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Table of Contents

1. **Dedi Turmudi**4-33
The Influencing Factors Addressed in EFL Essay Writing Class in Indonesia
2. **Yasmin Mari U. Ambrosio**34-50
A Study on the Motivational Problems of First Grade Pupils of De La Salle Zobel School: An Assessment
3. **Madhubala Bava Harji and Alireza Vafaepour**.....51-74
Integrating Internet-based Materials in Reading Comprehension Courses: A Theoretical Constructivist Perspective

The Influencing Factors Addressed in EFL Essay Writing Class in Indonesia

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Abstract

This research paper discusses a number of key points addressed in teaching essay writing courses of EFL classes in Indonesia. The researcher applied various techniques in teaching, including a newly developed technique called FBFRRP (Turmudi 2013) which basically assist(s) learners in self-regulatory process in writing composition (Magno, 2009). The research goals were to find out some critical points and how each point is qualified among the addressed issues. The primary data were collected with instruments such as tests, reflections, and questionnaires. Thus, the results were a descriptive qualitative with quantitative data output. The subjects were 100 undergraduate students of English Department enrolled in an essay writing class and the data were the students' responses on the addressed points formatted in a rating scale questionnaire (Sugiyono, 2009). There were no statistical inferences reported except for descriptive statistics and logical inferences. The result revealed that none of the components were dominants, but a certain technique as a medium to assist the students'

ability to write computer-based-essay test was needed to develop. Thus, this research has the same conclusion with that of Magno (2009) hypothesizing that learners of EFL tend to use specific approach to learning and eventually undergo self-regulatory process.

Key Words: Essay writing, EFL essay class, FBFRRP, Computer-based-essay test.

Introduction

Writing, to some extent, has become the last skill and the most difficult one to learn for anyone who learns a language for communication with its unique consequences. Moreover, the majority of students dislike essay writing which is a specific part of writing composition, compared to speaking task (Turmudi, 2013). In fact, writing is considered to be the most difficult one among the four skills particularly for non-native speakers of English or the so called foreign language learners (henceforth FLL). This claim is in line with that of Nepomuceno (2011) who states that:

Among the four macro-skills of language, writing appears to be the most difficult. It is unlikely for learners to be enthusiastic and exciting to do writing tasks, which is usually “a desk” activity, as compared to speaking tasks which are normally asked to move around classroom. The fact that writing outputs are documented or recorded makes students think twice (or more) whenever asked to write (p. 93).

Another fact is that the tendency that writing seems to be the most difficult skills is probably provoked by the theory of Audio Lingual Method (ALM) stating that writing is the last skill of productive skills to achieve (Richard and Rodgers, 2001 and Larsen-Freeman, 2000). Similarly, in the second language writing Silva (1993) as cited in Weigle (2009) states:

In a review of differences between first and second language writing found out that writing in second language tends to be more constrained, more difficult, and less effective than writing in a first language: second-language writers plan less, revise for content less, and write less fluently and accurately than the first-language writers (p.36).

The factors that may affect the students in developing their essay writing are complex. They vary from the topic to write, the students' mood, technique in writing essay, genres of essay, writing instructions and so forth. Broughton et al. (2003) proposed the nature of writing skill characterized with possible problems the students will face if the goal of teaching is to make the students to produce fluent, accurate, and appropriate written English. The problems cover mechanical issues with script of English, accuracy, writing style, and developing. Consequently, "writing well in a second language would require more and higher cognitive skills to be able to write well" (Magno, 2009, p.5).

"Generally, the students' writing problems seem to have stemmed from their poor command of the English language and lack of facilities in using English, it being a foreign language to most or all of them...", (Mojica, 2010, p.32). In the current study, English is as a foreign language; therefore, it implies that more and higher skills are needed to help a person reaches the utmost point mentioned by Magno above.

Essay writing, in this context, is a typical course at undergraduate level of English department in Indonesia, including in the researcher's context. Its status varies from required course to required elective course; however, in this context, essay course is a required elective course (curriculum of English Department, 2012). As a result, many undergraduate students of English department at this campus took this course as they thought that this course would be an important point for them. In addition, there

was a regulation that required elective courses such as English proficiency; essay writing, interpreting, and sociolinguistics applied a quota system to get enrolled at one of these courses. Every student had to sign up soon to take the course before the quota for this course was full. Consequently, those who got enrolled at Essay writing were because they did not have other options to take. In short, essay was the only choice to take no matter they liked it disliked it.

Unlike the tendency of students in avoiding essay course, in fact, essay is beneficial for them and helps them very much in developing their culmination task like undergraduate thesis, final assignment, and the majority of courses end their required tasks with writing product.

Other perspectives about essay class were seen from the use of essay itself. Whenever the students intended to pursue a magister, essay would be one of the most “terrifying” test for Indonesians who would study in-country or overseas and is very typical required document to get an admission. In many of scholarship applications, essay is there and would always be the key factors of a person’s qualification. This is vividly seen in the application of Fulbright, ford foundation, ILSP, or even ILEP. However, the most distinctive features of an essay is in the internet based (iBT) TOEFL which includes two sections for writing. The iBT TOEFL writing parts are somewhat different from that of both Computer-Based-TOEFL (CBT), and Paper- Based TOEFL (pBT). The challenges that might arise from this test are: the limitation of time (30 minutes) and the word limit (250-300 words). Consequently, the test takers have to manage their time effectively to reach the ideal essay of independent writing (ETS, 2009).

In teaching essay writing, further techniques are absolutely required to write a good piece. In the current research some different techniques were applied such as:

three phase technique (henceforth, TPT); Free Technique (henceforth FT); and Forward-Back-Forward Revising Publishing Technique (henceforth, FBFRP). This last technique was projected to creating learning centered-method (Kumaravadivelu, 2006) focusing on cognitive process of language learning.

However, all of the applied techniques were not intended to be the treatments like in that of experimental research. In fact, it was a matter of how an essay course had to happen at the beginning, the process of instruction within eight meetings, and at the end. In between both pretest and posttest were treatments, yet they were not meant to be the treatment in which the goal was to improve the posttest result of students' essay writing. The students had to undergo their class through a sequence of learning processes with different techniques applied on. Teaching writing, in fact, with essay writing in this context was not always a good and safe area of teaching that is what the researcher has felt so far. This condition was also in line with that of Nepomuceno (2011) who believes that:

Teachers are normally in state of dilemma when it comes to teaching writing. Should the teacher prioritize accuracy? Or should the teacher focus on content? These two important considerations when teaching writing have become the central issues in answering the essential questions: How writing should be taught? (p.94).

Thus, anyone who is the lecturer of essay writing may be in the same boat as what I have felt since I started teaching essay 5 years ago. Nevertheless, I realized that teaching writing was always like that of Harmer (1998) who states that “the reasons for teaching writing to students of English as a foreign language include reinforcement, language development, learning style, and most importantly writing as a skill in its own right” (p.79).

Research Problem

The problem of the research followed the real condition and questions around the essay class. If the students received a good score on their essays, what causes that score? In reverse, if they received bad score, what would the causes be? Hence, the following issues become prominent during the process of eight meetings of essay class: 1) lecturer factor, 2) content and skeleton of essay factor, 3) procedure factor, or 4) evaluation and follow up factor. Do all of these main categories affect the students in learning essay writing and will this lead to a good essay product? To what extent does each of the main factors affect the students' essay writing? Which one of the four factors is the most influential one, and which one is the least influential factor based on students' feedback? All of these inquiries were answered after the questionnaire was administered.

Research Questions

The following research questions were addressed and formulated based on what was in the problem background:

1. What is the description of students' pretest and posttest?
2. How does the lecturer reflect on his lecturing session?
3. What is the tendency of the students towards the aspects of the teaching procedures?

Methodology

Participants

The participants were senior university students who enrolled in English Department at Muhammadiyah University of Metro during the 2013-2014 Academic Year 2013/2014. There were one hundred students enrolled at an Essay Class of elective course with 78 female and 22 male students in total. They spoke seven different first languages

with Bahasa Indonesia as their second language. The data of the research was the students' perception towards the addressed statement with rating scale technique adapted from Sugiyono (2009).

Instruments and Validity of the Instrument

There were basically three kinds of self-made instruments: test, reflection, and questionnaire. The test consists of pretest, posttest, reflection and questionnaire. The last was created with some considerations taken from Bailey (2003) on how questionnaire is designed.

The pretest was about personal point of view written with genre of opinion essay. This work matches Bailey's (2003) criteria stating that an essay normally consists of: introduction, body, and conclusion. Thus, the students wrote at least three paragraphs of the assigned essay. Accordingly, three topics were offered on which the students could choose and write the entire essay with opinion genre and on a paper-based model. The topics covered; PPLT: continued or banned? TOEFL test: Wasteful or useful? Early Married: Advantage or Disadvantage? All students could choose one of them and developed their writing by taking their side (pros or cons).

The genre of opinion is part of essay writing (Evans, 1998). This genre was also applied for the posttest; however, the model was computerized essay writing with 30 minutes long and online submission. There were four types of questions to answer formed in opinion essay: 1). Juvenile Delinquency: Normal or Dangerous? 2). Is Indonesia a good democratic country? 3). Teacher Rights: Maintain well or not? 4). What makes corruption in Indonesia?. All of these questions were free to choose and develop accordingly. The students had 30 minutes long to go and submit it afterward through an email to the lecturer. In addition, they were requested to write their essay at least in five paragraphs.

The second instrument was reflection. In this research the lecturer reflected his teaching on the meeting basis, so there were six sheets of reflection along his teaching period. The contents of the reflection were the same as that of questionnaire in that all detail issues were posed. Accordingly, the lecturer rated his own teaching experience with certain scale. The scale was 1 to 5, but in reverse row (similar to Likert Scale). Each number had certain meaning which ranged from utmost point to the lowest point. These scales were also applied for the rest of questionnaire.

Unlike the test, in the questionnaire the four main factors were addressed to students to respond so that they could rate their level of agreement. The design of the questionnaire was a rating scale (5 to 1) model with four main categories or factors and twenty statements were exposed to students and asked them to state their level of agreement. The four factors or aspects are 1). Lecturer's appearance, 2). Content and skeleton of the essay, 3). Teaching procedure, and 4). Evaluation and follow up. Each factor was broken-down into 5 statements as described in the grid below. The design of core contents and details of questionnaire can be seen in appendix 1. Accordingly, the four main aspects were broken down into the following statements. See figure 2 questionnaire in details in appendix 2.

Validity of the Instrument

The instrument of test; both pre and posttest were validated by both content validity and construct validity. The content validity of these two instruments was measured in accordance with the content of the syllabus of essay writing. Further, two validators of curriculum and material development course reviewed the design of both instruments. They are expert in the area of English curriculum. The construct validity was taken through a process of reviewing the construct of the pretest, posttest, reflection and the questionnaire by experts in the related area through a process of expert judgment in

related matter. All of experts were senior lecturers at English Department of Muhammadiyah University of Metro (MUM).

