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Redefining, Integrating, Empowering
January 23-24, 2017

Excellence: Students & Educators in Pursuit of Life-long learning
January 23-24, 2018

Edited by
Rania Jabr & Mariam Osman
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PREFACE

This is the fourth issue of the annual NileTESOL conference proceedings, which we started publishing in 2013. We were unable to publish the proceedings of the 2017 conference and so we decided to combine the articles from both the 2017 and 2018 NileTESOL conferences. The current volume attempts to showcase and document the wide range of different presentation types featured in the conference. There are three types of articles: teaching and practice-oriented tips, literature reviews, and research studies.

The 2017-2018 NileTESOL Proceedings include nine carefully selected articles from the two conferences that took place on January 23 & 24, 2017 and January 23 & 24, 2018 at the American University in Cairo, Egypt. The articles included in this volume address issues related to English language teaching in different contexts. We hope that language professionals find the volume useful and hope that you can use the new ideas and techniques presented here in your classes.

We enjoyed working on this fourth issue of the proceedings and our aim is to provide an opportunity to conference participants to publish their work and to contribute to English language teaching and learning in Egypt and the region. We hope that you will help us disseminate these proceedings and publicize this publishing opportunity to all NileTESOL participants in the future.

We would like to conclude by offering special thanks to the 2017 and 2018 Conference Organizing Committees for their tremendous efforts and dedication in organizing this conference.

Rania Jabr & Mariam Osman
Cairo on December 1, 2018
Bios of the Contributors to the 2017-2018 Nile TESOL Proceedings

Fatma Abdelrahman

Fatma Abdelrahman obtained her Bachelor Degree in English Literature from the Faculty of Arts, English Department, Cairo University in 2006. She started her professional career as a teacher of Arabic to non-native speakers of the language. In 2010, she was awarded a Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Grant, where she taught Arabic at Colorado State University for one year. Fatma's journey to the US has inspired her to come back to Egypt and teach English as a Second Language. In June 2017, Fatma got her MA in TESOL from AUC, which has helped her to revolutionize her teaching methods.

Maha Hassan

Maha Hassan is a Teacher Trainer, Head of English Dept. at the Arab Academy for Training Technology and Founder of Teaching ESL Hub. She has presented at a number of International Conferences including IATEFL, EVO CALL-IS International TESOL, K12 Online Conference, TD SIG IATEFL, NileTESOL, LIF (Language in Focus) Turkey, TESOL Arabia, Global Education Online Conference as well as at Reinventing the Classroom, Learning Revolution Online Conferences, MMCV7 & 8 and CO18. She also had a number of papers published on IATEFL Voices, Pilgrims “A New Contribution to Bloom’s Taxonomy”, HEIS International TESOL Newsletter, NileTESOL Newsletter and Howtolearn.com. She also blogs on: teachingenglishcafe.blogspot.com/

Meriam Morkos

Meriam Morkos is Marketing executive, and a Teacher Trainer at Macmillan education Egypt. She received her B.A from the Faculty of Alsun, Ain Shams University. She has ten years of professional work experience most of which were centered on linguistics and education-focused activities where she has been teaching English as a second language. Her distinctively diversified background and work experience gave her a well-rounded knowledge of the technical aspects of teaching. She is a Cambridge CELTA holder and has presented on topics of teacher training at NileTesol conference, Benha University, and Pharous University.

Michael Thomas Gentner

Michael Thomas Gentner Ph.D obtained his doctorate in TESOL as well as certifications in CELTA and TEFL. He has taught English in Korea, Japan, China, Cambodia, and Thailand. He lectures, writes, and speaks on topics related to teaching EFL in areas of limited resources. He is the author of the series Teaching English in ASEAN, which includes editions from each of the countries that comprise ASEAN and the plus three nations of Japan, Korea, and China. His research has been published in the Asian EFL Journal and other notable periodicals.
Rania Jabr

Rania Jabr is a Senior Instructor II at the American University in Cairo, Egypt. She is the recipient of the Board of Trustees Award in 1995 and the Excellence in Teaching Award in 2013. She is a conference presenter, a teacher educator, and a member of the editorial board of numerous EFL journals. Her areas of interest are course design, materials development, skill integration, student autonomy, and using technology in teaching as evidenced by her numerous publications in professional publications. She is also past chair of NileTESOL conference 2012 and co-chair for 2018.

Rania M Rafik Khalil.

Dr. Khalil is a lecturer in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. She holds the positions of Research Coordinator and the Advising and Language Support Office (ALSO) Coordinator. She has a track record of publications in areas related to pedagogy in higher education, transition from high school to university, assessment in flipped teaching, and students’ support in higher education as well as publications in the field of English literature. Dr. Khalil is CELTA certified and is an IELTS Examiner. She is also a trained reviewer for CEA and QAA, Wales.

Rasha Osman

Dr. Rasha Osman Abd el Haliem, is an English lecturer and TKT (Teacher Knowledge Test) trainer. She is an avid researcher who presented many international conferences. She is highly interested in teaching adults, using technology and assessment issues. Her interest in the field of using Technology in education and enhancing English language teaching and learning made her an avid blogger. Her teaching blogs Reflective Teaching, Educational Technology in Practice, and Pcelt are full of helpful reflections on teaching practices.

Sally Mohamed

Sally Mohamed: I am a certified trainer from Cambridge University. I earned my MA degree in Education from the Department of EFL Instruction and Curriculum Design, Port Said University, 2017. I am interested in EFL methods of teaching, assessment, and incorporating technology into EFL instruction.

Samir Omara

Samir Omara has been a teacher of English at public schools since 1998. He has completed a University of Exeter TEFL course and diplomas of education, special education, and educational leadership. He has been a teacher trainer for Intel Teach, Oracle and Professional Academy for Teachers. He led students on different competitions. He received MOE “Ideal Teacher” and PAT “Excellent Teacher” awards. He is a RELO-NileTESOL mentor trainer. He presented at ILACE 2016 & 2017, NileTESOL 2017 & 2018 and TESOL 2018. He is NileTESOL Board of Directors member. He is Head of Professional Development for Teachers First Project in Egypt.
1. Perceptions of Egyptian ESL Teachers of Teaching the Target Culture

Fatma Abdelrahman
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Abstract

This study investigates the perceptions of Egyptian ESL teachers of the importance of incorporating the target culture in teaching the English language. The research is of a quantitative/qualitative nature. The participants in the study are 50 governmental and private school teachers. Data have been collected by means of a questionnaire as well as interviews with teachers. The questionnaire is divided into two parts: the first part investigates the teachers’ view on the significance of teaching the target culture of English in ESL, while the second part is concerned with their awareness of the level at which the target culture of English is presented in the third-secondary Hello! Textbook. The data resulting from the questionnaire are supplemented by those resulting from interviews with six teachers, 3 from governmental schools, and 3 from private schools. Results show that teachers acknowledge the importance of teaching the target culture. However, they do not give it the same weight they do to other linguistic aspects in their teaching due to several reasons, which include the lack of facilities in many Egyptian schools, teaching for the final standardized English exam, and some negative attitudes towards teaching or learning about the target culture.

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching a second/foreign language is a task that requires integrating the culture of the language taught. Many researchers and specialists in the field of teaching second and foreign languages have argued for the importance of teaching culture in ESL/EFL (Valdes, 1995; Byram, 1997; Byram & Fleming, 1998). In fact, they assert that it is almost impossible to teach English without blending in its culture.

Some researchers have attempted to classify culture into four main sub-elements: aesthetic, sociological, semantic, and pragmatic (Adaskou, Britten, & Fahsi, 1990). The
first one is referred to as culture with a capital C, which includes cinema, media, music, as well as literature. The second sub-element of culture is described as culture with a small c, which mainly points to family life, interpersonal relationships, work, and leisure. The third sub-element of culture is the semantic, which mainly refers to vocabulary items, like food and clothes. Adaskou, Britten, and Fahsi (1990) describe this particular sub-element as “culturally distinctive” due to the fact that it uncovers some specific information about the lifestyle of the people whose language is being studied (3). For example, one cannot learn about meals without learning about their times as well. The fourth and last sub-element is the pragmatic, which investigates how natives behave in social situations. The researchers state that in order for successful communication to happen, learners would need to use their background knowledge as well as their social skills.

The role of teachers in the process of teaching the second language and its culture cannot be underestimated. Teachers are a significant element in presenting the second/foreign language to their students. Zhao and Throssell (2011) assert that teachers should not just invest in their students’ linguistic competence, but they should also aim to reinforce their pragmatic skills. Other researchers (Vellenga 2004; Reimann, 2009; Aksoyalp & Toprak, 2015) also affirm that advancing the students’ pragmatic competence should be one of the teachers’ objectives in their mission of teaching ESL/EFL. This may be due to the fact that having learners with good linguistic competence but poor pragmatic skills might result in speakers who are aware of the grammatical structures of sentences but who are too socially awkward to function in real life situations. Along the same lines, Turkan and Celik (2007) say that in order for learners to reach a successful level of
communication in the second language, they would need to abide by the social rules of the target culture.

I.1 Research problem

During the present researcher’s teaching experience at a boys’ high school in Cairo, she noticed some exchanges among students where the students’ English utterances have been affected by their first language (Arabic). This attracted the researcher’s attention to the factors that might be affecting the students’ production, such as the level to which the target culture is taught in Egyptian schools as well as the representation of the target culture in the nationally studied English textbook. More specifically, the researcher aims to investigate how Egyptian ESL/EFL teachers perceive the importance of teaching the target culture in their classes, and whether they believe the representation of the target culture in the textbook is sufficient as far as the students’ level is concerned.

