course but were still happy with the child's exposure to the Arabic language through the course. In this case, we can say that their level of satisfaction was acceptable only.

As seen from the above findings, parent of profile 1 reported:

> *[K]ids have an increased Arabic vocabulary, can repeat sentences well with minimal encouragement, and I find them using Arabic words randomly while playing or speaking!! They also come up to me and ask me what such-and-such is called in Arabic! This curiosity to know more and for them to have direct, immersive exposure to the language, from the comfort of home, getting over their fear of learning a new language, has been my main intention/focus.*

It appears from the description of parental feedback regarding Profile 1 participants that the interaction and video submissions helped participants maximize their skill building which further helped them demonstrate their performance in the target language through consistent video

submissions. Subsequently, that led to a higher level in class interaction and post class performance, thereby resulting in positive overall satisfaction with the course. These students were able to maintain their motivation by interaction and making use of opportunities to produce meaning focused output.

In comparison, a parent of Profile 2 reported: Good experience, I expect little more intense in the upcoming courses, more interaction.

This difference might not be surprising, given the participant had medium to low level of interaction and was inconsistent in submitting their videos and using the target language. As such, they were unable to communicate in Arabic to the extent that they wanted, and this was reflected in their overall satisfaction in the course. Such participants are used to the ideas of learning and interacting in a traditional classroom setting and have a high expectation of in class interaction and performance. However, as mentioned earlier, it is difficult for students to engage with authentic material, follow instruction strategy, and perform within the same live instruction online. These elements have to be designed as a 3-step engagement model so as to help the L2 learner maximize skills in the target language. Taking the opportunity to perform in the post class activity in a language class becomes a necessary component in improving communicating skills in the target language, in this case Arabic as a L2, thus enhancing proficiency which is further reflected in the feedback given by the parents of these students.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, to maximize skill building and enhance the quality of engagement in online L2 Arabic classrooms, interaction needs to be an essential component of the course design. The present study shows how important it is to maximize skill building during live instruction and create opportunities for student interaction and performance beyond the live instruction time. Contrary to popular belief about L2 classrooms, wherein the curriculum is designed to include interaction and performance during classroom instruction (Shintani, 2011), in an online environment, it would be more realistic to extend interaction and use of target language outside the time-bound live instruction. Interaction can extend not only to task-based instructions, but also to engaging with the study context before and after the live sessions, cooperative strategies such as group tasks, performance, and presentation in the target language (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007). The objective of the live instruction becomes maximizing their L2 skills, which further supports their performance in the target language. This kind of interaction allows L2 learners to interact and perform as a means to improve their interpersonal and presentational skills.

This study addressed the relationship between consistent submissions and overall satisfaction from an L2 Arabic online course. In a remote platform, specifically in an Arabic language classroom, the students have limited instruction time with their teachers and peers; subsequently, the L2 learner interaction is far reduced (Bhamani et al., 2020). As a consequence, L2 Arabic learners have to rely on self-study or support at home to complete the activity. By intentionally building the students' skills during live instruction, we equip the student to engage with the post session activity in a meaningful way which leads to more interaction with the target language and a more acceptable overall satisfaction. Additionally, Grahn (2020) elaborates on the need to model and think aloud for the students during live instruction in the target language to familiarize them with

the strategies and routines for performing the task later. Furthermore, to test the need for scaffolding and modelling in a traditional model of language learning, the pre-recorded activity videos combined with the post-session submissions offer the necessary virtual support to maximize on skill building in the target language.

Based on the current study, it is evident that while designing virtual classes for Arabic, emphasis has to be placed on creating interacting context. This authentic context can be a part of pre-sessions and post instructions, which gives the L2 student more time to engage with the material before coming live. Another major issue is to incentivize engagement by asking the student to bring a question/hard words/main idea from the pre-session material to the live instruction. This way, you can have a higher number of students viewing the material before class. While the present study did not exclusively elaborate on the age of the participants, it is an essential factor while designing the interplay between the context and support. Looking at the existing capacity of the student to be able to engage with the context before getting instructions from the teacher will help develop appropriate content.

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CHAPTER 06

Three Effective Steps for Teaching Writing Skills to Novice Arab Learners of English

Mutaib Alotaibi

Abstract

This study proposes three practical steps of teaching writing to novice English as a second language (ESL) learners: brainstorming, folder methodology, and freewriting. The first step, brainstorming, is used to figure out the main concepts and ideas of a specific topic given to students, and the teacher writes those ideas on the whiteboard. Next, students are taught to write with coherence, acceptable spelling, and correct grammar structures in their second language. Then, the folder methodology uses a folder that allows each learner to take responsibility for the previous and current writing errors, similar to a portfolio. The goal is to help students track and take responsibility for their progress, which could be achieved by increasing student autonomy, goal setting, and student reinforcement. The third step, freewriting, encourages students to keep writing without stopping; the goal of this phase is to go through the writing process, not necessarily to produce pieces of writing.

Introduction

Teaching English writing is not only related to teaching vocabulary and sentence structures; it is also about guiding students through the whole process of brainstorming and organizing thoughts while keeping them actively engaged and motivated. In addition, writing is a fundamental part of engaging in professional, social, community, and real life. It helps students communicate thoughts and ideas to others and encourages them to engage with the text to deepen their understanding of the content. In addition, it draws connections to prior learning experiences.

Because writing is a highly complex process, it is often challenging to teach academic writing in a meaningful way to second language learners. Of the four language domains (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), fluency in writing is typically the last domain that students master (K. Flynn, personal communication, October 12, 2018). It requires a high level of vocabulary, content knowledge, and rhetorical structures and an understanding of the functions of language within different systems.

I noticed that English teachers did not know how to teach writing skills correctly in their lessons in my school. They are not fully prepared to teach writing. As a result, students are disappointingly weak in writing in English. This paper aims to suggest three effective teaching writing techniques to novice English learners: brainstorming, folder methodology, and freewriting, which will significantly increase students' writing skills and performance.