Data Collecting Procedures

The test items and the reflection form/sheet/questionnaire were created prior to the first class. The questionnaire was created after the seventh meeting. It was a result of several inquiries during the process aiming at knowing the details factor that might affect the students' essay product.

During the six meetings from 2 to 7, some various techniques of composing essay were applied and two meeting sessions used a certain technique called FBFRP technique (Turmudi, 2013). The whole meeting was a matter of intended involvement with the degree of co-participation (Rossman and Rallis, 2003). After the second meeting the lecturer reflected on what he had done before and this continued respectively at the end of every meeting session. In the second meeting, three steps technique was utilized and it went onto the third meeting. It basically covered drafting, developing, and revising. In the fourth and the fifth meeting, free technique of writing was utilized with several hot topics. In the sixth and seventh meetings, FBFRP was used in the instructional of essay class. This technique was ongoing research; however, the procedure of this technique was set up already. At the eighth meeting the designed questionnaire was issued for students to respond. There were 74 students who filled out the questionnaire, and all of which were taken into account considering its validity. In conclusion, pretest was conducted to map the possible problem whereas posttest was taken to show the final position of the students' essay product.

Two other data collections methods were also issued; reflection; and questionnaire. The questionnaire was spread out at the final meeting of the course as explained above to the all students who were enrolled at essay class, however, only

seventy four students filled out the survey. Reflection was aimed at mapping what the lecturer had done whereas; the last was aimed at disclosing critical components in the perspective of students' understanding.

Scoring Rubric and Inter-rating

Data Analysis Procedures

The subject of the research was coded with students' registration number (SRN) and all data of pretest, posttest and summary of questionnaire were plugged into a data table. The score scale of both pretest and posttest were zero to one hundred and this was also applied for questionnaire quantitative scale. There were several steps of scoring the pretest. Firstly the students' pretest was scored by rater 1 and rater 2 (henceforth, R1, R2). Secondly, both scores from R1 and R2 were combined to harvest the mean of the pretest. These processes were also applied in the scoring of posttest. Both scoring processes by R1 and R2 utilized the scoring rubric for opinion essay so that the subjectivity of estimating score could be lessened, and thus the result was valid. When everything was done, the further actions were data calculation, administering the result on the grid of tabulation using excel 2007, and making a graphics of column models describing the fact of each addressed aspects. Beyond the data analysis was interpreting data to answer the objective of the research and correlating each factor among the main aspects and each detail among the details within the main factors. When both means of pretest and posttest were gained, descriptive statistical calculations were taken. This was also applied for reflections and questionnaire. Both were taken into account because the intention of this research was to find out the description of the students tendency toward the posed 20 statements.

Further, all products of paper-based essay writings were scored by two different raters using specific rubric scoring of opinion essay. The rubric scoring targeted four

different aspects in essay with certain formatting; structure or skeleton of the essay; content, and grammar of the essay. This format was somewhat different from what Brown (2001) suggests in which he covers the five aspects of scoring writing covering “content; organization; discourse; syntax; vocabulary; and mechanics” (p.357). Each macro target was elaborated in several detail indicators with which the score could be judged. This scoring procedure was also applied for posttest despite the fact that the product of essay was computerized submitted online through email to the lecturer.

There were three steps of mapping the final score of questionnaire; firstly was by comparing the quantitative score among internal of the main aspect; and secondly by comparing the main aspect in single with other main aspects; and finally comparing the detail aspect with the other details no matter inside or outside of the main aspects. All of these steps were intended to gain a valid result and critical point.

Result and Discussion

This research was a descriptive qualitative research with specific genre of ex post facto research. However, to some extent this research is categorized as “a reflective teaching” (Zeichner, and Liston, 1996) because the process of teachings was reviewed as comparative data analysis. Reflective teaching in the current research implemented “more systematic reflection-on-action over a period of time“(p.47). It was however, in the position of the fourth level of reflective teaching after; rapid reflection; repair; and review (Zeichner, and Liston, at. al, 1996). The sampling was called “purposeful sampling” (Rossman, and Rallis, 2003,p.150)

Thus, at the end of the data analysis descriptive result of pretest, posttest, reflection and questionnaire were presented as a factual output without inferring that each of which may influence other as that in experimental research. Yet a descriptive statistics was tested to describe the real findings and recommendations.

After all data were analyzed using an Excel Worksheet, the result of descriptive statistics are presented in the following proposition. However; only some required aspects are included in this calculation covering mean, median, mode, standard deviation, range, largest and smallest, and confidence level. Further, upon the analysis of the data above, the following are discussions regarding the result of data analysis on the basis of the research questions. Thus, all the following research questions are the basis upon which the discussions flow.

What is the description of students in pretest and post test?

Looking back at the result of the pretest (Figure 1.1), the following descriptions represented the real fact of the students' existing achievement prior to essay writing courses. My assumption was that, admitted or not, the students had already had knowledge and experience in writing 2, 3, and 4 courses in which essay was taught and the students got used to getting exercise in somewhat repetitive phases. The scores in the pretest were means of scores resulted from two different raters; one was the researcher himself and another one was Mr. Andiyanto, who was also a writing lecturer. This rating model was aimed to make the score valid and reliable. After the three aspects of the scores from both parties were analyzed the intended descriptive analysis covering mean median and mode were taken into account. Hence, the result turned out that the mean of the pretest was 65, 19, while the median was 65, 50 and the mode was 64, 00. However; the result was slightly different from the post-test.

In the post-test the mean was 65.22, the median was 65.50, and the mode was 69.00. This indicated that there was only a little increase on the mean and the mode but not in the median.

Figure 1.1 The Description of Students' Pretest and Posttest

<i>Result of Pretest</i>		<i>Result of Posttest</i>	
Mean	65.19	Mean	65.22
Median	65.50	Median	65.50
Mode	64.00	Mode	69.00
Standard Deviation	6.96	Standard Deviation	6.30
Range	34.00	Range	33.50
Largest(1)	80.00	Largest(1)	84.50
Smallest(1)	46.00	Smallest(1)	51.00
Confidence Level(95,0%)	1.70	Confidence Level(95,0%)	1.54

Generally, how does the lecturer reflect on his lecturing sessions?

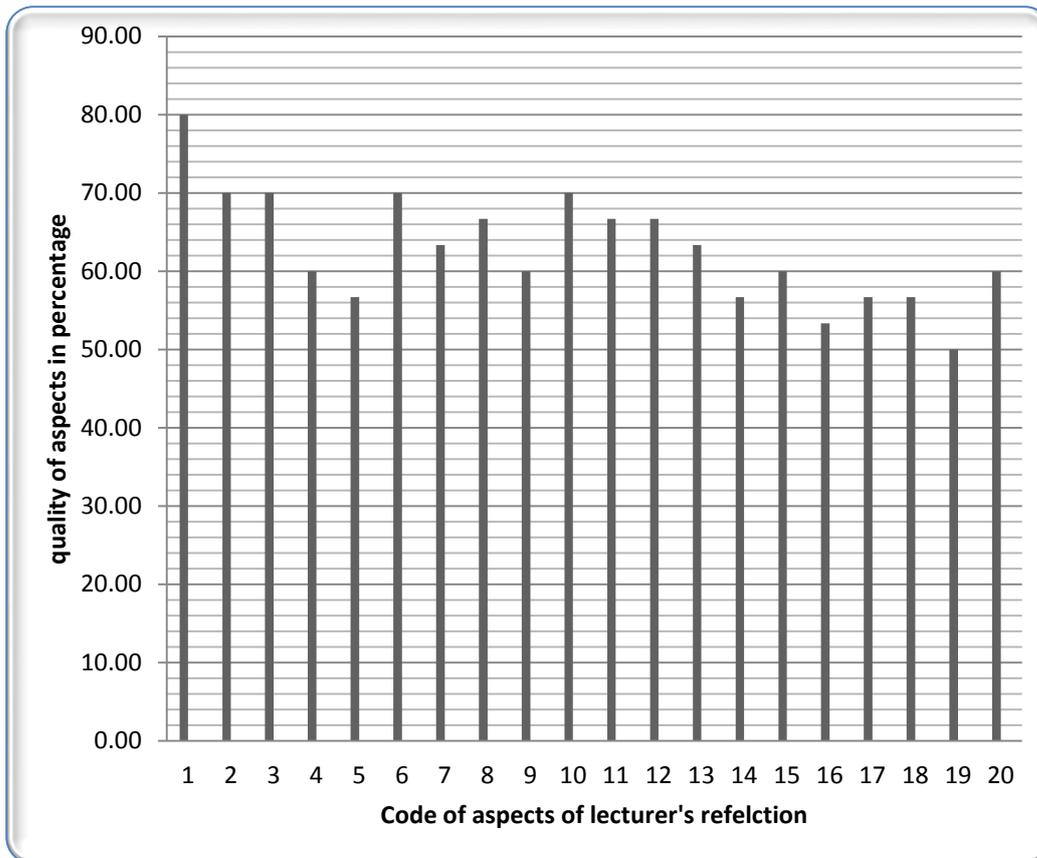
Having finished analysing on the lecturer's reflection and how the four macro categories correlated with one another, the detail aspects can be vividly seen in the following explanations. It turned out that the good condition of the lecturer (represented by no1) harvested only 80 %. It was the highest effort of the lecturer compared to that of the students' perception (indicated by no 1) which denoted 97,29 %. This result showed that the appearance of the lecturer had a great effect on the students' motivation.

As a comprehensive description, further description will be on the basis of each general category from the side of lecturer' reflection and the students' perception. The first category of the lecturer' reflection harvested 16,83 %, whereas the students' perception regarding this aspect mounts to 23,78%. In this case the lecturer appeared in a poor way of physical exposure and hence there was a relationship between these two aspects with the students' posttest in that there was no significant increase in the mean (65,19 to 65,22), median (65,50 to 65,50) and mode (64,00 to 69,00). Thus, no involvement or placebo effect happened to students (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, Chris, and Walker, 2014).

The same relationship happened to the second category (i.e. content and the essay skeleton) The lecturer contributed 16,50 % while the students' perception valued 21,89 %. The third category of the lecturer, i.e. teaching procedure contributed to 15,68 %, on the contrary the students' perceptions appeared to be 23,38%. Last but not least was the aspect of evaluation and follow up. This last aspect let the lecturer contribute 13,83 % compared to that of students' perception which valued 22,09 %. In short, all the four main aspects of the lecturer reflection were below the students' perception, therefore; it can be concluded that the poor result of the students' posttest was due to this fact. It may mean that there is a clear relationship between what the lecturer had done in the class and the students' achievement.