I.2 Theoretical definitions

The target culture: for the purpose of this research study, ‘the target culture’ is defined as the culture of the countries where English is the main, primary language of communication. In other words, ‘the target culture’ is the culture of Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the UK, and the USA, where there are some common rules when referring to the pragmatic aspect of culture.

Pragmatic competence: is the learners’ knowledge about the use of second language functions in context, in addition to their ability to apply these language functions

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

II.1 The importance of teaching pragmatic functions

Teaching the pragmatics of the target culture is an essential step if teachers aim at producing competent speakers of the second language. Boxer and Pickering (1995) explain that the difficulties that language learners face while communicating in the second language are, unlike grammatical errors, less tolerated by native speakers of the language. In other words, producing competent speakers of the second language means that learners should be aware of the linguistic rules of the language being studied as well as its pragmatics. This, however, might be a complicated task, for learners might sometimes rely on the sociolinguistic rules of their first language. In other words, they may transfer the pragmatics of their speech communities to their second language (Nelson, El Bakary, & Al Batal, 2006). This would result in inappropriateness, and the potential for miscommunication would be highly possible. In the same light, Milleret (2007) confirms that failure in intercultural communication would result in undesirable results, such as laughter, rage, or embarrassment. Turkan and Celik (2007) also make the case that when learners understand the social context where they communicate in the second language, they can use the linguistic rules of the second language as well as its pragmatics. This would result in successful communication with the native speakers of the language. The researchers also affirm that learners need to be exposed to communicative acts that are similar to those happening in the target culture so that they
pick up on the pragmatic rules of the second language. Along these lines, Zhao and Throssell (2011) give an example of misunderstanding taking place because second language learners apply intonation patterns from their first language. In other words, learners need to learn that intonation patterns differ across languages and cultures; therefore, second language learners need to learn the patterns of the second language in order to avoid miscommunication.

Research has proven that classroom instruction can improve the learners’ ability to function successfully in real social life situations. This brings in the essential role of ESL/EFL teachers in teaching the second language.

II.2 The role of ESL/EFL teachers in teaching the target culture

Teachers of ESL/EFL have a major role in presenting the target culture of English to second language learners. Harlig, Hartford, Mahan-Taylor, Morgan, and Reynolds (1991) state that in the process of teaching the second language, teachers should not only equip students with the linguistic aspects but also teach “the right words to say at the proper time” (14). Explicit teaching of the target culture and pragmatics has proven to be effective; however, some teachers still doubt the importance of teaching the target culture in ESL/EFL (Mekheimer & Aldosari, 2011). Afrin (2013) states a few reasons for this. First of all, teaching the target culture would require investing more time in the language syllabus, which would consequently require more time on part of the teachers. In other words, teachers might be reluctant to integrate the target culture in their teaching due to the limited amount of time they may have inside the classroom. Secondly, some teachers believe that grammar and vocabulary should be a priority when teaching a second
language, while the task of introducing the target culture can be done at a later stage in
the students’ language development. In other words, teachers tend to postpone teaching
the second language pragmatics until the students have somehow mastered the linguistic
aspects of the second language. The third reason that Afrin (2013) explains is that
teachers may think they lack the sufficient knowledge about the target culture, which
results in their refraining from teaching it. Reimann (2009) also confirms that teachers
may not feel confident when talking about abstract concepts of the second language and
its culture. A fourth reason as to why the target culture may not be properly taught in
ESL/EFL classes is the fact that teachers may face some difficulties when dealing with
the negative attitudes of learners. To elaborate, learners may reject learning about the
target culture, which makes the teacher’s task even more challenging. Choudhury (2013)
makes the case that in some traditional communities, teaching the target culture might
even be perceived of as a way for “cultural hegemony or linguistic imperialism” (20). Dai
(2011) asserts that in order for teachers to help their students reach a good level of
communicative competence, they would need to have a thorough understanding of the
target language and culture.

Khan (2011) states that even in ESL/EFL classes where the target culture is
somehow integrated, the teacher’s feedback is still geared towards mechanics, grammar,
and vocabulary. Dai (2011) suggests that in order for the task of teaching the target
culture to be successfully fulfilled, teachers would need to employ a variety of techniques.
To give an example, Zhao and Throssell (2011) mention that teachers can introduce
some cultural features that are associated with a linguistic aspect of the language through
in-class discussions. This may be one of the ways teachers can raise awareness of the
target culture and pragmatics. Turkan and Celik (2007) refute the teacher’s assumption that priority should be given to teaching the linguistic aspects of the language because cultural or pragmatic awareness would come at a later point in the students’ language mastery. In other words, the researchers argue that teaching the linguistic aspects of the language as well as its pragmatics should go hand in hand. However, they also state that teachers should not underestimate the arduous task of teaching the target culture since it would require care during the selection and adaptation of appropriate teaching materials. The role of ESL/EFL teachers in teaching the target culture is undeniable, and so is the cultural and pragmatic content of textbooks.

II. 3 Cultural representation in textbooks

ESL/EFL textbooks may be the teacher’s only resource when introducing the target culture to students. For this reason, the cultural content in textbooks needs to be relevant to the students so that their cultural awareness and sensitivity would be developed and empowered. Reimann (2009) comments that the cultural content in textbooks is very limited in many cases. In other words, he explains that the content may be biased or not contextualized, which worsens the students’ weak pragmatic competence. In his study on Japanese learners, Reimann noticed that textbooks do not necessarily refute preconceived beliefs and stereotypes in other cultures, which results in the difficulties that Japanese learners face when dealing with people from different countries. This leads Japanese learners to accept foreign cultures rather than investigate them.

Hinkel (2014) proposes two different levels of culture: “the visible and the invisible” (395-396). He elaborates by giving the example of learners who were asked about their
definition of culture by responding that it is about history and geography. Hinkel (2014) states that this is a basic understanding of the word, which refers only to the first layer of culture. On the other hand, Hinkel (2014) examines a deeper layer of culture or “the invisible” one. He states that this level is more challenging to teach because in many cases people are unaware of its existence due to the fact that it relates to the different subcultures within the same culture.

In this sense, Rodriguez (2015) examines three of the most-commonly used ESL/EFL textbooks in Colombia. His findings prove that only aspects of “the visible” culture are presented in the textbooks, whereas “the invisible” culture is completely ignored. One can argue that if learners are to be competent users of the second language and its pragmatics, they would need to be exposed to both layers of the target culture, “the visible and the invisible”.

In some cases, textbooks are in fact devoid of any cultural material. Fageeh (2011) gives the example of Saudi educationalists who have separated the teaching of English from its culture until a very recent time. The result of this is that most of the available ESL/EFL textbooks are designed to meet the learners’ linguistic needs. In other words, textbooks focus on the grammatical rules and vocabulary. Aksoyalp and Toprak (2015) argue that this would lead to severe intercultural communication breakdown, which can be tracked even in the comprehension and production of language learners of high proficiency level.

In addition, Melvin and Stout (1987) confirm that textbooks lack authentic ESL/EFL materials, which can help connect the students to the target culture by prompting them to communicate meaningfully in social situations (as cited in Akasha, 2013). Incorporating
authentic materials in the teaching of the second language culture would result in developing the students’ cultural awareness and sensitivity towards the target culture.

III. METHODOLOGY AND DATA

The design of this study is qualitative/quantitative to examine the perceptions of Egyptian ESL/EFL teachers of the importance of teaching the target culture. The study analyzes responses of private and governmental school teachers to show whether Egyptian teachers generally tend to support or reject the idea of incorporating the target culture in their teaching.

III. 1 Participants

Participants in this study are private and governmental school teachers. All have either used the third-secondary *Hello!* textbook at the time the study was conducted or used it at a previous point in time. This is a significant point since participants need to be aware of the cross-cultural communication activities in the *Hello!* textbook in order to be able to answer the second part of the questionnaire. It is worth mentioning that while governmental school teachers rely only on the *Hello!* textbook in their teaching, private school teachers use another ESL/EFL textbook to supplement their teaching of English. The present researcher has excluded participants from international schools, for the Egyptian government has authorized these types of schools to have textbooks and curricula that differ significantly in terms of content from local, private, and governmental schools. In other words, the researcher has not considered participants from international
schools in her study, for they might be an extraneous variable that would affect the validity of her data.

Overall, data have been collected from 50 teachers and interviews have been conducted with six of them. The participants’ ages range from 28 to 58 years. They teach at a variety of private and governmental schools in and outside of Cairo, and their years of teaching experience range from three to 37 years.

III. 2 Instruments

Questionnaire: teachers answered two sets of questions on the questionnaire. The first set investigates the degree to which they believe the target culture should be taught in ESL/EFL classes, while the second set of questions examines their satisfaction as to how the target culture is presented in the nationally studied *Hello!* textbook. In order to analyze the teachers’ responses, a four-point Likert scale has been used.

Interviews: In total, six interviews have been conducted with three teachers from two governmental schools and another three from two private schools. Teachers have been asked a set of questions so that the researcher would gain more insights into the responses they have provided on the questionnaire.