Problem Statement

Unmistakably, writing is an intellectual action; along these lines, educators have an important job in helping weak students further develop their writing abilities by informing them about the meaning of excellent writing abilities for advancement in their profession. Moreover, they can offer and put together productive courses in writing that will enable learners to get abilities and information in supportive writing methodologies.

A few elements can represent learners' challenges in writing. The principal reason is because of a reductionist way of dealing with writing, which dismisses writing as coordinated with other language abilities and offers a way to a more instructor-focused methodology, according to Javadi-Safa (2018). In this way, it overemphasizes revising surface mistakes in writing and denies students a shot at choosing their own writing themes. The second explanation is verified writing trepidation or dread of writing, which may be derived from the creation approach that just spotlights the result of writing while disregarding its cycle. The useless talk strategy in showing writing can be viewed as the third explanation. Another one, especially perceptible in English as a Second Language or English as a Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) settings, is due to the substantial writing classes (Javadi-Safa, 2018). To wrap things up, the reason is the crumbling of print culture and the beginning of television, radio, computers, computer games, and motion pictures.

Literature Review

Using varying writing techniques such as brainstorming, freewriting, and the folder method can have a positive impact on students' writing outcomes. One of the benefits of these techniques is developing academic vocabulary and "an expansion of knowledge that represents different concepts" (Hussain, 2017, p. 213). When contextualized in writing practice, language is more easily learned by the students and more effectively taught by the teacher (Goodwin, 2012; Hussain, 2017). Furthermore, brainstorming releases a creative and innovative approach to writing; students are not deterred by impossible or additional challenges.

Writing assumes an indispensable part in English learners' academic life. Grammar is a fundamental part of any great piece of writing. Foundation studies uncover that grammar is quite possibly the main difficulty concerning learners' literary writing execution, often due to the contrast between their native language and second language frameworks (Atashian & Al-Bahri, 2018).

Numerous analysts have explored grammar hardships in academic writing that an extraordinary number of ESL students face. One approach makes writing more open to new experiences and less inhibited (Goodwin, 2012; Hussain, 2017). Because the focus is less on mechanics and grammar, such methods allow students to develop their writing fluency, content, and form (Celce-Murcia, 2001). As for the folder methodology, it provides an opportunity for students to control what they submit for grading, which gives them a better chance to succeed. Therefore, they become evaluators of their writing. In addition, it increases the students' understanding of materials, which improves their overall educational experience (Goodwin, 2012).

The importance of writing capacity and its genuine situation in addressing students' learning certifications is unquestionable in second language educating and research. Essentially, writing is viewed as a troublesome errand, in any event, for local speakers; however, it is substantially scarier for non-locals, particularly EFL students. For the most part, writing research points in the second language range from disciplinary to interdisciplinary, lastly to the meta-disciplinary field of the request. Also, while the behavioristic and contrastive manner of speaking is considered as the two principal ways to deal with showing writing, we can name the item arranged, the cycle situated, and the post-measure approaches as the common ones to the investigation of writing. Finally, the organization of writing evaluation has been classified into insightful and impressionistic (all-encompassing) methods that language educators and analysts use extensively.

Methodology

The Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia is in charge of general education for students. The country offers public education for students. High school in Saudi Arabia lasts three years, and it is the final stage of public education with a credit-bearing system. The curriculum in primary, middle, and high schools is highly standardized and has only minimal difference among schools. Students study the English language from the first grade until the university level.

The most applicable methodology for this research undertaking involved selecting students randomly from a classroom setting to critically analyze their learning process. This random selection incorporated a control group of students that had not had prior training when it comes to ESL. Different techniques that have been previously mentioned were applied to the students, and they were also required to undertake surveys to gauge their performance and the progress that they made. Data analysis was conducted to determine which approaches are most favorable in teaching ESL. The experimental and control group were closely monitored by the instructors in order to eliminate any form of bias that might compromise the results computed at the end of the study.

The goals of the study are to increase awareness of the best approaches to students acquiring English as a second language. It also includes recommendations that can be applied in the KSA Ministry of Education to increase the availability of instructors that offer ESL. The importance of English is vital, and its significance is instrumental to the growing globalization moves.

Proposal: Effective Techniques for Teaching Writing

This section highlights suggested techniques for teaching writing that can significantly increase students' writing skills and performance. I proposed three effective methods of teaching writing to novice English learners: brainstorming, folder methodology, and freewriting. Practical strategies for teaching writing to Saudi secondary students help teachers enhance teaching writing methods. For example, according to Hussain (2017), one motivating process for Arab students is brainstorming. This technique is used to figure out the main concepts and ideas, reading books, and planning compositions. In addition, it is associated with learning vocabulary and knowledge that shows different pictures (Hussain, 2017).

Brainstorming

The brainstorming process was performed in two steps. Firstly, students were divided into different small groups. Each group was assigned a topic and asked to write down their ideas during a given time. During the discussion, they collected and organized their thoughts on the subject. Secondly, when the time was up, groups showed their reviews about the topic, and the teacher wrote those ideas on the whiteboard. In this part of the activity, the teacher corrected students' spelling and grammar errors and guided their ideas to be more concrete and organized. Students learned how to write with coherence, acceptable spelling, and correct grammar structures in their second language using this brainstorming technique. Skills were enhanced by learning the steps involved in effective writing. To be most effective, the activities should be linked to fundamental-life topics that interest the students (Hussain, 2017).