It can be seen from the graphic (figure 1.2) that the highest quality of my involvement in the class was marked with "I appeared in a good condition coded with no 1." It contributed to 80% of the maximum quality. The second highest quality of my involvement was represented by "dynamic tone of greeting coded with no 3", "elicited some interesting topics and narrowed it down coded with no 6", "presented a certain level of grammatical coded with no 10", and "smiled and showed a charming facial expression coded with no 2. These four actions covered the same value of 70% for each. The rest of the items were below 70 % and the lowest one was "I implemented a process of asking students the level of understanding coded with no 19." It contributed to 50 % in quality. Thus, the whole involvement of me coded with no 1 to 20 was 62, 84 % which was far below the students' perception, in total, which constituted 91,14 %. Hence it could be inferred that if my involvement was relatively close to that of the students' perception, the students' posttest would be much better.

Figure 1.2. The graphic of the Lecturer's Reflection



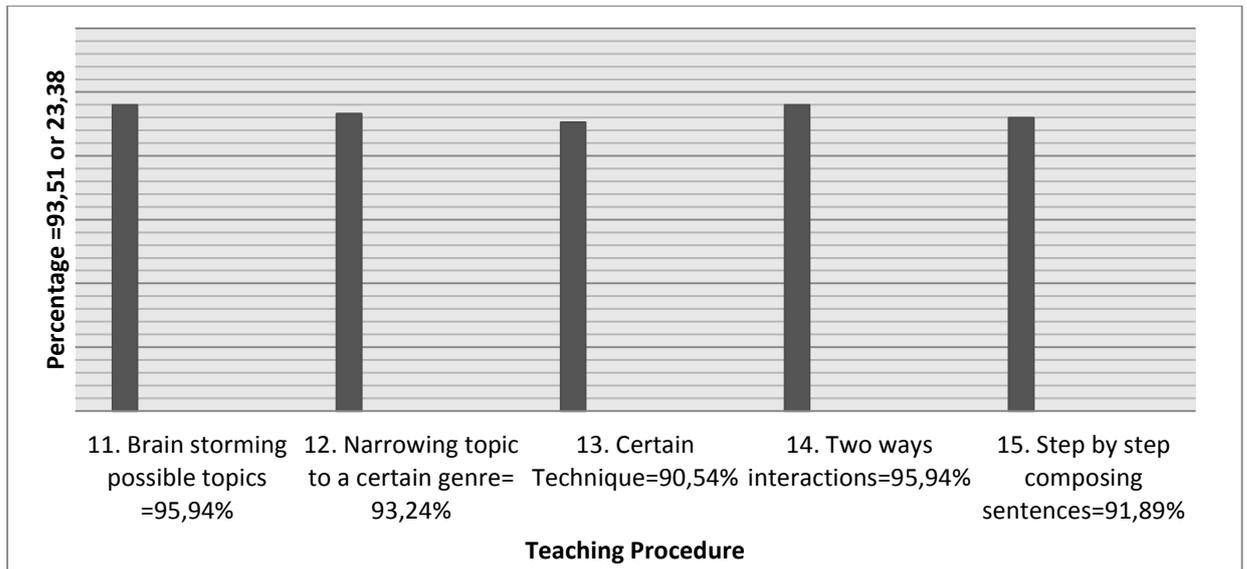
In general, the students rated the five detail factors regarding the lecturer's appearance with more than 80 % or equivalent with 23,78 % of this category in total. However, the highest rating one was "motivating word or sentences." The quotes were mostly from well-known people over the globe. It was exposed to the students at the beginning of the lecturing session. The quote was read loudly by the lecturer and the students followed him afterward. In this context, the students read it out loud in a chorus or in individual basis depending on the situation. A vivid example was a quote; "The best teacher is the one who suggests rather than dogmatizes, and inspires his listener with the wish to teach himself." Edward G, Bulwer-Lytton: (1803-1873). It turned out that the students liked this type of words and they memorized it and yelled it as an ice breaking during the process of experiencing writing essay.

Unlike the detail factors for lecturer's appearance which contributed up to 23,78 % out of the four other global categories, the detail factor for content and skeleton contributed only 21,89 % in total. Out of five statements, "clear title to develop" was the top rank in this category. This type of statement was merely a process of offering the students with some choices of title and how each of them would be developed in a good essay. In this context the lecturer posed some actual and interesting titles such as corruption in Indonesia, child education issue, political turmoil, or event human rights issues. At the same time, each topic was placed in the appropriate genres such as opinion, discussion, argumentative, comparison and contrast, or cause and effect. Surprisingly, out of all those offered genres to choose, the students were in favor of opinion genre followed by discussion genre and the least one was cause and effect. This means that whenever the students are assigned to write an essay, a clear title is the first thing to consider.

What is the tendency of the students towards the aspects of the teaching procedures?

In this third category, the total percentage is 93,38% or equivalent with 23,38 % in total. It seems that none of the five statements was dominant because all of them contributed relatively higher than 90 %; however, "brainstorming possible topics, and two ways interactions" contributed the highest ones. When brainstorming possible topics, the lecturer elicited many topics from the students and listed each of which on the board. The lecturer began with asking question "what do you think the most pressing or hottest issues today?"

Figure 1.3. The Graphic of Detail Factors for Teaching Procedure



The lecturer then recast further questions “why and how will you do with that?” As each proposed topic was explored with many angles and potential genres to apply, the lecturer communicated with the students in order that each topic was clearly elaborated through a step by step drafting technique. Whatever word the students posed, the lecturer made them aware where would the chosen topic flow. Thus, the lecturer requested the students to follow the drafting, developing, revising and editing process upon the discussed topic until the essay looked logical.

Despite the fact that there was not further research question for the detail factor for evaluation and follow up, it was worth summarizing the result since it had relationship with the previous explanation. All the five statements in the last category contributed less than 90% or equivalent with 22,09 % in total. However; this does not mean that the evaluation and the follow up are less important because the contribution was still between 80 to 90 %. Further, it shows that each detail statement placed a relatively similar point with a little margin. For example, “the topic and step by step drafting, and development process had similar values. The rest of tree aspect were

averagely about 86% or equivalent with 22 %. All of these aspects turned out to be as important as the follow up and homework.

Compared to all presented results above, it is quite clear that lecturer's appearance placed the highest point out of the three others. This indicates that lecturer's factor cannot be neglected since it might affect the students' attitude. In my context, when the lecturer looked nice and his attitudes were positive, then the students looked fine and eager to experience the rest of the lecturing sessions no matter the learning process was demanding and exhausting. Thus at least, this may be applicable in the culture of my context but may not be applicable in the western classroom situation.

Conclusions and Suggestions

This present study explores some potential aspects that might affect the students' essay writing with regard to their perception. In addition, this study is a part of the broader research on essay writing carried out by the researcher with the original topic "Developing Technique in Writing Essay" (Turmudi, 2013). Thus, the result is an integral part of the being developed research until then. Further, this study has revealed that the factors influencing the students' essay class were complex and none of them was poor but was in balance.

Considering the description of students' pretest and posttest, it can be concluded that there was no significant different between the result of pre-test and posttest. This means that the lecturer's interaction with the students during the whole meeting did not have any effect onto the students' cognitive achievement.

As for the lecturer reflection on his lecturing session, it can vividly be seen that his whole involvement in the essay writing was below average of the students' perception regarding all aspects addressed during the process of learning. However; it

remains a clear logical conclusion that both the lecturer's reflection and the students' perception have a close relationship.

Regarding the tendency of the students towards the aspects of the teaching procedures, it can be inferred that the first aspect of the lecturer, i.e. his appearance, and motivating words were the most influencing aspect in the students' motivation. In fact, "motivating words was the highest factor that influenced the students in respect to their perception. This result is in line with the finding of Wong (2010) stating that the Hongkong students see teachers as an important factor in influencing their students' motivation to learn English. Other previous results which are in support of this finding (more or less) are Wong and Lee (1999), and Wang (1993) as cited in Wong (2010). Thus, this category is the highest factor in affecting the students' essay writing class which may also apply for other similar class of EFL class.

Teaching procedure has contributed 23, 38 % of the four main categories and placed it as the second position. It means that this factor is still an important part for any teacher to apply. Whereas, the evaluation and follow up session has contributed 22.09 % of the four main categories. This means that none of the factors dominated the influence upon the students' essay class. Finally, the least factor that has influenced the students' essay class was content and skeleton of the essay. It has only contributed 21.89 % and placed the highest point that influenced the students' essay class on the basis of this category. In brief, none of the four main factors, as partial or integral, took dominant factor or minor one but was in close margin among them.

Upon the completion of the descriptive analysis, it has come to a conclusion that in teaching essay and making how the students yield a good achievement need some certain treatments. Accordingly, a holistic factor is recommended to apply considering the previous results. It is also recommended that a further research of related topic be

carried out in a more experimental one to make its external validity more acceptable and reliable. As for the researcher in this context, a further research and development to develop a certain technique in enhancing the student's achievement in essay writing needs conducting as a follow up study.

Pedagogical Implication

The implication of this study is that in teaching essay, some aspects of both lecturer and students are worth considering as they may have reciprocal cause either integratedly or in a partial process of learning. Thus, the complexity of aspects in teaching play visible roles that may control the outcomes of the learning.

Limitation of the study

This study, focused on analyzing the result of, pre-test, questionnaire, posttest, and reflection, was only taken from a private university in English Department in Indonesia. Therefore; the external validity needs a further research considering state and private, multilevel of learners, and sampling technique. Another limitation of the present study was qualitative one and in fact, no parametric statistical were applied to test the correlation such as Pearson product moment and other related test.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Table of Aspects and Question Distributions in the Questionnaire

No	Global Aspects to Address	Detail of statements	Representation
1	Lecturer 's Appearance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Good condition of the lecturer such as health, and on the spot performance 2. Charming facial expression of the lecturer 3. Tone of greeting of the lecturer 4. Physical exercising to prepare the readiness of the instructional 5. Good motivating words or sentences 	1,2,3,4,5
2	Contents and Structure of the Essay	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Interesting topics blown out and focus on specific topic afterward 7. Clear title to develop 8. Clear key points such as introduction, bodies, and concluding paragraph, as well as thesis, topic sentence, and supporting sentences and details 9. Number of vocabularies, grammatical aspects, and punctuation to include 10. Level of grammatical complexities such as simple, compound, complex, and compound and complex sentences 	6,7,8,9,10
3	Teaching Procedures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Began with brainstorming in spoken by listing possible issues to address; 12. Narrowing issue to address in a certain genre; for example opinion, discussion, argumentative or cause and effect; 13. A certain Technique in developing essay for example: 3 Steps Technique, FBFRP technique or other; 14. Two ways interaction between lecturer's and Students; 15. Step by step composing sentences :e.g.: Topic sentence to Supporting Sentences, Supporting Sentence to Supporting details, etc; 	11,12,13,14,15
4	Evaluation and Follow up	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 16. Asking SS the topic and the steps of drafting; 17. Asking SS the development process of the essay; 18. Asking SS the key points of the essay; 19. Asking SS the level of understanding and level of satisfaction of the students toward the discussed topic of the day; 	16,17,18,19,20

		20. Requesting follow up of essay writing at home;	
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Appendix 2

Survey on Essay Writing Course “How much important for you does each of the following issues?”