To answer the research question this study investigates, the data resulting from the teacher questionnaire have been tabulated and analyzed using a four-point Likert scale. On an Excel sheet, the researcher set the scale options from one to four (‘totally agree: 1’, ‘agree’: 2, ‘disagree’: 3, ‘totally disagree’: 4) so that she would evaluate the percentage of teachers who ‘agree’ or ‘disagree’ on each of the questions in the two sets. This means that the data resulting from the questionnaire are in the form of descriptive
analysis. In the case of the affirmative questions where teachers answered ‘totally agree’ or ‘agree’, the responses indicate positive teacher awareness of the importance of teaching the target culture. Teachers who answered ‘totally disagree’ or ‘disagree’ to affirmative questions give less weight to the importance of teaching the target culture. Data from the questionnaire and interviews have been combined so that the teachers’ responses in the interviews complement those provided on the questionnaire.

IV. RESULTS

This section reports on the data resulting from the interviews as well as the questionnaire designed to collect data from private and governmental school teachers regarding two aspects: the perceptions of Egyptian ESL teachers of the importance of teaching the target culture of English and the level to which the cross-cultural communication activities are incorporated in the *Hello!* textbook. Out of the 50 teachers who have responded to the questionnaire, 33 work at a governmental school (representing 66% of the total number of teachers), while only 17 work at a private school (34% of the total number of teachers).

The resulting data will be presented in two tables: table 4.1 reports on the teachers’ responses on the first part of the questionnaire, while table 4.2 reports on the quality of the content of the cross-cultural communication activities in the *Hello!* textbook as mentioned by teachers. Analysis of both tables is complemented by the data resulting from the interviews.

**IV. 1 Teachers’ perceptions of the importance of teaching the target culture**
Using a Likert scale on a continuum from “totally agree” to “totally disagree”, excluding the “neutral” option, the data are analyzed as reported by the governmental and private school teachers. Table 4.1, below, shows the collective percentages of responses on each of the items on the part of the questionnaire concerned with examining the teachers’ perceptions of the importance of teaching the target culture. On some question items, teachers’ responses show some uncertainty as to whether they agree or disagree with teaching particular aspects of the target culture in ESL classes. For example, on the second item of Table 4.1, which states, “I may avoid teaching a particular aspect of the target culture (English culture) if I know it will shock the students”, 52% of the teachers totally agree or agree, while 48% totally disagree or agree. During the interviews, teachers pointed out some reasons as to why they may refrain from teaching some aspects of the target culture. For example, they mentioned that some differences between the Middle Eastern Muslim and the English culture are difficult to explain to the students. One teacher even mentioned that he intentionally avoids providing details in instances where he finds the target culture clashing with the students’ first culture and confirms, from his viewpoint, that some aspects “cannot” be taught. He supports his argument by giving an example from the third-secondary novel The Prisoner of Zenda, where one of the main characters Rudolf Elphberg is murdered by eating a poisoned cake, whereas in the original text he is drugged by drinking a glass of wine. In other words, curriculum designers monitor and adapt ESL materials so that they fit into the students’ first culture. Teachers seem to agree that when presenting the target culture to the students, only the “positive” and “common points” should be discussed. One teacher said “I should only take what does not contradict with my religion and principles”. 
Similarly, another interesting statistic with regard to teacher responses is the one given to item six: “I think most English lessons should include information about the culture of English speaking countries”, where 54% of the teachers adopt the totally agree/agree position, while 46% are on the totally disagree/disagree side. These last two items call into question the reasons why teachers are inconclusive about their stances on teaching some aspects of the target culture of English in their ESL classes. In addition, on items seven and eight, around 30% of the teachers believe that excluding the target culture from textbooks does not affect the students’ language development and that students’ lack of knowledge of the target culture does not hinder their communication with native speakers of English.

Some of the items on the questionnaire elicited quasi-unanimous support for the teaching of culture. An example of this is the first item (Table 4.1) “teaching the target culture is an important factor when Egyptian students are learning English”, to which 92% of the teachers either totally agreed/agreed. Such data correspond positively to what teachers stated in the interviews. Teachers have shown awareness of the importance of teaching the target culture; five out of the six interviewed have confirmed the statistics that resulted from the questionnaire. They mentioned that learning a second language is not only about studying “lexical items” but also the lifestyle of the target culture, such as people who have different celebrations, foods, and behavior. Teachers have also explained that lack of understanding of the target culture may lead students to come across as rude in social situations. One of the six teachers, however, thinks that teaching the target culture may be unimportant, for the final standardized English exam deals with
grammar and the function of words. Therefore, written discourse is what the students tend to pay more attention to.

In addition, 82% of the teachers indicate that they may include an aspect of the target culture that is not tackled in the textbook, and 96% of them either totally agreed/agreed that they are capable of presenting many aspects of the target culture to their students. The latter percentage is of particular significance since it somehow contradicts with what teachers mentioned in the interviews. Teachers say that in order for them to present the target culture properly, they need to be equipped with the relevant resources, such as the Internet. When teachers have many resources and materials available to them online, they are more able to present the target culture successfully. Teachers also remarked that they may even need to be trained on how to gather and synthesize the information accessible on the Internet. In other words, they may need specific guidelines as well as a well-designed curriculum because the lack of quality materials would be a determining factor in the way they present the target culture to their students. One teacher supports this point of view by saying “we need to develop the teachers to learn before they teach. Teachers need to be aware of different teaching methodologies”. She then elaborates by saying “[i]f the teacher is ready to prepare himself well to teach the different cultures, it is not difficult, but he needs to work on himself first before he works with the students”.

Table 4.1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Governmental &amp; private school teachers (N=50)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Totally agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Totally disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I think teaching of the target culture (English culture) is an important factor when Egyptian students are learning English.</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I may avoid teaching a particular aspect of the target culture (English culture) if I know it will shock the students.</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. In my classes, I may include a cultural component from the target culture (English culture) that is not included in the textbook.</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I believe that English language teaching should only teach language components, like grammar, spelling, and pronunciation.</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I believe that I am capable of presenting many aspects of the target culture (English culture) to my students.</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I think most English lessons should include information about the culture of English speaking countries.</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Excluding the target culture (English culture) from course books does not affect the students’ language development.</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Communication with native speakers of English is not hindered by the students’ lack of knowledge of the target culture (English culture).</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IV. 2 Hello! textbook and the cross-cultural communication content

The second part of the teachers’ questionnaire is concerned with how effective the presentation of cross-cultural communication activities is in the Hello! textbook (Table 4.2). While teachers collectively tend to either totally agree/agree or totally disagree/disagree on some question items on this part of the questionnaire, it is also noted that there is some indecisiveness on the part of the teachers on other question items. For example, results for the first item (Table 4.2) “the textbook integrates teaching the ‘functions’ of the target culture (English culture) in most units” indicate that 56% of the teachers either totally agree/agree, while 44% either totally disagree/disagree. The third
item “I think enough space (content) of the textbook is devoted to communication activities” (Table 4.2) is one more instance where teachers’ answers do not provide a relatively more certain stance, where 38% of the teachers agree and a similar percentage disagrees. In a similar fashion, 34% of the teachers agree, while 32% disagree on whether “the teacher’s guide to the textbook includes information about how to communicate in English and how to present this to students” (The sixth item, Table 4.2). Results from the interviews tend to affirm that the teacher guide, which is mostly the teacher’s only resource, does not provide teachers with well-grounded information on how to handle the cross-cultural communication activities in the Hello! textbook sufficiently.

Table 4.4:

Hello! textbook content, percentages from governmental and private school teachers data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Governmental &amp; private school teachers (N=50)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Totally agree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The textbook integrates teaching the “functions” of the target culture (English culture) in most units.</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I am satisfied with the way the textbook teaches students how to communicate in English.</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I think enough space (content) of the textbook is devoted to communication activities.</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Students can still master English without necessarily practicing how to communicate.</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. It is almost impossible to teach how to communicate in English by using just the textbook.</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The teacher’s guide to the textbook includes information about how to communicate in English and how to present this to students.</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Generally, some of the percentages show the teachers’ discontent with the presentation of the cross-cultural communication activities in the Hello! textbook. For example, teachers denied, at a relatively high percentage (66%), that they are “satisfied with the way the textbook teaches students how to communicate” (the second item, Table 4.2). In addition, teachers (96%) strongly denied that “students can still master English without necessarily practicing how to communicate” (the fourth item, Table 4.2). Furthermore, 88% reported that “it is almost impossible to teach how to communicate in English by using just the textbook” (the fifth item, Table 4.2).