Folder Methodology

The second technique I proposed was the folder methodology. It entailed using a folder that allowed each learner to take responsibility for his or her previous and current writing errors, much like a portfolio. This portfolio provides data that can be used by writing teachers to monitor their students' progress. The primary goal of this folder methodology was to stimulate the students' intrinsic motivation by allowing them to track and take responsibility for their own progress, which could be achieved by increasing student autonomy, goal setting, and student reinforcement. According to Goodwin, the learners' reaction and development that was used to identify the effectiveness of the folder methodology illustrate a way of improving ESL/EFL writing (Goodwin, 2012).

Freewriting

The last technique was freewriting. Students are given enough time to write freely in this phase. If students are not able to think of anything to write, they can write about how that feels or repeat a few phrases over and over. The crucial point is to keep writing despite any barriers. Thus, the goal of freewriting is in the process, not the product. Celce-Murcia (2001) presented several teaching approaches, highlighting the importance of quantity over quality in writing. In a second language approach, control of language mechanics such as grammar and spelling are stressed. Celce-Murcia pointed out that writers have to deal with these features when writing in a second language (2001). Mechanics and word choice were added to these features, such as content, organization, and writing.

Listyani (2018) states that writing in a second language is different from writing in one's mother tongue; writing in a foreign language is thought to be more exciting than writing in the first language. Therefore, teachers must understand the differences between writing in the first language (L1) and writing in the second language (L2). Hyland (2016) pointed out that teaching writing is made difficult by the definition of writing, and its purpose will directly affect methodology. All the articles mentioned above portray L2 writing instruction as a complicated and

complex challenge for learners and teachers. As a result, based on the research, teachers must choose the most appropriate teaching methods and strategies for their writing classes.

Implementation

This section describes how to implement this project. What follows introduces the step-by-step procedures with the timeline, limitations, and impact evaluation over two school semesters. First, I tried to identify the text features in a chosen text that teachers want students to imitate in their writing while also creating lessons that help students notice the same features. Second, I planned to teach students rhetorical structures and patterns without overloading or confusing them.

It is essential to make learning tasks exciting and accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and lower English language proficiency. To apply these techniques, in August 2019, I convinced my school principal of the importance and the effectiveness of using the three writing techniques with novice learners of English. In addition, I provided some videos about how these techniques are very crucial in our school. Then, in September 2019, I introduced the same content to teachers by organizing bi-monthly workshops introducing the three strategies. I started with five EFL teachers before expanding this work in my school district.

In doing so, I hoped to build a good relationship with my colleagues. In addition, I discussed and explained any point that was not obvious to them. On September 1, 2019, I applied the first technique, which was brainstorming. Then, the folder methodology technique would be effected starting on October 2, 2019. Finally, I used the freewriting technique on November 3, 2019. In our meetings, we discussed everything in detail and gave feedback to improve ourselves. During the first semester of 2020, after collecting data and evidence to present to the decision maker in my school district, I expanded this work in my school's district.

A few limitations are worth noting at this point. First, my three techniques provided heavy burdens for teachers to prepare classes because it takes much time to design group activities and evaluate them. Furthermore, it required creativity from teachers who might feel already overwhelmed. I planned to resolve this issue by sharing my course materials with my colleagues online. In addition, because the curriculum binds teachers and the materials need to be covered in full, they had limited class time to implement new techniques. However, I plan to conduct a mini session to explore integrating these techniques in the current curriculum.

Findings and Discussion

The ultimate goal of the proposed plan is to help Saudi teachers enhance their methods of teaching in secondary schools. To be able to evaluate the progress made during the implementation phases, several measures need to be considered. For this purpose, at the beginning of the semester in early September 2019, I used a pre-assessment to identify my student's writing levels. I then immediately proceeded with applying the three techniques mentioned above in different activities for the first semester. At the end of the first semester, during the first week of January 2020, I administered a formative writing assessment to measure the effectiveness of these techniques. I adjusted my plan for the second semester according to these assessments to ensure my program's

point. Finally, towards the end of the school year in June 2020, I gave a writing post-assessment. I then analyzed the data I had from the pre- and post-assessments by comparing the results. This data analysis offered me an indication of the effectiveness of my plan.

In addition, I asked the other EFL teachers who implemented these techniques in my school to do the same and compare their students' data. They were asked to report on the students' results both before and after implementing these techniques (i.e., in the pre=- and post-assessments). The corroborated data results provide the evidence needed to assess teachers' impact including the three writing techniques in their EFL classrooms. Additionally, at the end of the school year (end of June 2020), I used an online survey to ask my colleagues how they perceive the likely improvement in their respective levels and their overall experience in implementing the three strategies in their classes.

Limitations

Where there are limitations, there are solutions to overcome these limitations. Implementing the three writing steps has faced challenges, such as:

- Lack of enthusiasm from teachers.
- Time constraints for teachers.

These three techniques burdened teachers with preparing classes because it takes a lot of time to design and evaluate group activities. Also, they require creativity, and teachers might feel overwhelmed. To resolve this issue, teachers can share course materials with their colleagues. In addition, teachers might experience a lack of time due to several tasks and group activities. To overcome this challenge, a diagnostic test held at the beginning of the semester can give the teacher a clear vision of their students' interest, readiness, and levels, which will make it easier to divide the students into groups.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this paper, I suggested a sequence of three techniques for effective writing instruction that included brainstorming, folder methodology, and freewriting. These steps improve students' writing performance and foster their English learning in vocabulary and grammar. I planned to implement this methodology in my high school starting in August 2019. In addition, I will conduct an impact evaluation to improve the techniques even further and enhance the methodology with the evaluation results and the feedback I receive from my colleagues.

Although this plan is to be implemented within the four walls of my classroom initially and then expanded to the realm of my school, I am optimistic that these techniques will flourish further in my school directorate in the city of Riyadh. Applying such new techniques in our classrooms will develop our students' writing, which will enhance their critical thinking skills, a significant aspect of our country's 2030 Vision. The 2030 Vision entails that we produce a generation capable of thinking critically, analyzing, and creating while relying less on memorizing. To accomplish that, it is of essence that our students learn how to express themselves freely and fluently in both

languages through written and spoken mediums. Thus, implementing my plan will be one of the first steps towards this change.