Directions!

1. Put a thick in the box if you think it represents your agreement;
2. Consider your own understanding and need based on what you feel when joining essay writing class;
3. Your choice indicates your own feeling; accordingly consulting matters with your friends is prohibited;
4. Scoring meaning;
 - a. 5 : strongly agree
 - b. 4 : agree
 - c. 3 : abstain
 - d. 2 : less agree
 - e. 1 : disagree

No	Detail statement to respond	Level of Agreement				
		5	4	3	2	1
1.	A good condition of the lecturer such as health, and on the spot appearance;					
2	A charming facial expression of the lecturer on the spot;					
3	A dynamic tone of greeting of the lecturer;					
4	Physical movement to prepare the readiness of the instructional;					
5	Some good motivating words or sentences;					
6	Listing some interesting topics and then focusing on the specific topic afterward;					
7	Presenting a clear title to develop of the day					
8	Presenting a number of clear key points such as introduction, bodies, and concluding paragraph, as well as thesis, topic sentence, and supporting sentences and details					
9	Presenting a number of vocabularies, grammatical aspects, and punctuation to include in the essay product;					
10	Presenting certain level of grammatical complexities such as simple, compound, complex, and compound and complex sentences;					
11	It is began with a brainstorming process spoken by listing possible issues to address;					
12	A process of narrowing issue to address in a certain genre; for example opinion, discussion, argumentative or cause and effect etc;					
13	A certain technique in developing essay for example: 3 Steps Technique, Forward-back-Forward- Revising and Publishing technique (FBFRP)or others;					

14	Two ways interaction between lecturer's and students asking what they want to address regarding the developed text;					
15	A step by step composing sentences :e.g.: topic sentence to supporting sentences, a supporting sentence to supporting details, etc;					
16	A process of asking SS about the developed topic and the steps of drafting;					
17	A process of asking SS the development process of the essay such as types of thesis statement, types of conclusion and types of concluding paragraph;					
18	A process of asking SS the key content points of the essay;					
19	A process of asking SS the level of understanding and level of satisfaction of the students toward the discussed topic of the day;					
20	A case of requesting a follow up of the essay writing at home;					

Appendix 3

Design of Lecturer's Reflection

Notes

5 : Always or Very good 4 : Often or good , 3 : Sometimes or Satisfactory , 2 : Seldom or poor 1 : Never or absent

Reflection :

No	What I did in teaching essay class	Quality				
		5	4	3	2	1
1.	I appeared in good condition					
2	I smiled and showed a charming facial expression					
3	I greeted my students with dynamic tone of greeting					
4	My physical movement in the class					
5	I told my SS some good motivating words or sentences;					
6	I elicited some interesting topics and then focusing on the specific topic afterward;					
7	I present presented a clear title to develop of the day					
8	I presented a number of clear key points such as introduction, bodies, and concluding paragraph, as well as thesis, topic sentence, and supporting sentences and details					
9	I presented a number of vocabularies, grammatical aspects, and punctuation to include in the essay product;					
10	I presented certain level of grammatical complexities such as simple, compound, complex, and compound and complex sentences;					
11	I began the class with a brainstorming process spokenly by listing possible issues to address;					
12	I did a process of narrowing issue to address in a certain genre; for example opinion, discussion, argumentative or cause and effect etc;					
13	I used a certain technique in developing essay for example: 3 Steps Technique, Forward-back-Forward- Revising and Publishing technique (FBFRP)or others;					
14	I implemented two ways interaction between lecturer's and students asking what they want to address regarding the developed text;					
15	I did a step by step composing sentences :e.g: topic sentence to supporting sentences, a supporting sentence to supporting details, etc;					
16	I did a process of asking SS about the developed topic and the steps of drafting;					
17	I did a process of asking SS the development process of the essay such as types of thesis					

	statement, types of conclusion and types of concluding paragraph;					
18	I did a process of asking SS the key content points of the essay;					
19	I implemented a process of asking SS the level of understanding and level of satisfaction of the students toward the discussed topic of the day;					
20	I requested SS and followed up with some assignment of writing essay at home;					

Appendix 4
Scoring Rubric for Essay

SCORING RUBRIC FOR ESSAY ASSIGNMENT						
OPINION						
Computerized-based Essay						
NO	ITEMS	IDEAL SCORE	Actual Score			Mean
			R1	R2	R3	
I	FORMATING					
1	There are five paragraphs in total	5				
2	The Title is Center	2				
3	The outhor and SRN are below the Title with one space	2				
4	Every paragraph is indented	2				
5	The space for all doceumnts are two spaces	2				
6	Capital letter, comma, period,semi colon, question mark are use	7				
II	STRUCTURE OF THE ESSAY					
1	There is an introduction of the paragraph	2				
2	There are three good paragraph bodies	3				
3	There is a concluding paragraph	2				
4	There is a good hook in the introductory paragraph	2				
5	There is a general statement	2				
6	There is a thesis stament : FIRST PERSON POINT OF VIEW	2				
7	The thesis is a complete sentence	2				
8	The thesis has a topic : POV and a controling idea	3				
9	The thesis is the most genereal sentence in the essay	2				
10	There is a topic sentence in paragraph 2 : First Person POV	2				
11	There are some ARGUMENTS in paragraph 2	3				
12	There is a concluding sentence at then end of the paragraph 2	2				
13	There is a topic sentence in paragraph 3 : First Person POV	2				
14	There are some ARGUMENTS in paragraph 3	3				
15	There is a concluding sentence at then end of the paragraph 3	2				
16	There is a topic sentence in paragraph 4 : First Person POV	2				
17	There are some ARGUMENTS in paragraph 4	3				
18	There is a concluding sentence at then end of the paragraph 4	2				
19	There is conclusion or summary in the concluding paragraph	4				
III	CONTENT					
1	The topic is appropriate with the assignment	3				
2	The topic is interetsing to read	3				
3	the content is focus from beginning until the end	3				
4	The content has good unity	3				
5	The content has good coherence	3				
IV	GRAMMAR					
1	No errors are found (20)	20				
2	Few errors are found (16)	16				
3	Sufficient errors are found (12)	12				
4	Fifty percent errors are found (8)	8				
5	Major errors are found (4)	4				
	TOTAL SCORE					

A Study on the Motivational Problems of First Grade Pupils of De La Salle

Zobel School: An Assessment

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Abstract

Children seem to be driven with their curiosity, making them eager to interact meaningfully in their environment. Unfortunately, as these children grow, their eagerness to explore and learn declines, thus, this may result to problems concerning motivation. Using Stipek's Theory on Motivational Problems (2002), this paper assesses whether the selected group of first grade pupils from De La Salle Zobel School have motivational problems and aims to highlight the most preponderant ones. A researcher-made survey which was validated by Elementary Education professors from University of Santo Tomas was used. The data were treated with the help of a Math teacher. Finally, the results revealed that there is a minimum occurrence of each motivational problem in the class.

Key Words: Motivation, Grade 1 students, Motivational problems

Introduction

In a learning environment, motivation plays an important role. Learning is an active process requiring conscious and deliberate activity. (Stipek,1998). A student may be extremely able, but if they do not exert effort, success would not be possible. In order to maximize the benefits offered in schools, educators must provide an environment conducive to active engagement and productivity in learning activities. As what recent studies had shown, high motivation and engagement in learning plays a key role in increasing levels of student achievement (Kushman, Seiber, & Harold, 2000 in Broussard, 2002). Furthermore, Brophy (1983) denotes that motivation is the response of students making sense of activities and experiences and eventually understands the concepts taught leading to mastery of skills that these activities and contents promote.

However, in a dynamic setting such as a classroom, providing and sustaining motivation poses a key obstacle for teachers. As a classroom consists of a unique array of cultures and personalities, it is also most prone to a multitude of motivational problems. Stipek (2002) classifies these motivational problems into six categories, providing caricatures to represent them, namely, *Defensive Dave*, a person who chooses to pretend to try to exert effort than to risk being viewed as a dim-witted student; *Helpless Hannah* who develops a firm view of oneself as an incompetent student and who constantly asks “*why try when failure is inevitable?*”; *Safe Sally* who views academic challenges as something to be avoided at all costs, rigidly follows guidelines and structure given to them and sees good grades as the only benefit of learning; *Satisfied Santos* who does only what is required by teachers in order to keep out of trouble and who enjoys intellectually challenging activities on their own terms. Fifth among the categories is *Anxious Alma* who is constantly distracted by thoughts of failure and who is painfully concerned about other students evaluating gaze, thus less

concentration is given to the teacher's question itself; Lastly, *Alienated Al* who has a conceived conviction of not wanting to be seen as a serious student.

Framework of the Study

In the learning environment such as classrooms, *Motivation* is an essential key to achieve success in learning. Hence, motivation is an active process where it requires dynamic participation from a conscious learner doing activities that are purposeful (Stipek, 2002). It is important for teachers in educational settings to create a place conducive to learning where the students exert effort in enriching activities. From this, teachers provide reinforcements to the learning experiences where the students are involved to amplify learning behaviors that are desirable in educational settings. Teachers give reinforcements to imply standards in classroom that students shall follow. An example of this is the widely used Operant Conditioning by B.F. Skinner (Stipek, 2002). Inside the classroom, teacher establishes desired classroom behaviors for successful learning through constituting rules, procedures, routines - these increase the probability of motivation. Moreover, motivation in learning enhances the behavior in which the "learner's knowledge is turned into beneficial contributions to accomplishments in learning, despite complexity of subject and tasks" (Stipek, 1998, p. 94). Motivation in learning stimulates students to be dutiful and effortful for learning to occur. Teachers are, then, expected to motivate students through engaging and productive learning experiences (Stipek, 1998). This is done when teachers use models of operant conditioning such as *positive reinforcement, punishment, negative reinforcement, token economies, praises*, etc. However, with use of these, teachers must always identify at the start of class that they anticipate desired behavior even before reinforcing or punishing.

At some extent, there will always be problems in motivation that may arise. Oftentimes, the problems in motivation are seen through observable behaviors. In the sphere of *Motivation in Learning*, Stipek (2002) identified that motivational problems may come in *low effort expenditure, poor attention, or exhibiting disruptive behavior*. Not all students who get high grades are motivated in learning. There are instances where the students are often getting A+ in school works but doing it only for grade sake and there are others who are consistent average students who can achieve better grades. These students' skills are, therefore, underdeveloped and chances are students become disinterested at some point. On this matter, the problem is grounded on teachers' responsibility to observe behaviors under various working contexts. As a teacher, he or she must work on observing the working attitude of all students, achievers and underachievers in general. Teachers are tasked to review or re-evaluate the environment where teaching-learning takes place, instead of questioning what has gone wrong with the students (Stipek, 2002). Educational implications of reinforcement could be negative in some instances when teachers do not know how to effectively implement reinforcement practices in class. As a result, it contributes to the problems of students in motivation to excel in school. The problems in motivation falls down to the place where teaching and learning take place. Teachers' way of implementing lessons, provision of variety of learning experiences and managing the classroom affect the dilemma in motivation. On the other hand, communication between teachers and students may add to motivational factor. When the teachers and students fail to establish communication, unspoken issues may grow. Teachers need to provide discussions with students individually or as a group to reveal any mishaps on the relationship. If communication is not well maintained, productive pathways are not enhanced, as well

as, teachers will not be able to get information and may fail to understand the students (Stipek, 2002).