V. DISCUSSION

Many researchers in ESL/EFL advocate the integration of culture in language teaching (Valdes, 1995; Byram, 1997; Byram and Fleming, 1998), and there is a general consensus that successful communication in the second language needs learners to be equipped with not only the linguistic features of the language but also the pragmatic skills to function appropriately in the target culture. This study confirms that Egyptian ESL teachers in both types of school, private and governmental, are aware of the need for teaching the target culture in ESL/EFL. However, the deficient way the third-secondary Hello! Textbook deals with the target culture brings the students’ pragmatic competence to question. It is also worth mentioning that teachers may be aware of the fact they are still unlikely to supplement the textbook and bring extra materials to class.
The study also reveals that there are a few major obstacles that need to be addressed before the task of teaching the target culture in Egyptian schools is done properly. First of all is the final standardized English exam. Almost all teachers, including those in private schools, have referred to the fact that they teach to the test, which completely ignores the listening and speaking skills. Teachers have mentioned that students are generally demotivated when it comes to these two skills because they are not assessed in the final test. Therefore, students’ attitudes towards the test drive the teacher’s behavior. Second, teachers have also reported that the lack of quality materials affects the way they integrate the cultural aspects with the linguistic ones in their lesson plans. Governmental school teachers even lack the basic facilities and equipment inside the classrooms; for example, the absence of computers, projectors, and audio players hinders them from embarking on the task. In addition to this, teachers’ responses in the questionnaire have pointed at what Hinkel (2014) calls the “visible” aspects of the target culture rather than the “invisible” ones. It might be argued at this point that in order for learners to function competently in the target culture, they would need to be exposed to materials from both levels. This is an urgent need if one of the main objectives is to bridge the gap between the two cultures as well as broaden the students’ horizon to be more open-minded, tolerant, and sensitive towards the second language culture. A third major obstacle that would need the collaboration of teachers, educationalists, and curriculum designers is the students’ attitudes towards the target culture. This is an underlying problem that has been ignored in Egyptian schools for a long period of time. Solving this issue may need teachers to be dedicated to the mission of teaching the target culture so that the students’ attitudes would be altered over time. During the interviews, teachers
stated that students consider English as a ‘school subject’ that they need to study to pass the exam rather than a second/foreign language that they would need to interact with others. Teachers have also added that they put students’ needs into consideration, and therefore, they may give up teaching the cultural aspects, which are not assessed in the standardized English exam.

Milleret (2007) asserts that there is an essential need to devise a specific and straightforward assessment plan, where students’ performance at all levels of language proficiency is evaluated. This assessment plan should be based not only on the students’ acquisition of grammar rules but also on their cultural appropriateness and language use in context. While this poses a challenging task for all individuals involved in the process of language teaching, it would possibly result in more competent users of the second language. This means that if the Egyptian government exam committee hopes to see some progress in the ESL students’ pragmatic abilities, it needs to address three main issues. First is to include cultural aspects of the language in the final standardized English exam so that teachers stop teaching to the test and students’ negative attitudes towards learning about the target culture could be positively altered. The second issue is that teachers should be equipped with the necessary materials in and outside of class so that the task of teaching the target culture is facilitated. These materials should also be widely varied to address different learning styles among ESL students. The third issue, students’ negative attitudes somehow correlate with the first, the final standardized test. One way students’ negative attitudes could be dealt with is to bring up the benefits the students’ would reap out of their learning about the target culture.
VI. REFERENCES


Afrin, N. (2013). Developing real life experience through teaching culture in the efl class: Fostering the learning through intercultural awareness. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention, 2*(1), 70–76.


https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/49.1.44


https://doi.org/10.4304/jltr.2.5.1031-1036


Abstract

Supervisors and Teachers worry a lot when setting exams. Are we going to be fair towards the students? Should tests be difficult or easy? What is the best way to set them? Testing not only worries supervisors and teachers, but students as well. Will I be able to pass it? I can’t concentrate on my studies? What should I do? Is there a relationship between assessment and testing? Can this help both teachers and students in dealing with test stress? In my presentation, I will speak about the common elements between assessment and testing. How this can help teachers put a suitable formative assessment system for their students all through the year to help them go through summative assessment at the end of the year as smoothly as possible. I will also speak about online and offline tools that can help supervisors and teachers set well balanced exams and help them apply them practically during the session.

INTRODUCTION

“While we often think of exams as a way to test students’ comprehension of material, exams can serve more than one purpose. Being aware of why we are testing students and what exactly we want to test can help make students’ and instructors’ experience of exams more useful.” Before we move ahead with this relationship between assessment and testing, let’s try to discuss the questions: What is assessment? Why is it important or necessary? What does it tell us?

There are many definitions of assessment, but let’s try this one: “In education, the term assessment refers to the wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure, and document the academic readiness, learning progress, skill acquisition, or educational needs of students.”(1) Yet, it can be considered “the process of gathering and discussing information from multiple and diverse sources in order to
develop a deep understanding of what students know, understand, and can do with their knowledge as a result of their educational experiences. The process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning.” (2)

In both definitions, we find that teachers should gather information using different tools and methods to evaluate students’ learning and how far are they developing while learning the language.

Methods & Tools

Evaluate Academic Readiness
Measure Learning Progress
Document Skill Acquisition / Educational needs of Students

Gathering & Discussing info know

What Students know
What Students understand
What Ss can do with knowledge

Assessment results are using to improve subsequent learning

Maha Hassan – Sequence of Assessment
Thus, we deduce that the primary aim of assessment is to help us, teachers, realize the progress of our students’ learning and whether the ‘methods and tools’ used are suitable enough or need improvement and/or adjustment. Such ‘methods and tools’ are used during the school year on an ‘on going’ basis to help students and teachers achieve the best possible results. This is considered formative assessment. However, what about summative assessment, i.e. monthly, term, or end-of-the-year exams? Can't we consider them part of formative assessment as well to help us develop the material provided to students and the systems followed?

A) Comprehension Analysis

Let’s start here by analyzing the following comprehension passage. Yet, let me ask you a few questions first: When you give such a passage to your students and ask them to read it silently, what kind of questions are you going to start posing? Are you going to follow the top-bottom or bottom-top method? (This depends a lot on the level of students you are teaching). What is the objective of using the comprehension itself? Is it for school students or adults?

By the Top-Bottom method, we mean that you start with the general, board questions and then you move to the specific ones. By Bottom-Top, we mean that you start with specific questions like: Who is the main character here? Where is he? What is he doing? Again, you can use these different methods according to the level of the students you are teaching and the curriculum chosen.

Sample (1)
COMPREHENSION

Read the following passage and then answer the questions below:

This is the story of a very simple invention that you can find in almost every office in the whole world today. It is also the story of an inventor whose creativity and persistence resulted in a very useful product. What is the famous invention? It is Liquid Paper, the white liquid that covers up the mistakes you make when writing or typing. It was invented in the early 1950s by Bette Nesmith Graham, a secretary in Dallas, Texas, who began using tempera paint to cover up the typing errors in her work.

At the time, Ms. Nesmith was a 27-year-old mother of one son, struggling to make ends meet and working as a secretary to the chairman of a big Dallas Bank. When she began to work with her first electric typewriter, she found that the type marks she typed onto the paper didn’t erase as cleanly as those from manual typewriters. So, Ms. Nesmith, who was also an artist, quietly began painting out her mistakes. Soon she was supplying bottles of her homemade preparation which she called Mistake Out, to other secretaries in the building.

When she lost her job with the company, Ms. Nesmith turned to working full time to develop the Mistake Out as a business, expanding from her house into a small trailer she had bought for the backyard. In hopes of marketing her product, she approached IBM, which turned her down. She stepped up her own marketing and within a decade was a financial success. The product which came to be called Liquid Paper, was manufactured in four countries and sold in nearly three dozen. In 1979, the company had sales of $38 million of which $35 million were net income. By the time Ms. Nesmith finally sold her business to Gillette, she had built her simple practical idea into a $47 million business.

It is heartwarming that the story has a happy ending in more ways than one. Ms. Nesmith remarried and became Mrs. Graham. Her son, Michael, a musician of whom she was greatly proud, became very successful as one of the members of a music group called the Monkees, which was very famous in America in the mid-1960s.

With some of her profits, Mrs. Graham established a foundation whose purpose is to provide leading intellectuals with the time, space and compatible colleagues that they need to ponder and articulate the most important social problems of our era. Bette first developed a product that there was clearly a need for; then she used the substantial profits for charitable purposes, which is a fine thing to do.

The story of Liquid Paper and Bette Nesmith Graham is a story everyone can appreciate. It shows how a wonderful product came to market because of the cleverness and perseverance of its inventor. Perhaps you, too, have a clever idea that will spread like wildfire if only you can give it the kind of spark that Mrs. Graham gave to her product.

Choose the correct answer:

1. What is Liquid Paper? It is ........
   a. Tempera paint
   b. manual typewriter
   c. A bottle of Nesmith’s homemade preparation
   d. The white liquid that covers up the mistakes you make when writing and typing
2. What did she do at the beginning of her career? She was ..................
   a. An inventor       b. a charity supporter       c. a secretary       d. a singer

3. This story “shows how a wonderful product came to market because of the cleverness and perseverance of its inventor. The underlined word means ............... 
   a. Willingness       b. reluctance       c. insistence       d. cleverness

4. “At the time, Ms. Nesmith was a 27-year-old mother of one son, struggling to make ends meet.” The underlined words mean .................. 
   a. Fight for her life       b. work hard to have money for her company       c. prepare more of her invention       d. earn enough money to live on

5. What pushed her to work on her invention? Because .................. 
   a. She found that the type marks didn’t erase as cleanly as those of the manual typewriters       b. The electric typewriter didn’t erase letters as clearly as the manual typewriters       c. Because of the supply of bottles of her homemade preparation       d. She bought a small trailer for the backyard.