The development of ESL students' writing abilities is vital. The utilization of cooperative learning (CL) has gotten progressively well-known lately as instructional method patterns around the world. Instruction has moved from instructor-focused to student-focused techniques. Among the strategies embraced in showing writing is the use of CL. Numerous analysts accepted that one's capacities in language are showcased in writing.

Writing is called an inventive interaction since it connects to finding one's ideas. A decent piece of writing requires standard grammar, linguistic structure, and word decision, as well as proper mechanics, passage structure, and content. The writer's cycle and reason ought to be the clear, familiar, and viable communication of thoughts.

Among the strategies considered to suit the instructing of writing is CL. Alternatives are provided below to integrate teaching novice Arab students a second language:

1. **Positive interdependence**: to accomplish the designated objective, learners depend on each other. Therefore, each learner needs to contribute thoughts and sees the obligation of performing extraordinary work to finish the group jobs relegated to them.
2. **Individual and group accountability**: Every learner should be answerable to contribute a share of the work and master all materials to be learned for the group's success. The presentation of every individual should be evaluated, and the outcome should reward the group.
3. **Face-to-face promotive interaction**: another element of CL is that it stresses interaction among the group. Despite the fact that a few assignments are finished individually, learners simultaneously assume a significant role by giving each other criticism, testing thinking, and supporting and urging each other to accomplish the group's objectives.
4. **Relational and small group skills**: these are the essential abilities in cooperation. Group members should master relational abilities like dynamic learning, remaining focused, posing inquiries, empowering, helping other people to work with collaboration, developing trust, and improving communication.
5. **Group processing**: this is considering a group meeting to discuss which activities were more or less valuable and to settle on choices about what actions to continue and which to change. It additionally assists with advancing confidence and uplifting outlooks towards the learning interaction (Yusuf et al., 2019).

English educators throughout the world can utilize these techniques to improve their teaching of writing, developing learners' communicative skills in multiple ways along with increasing their writing abilities. These steps provide a meaningful way to teach the challenging yet essential skill of writing in a second language.

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CHAPTER 07

Lifelong Learning via Digital Literacy Tools and Skills

Rania Jabr

Abstract

This article outlines the potential benefits of the use of digital literacy skills to aid English language acquisition and proficiency. Knowing how to read, write, and participate in the digital world has become the new, basic foundational skill in our rapidly evolving, connected digital world, and the efficacy of these must have competencies is outlined. Having these skills expands access and opportunity for students to learn anytime, anywhere, at any pace. Armed with these new digital sub-skills (i.e., critical thinking, collaboration, problem solving, creativity, and communication), these digital literacy skills help our students communicate, engage, and work in today's world. Implications for EFL teachers and curriculum designers are also provided.

Introduction

Since technology has become ubiquitous and more students engage online, digital literacy has become a must in modern EFL academic curricula. The goals for teaching digital literacy are varied; however, they can be succinctly summarized as the need to provide our students with the skills and know-how essential to use the web to both succeed academically and professionally later on in their life (Pegrum, 2019). Whether they are majoring in the sciences or the arts, the degree to which they can read, write, collaborate, and participate on the web while composing their written work, integrating sources of information, evaluating, and communicating sheds lights on their ability to function currently and also later on as citizens of our tech world. Specifically, the author refers to the skills of reading in the form of how to explore the web, evaluating web content, and identifying trustworthy versus fake information online are focused on. Added to this, writing is explored in the form of transforming text into a hyperlink, creating their own blogs, posting entries, and adding media tools to blogs. As for participation, this includes interacting with peers and creating an interactive web community, while protecting students' online identity and abiding by the rules of online etiquette and ethics. Finally, twenty-first century skills refer to abilities, habits, and characteristics necessary to succeed in both university and careers, namely collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. In order to ensure that these digital-age skills are connected to the curriculum, we need to secure buy-in from classroom teachers. The main areas are focus on language, focus on information, and focus on the visual and the aural. Pedagogical implications for EFL teachers suggest that actively teaching digital literacy is beneficial for teaching academic English, as well.

Literature Review

The value of acquiring digital literacy skills as tools to aid in the process of learning English is well documented in the literature, which is one way to take the first step to become life-long

learners. These newly developed skills will enable learners to better function in the real world, in their jobs, and possibly in doing research in the future. Anthonysamy et al. (2020) suggest that lifelong learning is a main effect of digital literacy because it not only assists learners in managing their learning in face-to-face situations but also in online learning contexts. It is even recommended that digital literacy be included in the school curricula as early as primary school (Ala-Mutka et al. 2008). Additionally, Alazie et al. (2020) explore the need for making this type of literacy a requirement in formal education, thus enabling learners to be autonomous and capable of sustaining their life-long abilities and skills. Jimoyiannis and Gravani (2010) focus on adults and how the needs of such learners are catered to when tackling the digital literacy skills needed in conjunction with other skills with a view to becoming actively engaged in the digital world. Conversely, Lau (2006) warns educators that this need for knowledge of digital literacy extends to the need to engage with life-saving day to day tasks and the acquisition of information, for example for healthcare purposes. Potyrała and Tomczyk (2021) ascertain that examples of digital literacy skills to master include but are not limited to dealing with cyberbullying, ensuring accuracy of online information, academic integrity, and online safety.

Digital Natives Are Not Digitally Literate!

We educators make a huge assumption that the Net generation are tech savvy. It is true that they are digital natives unlike many educators who are digital immigrants (Creighton, 2018). They are comfortable using social media platforms, but what we ought to aim for as educators is to create a data-driven learning culture (Boulton, 2009) in which learners are taught such skills as asking questions, peer teaching, feedback, and assessment, and in which group learning leads to a student-centered class. These 21st-century skills (Trilling & Fadel, 2009) all enable educators to support their call for focusing on digital literacy.