Furthermore, motivational problems inside the classroom can be easily identified when teachers know what potential behavioral problems to observe. These motivational problems were stated in *Deborah Stipek's Motivation in Learning* as several behavioral profiles that come from numerous shapes, sizes and are in packages. Stipek prepared 6 vignettes featuring the hypothetical children to be enrolled in classes of teachers. The profiles below exhibit the usual motivation “syndrome” (Stipek, 2002) of various behaviors that withholds the maximum opportunity for learning.

The Six Profiles of Motivational Problems (Stipek, 2002)

Defensive Dave

Grounded on Convington's Failure – Avoidance Theory (Stipek, 2002), the perception of Defensive Dave in self – worth assumes that human beings naturally strive to maintain people's judgment of their own value. This explains why people often take more responsibility for their success than for failures (McAllister, 1996; Miller & Ross, 1975 in Stipek, 2002), as well as why they behave maladaptively when their self – worth is threatened, especially in public contexts.

Defensive Dave is labeled as a type of student who avoids looking incompetent in class. According to Dweck (1986 in Stipek, 2002), student with performance goals holds an entity view of ability and therefore wants to look competent or avoid looking incompetent. He judges his competence on how well he performs relative to others or on external feedback, not on real gains in understanding or mastery.

The strategies of Defensive Dave such as asking his teacher questions yielding that he is diligently doing his task and having tendencies to copy the homework of others or cheat in a quiz make him avoid looking incompetent. These strategies are not

likely to promote learning. Indeed, in one study boys who claimed they didn't ask for help because they wanted to avoid negative ability judgments were more likely than other students to cheat (Stipek, 1998). Ames and Archer (1988 in Stipek, 2002), concluded that students who perceived their classroom to be more performance – oriented tended to attribute failure or low ability. These students are disadvantaged because students who attribute failure to low ability have no reason to exert effort in the future.

Helpless Hannah

The Theory on Learned Helplessness which attributes in students where they believe that they cannot do a particular task without depending on someone, best explains the Helpless Hannah motivational problem. Learned helplessness in achievement situations occur when students – usually those who have experienced a great deal of failure believe that there is nothing that they can do to avoid failure. When they fail, helpless children typically attribute the failure to their low ability, which they believe is stable and out of their control (Dweck, 2000 in Stipek, 2002). These students exert minimal effort on school tasks and give up easily when they encounter difficulty.

Helpless Hannah has already given up, and is labeled as the type of student who says “I don't know “and “I can't” most of the time. She doesn't pay attention to teacher's instructions nor ask help when needed. She is withdrawn, and if she tries to gain respect, it is through other means, such as bullying.

Safe Sally

The behavior of Safe Sally can be best explained by the theory of Expectancy \times Value proposed by Atkinson (1964 in Stipek, 2002). In this theory, Atkinson proposed that achievement behavior is determined by a conflict between two tendencies—to approach tasks and to avoid tasks. These tendencies are then strengthened or weakened by

motives and expectations of a person regarding the accomplishment of a particular goal (Stipek, 1998). He also proposed that two conscious variables are in play—the *perceived probability of success* wherein a belief that the probability of success is high is conceived, and the *perceived probability of failure* wherein shame as a result of failure is anticipated.

Safe Sally, as described by Stipek, deliberately chooses tasks in which she is most likely to succeed, thus, projecting an image of being a diligent student. She avoids tasks in which success seems inevitable in order to avoid occasions of shame brought by failure.

Satisfied Santos

Underachievement refers to the achievement of students which is believed to be below their ability (Stipek, 2002). Santos chose to perform below his capacity because he has a different perception of self-worth by Covington's theory. For him, he set his standards below his ability and therefore don't put too much attention on achieving more since he is satisfied with simply passing or finishing mediocre works. According to Harter, Whitesell and Junkin (1998 in Stipek, 2002) discounting the importance of academic success explains why Santos divert his attention in nonacademic domains rather than focusing on academic ones.

Teacher's expectation on students plays a role in Santos achievement. With Santos situation, the teacher knows that he can finish his task and this serves to reinforce Santos confidence in his ability (Stipek, 2002). But at the same time, knowing that Santos already perceived that the teacher's expectancy about him is that he is satisfied with fair grades, Santos would choose to get fair grades to meet the teacher's expectation.

Anxious Alma

Anxious Alma can be best explained using Achievement Anxiety, where most students who are highly anxious in achievement situation have low perceptions of their academic competence and low self-efficacy; they are most anxious in situations that threaten their self-esteem (Stipek, 2002). Anxious Alma diverts her attention on her performance losing her concentration on receiving, transferring and using her knowledge. She already anticipates failure by thinking that she might not meet the expectation of others or the standards to be met. Instead of striving to finish a highly evaluative task, she chooses to do the easy ones where success will be fairly certain (Stipek, 2002). This explains the reason why Alma chose to refuse answering than giving wrong answer and because of high-anxiety she tends to forget what she already knows because of the fear of being evaluated by the class.

Alienated Al

Rotter emphasizes on the value of *reinforcement* in shaping behavior, and on the role of *beliefs* with regards to the effectiveness of such reinforcement. Relating both variables, Rotter believed that reinforcement value is linked not only to the probability of success, but also to the needs of a person (Stipek, 2002).

This theory best explains the behavior of Alienated Al. As described, Alienated Al places value on interaction with friends in school rather than on learning in school. As what can be inferred, he finds this interaction with peers a more pressing need. Grades imply little importance for him compared to the warmth and reaction he get from his peers. Alienated Al matches the wrong reinforcement with the wrong behavior.

Objective of the Study

This study aims to assess the motivational problems of a selected first grade class.

Specifically, the study seeks to answer the question:

What is the motivational problem profile of the selected grade one class?

Methodology

Participants

The subjects of this study are selected grade one pupils who are currently enrolled at De La Salle Zobel School in Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa for School year 2012 – 2013.

Table 1 shows the target and generating population for the study.

Table 1

TABLE FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Section	Target Population	Actual Population	Percentage
Grade 1 C	32	26	81%
Total	32	26	81%

Out of the 32 respondents from Grade One – C, 26 answered the questionnaire.

Thus, 81% participated in this study.

Instrument

The Motivational Problem Assessment Tool (MoPat) is a researcher – made questionnaire consisting of 30 items, which identifies motivational problems common to students. The questionnaire classifies motivational problems according to Stipek’s theory on Motivational Problems (2002), which includes the following qualities: Defensive Dave, Helpless Hannah, Safe Sally, Satisfied Santos, Anxious Alma and Alienated Al. To validate the content of the survey, the instrument was presented to a panel of education professors from the University of Santo Tomas, Manila. It was assumed that the instrument is valid and does not need pilot testing due to time

constraint. Table 2 shows the breakdown of the Motivational Problem Assessment Tool.

Table 2
COMPONENTS OF THE MOTIVATIONAL PROBLEM ASSESSMENT TOOL

Parts of the Survey	Number of Items
Part I: Defensive Dave (DD)	5
Part II: Helpless Hannah (HH)	5
Part III: Satisfied Santos (SS1)	5
Part IV: Safe Sally (SS2)	5
Part V: Anxious Alma (AA1)	5
Part VI: Alienated Al (AA2)	5
TOTAL	30

Table 2 shows that the survey is divided into six parts, each corresponding to a specific classification of motivational problems. The first part corresponds to the items pertaining to common characteristics found in *Defensive Dave*. The second part focuses on atypical traits of persons with motivational problems classified under *Helpless Hannah*. The third part corresponds to the third of Stipek’s motivational problems, *Satisfied Santos*. The fourth and fifth parts help in identifying those respondents under the classifications of *Safe Sally* and *Anxious Alma*, accordingly. Lastly, the sixth part matches with the classification of *Alienated Al*.

The survey is structured as a 5-point Likert Scale describing how often they exhibit the behavior under each item number. Respondents are to tick off 5 for always, 4 for frequently, 3 for often, 2 for rarely, and 1 for never.

Data Collection

The instrument was administered to grade one pupils with prompting during a two day homeroom class. The teacher explained that the questionnaire is not a test that will be

graded; rather the test will assess the motivational problem of the selected grade one class. The response from the students were tallied, summarized and subjected to statistical procedures.

Statistical Treatment

The researcher computed for the Mean to identify which Motivational Problem is prevalent in the chosen first grade class.

The following statistical formulas were used:

1. Mean (Black, 2001, page 40)

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$

Data Scoring and Analysis

To score the items included in the six parts of the survey, numerical values were assigned for the answers of respondents on the Likert scale. 5 was given for *always*, 4 for *frequently*, 3 for *often*, 2 for *rarely* and 1 for *never*. To identify which motivational problem is most inherent for each level, the mean score for each classification was computed. These are then interpreted using a scale developed by the researchers for interpreting the MoPAT. Illustrated in Table 3 is the mean score range and its corresponding mean interpretation.

Table 3
RESEARCHER – DEVELOPED SCALE FOR INTERPRETING THE
MOTIVATIONAL ASSESSMENT TOOL

Range of Mean Scores	Occurrence of Behavior
4.51 – 5.00	Always
3.51 – 4.50	Frequently
2.51 – 3.50	Often
1.51 – 2.50	Rarely
1.00 – 1.50	Never

A mean score of 4.51 to 5.00 indicates a high level of occurrence of the motivational problem in the group of respondents. A mean of 3.51 to 4.50 indicates that the motivational problem is frequently manifested. 2.51 to 3.50 imply that the classification of motivational problem is often exhibited. On the other hand, a mean of 1.51 to 2.50 indicates that the problem is rarely inherent. Lastly, a mean of 1.00 to 1.50 shows that the problem is not significantly or is never at all exhibited.

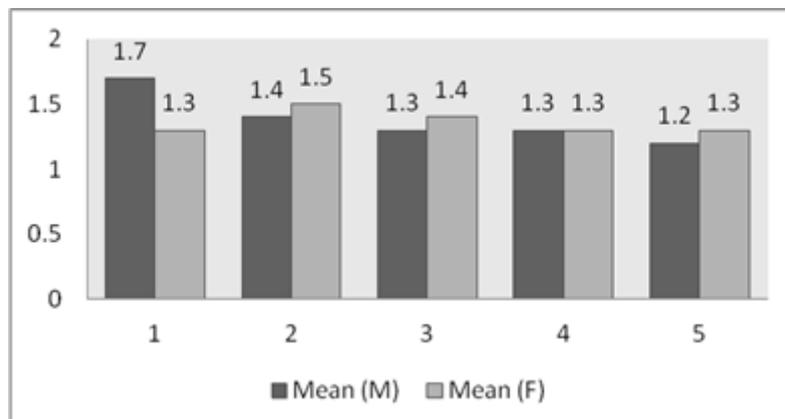
The mean for the grouped data will then be computed. The classification with the highest grouped mean score would pertain to the motivational problem exhibited by the specific year level.