6. In hopes of marketing her product, she approached IBM which turned her down. The underlined words is close in meaning to .................. 
   a. Her business was a financial success       b. They refused her project       c. The product was manufactured in four countries       d. Gillette bought her product

7. Do you think Ms. Nesmith was rewarded in the end? 
   a. Yes       b. No       c. It is not mentioned       d. It is not clear in the passage

8. Why did Ms. Nesmith establish a foundation with some of her profits? 
   a. To help poor people       b. to develop her product       c. to help her son become a successful singer       d. to help the people of her society

9. What do you need if you have a great idea? 
   a. you need an electric spark       b. creativity and persistence       c. singing       d. wildfire

10. Why do you think Ms. Nesmith’s product was successful? Because .................. 
    a. it was fun       b. people asked her to make it       c. people needed it       d. charities needed it
When we deal with young learners or beginners, we should start by asking detailed questions; then, gradually we get to the main topic of the passage or the general idea (bottom-top). With advanced learners, we do it vice versa. On the other hand, it is very important to keep in mind why we are using the comprehension passage in class. Is it for introducing new vocabulary and grammatical rules, or for improving the reading and understanding skills? Here are a number of ways to set up questions that would check student understanding or test it:

(1) Using MCQ is one of the interesting ways that help students realize the different ideas found in the passage and guess the meanings of new words.

(2) With a second sample of comprehension questions, here we can see different kinds of questions, especially guessing the meanings of words. You can set the new words with missing letters and then add 'a hint' beside them (i.e. a short definition), which is a different interactive way that can be a good chance for students to work in groups or pairs. Instead of answering the questions right away, the students could be asked to work in pairs or groups for a given time, e.g. 5 minutes to guess the meanings of words using the given hints. The group which finishes first gets more points or a bonus. This would help them go through the comprehension passage more than once and work together to find the answers to the missing words or meanings. This is much better than spoon-feeding them monotonously the meanings of words.

Sample (2)
1. In the box below, circle the words that describe a giant panda’s natural habitat.

- Tropical
- High altitude
- Sand dunes
- Mountainous
- Forested
- Extremely dry
- Arctic grasslands

2. Why do giant pandas spend so much time eating?

3. Which of the following animals is the giant panda most closely related to?

- a. Red panda
- b. Raccoon
- c. Grizzly bear
- d. Badger

4. Put a check mark (✓) next to each of the ways a male giant panda might attract a female mate.

- Male pandas rub against trees to leave their scent.
- Male pandas fight other males in front of the females to impress them.
- Male pandas walk in circles around female pandas.
- Male pandas do “handstands” to leave their mark higher in the trees.

5. If a mother giant panda gives birth to two cubs, will they both be with her a year later? Explain why or why not.

6. Fill in the missing letters to create a vocabulary word from the article. Then write the full word on the line. Be sure you spell each word correctly.

- 1. __ e __ r i __ t e ___________________________ hint: limited or confined to a certain area
- 2. __ a __ b __ __ ___________________________ hint: a very tall, wood-like grass that pandas eat
- 3. __ r i __ i n g ___________________________ hint: holding tightly
- 4. __ a __ oo ___________________________ hint: an American mammal with a mask-like face
- 5. __ a __ a __ g __ ___________________________ hint: the natural environment an animal lives in
- 6. __ a __ i __ s ___________________________ hint: patterns on an animal’s fur or skin that distinguish it from other animals
(3) A different method is to use is ‘Yes/No or True and False questions’. What is, then their objective? Yes/No questions are useful with young learners and adult beginners to guess their understanding, especially if they are not confident enough of understanding the language.

(4) Finally, ‘wh-questions’ help us walk our students systematically through the passage to check their understanding and give them its full meaning.

**B) Grammar Analysis**

Let’s take a look at this exercise. What is its objective? In the first question (example 1), we are testing the student’s ability to form the right question in the past tense. If you change the wh-word and use different ones other than ‘who’, such as (example 2), thus, we test the students’ ability to realize the difference between using the different wh-words in questions.

**Example (1): Somebody rang me at 3am last week!**

a. Who did you ring at 3 am last week?
b. Who you rang at 3 am last week?
c. Who rang you at 3 am last week?

**Example (2): Somebody rang me at 3 am last night.**

a. What rang you at 3 am last night?
b. When did somebody ring you last night?
c. Who rang you at 3 am last night?

Discussing these two genres of language i.e. comprehension and grammar can be applied to other items taught in class as well, like the story, vocabulary, writing … etc. Thus, the most important question to keep in mind as teachers is: ‘what is the objective
of the genre taught? What are the different objectives of the questions used?’ Posing these questions helps us use tests as a kind of assessment of what the students have already learnt and how we can use them later on to evaluate the teaching system and curriculum. When you set an exam, you have to keep the following questions in mind:

- Why are you giving an exam to your students?
- What do you want to assess?
- How do you decide what to test and how to test it?

**Important points to keep in mind**

As a sum up for these two sections, it is important to consider not overdoing standards, i.e. applying test formation rules. Make sure that the size of the exam is suitable for the time slot set for the students to answer it. Try to make the question layout easy to follow, reduce emphasis on memorization, don’t measure the same things again and again. Other important points to keep in mind as well are: keep the sentences short, make sure that the questions cover the learning outcomes required and finally, and ask colleagues to revise your test before giving it to the students. These points are very important as they help us set as fair tests as possible.

**C) Marking Criteria**

This is an important point. Sometimes, the students make mistakes and even if we explain that to them, they don’t realize what’s really wrong. Thus, we need to provide our students with our marking criteria to help them develop their learning of the language, realize their mistakes, and help them in assessing themselves. Attached are a number of rubrics that you can use as a guide. A good idea would be to share your ideas with your students and help them set the marking scheme with you.
**Professor MaryKay Serverino, Final Exam Rubric**
http://www.professorseverino.com/final-exam-rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content/Story</th>
<th>1-2 points need to improve:</th>
<th>3-4 points presented well:</th>
<th>5-6 points great job:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Presented story in a confusing way.</td>
<td>The story line was readily clear.</td>
<td>Presented the story well.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>1-2 points need to improve:</th>
<th>3-4 points presented well:</th>
<th>5-6 points great job:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Organized</td>
<td>Presented in an organized way and was somewhat clear.</td>
<td>Presented in an extremely organized way and the delivery was clear and easy to follow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unclear and confusing</td>
<td>For the most part it was not confusing to follow.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>1-2 points need to improve:</th>
<th>3-4 points presented well:</th>
<th>5-6 points great job:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sentence structures</td>
<td>Sentence structures</td>
<td>Sentence structures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Delivery</th>
<th>1-2 points need to improve:</th>
<th>3-4 points presented well:</th>
<th>5-6 points great job:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Voice volume</td>
<td>Voice volume</td>
<td>Great voice volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tone and pacing</td>
<td>Tone and pacing</td>
<td>Tone and pacing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inappropriate gestures &amp; movement</td>
<td>Postures &amp; movement</td>
<td>Body gestures and body movement supported the presentation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Effectiveness</th>
<th>1-2 points need to improve:</th>
<th>3-4 points presented well:</th>
<th>5-6 points great job:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not enthusiastic</td>
<td>Somewhat enthusiastic and kept the audience’s attention for the most part.</td>
<td>Enthusiastic, kept the attention of the audience the whole time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of eye contact</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bonus Point (Creativity/Effort): _____ Grade _____ / 30**

**Informal Essay Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>4: Expert</th>
<th>3: Accomplished</th>
<th>2: Capable</th>
<th>1: Beginner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Writing</td>
<td>• Piece was written in an extraordinary style and voice</td>
<td>• Piece was written in an interesting style and voice</td>
<td>• Piece had little style or voice</td>
<td>• Piece had no style or voice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar, Usage &amp; Mechanics</td>
<td>• Virtually no spelling, punctuation or grammatical errors</td>
<td>• Few spelling and punctuation errors, minor grammatical errors</td>
<td>• A number of spelling, punctuation or grammatical errors</td>
<td>• So many spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors that it interferes with the meaning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Cox, Janelle, Sample Essay Rubric for Elementary Teachers**
https://www.thoughtco.com/essay-rubric-2081367
### Oral Exams: Introduction

![Image of exam rubric hierarchy](https://www.slideshare.net/DaliaAHamdy/introduction-of-grading-rubrics-to-egyptian-pharmacy-students-oral-assessments)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Descriptor</th>
<th>Additional Guidance on Strengths/Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Exceptional</td>
<td>Exceptionally strong with essentially no weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td>Extremely strong with negligible weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Very strong with only some minor weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
<td>Strong but with numerous minor weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Strong but with at least one moderate weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Satisfactory</td>
<td>Some strengths but also some moderate weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Some strengths but with at least one major weakness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Marginal</td>
<td>A few strengths and a few major weaknesses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Very few strengths and numerous major weaknesses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Qualifying Exam Guidelines

[https://www.utmb.edu/phtox/current-students/qualifying-exam-candidacy-information](https://www.utmb.edu/phtox/current-students/qualifying-exam-candidacy-information)
Important points to keep in mind

It is advisable to penalize the same mistake once, so review the test after the exam to check how things went on with the students and whether they faced any problems in answering any questions. Finally, make notes on the exam results.

For large classes you ought to make a table of signs to help the students understand your notes without taking too much time.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punctuation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Structure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of Conjunctions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revise drama details better</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study better</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Maha Hassan – Teacher Correction Schedule

D) How can you support students’ failure?

- Help students come to a position where they can see failure as an opportunity for learning.
- Take account of the feelings of students.
- Help students understand that it is their work and not their personality that is the problem.
- Concentrate on what students can do in the future to improve, rather than blaming them again and again.
- Let students have further opportunities for practicing under simulated exam conditions.
- Let students play examiner.
- Help students identify what went well.
- Help students develop revision and exam techniques.
- Encourage students in pairs to set questions for each other and mark them.