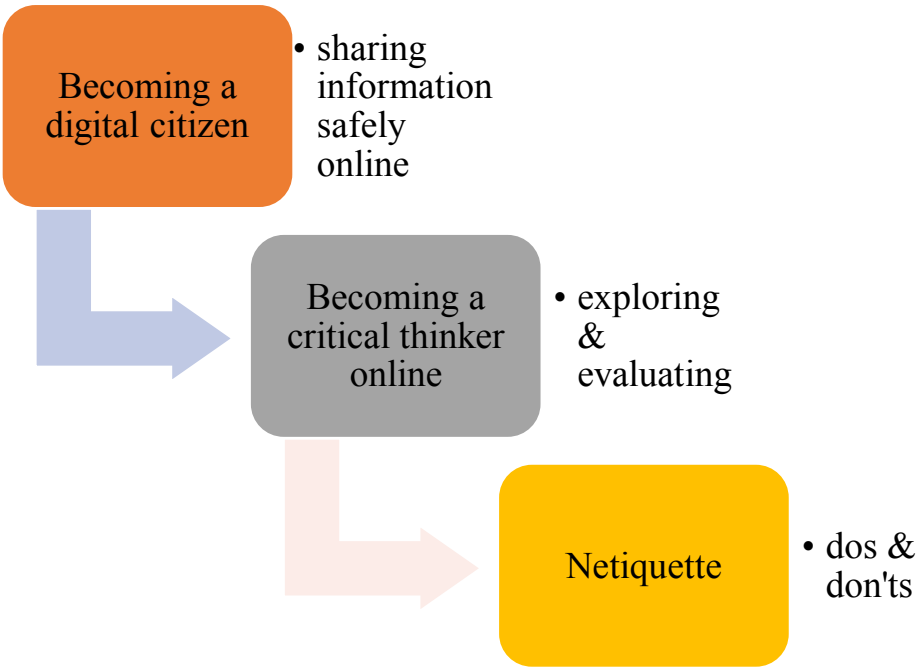
To answer the question of why we need to teach digital literacy, we need to outline its effects on our students. They will have the capability to function in the digital world, an essential skill today. They will not only learn how to use digital tools to conduct research, but finetune their critical thinking skills via the most recent tech tools. The process of teaching and learning becomes much easier and more engaging through the incorporation of visuals and sounds. According to Parsons and Taylor (2011), student engagement is a positive outcome as evidenced by their newfound abilities to problem-solve and self-assess. I would add that a by-product of all this is increasing student employability, a factor often uppermost in my students' minds given today's extremely competitive job market. However, what actually happens in most, if not all, classes is that unfortunately the use of technology for advanced critical thinking or problem-solving tasks is quite limited. Only when educators require their students to apply technology to their learning in their classes do students use it for academic purposes (Beetham & White, 2013).

Three Solutions

I have tried these, and they work! Build the use of technology in your class. Make it a process, not an addendum. I have been going paperless in my classes since 2010. This means over the years that I have sought to build a class community and that I have made my classes engaging. I set for myself three main goals: a) to encourage my students to think critically about what they access

online and to apply it to their learning in my classes creatively, b) to insist on adhering to the tenants of academic integrity when using online information, and c) to ensure their online safety. To achieve these goals and ensure that my students become digitally literate as well as life-long learners, I carefully curated the web tools (apps/sites), including the content of articles, videos, visuals, and infographics. This was followed by hyperlinking these tech tools to a digital space. In my case, I use Blackboard for my classes. Alternatively, any online platform can be used, such as Moodle, Facebook, a Google site, a Wiki, or a blog. Finally, I maximized the use of self and peer feedback in the form of revision and reflection tasks (Panadero & Alqassab, 2019). Whether we like it or not, teaching has changed radically. We used to call what our students do in class drills. Later, we started to call them activities. Today, we call them tasks or learning structures. Face-to-face learning is now supplemented with screen-based learning. Individual work is supplemented with group, collaborative learning. And tests are a minimal part of the huge umbrella term of assessment, including self and peer assessment.

Figure 1. *Digital Literacy Components*



The three components of digital literacy (see Figure 1), which I focus on in my classes, will not succeed unless we educators supplement them with the need for first collaboration on tasks and then written reflection upon completion of the project or learning structure. This not only emotionally engages students in the learning at hand, but it also boosts their feeling that they are essential members of a team. To clarify, carefully crafting class tasks or mini projects that are tech based and collaborative sends the message to the students that they are also becoming an integral part of the wider tech savvy community. This results in buy-in, and students make a concerted effort to engage with and apply technology into the learning process. For example, one mini-project I ask my students to do is create a Google Site for their own group. Simply, they love it. It builds in them a sense of community. On their group's site, they post their work, showcase it,

comment freely, and give peer feedback in a non-threatening learning environment. It is very fast and very easy to create. It is also a platform for easy communication among themselves and with me, their instructor.

Skills and Digital Literacy

Using emojis has become part of daily life, so why not use them with your students to self-assess or self-reflect? Students can create their own story by using only emojis. They can summarize a reading text only by using them, and they can give "cool" feedback to their peers by using them. This visual representation of their thinking allows them to engage with this social media staple and apply it to any academic tasks. As for research, my students engage in several projects which require them to do online exploration, find sources, and give a presentation. Fake news and unreliable sources are a problem that introducing digital literacy in our classes can overcome. Engaging students with questions about the reliability of their sources, comparing the information they gather with what they already know, and stepping back to examine whether the information makes sense to them are some of the factors I have my students consider when embarking on their projects. I also ask them to verify the information they collect by cross-checking it against other sources. They are instructed to ensure that their sources are current and to carefully check who authored the articles and the resources they collected.