Results and Discussion

Motivational Problem Profile

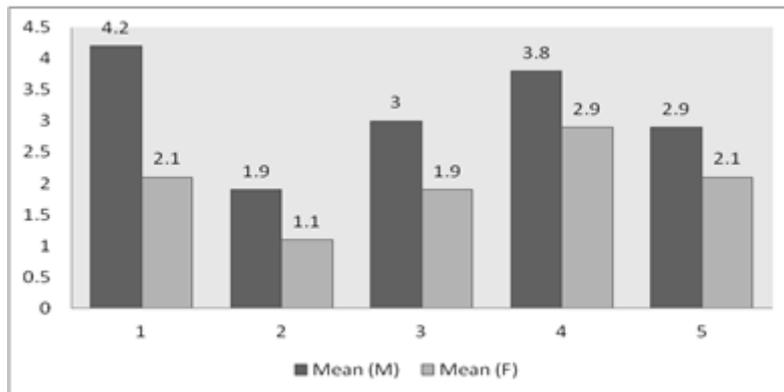
Graphs 1 to 6 presents the motivational problem profile of the selected grade one class. Graph 1 shows that most of the respondents have an average response ranging from a quarter above 1 to almost 2, which means that the occurrence of behaviors such as blaming their classmates when group works remain unfinished, pretending to work on tasks whenever the teacher is looking, or pretending to be looking inside his bag to find for a “missing” assignment, ranges from rarely to never.

Graph 1
Defensive Dave Motivational Problem



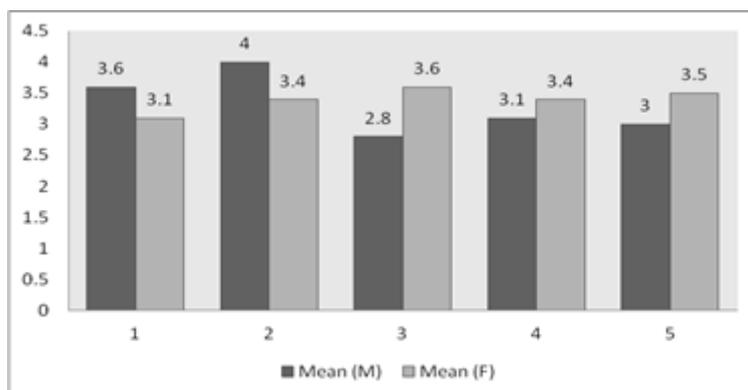
On one hand, graph 2 shows that the average response of male students range from 33% above 1 to almost 3, which means that the occurrence of Helpless Hannah behaviors such as thinking that there's no point in trying hard and talent is something they do not have among the many others happens often. On the other hand, the average response of the female respondents ranges from almost 2 to 40% almost 5, which means that the Helpless Hannah behaviors manifest rarely to always among the females.

Graph 2
Helpless Hannah Motivational Problem



Graph 3 shows that the male respondents answered within the range of 2.71 to 4.

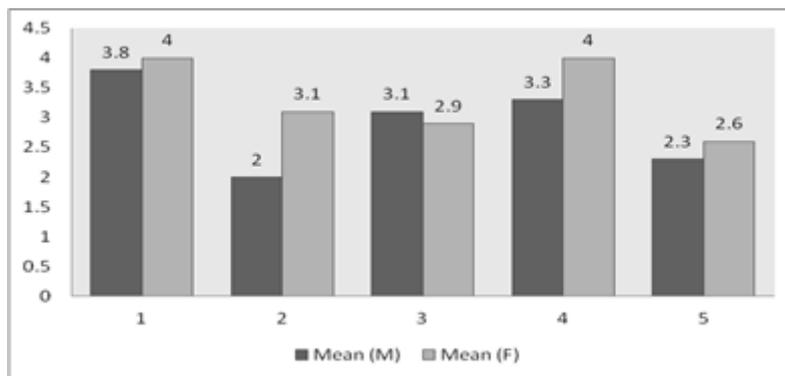
Graph 3
Satisfied Santos



This implies that the occurrence of Satisfied Santos behavior such as finishing tasks barely above the minimum effort required, doing as the instructor says to keep out of trouble and keeping a happy – go – lucky attitude are exhibiting occasionally.

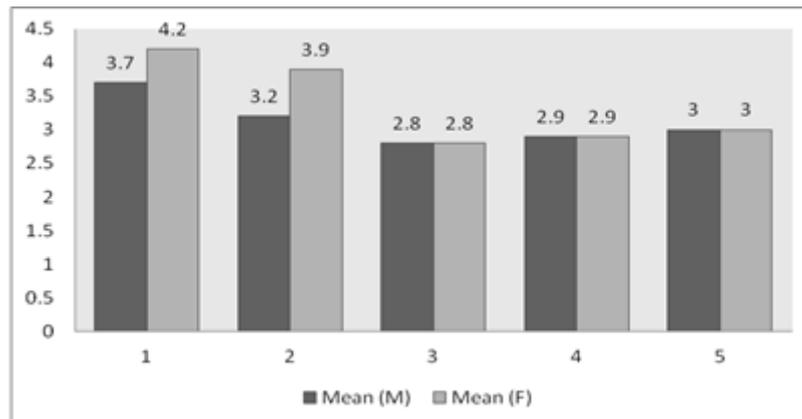
Looking at graph 4, it is implied that that males' average response ranges from 2 to 4. This signifies that behaviors under the category Safe Sally such as avoiding academic challenges, obsessing over getting high grades, depending on rote memory skills and sticking to routine activities patents from rarely to frequently. Moreover, it can be seen that the females' average response is from 2.5 to 5, manifesting Safe Sally behaviors rarely to always.

Graph 4
Safe Sally



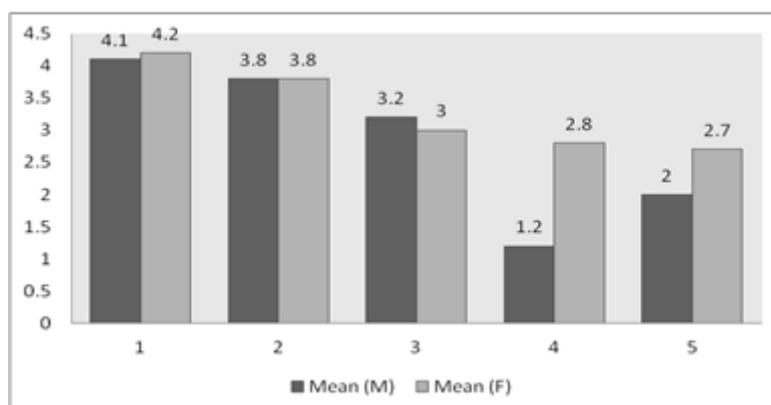
Graph 5 shows that the average response of male students is within the range of 2 to 4, implying that the Anxious Alma behaviors such as volunteering in recitations, sharing assignments to the class and agrees to have surprise tests occur rarely to frequently. With regard to the average response of the female group, respondents claim that they exhibit Anxious Alma behaviors rarely to always.

Graph 5
Anxious Alma



As shown in Graph 6, there is a relative response from the male group since the range of their responses from the mean score group is from 15% above 3 and 20% over 4. Hence, this shows that majority of the males often exhibit the behaviors of Alienated AI. These students give worth to informal conversations with their teacher. They also like listening and receiving feedbacks from them. Lastly, it is of great importance to them that their classmates listen to their ideas and opinion. Also, it is implied that a few among this group rarely manifest behaviors of Alienated AI. Looking at the average response of the females, it is noted that the majority exhibits the Alienated AI behaviors as scores are within the 3 to 5 range.

Graph 6
Alienated AI



Conclusion

Motivation in young elementary students is vital as it “may have profound implications for initial and future school success” (Gottfried, 1990 in Broussard, 2002 p. 43). As early as first grade, it is useful to identify the motivational problems affecting these students to help educators equip with the necessary skills, knowledge and eventually guide these people on handling these issues correctly by consulting experts or conducting more researches. This is because it is certain that students who are motivated will most likely learn compared to those who are not (Child, 2007). Looking at the six motivational problems (Stipek, 2002), it is probable that educators who are unaware of these kinds of student profiles may misunderstand each child as stubborn or dim – witted and may result to using the wrong motivation that addresses the real concern. Hence, may bring success through fear – generated motivation. Achievement caused by fear – generated motivation will most likely put the school success of the child at stake, exposing the child to traumatic and emotional anxiety (Child, 2007). Thus, controlling rewards seems to be more effective in motivation.

The motivational problem profile of the selected class reveals a minimum occurrence of each type of motivational problem. There is an indication that these children are intrinsically motivated. Thus, exposure to fear – generating motivation seems to be minimized.

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**Integrating Internet-based Materials in Reading Comprehension Courses: A
Theoretical Constructivist Perspective**

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Abstract

This paper aims to discuss constructivism and its various features as the theoretical foundation for integrating authentic, Internet-based materials in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) courses. Two pivotal themes within the educational contexts, namely constructivism and internet use, have been merged in this study through a fairly comprehensive review of the available literature on various aspects of constructivism which lend support for the use of the internet in EFL courses. Constructivism, as a prominent learning theory, is used to provide the theoretical underpinnings for the use of the internet-based materials as a practical strategy for enhancing student learning. An important aspect of this study is a focus on minimal use of the internet to make it

appropriate for learners in contexts with limited access to the internet. It aims to provide sound theoretical foundations for incorporating authentic materials from internet in reading courses. The paper begins by briefly discussing constructivism, as the supporting learning theory, and proceeds by presenting its relevant characteristics which have been frequently mentioned in the literature as the requisites for constructive learning environments. This is followed by a discussion of each of these characteristics separately in light of previous research, and how each of these features can be achieved using the Internet-based materials.

Key Words: Constructivism, Internet-based instruction, Materials development

Introduction

The constructivist use of the internet has been discussed in a number of studies like Hung and Nichani (2001), Koohang, Riley, and Smith (2009), and Swan (2005). However, their main focus is on internet incorporation in the broader sense of e-learning which, although insightful and necessary, cannot be applied in contexts where the access to the internet is very limited as is the case in many developing countries. Mindful of the digital divide issue (Woolfolk, 2010) and the concerns over the practicability of the more advanced applications of the internet in the standard language classroom (Brandle, 2002), and in an attempt to take into consideration the large number of learners with limited access to the internet, this paper offers theoretical support in light of previous research for the constructivist use of the print form of the internet-based materials rather than their online form in teaching and learning in the afore-mentioned contexts.