This is very important as sometimes failure is caused because of a certain weakness with the student’s studying or understanding of certain points of the language, i.e. sometimes the students prefer to memorize their lessons rather understand them before working out exercises or they do exercises without studying their lessons first. At other times, it can be a lack of confidence.

E) **Online Assessment**

Now it’s time to ask “how can technology help us with class or exam assessment?” There are a lot of online apps that can be used inside and outside class. If we have an Internet connection in class, we can use these apps as ongoing assessment tools to see how far our students have grasped their lessons. Otherwise, we can prepare exercises/quizzes and ask the students to do them at home. The best thing about these tools is that you can follow the work of the students and see how many students did the exercise, how many questions were answered correctly, and so on.

Here we are going to discuss two Apps: Quizalize and Quizlet. For Quizalize, you need to sign up for an account, follow the steps shown to create your quiz, and then share it with your students. For Quizlet, you have to do the same, yet Quizlet is more like Edmodo and Wiki. You can divide it into folders for your work, make accounts for your students, post assignments for them, and give them feedback on the work done. Different kinds of questions are provided to help you form different kinds of quizzes.
To sum up, we have to remember that Assessment is a whole process under which ‘a test’ and ‘a diagnosis’ come as sub categories. We use the test to get results through which we diagnose a conclusion about the development of our students’ learning and thus help us enhance our teaching.

Eventually, we have to be aware of the objectives of our lessons in order to succeed in setting correct objectives for the exams we set. Thus, we form a link between formative and summative Assessment, as we mentioned previously in the introduction, and thus help improve the teaching systems we follow, the activities we use in class, and the curriculum chosen, which is supported by technology. Thus, both formative and summative assessment ends up with diagnosis, which forms the results that help us come out with conclusions that help us improve our work.
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Meriam Morkos
Macmillan Teacher Trainer, Egypt

Abstract
Technology is present in every aspect of our lives. There is not a waking moment in our day that is not linked in some respect to technology. In the same way, technology has made our lives easier and richer. It has added tremendous new depth in the field of teaching and learning. Mixing technology with traditional methods to learn a language has proven a great success; however, not many teachers in Egypt are able to successfully apply it in their classrooms. This article is based on a presentation that aims at introducing the concept of Blended Learning to teachers and empowering them with the resources and tools to successfully apply it. Blended Learning can benefit both the teacher and the student if schools are willing to change from traditional methods. This article also introduces a material designing model to help teachers incorporate Blended Learning in their curriculum.

I. DEFINITION

“Blended Learning is the thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with online learning experiences” (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004, p.96). It is simply a mix of traditional and digital technologies, which are blended together in a way that helps learners learn more productively. Teachers can assign certain parts of their curriculum to be taught using technology, while teaching the other parts using the traditional in class methods.

II. BENEFITS

Blended Learning benefits both the teacher and the learner. When students have access to the learning material, for example online, they become more engaged in the learning process. Students get to learn according to their own pace since they can use the material anytime and anywhere. Blended Learning also allows for a better
communication with the teacher and better student feedback documented for future reference. Using different kinds of technology in teaching also caters for different learning styles; for example, students who are more visual learners can benefit more from a lesson taught via video. As for the teacher, Blended Learning saves the teacher’s time in class, giving time to a more meaningful practice. A teacher can also try different methods of testing, tracking performance, and reporting to both parents and the school. With the use of technology in learning, it is more fun for the student and the teacher. Blended Learning transfers the teachers from instructors to facilitators. The teacher becomes a guide in learning and the class becomes more student centered.

III. CHALLENGES

“When thoughtfully designed, Blended Learning offers an opportunity to enhance the campus experience and extend thinking and learning through the innovative use of the Internet and communications technology” (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004, p.102). However, the biggest challenge that can face teachers is the resistance to change. We must change the mindset, shift thinking, accept, and acknowledge this change. Schools and institutions cannot rely on old methods but must adapt to change to have a place in today’s market.

IV. RESOURCES TO CREATE MATERIAL FOR BLENDED LEARNING

Teachers can use publishers’ ready-made blended learning material, for example: *Open Mind-Macmillan Education, 2014*, which is both time saving and trusted. Another possible option is the teachers’ own designed material. This can be tailored for each class but is time and effort consuming. Open educational resources (OER) is also a great option
for teachers. According to The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, OER is defined as teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and repurposing by others. Open educational resources include full courses, course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge (The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, 2013). It is a global initiative aiming at sharing and participation.

V. OER EXAMPLES

This is a list of some websites that offer excellent educational material for free:

- **www.khanacademy.org**: Offers Math, Physics, and computer programming lessons.
- **www.onestopenglish.com**: An English language teachers’ resource site.
- **www.futurelearn.com**: A digital education platform where you can learn different subjects.
- **www.tes.com**: Teaching resources graded by school level.
- **www.merlot.org**: For higher education and professionals resources.
- **www.macmillanyounglearners.com/resources**: A variety of downloadable resources for English language teachers of primary stage.

VI. USING THE DADDIE MODEL IN CREATING BLENDED LEARNING MATERIAL

One thing is certain. Blended Learning does not represent more of the same. Blended Learning inherently is about rethinking and redesigning the teaching and learning relationship. To paraphrase Marshall McLuhan, it is not enough to deliver old content in a new medium (Garrison & Kanuka, 2004, p.99). That is why, teachers can use the
DADDIE model to design their own material. The DADDIE model, which is an adaptation of the ADDIE model, is a traditional instructional design model. It has been around for a long time, so well proven. The DADDIE model helps the teacher to carefully approach the teaching and learning strategies to ensure the best outcome for the students.

**DADDIE stands for:**

i. **Define:** is about defining the objectives and the outcomes to be delivered by the curriculum.

ii. **Analysis:** it is where the teacher evaluates the students who will receive the learning and how would they receive and react to the process.

iii. **Design:** this is an important stage where the teacher will be looking at what has been collected and deciding on a how to use it.

iv. **Develop:** this is where you create the content of your course, for example creative videos.

v. **Implement:** Putting the course into action whether in a classroom or a virtual learning environment.

vi. **Evaluate:** Analyze the process and its outcome to decide on its success.

**VII. TOOLS**

There are a variety of tools teachers can use as forms for their course material from videos, online applications to social media websites, and virtual learning environments (VLE). A Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is a system for delivering learning materials to students via the web. These systems include assessment, student tracking, collaboration, and communication tools (Oxford University Press, Online Resource Centre). VLE can work online and offline to support the students in school and outside.

Examples:
VIII. TRAINING

Learning how technology works is essential in the design and development stages of creating the learning material; that's why, the University of Leeds in their course on Blended Learning suggests the below websites and courses to learn technological skills.

- BBC Website
- Microsoft Digital Literacy
- JISC Developing your digital literacy Design Studio
- Open University Being Digital skills for life online
- JISC Digital Media guide to video production

IX. REFERENCES


4. Teaching EFL without Tech or Textbooks

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Panyapiwat Institute of Management

Abstract

Though much of the EFL literature today centers on the use of contemporary technology within a learner-centered medium, the majority of English language learners worldwide are living in areas of reduced circumstances. Educational institutions, in many cases, cannot afford multimedia or blended learning tools; nor can they incur simple textbooks. This paper offers a perspective on activities from a task-based syllabus that provides lessons requiring little more than pen, paper, and the resourcefulness of the second language instructor. The lessons consist mainly of auditory activities that utilize the second language learners’ existing cognitive concepts. The relevant feature of this task-based design is its dependence on the creativity of the instructor who is charged with developing, constructing, and presenting the tasks that both engage and educate the learners. In creating lesson material, themes associated with Arabic speaking societies are adopted rather than culturally sensitive topics often found in the EFL/ESL generated material dispersed by Eurocentric publishers. Allowing Arabic speaking EFL learners the opportunity to absorb and display English from the prism of their own societal consciousness, and in a task-based format, creates a wealth of lesson plan possibilities.

I. INTRODUCTION

This work offers a teaching strategy for EFL learners in areas of the Arab world that either prefers a more traditional approach to English language instruction or are teaching under diminished circumstances that negate the prospect of a more modern and diverse approach to English proficiency. Second language instruction can be implemented effectively under such diverse conditions with the proper learning objectives and expected outcomes realized. The tasks under discussion rely largely on the instructor taking the role of an English language narrator. Of great consequence in this schema is the use of
the learners’ existing cognitive concepts that form the cornerstones of these task designs. The local knowledge and experiences students possess and retain in their regionally influenced reflections are mapped to their English repositories during the English narration. In this manner, learners utilize top-down processing in order to create a match and identify the topic or title discussed in English. Material and tempo considerations are made in regards to the learner’s age and English proficiency level. Assembling material of which learners have a preconceived knowledge, such as music, film, celebrities, holidays, and religious events in the Arab world, make up the greater part of task content. A degree of knowledge in such customs and pop trends will vary from region to region and contingent upon a host of conditions. It is, in large measure, the instructors and their familiarity with the faculties and limitations of the class who must organize the appropriate tools to create an agreeable lesson. The combination of non-tech task material and culturally relevant accessories increases motivation and diminishes foreign language anxiety.