Conclusion

To address this issue of digital literacy, educators need to create a checklist of essential digital literacy skills prioritized as a digital road map to enable them to include these into their syllabi and lesson plans. The main areas are focus on language, focus on information, and focus on the visual and the aural. Pedagogical implications for EFL teachers suggest that actively teaching digital literacy is beneficial for teaching academic English, as well. So, what comes next is that teaching and learning will continue to fully use technology because it now permeates our daily life. Students can no longer be passive learners and consumers of knowledge. They need to be actively involved in their own learning and acquisition. Technology enables this goal of bridging the gap between digital literacy and lifelong learning. The end result is developing learners who have the prerequisite skills to continue learning on their own.

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CHAPTER 08

Attitudes towards Technology Integration Implementation among Gaza University Students: Acceptance and Procrastination

Yahya Al Khoudary

Abstract

This study scrutinizes university students' outlook towards integrating technology in ESL classrooms. Moreover, this survey displays students' perspectives towards including technology together with normal teaching to create effective rich learning. Google Classroom applications are adopted as an example in which students achieve activities outside classroom walls. Further, this examination embraces a blended learning approach as a vital plan to enhance student learning quality at Gaza University using qualitative methods. Fleming's (2001) pedagogical theory is used, based on learners' proficiency. Sixty university ESL students and 10 English language instructors were interviewed and observed. The result of this exploration demonstrates that students have disparate viewpoints towards incorporating technology in education. This consideration concludes that technology integration is of paramount importance in ESL classrooms at a university level regardless of obstacles.

Introduction

Technology integration in teaching and learning along with face-to-face instruction has become a vital approach to be used in this era as technological devices are available in everyone's hand (AlKhoudary, 2020; AlKhoudary & AlKhoudary, 2019). Research supports those ideas since the experience of COVID-19 forced all educators and institutions to employ technology in teaching to replace in-person teaching and to overcome the challenges many educational institutions grapple with during technology incorporation in schooling since it is difficult to integrate technology in some countries due to some obstructions (AlKhoudary, 2020; AlKhoudary & AlKhoudary, 2019).

Teaching language skills in ESL classrooms is a difficult job as most students are inefficient in the oral skills due to the deficiency in teaching quality at secondary schools (AlKhoudary, 2018, 2020; Tawil, 2018; Thorn, 2003; Willging & Johnson, 2009). Therefore, a supportive tool must be incorporated in the conventional ESL classroom to help teachers create fruitful teaching. Gerstein (2012) suggests that melded learning demonstrates that face-to-face along with online teaching furnishes enough opportunity to both teachers and students to bring about deep learning if ESL teachers implement that system regularly (Cakici, 2016). The phobia of participation and class activities will be reduced. Students' apprehension is caused by cultural, linguistics and psychological factors such as stress, self-doubt, anxiety about future failure, and disappointment (Ladaci, 2017).

In addition, anxiety can be lessened if teachers are given enough opportunity to implement teaching in ESL classes through a unique amalgamated approach that positively affects language learning skills, improves teaching input quality, and overcome the obstacles most ESL learners

grapple with when they are involved in class discussion and debating (Ladaci, 2017; Gerstein, 2012).

Furthermore, blended learning (BL) allows all learners enough chances to engage in class discussion, tasks, and activities and to get written feedback through the virtual class. It also overcomes teaching problems and use of class time (Liu, 2013; Osgerby, 2013; Santos, 2011; Sato, 2009; Thorn, 2003). This study aims to check the result of integrating technology as a supportive tool in a normal class. Incorporating technology as a bridge in teaching language skills creates a powerful, teacher-centred classroom (AlKhoudary, 2018, 2020).

The current study is based on Fleming's (2001) theory as it deals generally with learning styles. Fleming's visual, auditory, and kinesthetic learning styles comprise three main senses as students have a variety learning styles (Banditvilai, 2016; Sato, 2009). However, the impact of these styles is often not the same since learners only process information rapidly when a specific style is used (Sharma & Barrett, 2007; Tawil, 2018; Tosun, 2015; Veledinskaya & Dorofeeva, 2014).

The Study: Significance of the Survey

This examination is of great importance in this arena since teaching ESL often does not achieve the essential learning outcomes. Class observation showed that students' learning output lacks accuracy and fluency as ESL students feel unhappy in class activities. A general problem in ESL classes is noticed. Educators aspire to include technology alongside normal classes (Jin, 2014). Moreover, teachers veer towards technology as a tool to support instruction. Consequently, it is urgently required to constitute a fitting teaching method via technology since some instructors notice that face-to-face class activities combined with diverse methods contribute to boost feasible learning outcomes (AlKhoudary, 2018; Voet & Wever, 2017; Challob et al., 2016).

Additionally, both technology and face-to-face classes increase competitiveness among students to fix the gap in learning outcomes (Graham, 2006). Students need to engage in oral class discussion and participation. BL and flipping classes encourage students to be involved in the learning process. That system has become pertinent not only to basic education but also to higher education as it grants extroverted and introverted students alike an opportunity to practice language outside the class walls (AlKhoudary, 2018, 2020; Bock et al., 2018).

Objectives and Research Questions

The purpose of this investigation is to discover the perspectives of both students and teachers towards including technology in traditional classrooms. The objectives of this inquiry are to:

1. Examine students' attitudes towards mingled learning in classrooms.
2. Inspect students' expectations mixing online class with normal one.
3. Encourage future research in TESL.
4. Examine the effect of BL idea on students' supposition.

The following research questions will be answered by this research:

1. To what extent do students consent to incorporate technology in education?
2. What are the students' attitudes towards BL?
3. Do students change their perspectives towards including technology together with normal class?
4. Is it possible to meld technology in conventional ESL classes at university level?