Practical Concerns

Reading comprehension is generally taught by means of textbooks and these textbooks have undergone enormous changes to meet learners' needs and provide them with the best learning experiences possible. However, a number of disadvantages seem to be inherent in textbooks. These disadvantages are briefly discussed below.

One major problem with textbooks is maintaining authenticity. Generally, textbooks are simplified, pedagogically oriented, and linguistically engineered, while the reading tasks, which people encounter in their everyday life, are original, use oriented, and linguistically varied (non-manipulated). In other words, most textbooks are designed to suit the learners, but when trying to apply their reading ability in the outside world, it is the learners who have to fit the text. Thus, it is essential to prepare the learners for the text rather than preparing the text for the learners. This issue is vividly expressed by Berardo (2006):

One of the main reasons for using authentic materials in the classroom is once outside the “*safe*”, controlled language learning environment, the learner will not encounter the artificial language of the classroom but the real world and language how it is really used. The role of the teacher is not to delude the language learner but to prepare him, giving the awareness and necessary skills so as to understand how the language is actually used. (p. 67, emphasis original)

One promising means of attaining this objective seems to be using the authentic Internet-based materials, since they are written for real communicative purposes with the native speakers in mind rather than the language learners.

Other disadvantages have been mentioned by a number of researchers who maintain that generally textbooks are artificial and reductionist in their coverage of

language items, and impose uniformity of syllabus and remove initiative from teachers (Bryd, 2001; de Beaugrande, 2001; McGrath, 2006; Richards and Renandya, 2002; Romer, 2004). It seems rather challenging to capture authenticity in textbooks.

Another issue is the discrepancy between the activities in EFL reading textbooks and everyday reading activities. EFL classroom activities tend to include decoding meaning, paraphrasing, summarizing, finding synonyms/antonyms, matching items, true false questions, etc. While these activities are all essential for language learning, they appear to not leave much room for communicative use of language. This is in sharp contrast with reading tasks outside the classroom in which people read for communication: getting the news, finding information (manuals, tourist guide books, notices, brochures, etc.), keeping in touch (emails, text messages, IM), and inevitably learning. The above-mentioned discrepancies, which are a shared concern of many educators, call for a solution.

A rather subtle but equally compelling justification for the need to substitute textbooks with the Internet-based materials is that in a number of countries with no strict observation of the copyright law, the translated versions of the more useful and popular textbooks are immediately published and made available in the market. This makes EFL textbooks virtually ineffective or at least much less effective, because a large number of students would opt for the translated version rather than the original text, which entails using their first rather than the foreign language. One possible approach to resolving this challenge would be incorporating Internet-based materials so that learners would no longer have access to the translated versions of texts because the indefinite number of materials on the internet renders their translation impossible for such purposes.

Constructivism as the Theoretical Underpinning for the Use of Internet-based Materials

Constructivism, as a prominent theory of learning rather than instruction, is deeply rooted in the work by Dewey (1916), Piaget (1972), Vygotsky (1978), and Bruner (1990). It defines learning as active construction of new knowledge based on learners' previous experiences. According to Piaget, who is credited with formalization of the constructivism theory, learning takes place as the result of cognitive processing of the environmental interactions and the resultant construction of mental structures, or schemas that help to make sense of those interactions (Swan, 2005).

Piaget explained the mechanisms through which learners construct knowledge by introducing the concepts of assimilation and accommodation. He maintained that people have in place some mental structures, or schemas, as a result of prior interaction with the environment. When faced with new experiences, they either find them compatible with previous frameworks, and therefore assimilate them into the existing schemas, or notice mismatches between the new experiences and the existing mental structures, in which case they tend to accommodate, or change and reframe these structures. Obviously, assimilation can also occur as a result of failure to perceive a mismatch between the new experience and the existing schemas. Such failure can be due to negligence, misinterpreting the perceived information, or treating it as trivial. In any case, the individual will fail to alter a faulty representation.

Swan (2005) claims that according to Vygotsky even though learning takes place within the individual minds, it is the result of social interaction, and therefore, social construction of meaning occurs via communication, activities, and interactions with others. He further maintains that Vygotsky did not believe that cognitive structures are genetically predetermined; rather he maintained that they are the result of individuals' interactions with their societies. Vygotsky viewed knowledge construction

as occurring via a two phase, reciprocal process; he maintained that first, meanings are enacted socially through interactions with others and then internalized within the individuals; the internal conceptualizations, in turn, guide social interactions

Constructivist Features Applicable in Contexts with Limited Access to Internet

The relevant features that are deemed most applicable to constructivist learning using the Internet-based materials are outlined below, followed by a discussion of these concepts and their compatibility with the use of the Internet-based materials:

- a. Complex, relevant, and realistic context (Bruning, Schraw, Norby, & Ronning, 2004; Driscoll, 2005; Honebein, 1996; Jonassen, 1994; Murphy, 1997, Savery & Duffy, 2006; Schunk, Pintrich, & Meece, 2008)
- b. Social negotiation (Bruning et al., 2004; Driscoll, 2005; Hirumi, 2005; Honebein, 1996; Jonassen, 1994; Murphy, 1997; Schunk et al., 2008)
- c. Shared responsibility (Bruning et al., 2004; Driscoll, 2005; Honebein, 1996; Muirhead, 2006; Murphy, 1997; Schunk et al., 2008)
- d. Multiple perspectives and multiple representations of content (Driscoll, 2005; Hoffler & Leutner, 2007; Honebein, 1996; Jonassen, 1994; Murphy, 1997; Savery & Duffy, 2006; Schunk et al., 2008)
- e. Self-awareness (Bruning et al., 2004; Driscoll, 2005; Honebein, 1996; Murphy, 1997)
- f. Knowledge construction view (Bruning et al., 2004; Driscoll, 2005; Hirumi, 2005; Honebein, 1996; Jonassen, 1994; Muirhead, 2006; Murphy, 1997)
- g. Ownership in learning (Driscoll, 2005; Honebein, 1996; Muirhead, 2006; Murphy, 1997; Savery & Duffy, 2006; Schunk et al., 2008)
- h. Learning tools' support for challenging tasks (Liu and Chen, 2010; Schunk et al., 2008)

- i. Scaffolding (Chen, Chia-En Teng, Lee, & Kinshuk, 2011; Kim & Hannafin, 2011; Li & Lim, 2008; Muirhead, 2006; Murphy, 1997; Schunk et al., 2008)
- j. Use of primary sources of data (Murphy, 1997)

These characteristics can be further categorized under three main categories, which reflect the three important factors in learning, namely the learner, the learning environment, and the teacher as presented below:

1. The learning environment
 - a) Complex, relevant, and realistic contexts
 - b) Multiple perspectives and multiple representations of knowledge
 - c) Use of primary sources of data
2. The learner
 - a) Social negotiation
 - b) Shared responsibility
 - c) Self-awareness
 - d) Knowledge construction
 - e) Ownership in learning
3. The teacher
 - a) Teacher to facilitator role shift
 - b) Scaffolding
 - c) Providing learning tools that support student learning

Learning-Environment Related Requisites for Constructivist Learning

Among the characteristics related to the learning environment, the first one is the provision of complex learning environments and authentic tasks (Driscoll, 2005). The rationale is that the world outside classroom does not present problems and tasks in a linear, simplified manner, rather it hosts all types of fuzzy, ill structured, and complex

problems and tasks (Woolfolk, 2010). Complex learning environments should be presented to learners to prepare them for successful interaction with real world problems.

As Needles and Knapp (1994) put it, complex problems should be presented in authentic tasks and activities which learners would encounter when applying what they have learned to the real world. Obviously, when dealing with complex tasks, learners may encounter challenges and need help, but this can be addressed through scaffolding mechanisms by teachers or peers.

Other studies have also noted the need for complex, real life tasks. For instance, Murphy (1997) maintained that in a constructivist learning context, “Learning situations, environments, skills, content, and tasks are relevant, realistic, and authentic and represent the natural complexities of the real world” (p. 12). Similarly, Bruning et al. (2004) maintained that the most meaningful learning happens through real world, authentic tasks. Schunk et al. (2008) also suggested the same view regarding the task type to be used in classes:

Learning and motivation researchers have suggested the importance of using authentic tasks, problems, and assessments... The general idea is that tasks and problems that are more authentic will be more meaningful to the students, will increase their interest, and will lead to better learning (Schunk et al., 2008, p. 328).

The idea that meaningful learning can be best achieved through real world or authentic tasks can be traced back to situated cognition which according to Anderson, Reder, and Simon (1996) suggests that “Much of what is learned is specific to the situation in which it is learned” (p. 5). This implies that for the learners the real world or authentic learning experiences are more transferrable to other contexts than the ones

presented in the abstract. The definition offered for authentic tasks by Van Merriënboer, Kirschner, and Kester (2003), which presents them as the activities during which learners practice thinking in the same way that is required in the real world, reflects a concern for transferability of the learning to the real world context.

The Internet-based materials seem to have the capacity to address the above mentioned concerns of constructivist learning. As to the fuzzy, complex, and ill-structured nature of the real world tasks mentioned by Driscoll (2005), unlike textbooks which present students with simplified, well-structured, and step by step tasks, the Internet-based materials represent and in fact, are the real world reading tasks the students would encounter when applying their learning in the real world; no modification of grammar or vocabulary, no simplification, and no grading of the content; everything is as it might be in the real world reading tasks simply because they are the real world reading tasks.

In addition, compared to textbooks which usually provide formal academic language, the language used in the texts available on the internet is much more varied and ranges from highly formal to completely informal and even colloquial or slang (especially in comments provided by readers) varieties of language, which students may not encounter in textbooks. This has been emphasized by Wilson and Cole (1991) urging instructors to “Provide for authentic versus academic contexts for learning” (p.59).

The second environment-related requirement for constructivist learning is the provision of multiple perspectives and multiple representations of the content. A natural corollary to the use of complex problems in their authentic real world setting is that such complex real world issues have more than just one facet. Therefore, presenting only one aspect, one model, one analogy, or one way of understanding the materials

can result in students' oversimplification of the matters when they try to apply the only one approach they have learned to all encountered situations (Woolfolk, 2010). This implies that to realize the full complexity of the real world issues, students need to have multiple perspectives of those issues, which in turn necessitates multiple representations of the content.

Another justification for providing multiple representations of content is that they can make up for students' lack of experience regarding completely new topics, and ideally, provide all the necessary information for understanding them. From this viewpoint, their function is threefold: they form the experiences that learners utilize in constructing their knowledge (Freeman, McPhail, & Berndt, 2002), they absorb and maintain learners' attention, and when there is a disequilibrium which calls for conceptual change, they form the foundation for such a paradigm shift (Eggen & Kauchak, 2010).