II. METHOD AND MOTIVATION

An array of international studies has found the task-based approach a viable addition to any second language learning objective. Teachers recognize the need for a communicative approach to classroom instruction but regularly favor the more familiar and assessment friendly grammar-translation method. Research by Abu-Ayyash and Assaf (2016) found that linking the learner preference styles of Arabic-speaking learners with task-based activities improved the overall proficiency of EFL learners. Forming and identifying proper syntactical constructs is seen as prerequisite to communicative ability
and scoring well on grammatically-centered comprehension examinations, in the minds of many, takes precedence. Research into the motivational factors of Arabic speaking EFL learners’ quest for proficiency suggests that the majority are intrinsically and instrumentally motivated to learn English, with a focus on examination results for future employment opportunities (Al-Mutawa, 1994; Qashoa 2006). There is, however, a vocal minority who support the notion that learning a second language, especially one that figures as prominently as English, should be an emotive fulfillment rather than solely a resource for academic assessment (Al-Marooqi & Denman, 2015).

III. SOCIETAL FACTORS

A scan of the EFL textbooks for purchase in bookstores throughout the Middle East and North African region finds a significant amount of subject matter highlighting features of Western culture. Learners are offered the sights and prose of American and European culture, history, topography, art, and technological advances in their lesson material. Tasks may, however, be more effective if Arabic speaking learners could have recourse to aspects of their own culture through the medium of English. With this strategy, students would not have to struggle with the twin challenges of learning a second language and its cultural appointments in tandem. A circumstance such as this sends learners down a second indeterminate path that may risk disorientating them. Since Arabic speaking learners have an understanding of local and regional culture, constructing Arabic-themed tasks would allow learners to train their sights on the discourse of English, with the understanding of their indigenous culture available to assist in their comprehension of the English objective.
One of the primary points of contention in regards to the adaptation of the English language and its ethos is the ease to which cultural conversations and demonstrations can inadvertently belittle the culture of English L2 learners (Brown, 2001). The religious traditions of Arabic speaking communities are sometimes slighted by offensive representations, in one form or another, from interactions with Western culture. Sowden (2007) cautions EFL instructors to address cultural matters with sensitivity since Western ideology is comprehensively fused to English instruction by its very nature. A pros and cons approach may lead to learner disengagement, indignity towards the instructor, or otherwise impinge on the classroom environment. Typecasting, condescendence, and historical bias can come about unintentionally. Tasks with Christmas, Easter, or Halloween themes may prove to be viewed as cultural elevation by those who harbor the idea that learners are made to envelop the culture of the dominant language to wholly comprehend its linguistic register (Phillipson, 2000). Ariffin (2009) asserts that discovering cultural similarities promotes tolerance; therefore, both cultures should be elevated and distinguished in a positive light. In an attempt to avoid cultural indignities, and as a vehicle to a better understanding of the instructor's oracy, the content of the tasks in the proceeding examples adheres to a societal mirroring approach (Gentner, 2016), based solely on cultural appointments of the L1 under the discourse of the target language.

IV. TASK-BASED INSTRUCTION

IV. 1 Collaborative Learning
One of the primary points of contention in regards to the adaptation of the English language and its ethos is the ease to which cultural conversations and demonstrations can inadvertently belittle the culture of English L2 learners (Brown, 2001). The religious traditions of Arabic speaking communities are sometimes slighted by offensive representations, in one form or another, from interactions with Western culture. Sowden (2007) cautions EFL instructors to address cultural matters with sensitivity since Western ideology is comprehensively fused to English instruction by its very nature. A pros and cons approach may lead to learner disengagement, indignity towards the instructor, or otherwise impinge on the classroom environment. Typecasting, condescendence, and historical bias can come about unintentionally. Tasks with Christmas, Easter, or Halloween themes may prove to be viewed as cultural elevation by those who harbor the idea that learners are made to envelop the culture of the dominant language to wholly comprehend its linguistic register (Phillipson, 2000). Ariffin (2009) asserts that discovering cultural similarities promotes tolerance; therefore, both cultures should be elevated and distinguished in a positive light. In an attempt to avoid cultural indignities, and as a vehicle to a better understanding of the instructor's oracy, the content of the tasks in the proceeding examples adhere to a societal mirroring approach (Gentner, 2016), based solely on cultural appointments of the L1 under the discourse of the target language.

**Iv. 2 Oral Narrative Instructions**

The traditions of storytelling in the Arabic world transition graciously into a familiar and widely accepted oral narrative style of language instruction. This design of auditory
learning is the primary mode of classroom instruction for those acquiring English without tech or text. The addition of stories and drama to a lesson adds a degree of excitement that has learners listening and participating more energetically. Flavoring the auditory oral-narrative with Arabic-based content relates to a component of advanced organizer skills known as subsumption. The premise, as advanced by psychologist David Ausubel (1960), asserts the idea that learning is conditional on the types of subordinate, representational, and combinatorial processes that occur during the reception of information; a primary process in learning since new material is related to relevant ideas in the existing cognitive structure on a substantive, non-verbatim basis. Cognitive frameworks represent the byproduct of all learning experiences. Forgetting occurs because certain particulars get interwoven and lose their singular identity.

Instructors adhering to this approach create lessons from the learners’ existing cognitive conceptions. The theory states that all of an individual’s prior perceptions are deposited in the cognitive structures of the brain. For acquisition of new substantial knowledge to take place, prior knowledge or schema should be activated within these structures by way of an introductory instructional strategy. Stimulating schema allows learners to link prior knowledge with new input. Advanced organizing provides a mental scaffolding to acquire new information. In marginalized areas of the Arabic-speaking world, instructors may find this type of instruction unavoidable due to typically large class sizes, lack of funds for auxiliary modes of instruction, and learners who view the instructor as their sole linguistic provider of these largely receptive and unadorned tasks. In this leadership role, the devising, shaping, and modifications of the lessons and syllabus must conform to the
classroom’s economic realities irrespective of the demands of a model curriculum (Fareh, 2010).

As instructors carry out oral narrative tasks in the medium of English, the learners will be manipulating the information in two interdependent patterns. In top-down processing, students evoke past experiences as well as search through their mental databases where they combine new elements with prior knowledge to make predictions. In bottom-up processing, students connect their knowledge of grammatical rules and lexical chunks to construct a visual image of the topic being discussed. Second language instructors often believe that their students are listening attentively to every sound, word, or sentence in order to understand the meaning of the discourse. In practice, students often employ the top-down approach to extrapolate the most likely message. Only afterward do students switch to the bottom-up approach to verify their understanding. Also known as schema theory, the premise suggests that to understand the English message put forth by the instructor, the words and phrases must be mapped against and overlaid by a learner’s pre-existing knowledge in a bid to make a connection.

Learners are acquainted with the content of these tasks in their Arabic culture and language-assertive intellect. By describing the events in English as an oral narrative task, the instructor is relating new linguistic speech sequences. In this sense, the instructor is not necessarily creating new knowledge, but rather creating an environment where learners elicit the knowledge they already possess. This technique runs counter to the
rote memorization schema that has for decades been the dominant approach to English studies in many EFL scholastic curriculums.

V. LESSON PLANS

V.1 Phonetic Bingo

The phonetic bingo task is designed to address some of the phonetic challenges Arabic speaking learners of English face when articulating words in the English language. The activity is carried out in the same tradition as standard bingo games. Instructors may wish to visit one of several online sites that generate bingo cards according to the instructor’s request (approx. 48 words into 36 cards). The words selected should consist of those Arabic-speaking students have the most difficulty producing. The instructor will no doubt find this to be a more enjoyable and engaging approach to English vocabulary pronunciation and recognition than drilling students with the standard speak and repeat design. The following is a sample phonetic bingo card highlighting a few of the phonemes (/f/ /t/ /v/) that prove a challenge for Arabic speaking learners of English to get their tongues around. Arabic translations are added for clarification:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample card (/f/ /t/ &amp; /v/ phonemes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>falcon صقر</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>airport مطار</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heart قلب</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>silver فضّة</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this task, instructors describe popular Arabic-language films in synopsis form as learners, in group settings, use top-down processing to recall the movie titles. Instructors may emphasize words that are relevant to the film and use rising and falling intonations to add importance and excitement to particular words and phrases. This information-gap activity is an auditory task using elements of decoding and transfer of information. Although films and their distribution require a degree of tech in order to be enjoyed, learners become aware of films and their content by news, blogs, or word of mouth. The
absence of technology in the classroom is the subject matter of this endeavor, not the extent and proximity of technology outside the class. The following are sample movie descriptions that provide examples of a film narrative task for various age groups:

1) **Bilal: A New Breed of Hero** (2015) About 1,400 years ago, a seven-year-old boy and his sister became slaves. The boy endures many hardships but he knows the only way out of his captivity is to raise his beautiful voice and remember his faith.

2) **Sorry for the Disturbance** (2008) An aviation engineer, who feels lonely and depressed, begins dating a beautiful girl he met at a café, but trouble begins when he learns he has a mental disease and has visions of his late father and girlfriend.

3) **In the Heliopolis Flat** (2007) The story of a man who rents an apartment in a suburb of Cairo away from his parents yet close to his job at a banking and stock company, but the ghost of a person who rented the apartment before him is still in the apartment.