Literature Review

The aim of this study is to discover students' perspectives towards including technology in teaching and learning along with traditional teaching in Gaza University classrooms. Thus, the following overview displays the influence of a BL application on ESL students. Class activities in normal classrooms are based on lecturing, not teaching (AlKhoudary, 2020; Dennis, 2012; Hashim, 2018; Suppasetseree & Dennis, 2010; Badawi, 2009; Morris, 2010). AlKhoudary (2018) sustains that lecturing is not enough to satisfy the individual differences and neglected students in the classrooms.

AlKhoudary (2020) suggests that it is important to integrate technology apps to achieve interesting classrooms since technology exists in everyone's hands (Ladaci, 2017; Isti'anah, 2017). Based on research BL improves students' learning quality (Roy, 2019; Hsu, 2010). Furthermore, many studies have looked at BL using face-to-face learning together with Google Classroom (Al-Gumaei et al., 2019; Akkoyunlu & Soylu, 2006).

Additionally, Willging & Johonson (2009) indicates that poor interaction among students in the class affects their performance negatively. BL formulates effective deep learning since the learners are attracted to using technological devices (Aguilar, 2012; Moore & Kearsely, 2011). Osgerby (2013) claims systematic technology provides sustainable learning outcomes as technology is accessible to all people (Roy, 2019; Tosun, 2015). Furthermore, a combination of internet and social media with classroom requires the physical presence of teacher and students as well (Roy, 2019; Hsu, 2010; Wold, 2011).

AlKhoudary (2020) ascertains that BL is more effective than the normal teaching method. In addition, BL stimulates introverts and extroverts (AlKhoudary, 2019; Voet & De Wever, 2017; Jalilifar, 2010). A hybrid strategy of online and traditional learning gives enough opportunity to all students to engage in the learning process (AlKhoudary, 2018). Further, BL grants opportunities to all learners to engage in practicing English language skills in and out of the classroom (AlKhoudary, 2018, 2020; Kirkgoz, 2011).

Sharma and Barrett (2007) suggest that integrating technology in teaching the English language creates an interactive learning environment. Jingwei (2013) proposes that BL comprises online and the traditional instruction method. Research affirms that BL reduces speaking apprehension and enhances students' language skills (Roy, 2019; AlKhoudary, 2020, 2018).

BL is a productive strategy in which students practice independent learning and are deeply involved in the learning process where they monitor their progression (AlKhoudary, 2018, 2019, 2020). Likewise, students appreciate noticeable change in the teachers' role in the classrooms when they

employ online along with face-to-face instruction to constitute great potential towards students' needs and levels (AlKhoudary, 2018; Behjat et al., 2012).

Methodology

A qualitative method is adopted in this inspection to gather new ideas towards technology infusion in education. It is used to demonstrate the perspectives of the selected random sample in the current study (Yin, 2010). Therefore, interviews were conducted with all participants in this study to check the context of ESL students towards integrating technology in ESL classes together with normal teaching at university level among ESL students in Gaza Strip. The population of this survey consists of 60 university students as well as 10 ESL instructors who have experienced online teaching English in Gaza University classrooms. The randomly selected teachers have been exposed to online teaching during COVID-19 that spread out across the globe.

Results and Discussion

Extracts from participant interviews are presented and discussed below.

Findings from student interviews by levels

Extract 1 (good students):

> They are interested in having technology together with normal class since online is not enough that they experience during Covid-19. Online teaching is the worst experience we had. There were no chance to discuss the vague points where teachers recorded the materials on Moodle and left us struggling. So, it is better to have both together online along with face-to-face teaching. During teaching online only, our performance was affected negatively. We prefer normal teaching mingled with online.

Extract 2 (intermediate students):

> BL method is more productive than pure online teaching. We will be satisfied and motivated towards learning online together with lecturing class. BL method model gives us great opportunities to engage in learning English language skills inside and off-class walls. It will amalgamate online and face-to-face learning. We are against online lecturing as it creates boring environment and discourages us to attend regularly regardless of regular internet disconnection and electricity cut for eight hours daily besides lack of electronic devices in everyone's hand.

Extract 3 (weak students):

> Although we struggle in learning English, we feel that intermix online and traditional class will be more effective than pure online teaching whether through Moodle, Google Classroom, etc. Online learning does not satisfy us during the current pandemic Covid-19 as our performance gets worse because teachers give recorded lectures, download assignments without checking the given presented teaching materials. It is believed that BL it exposes us to the language outside the class and work individually to improve our language skills. This system encouraged us to practice what we learnt online at home and involve directly in class activities that affects positively our speaking skills' standard.

Based on participants' responses, BL positively influences learning performance in ESL/EFL classes. The effective impact gives students enough opportunity to be involved in the learning process. One problem is lack of discussing opportunities in online-only coursework. Regarding the middle level students, they state that including technology through instructional platform along with the normal class is beneficial. On the one hand, pure online teaching is useless, disappointing, discouraging, and ineffective (Extract 2). Further, the low achievers show positive reactions towards BL and integrating technology with face-to-face learning. They are against including pure technology in the class. They found that mixing formal and online learning as well-made sense with them (Extract 3).

Findings from miscellaneous interviews

Extract 4:

> It is found that there are many disadvantages in having technology in education since technology adds complexity to the classroom. Students feel that some teachers are not qualified enough to become experts in specific technology, which leads them to spend extra time doing other things like trouble shooting and trying to learn new technology. That all takes away from class time and defeats the purpose of making the class more efficient and easier. These disadvantages trump the advantages and leave very little benefits in using technology in classrooms. All in all, regular electricity cut for more than eight hours and the poverty among students who cannot buy more than one device besides the poor internet connection.

Extract 5:

> The biggest concern with using technology in classrooms is the cost it will have on the university and poor families regardless of internet. Although there are problems, extra cost is spent on technology, they prefer BL regardless of difficulty in accessibility. Gaza University is unable to supply the demand for expenses that some poor students are not capable to cover. On the one hand, technology contributes to facilitate teaching, classroom activities and more fast-paced learning. That encourages both instructors and students to favour the idea of having alternative method BL.