Concerning the matter of multiple perspectives and multiple representations of content, the incorporation of the Internet-based materials seems to be well justified. These materials are not limited to a certain textbook, writer, or website. A topic can be explored from all different perspectives and the content is represented in almost any manner both within the textual presentation mode (such as news reports, comments, weblog postings, scholarly articles, etc.) and beyond it (such as the use of images, audio, video, animations, and so on). As El-Hindi (1998) put it: "The Internet can also be used to show students the multifaceted nature and complexity of any one topic."

The final feature deemed as essential for learning environments is the use of primary sources of data. The philosophy behind using the primary sources of data is to ensure that the authenticity and real world complexity have been taken into consideration (Murphy, 1997). This requirement seems quite justifiable, since it is only

in the original context and primary sources that one can see the matter as it really is, with all the complexities and various facets it might have. The secondary sources generally convey someone else's perception or notion of the issue, which might not completely reflect the author's original view; likewise, there is no guarantee that the secondary sources' perceptions would entirely match the conceptions that learners would form if they had access to the original idea.

Again it appears that the concern for using primary sources of data can be addressed through the use of the internet as a source of materials, because it hosts all the firsthand accounts of issues produced by the original authors, reporters, witnesses, etc. Even if the secondary sources are visited first, it is possible to get to the original ones through links, addresses, or other search options. This ensures that learners will access the authentic materials in their intact, complex, and real world contexts.

Learner-related Requisites for Constructivist Learning

The next category of the required characteristics for constructivist learning is the learner related ones. The first condition deemed necessary for constructivist learning is embedding social negotiation as part of learning. This highlights Vygotsky's (1978) belief that interaction and social negotiation are necessary for developing higher level mental processes. Bruning et al. (2004) maintained that social interaction facilitates learning. Schunk et al. (2008) also noted that teachers and students are required to develop a mode of talking, listening and discussing matters related to the content knowledge of the class as part of collaborating around authentic tasks. Similarly, Honebein (1996) suggested that learning should be embedded in social experience; an idea concurred by Murphy (1997) who explained that in a constructivist learning context, learners should derive goals through negotiations, either among themselves or

with the teachers. This concern provides evidence for the vitality of Vygotsky's social orientation toward learning.

Working with Internet-based materials provides negotiation and collaboration at two stages: First, students have the opportunity to negotiate over the topic and type of materials with each other and with the instructor to reach common ground on the content area. Second, features of Internet-based materials such as their authenticity, immediacy, relevance, and attractiveness can encourage students to willingly join in and exchange views with each other.

The second learner-related factor for constructivist learning is the concept of shared responsibility. This constitutes the first of the three pedagogical principles offered by Little (2004) under the title of learner empowerment, which he defined as: "requiring learners to assume responsibility for their own learning and (what amounts to the same thing) giving them control of the learning process" (p. 22). This is in fact a major part of the learner-centered view of constructivism, which transfers the responsibility for learning to the learner. Using internet as the materials source paves the way for shifting responsibility to learners; they need to collaborate on determining the general guidelines for materials selection, they are responsible for finding materials or choosing from among the materials suggested by their classmates and themselves. They would feel they are in charge of parts of the process of learning, such as shaping the syllabus, which formerly were considered only the teacher's realm.

Two other linked, learner-related concepts in constructivist learning are self-awareness and knowledge construction. Cunningham (1992) argued that there is much emphasis on making learners aware of the role they have in knowledge construction in constructivist approaches. He maintained that:

Learners do not transfer knowledge from the external world into their memories; rather, they create interpretations of the world based upon their past experiences and their interactions in the world. How someone construes the world, their existing metaphors, is at least as powerful a factor influencing what is learned as any characteristic of that world (Cunningham, 1992, p. 36)

By self-awareness it is meant that learners should realize that the knowledge they gain is the interplay of their beliefs and assumptions with their new experiences. It is only through such understanding that they come to recognize that their various beliefs and experiences can produce different knowledge (Woolfolk, 2010). This in turn helps them to be more aware of reasons of the disagreements and differing views they have regarding the same issues.

One clear advantage of learners' awareness is that they can decide on the type of learning experiences they want to obtain, based on either their present interests, or their future goals. El-Hindi (1998) noted that rather than textbooks, what pushes instruction forward is the natural curiosity of the students to explore and understand the world. Similarly, Gould (1996) maintained that constructivist contexts empower the students to pursue their own interests. This makes the learning process more relevant and meaningful to them. In addition, such awareness can convince them to make changes in their assumptions and learning experiences when it is necessary to get a different view of reality, that is, when there is disequilibrium due to a mismatch between their new experiences and their internal representations that requires them to use the accommodation mechanism in their knowledge construction process.

As to knowledge construction, according to Bransford, Brown, and Cocking (2000) constructivism suggests that learners produce their own knowledge of the

subjects they study instead of receiving it from other sources which transmit it to them. Similarly, Gavelek and Raphael (1996, p. 183) posit that the text meaning “is not 'out there' to be acquired but is something that is constructed by individuals through their interactions with each other and the world”. Based on this view, learners need to change their approach to learning from the relatively passive recipients of knowledge to the more active constructors, who can decide and choose what to include in their knowledge base. The constructivist approach encourages learners to realize that rather than waiting for the teacher to explain everything and present his own view of knowledge to them, they should take the initiative and make sense of their experiences, and shape their own unique view of the issues.

Working with Internet-based materials has the potential to provide students with a chance to challenge their beliefs and assumptions of how reading comprehension should be approached; the assumption of having a well-organized, graded, and made to measure textbook selected by the teacher would not be valid anymore. However, it gives them the opportunity to realize that by choosing to work on various more relevant materials, the information or knowledge they gain would also be more related and applicable. Searching and selecting the instructional materials on the internet help the learners assume the role of someone who engages in knowledge construction; they do not have to receive the materials and learn from the instructor, rather they can decide what to study and learn.

The final concept discussed under the sub-heading of learner-related conditions for constructivist learning is encouraging ownership of learning. Closely related to the concepts of self-awareness and knowledge construction, learner’s ownership of learning goes beyond informing learners of knowledge construction processes and the role they have in it, to putting the responsibility of learning mostly with learners.

Learner ownership of learning is rooted in self-regulation because it considers learners motivationally, metacognitively, and behaviorally proactive participants (Zimmerman & Schunk, 1989). As Prawat (1992) maintained, there is a shift of focus from teacher to the learner, which makes the student effort the central component in learning. However, this does not imply that teachers are not responsible anymore; while they do delegate some of their long-established roles to students, they assume the role of a guide or facilitator scaffolding the learning process. Using Internet-based materials seems to be a good stepping stone for self-directed learning. If students are familiarized and primed in the use of various sources of learning, they can continue their language learning journey on their own, with minimal guidance from teachers.

Teacher-related Requisites for Constructivist Learning

In the constructive approach to learning, the focus is primarily on learners actively constructing their own knowledge, rather than receiving it from the teacher, which results in a major change in the teacher's role from providing knowledge for learners to facilitating their knowledge construction process. As Bauersfeld (1995) put it, instructors need to assume a facilitator's role rather than that of a teacher. Such a shift in the role, according to Brownstein (2001), entails that instructors have to be equipped with a special pool of skills including, among others, the ability to provide students with opportunities and incentives to build their knowledge (Von Glasersfeld, 1996), guiding learners (Mayer, 1996), providing resource advice, coordinating, and coaching (Gergen, 1995), and fostering student inquiry (Brooks & Brooks, 1993).

The embodiment of this paradigm role shift from a teacher to a facilitator can be seen in the concept of scaffolding. Santrock (2009) defined scaffolding as “the technique of changing the level of support over the course of a teaching session” (p. 351). A more illuminating definition is offered by Woolfolk (2010, p. 50): “Support

for learning and problem solving. The support could be clues, reminders, encouragement, breaking the problem down into steps, providing an example, or anything else that allows student to grow in independence as a learner.” Inevitably, as the learner’s competence increases, the amount of guidance provided by teacher gradually decreases, similar to removing a scaffold from a completing structure.

With the Internet-based materials scaffolding is necessary at two levels: firstly, to help students with the process of learning the content, and secondly, to provide assistance with the use of technology itself. Research suggests that scaffolding is more frequently utilized when learning is assisted by technology (Prinsen, Volman, & Terwel, 2007; Solimeno, Mebane, Tomai, & Francescato, 2008). At the beginning, students may encounter problems using the internet for instructional purposes and require help with the technology aspect of their task. With regard to the learning process as well, they may probably need more help, since contrary to the textbooks, the Internet-based materials are not organized, graded, or linguistically modified to make them more accessible to the learners. This makes the learning context a bit fuzzy and difficult to cope with; however, a little guidance, some clues, reminders, encouragement, etc. would put them on track again.

Learning tools’ support for challenging tasks (Schunk et al., 2008) is another important aspect in constructivist learning. With the Internet-based materials, such tools can consist of online or offline dictionaries, encyclopedias, and thesauruses, hyperlinks, text highlighting options, and search options, among others. Teachers can train learners in using different types of available dictionaries, for example, to counterbalance the effects of uncontrolled number and type of the new vocabulary items. Encyclopedias such as Wikipedia can be used to provide the necessary background knowledge for understanding new concepts. Texts from the internet can be moved to programs like

Microsoft Word to perform all kinds of highlighting and marking of the important portions. Such programs can also help reorganizing the passages and formatting them on the basis of the points considered more relevant to learners or learning context. Hyperlinks make links to other relevant materials, thus providing either background or additional information on the topic. In addition, search options on the internet give the user/learner the chance to explore almost any area from different perspectives and have a full view of the issue under study.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed a number of major characteristics of constructivist learning, which can be applied even in learning contexts where the access to the internet is very limited. Thus, the discussion of internet inclusion is only limited to the use of the World Wide Web as a rich and resourceful source of textual and at most pictorial materials which can be printed and used instead of the textbooks. Such limited application of the internet is justified in the light of the fact that in many areas of the world, users' access to internet is limited in terms of speed and/or coverage. More research is needed to address the large number of learners and instructors in these disadvantaged areas, who are as keen on using new technologies as their more privileged counterparts with good access to the internet.

More advanced applications of the internet such as the use of multimedia, videos, online courses, etc. are not discussed in this paper due to the fact that they are not applicable in the mentioned contexts. As Brandle (2002) expressed it judiciously and accurately, "until limitations on interactivity and bandwidth have improved, such applications will not become common practice in the standard language classroom" (p. 105). Moreover, the application of the full potential of internet with all its advanced

capabilities has been discussed extensively in literature (see for example, Chen et al., 2011; Hung & Nichani, 2001; Koohang et al., 2009; Swan, 2005).

A considerable number of features deemed as constructivist in nature by researchers were presented and discussed along with their applicability in learning contexts with limited access to the internet. This is merely a theoretical discussion of the issue, which appears to deserve more empirical studies to examine these characteristics in practice and find out which ones are valid and to what extent.

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