Extract 6:

> It is believed that BL is extremely of paramount importance in having effective teaching. Technology as a supplement allows more easy access to comprehend teaching materials. It is amazing to get much information since it is at our fingertips. Therefore, integrating technology apart from ordinary classrooms gives all students unique opportunity to have collaborative learning and communication in the classroom. Additionally, teachers can flip classroom, engage students outside of the classroom by communicating online, posting helpful links. Technology also helps instructors to become more efficient and productive. The majority of students recommend mixing conventional besides online teaching as they feel comfortable to learn easily in traditional classroom situation. to engage in learning process and become more productive with classroom materials.

Based on extracts 4, 5, and 6, students demonstrate diverse reactions towards technology integration in education. They declare that technology complicates leaning as some teachers are inexperienced, waste time, and go away from the ultimate main aim of teaching and learning. As

a matter of fact, Gaza City is overpopulated and poor as it depends on international donations which creates problems in having enough devices in classes. Also, some students cannot afford to purchase technological items; some families are poor and have more than ten children. However, they believe that having a BL model enriches teaching and create interesting and effective classrooms. Although there are many obstacles to employing BL in teaching, it creates effective deep learning. Teachers assigning tasks outside the class walls inverts the traditional teaching to institutional model.

Teachers' responses

Some selected extracts from teachers' reactions towards utilizing BL model in ESL classrooms are presented below.

Extract 7:

> BL is an attractive environment where students find themselves and have a big chance to engage in the learning process, but it requires training to both teachers and students as well to train on punctuality and commitment in achieving assignments and tasks inside and outside the class walls. BL is creating [more] effective classes than online teaching which is ineffective since students do not get an opportunity to have a rich learning environment. The participants in this study oppose the idea of integrating pure technology and ignore physical face-to-face teaching as students need interactive community to practice the English language skills. BL is entrusted to support classroom and online learning to supplement struggling students in language skills.

Extract 8:

> Online teaching does not satisfy learners even though technology is available on everyone's hand. Technology can be employed as a supportive tool as well the conventional classroom. During teaching, it is observed that the pandemic Covid-19 forced all institutions to adhere to online teaching via Google Class, Moodle…etc. That system affects negatively on the learners' language skills quality and does not achieve the ultimate learning objectives as well due to the lack of interactive classrooms. Teachers state that integrating technology away from normal class discourages students to follow up as teachers give boring lectures where students receive recorded boring materials. They affirm that intermixing online and conventional class will come out with fruitful results.

Extract 9:

> Online teaching is unfruitful since most students complain about the boring given materials and lack of engagement and discussion during lecturing online regardless of electricity cut, instability of the internet and poverty among some families in Gaza. ESL instructors maintain that technology can be a supportive tool to education not to be the essence. An effective teaching can be achieved through intermixing technology in company with ordinary class. BL motivates the frustrated reluctant students and lessen their anxiety and phobia when participate in the class activities and discussion reduces oral discussion phobia, participation and nervous when expressing themselves.

Most interviewees assert that online learning is useless and ineffective since the given teaching materials are boring; a lack of extra explanation and facilitation is also problematic. They affirm

that BL is a productive teaching model to create successful learning to encourage all students to engage in learning interactively (Extract 7). They added that integrating pure technology can be embraced as a supportive tool along with conventional class since online teaching by itself is unproductive.

The vast majority of teachers recommend BL as they propose that intermingled learning stimulates students to achieve the assigned tasks and necessitates introverts and extroverts to take part in the learning process. Some of the interviewees state that technology may be effective accompanying traditional teaching. They propose that BL contributes to helping all students reduce their apprehension in the class and invigorates them to engage effectively in the learning process. Although power outages formulate an obstacle to employing BL in classes, all obstacles must be overcome (Extracts 7, 8, 9)

Conclusion and Recommendations

The implementation of this inquiry was based on participants' perspectives towards pure online instructions. A considerable number of the participants in this study argue that online teaching negatively influences leaners. The interviewees demonstrated that amalgamation of online and traditional teaching achieves high learning outcome quality. As they experience online learning, they favour mixing online with traditional classes since they feel that this has successful results and satisfies individual differences.

A great number of Gaza University students are considered weak in English language skills due to their poor engagement with native speakers, lack of opportunity to listen to good English, and rare chances of exposure to the spoken native language. Further, there is a problem in teaching ESL due to the difficult circumstances that influence teaching input quality. This study finds out that there are positive views towards combining traditional with online teaching through utilizing a BL model in ESL classes; also, it recommends the proposed BL model strategy to improve English language skills. Furthermore, the results of this study show that students' negative attitudes towards BL relate to the regular electricity cuts and poverty among students who do not have more than one device. Other contributing factors to negative responses include internet instability and many problems due to frustration and disappointing, overcrowded classes and unqualified and ill-trained instructors who lean to the lecturing method. It is hoped that BL supports the teaching process and pedagogical issues within similar cases. This inquiry concludes that BL is a promising approach of paramount importance in education.

Face-to-face together with online teaching requires a change in the mentality of both teachers and students to eliminate the obstacles the majority grapple with during BL. It also leads to develop learner autonomy, systematic learning, and communication skills. Further research is needed to examine the influence of BL on the expected learning outcomes.

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21st Century Linguistics and Language Teaching: Bridging Diversification and Equality in the Classroom

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The papers in this volume represent the diverse backgrounds, experiences, and research interests of the ALLT presenters. They cover a range of theoretical, empirical, and pedagogical practices with a strong emphasis on language teaching. While most of the papers focus on English language, the findings and lessons are applicable to the teaching of any language. This makes the volume an invaluable resource, addressing important aspects of contemporary research topics and the pedagogy of language teaching.

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