**V.3 Quiz Competition**

Test student ability to decode and answer information-gap questions from auditory context clues. Instructors may wish to develop categories based on the learners' local and regional cultural attributes. In the same oral narrative design, instructors offer questions that stimulate the learners existing cognitive concepts. Learners use top-down processing in a group format to discuss the language and content before agreeing upon an answer. The category 'Singers' provides an example of how questions in this task can be developed:
Singers:

5 points – Who is the Lebanese star who made two Pepsi advertisement videos for the world cup with Christina Aguilera? (Elissa)

6 points – She is from the UAE and nicknamed the star of herself, she appeared in Arabic Idol and married a Qatari rally champion and has three children. Who is she? (Ahlam)

8 points – He is an Egyptian singer born in 1981, he sings the song El Leila and was the first Arabic singer to make a music video. (Amr Diab)

10 points – This Syrian singer and movie star, born in 1910, sang ‘Mawwal’ and was nicknamed the King of the Oud. (Farid al-Atrash)
Music remains a reliable segment in most EFL syllabus designs. Songs cross social frontiers in ways no other facet of language can. Words of a song are set to a rhythm and hence have a natural human appeal despite whatever difficulties may be faced with accurate translations. Adding rhythm and melody to vocabulary promotes sensorial patterning and rehearsal that moves the target vocabulary from the short-term to the long-term memory. Instructors may follow the same oral narrative format when reading the Arabic language song translations. Learners in group settings map the English to their mental Arabic-song repositories in an attempt to find a match. Instructors may find it better to speak slowly as songs are typically sung at a slower pace. Emphasize words which may be unfamiliar and employ body language and dramatic intonations to add fanfare and coherence. The songs should be popular with the age group but timeless favorites may be included to add a challenge that will reward the more industrious students. Examples for this task, for differing age groups, are as follows:

1. ‘When will dad come? He will come at 6. Will he come on foot or ride? He will come riding a bike. Is it red or white? It is white like cream, please open the way and salute him…’ (When Will Dad Come?) (متى سيأتي أبي) (\text{متى سيأتي أبي})

2. ‘You live in my imagination, I adored you for years, no one else is in my mind, my darling, my darling, the most beautiful eyes I ever saw in the universe, God be with you, what magic eyes…’ (My darling, you are the light of my Eye) (حببي يا نور العين – حبيبي يا نور العين) by Amr Diab (by Amr Diab)
3. ‘Oh his eyes have melted me, my heart became inclined towards him, what can I do? Oh the nights, my heart has lived dreaming of his love, and when his eyes met mine, it was as if he was my destiny…’ (His Eyes Melted Me)

(Dawwabony Ayneeh - دووبوني عينيه) by Ehab Tawfiq

V.6 Oral Narrative by Proficiency Level

The following is an example of how an oral narrative can be adjusted to multiple proficiency levels:

Pre-intermediate and Intermediate

The Fisherman and the Jinni

- ‘An old fisherman cast his net only four times a day, one day after casting his net, he found the net very heavy, when he pulled it up, he found a dead donkey in the net, trying again, he found a jar of dirt, then he found broken glass…’

- An elderly fisherman cast his net a mere four times daily, on one occasion, his net felt much heavier than usual, when he brought it up, he discovered a dead donkey, on another attempt, he discovered a jar of dirt, on the third casting, broken shards of glass…’
V.7 Oral Narrative with Verb Tense Focus

The following is an example of how an oral narrative can be adjusted to underscore multiple verb tenses.

**Ali Babba and the Forty Thieves**

- **Present Continuous**: ‘A poor woodcutter **sees** a secret place thieves have hidden a treasure, the poor man **says** the words, ‘open sesame’ and **enters** the den, the thieves **are** angry, but the man’s faithful slave girl **helps** him…’

- **Past Simple** ‘One day, a poor woodcutter **saw** a secret place where a large group of thieves **hid** a treasure, the poor man **said** the words, ‘open sesame’ and **entered** the den, the thieves **were** angry, but the man’s faithful slave girl **helped** him…’

V.8 Reading

An examination of the TOEFL IBM test scores for Arabic speaking learners shows that communicative skills are surprisingly sufficient while reading skills are continuously the weakest link in the path towards proficiency. Instructors have, for a number of years, applied classroom reading material based on the reading proficiency of English language learners in other areas of the world. When drawing a distinction between English and the Arabic language, the near reverse flow of construction and thought between Arabic and English prose that is a principal cause for the dispiriting reading assessment scores. In addition, the Arabic language makes assumptions about subjects, vowels, and tenses, then frequently omits them from sentences. In English, words are dismissed from a
sentence at far fewer intervals and in an ellipsis-like matter. Millin (2013: n.p.), warns that “the implications of this for teaching Arabic students are quite serious. If students aren’t seeing the vowels, or aren’t remembering them, this could inhibit their learning greatly. What can we do to help them notice and pay attention to vowels? In short, to help them completely change a cognitive process which is carried over from L1”?

With a blueprint akin to a writing exercise, the learner will start with the lexical items, develop a basic understanding of their morphology, and tack on additional elements of a sentence until an organized, grammatically correct sentence is decoded and constructed. The poor English reading skills of Arabic speakers is not entirely the fault of an L2 linguistic register in opposition to an L1. In much of the Islamic world, reading has been largely religious occasions. Al Mahrooqi & Adrian (2014), suggest that reading habits in the Arab region pale in comparison to those in other parts of the world, particularly the West. Creating reading lesson plans could assist in the learner’s ability to recognize grammatical patterns and how to self-correct improprieties. Templates can be developed that encourage learners to find and correct mistakes in a paragraph. Keeping the story content regional allows for a greater focus on the objective. The following are examples of how the text can be manipulated to address a grammatical problem area:

**Pyramid of Khufu**

The pyramid of Khufu, also knowing as the Great Pyramid, is one of the three pyramids under the Giza Plateau and is the most largest in the world. It was build around the years 2550 B.C. with thousands of workers who used approximately 2.3
million stone blocks that every weighed between 2.5 and 15 tons each. In front of the magnificent structures sat the Sphinx which was carving from bedrock with the head of an pharaoh and the bodies of a lion.

**Calligraphy**

The traditional tool for to creating Arabic calligraphy is a reed or bamboo pen known as a qalam. Before paper was to be invented, very most calligraphy was drawn or written on the papyrus or parchment. But it is also many commonly found on his tiles, pottery, carpets, and coins. Most of the words that are form these beautiful art works are been taken directly from religious text. There are five cursive styles next to of Arabic calligraphy that are called Naskh, Nasta’liq, Diwani, Thuluth, and Ruq’ah.

**VI. CONCLUSION**

In much the same way modern medical advances are important to a patient, ample acclaim can be made of traditional remedies that are often equally, if not more, effective. For schools with inefficient financial expenditures, a modern task-based approach with a variety of task types and outcomes can be cultivated effectively without the need for technology or textbooks. Oral narrative tasks in a pair/group format afford language learners the opportunity to bolster their auditory, visual, kinesthetic, and tactile skills to great effect. Though comparisons can be made between oral narrative and the much-criticized teacher-centered approach, the rote memorization commonly aligned to its
strategy plays no part in the desired outcomes of the lessons presented in this paper. Learners are encouraged to speak within their groups and participate in the auditory exercises by recalling cognitive concepts, applying top-down processing, and discussing possible solutions in a Vygotskian-style group setting. Being neither a teacher-centered nor a student-centered approach, perhaps a teacher-merged approach would be a more apt characterization. In regions of poverty or conflict, English lessons can be designed and implemented with motivated learners and satisfactory outcomes. It is the enthusiasm and determination of the instructor as narrator, orchestrator, and performer that decides the success of a teaching without technology syllabus.

VII. REFERENCES


5. The Resilient Teacher

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Abstract

How can teachers become super teachers? By sharing carefully planned techniques to guide teachers through the challenge of teaching even the most challenging classes, creating a resilient teacher is guaranteed. This session will focus on balancing competence and learning to create an active, engaging environment where real learning can successfully take place. Participants will reflect on the challenges of teaching and leave with a checklist of dos and don’ts.

Keywords: resilient, engagement, quality, planning, challenges

I. INTRODUCTION

The issue of student resilience for success is not new, but what has happened since then? Has research proven our initial ideas about best teaching practices to be wrong when it comes to teachers? Unfortunately, quality teaching is mentioned everywhere in most teaching journals, while quality teachers are sidelined. This led to a sad reality: What teachers hope to achieve is to simply get through the lesson in one way or another.

Proficiency in English is generally measured in terms of ability in reading, writing, listening, and speaking. However, motivation, self-confidence, and low anxiety on the part of teachers are also essential variables to successfully acquire a foreign language. Thus, recently, the need for quality teachers who deliver quality teaching has taken a new, fresh perspective with greater emphasis on personalization, individual ownership, and personal learning outcomes, thus yielding a demonstrable impact on student learning. Often
ignored components in this formula for success is how to develop excellent teachers who are resilient.

II. DEFINING RESILIENCE

If you can bounce back after a bad class, you are resilient. If you can adapt to the difficulties and challenges you face in day to day teaching, you are resilient. If can cope with new, sudden changes in administration, curriculum, or assessment, you are resilient. Unfortunately, resilience cannot be taught, but it can be learned by practice. It’s not always clear how to develop more resilient teachers. It is a long process which requires time and effort. I believe there are three main areas to focus on: their competence, their tolerance of mistakes, and their ability to set goals for themselves and their students (Howard, 2003). These components help young teachers sustain effort even when the challenge of teaching seems too great.

III. MISTAKES

Are you making these mistakes? In what follows is a short self-assessment checklist.
Be honest and try to think back to what usually happens in most of your classes. Don't worry about one-time events. Focus on patterns in the way you teach.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mistake</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you echo your students’ answers?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you take up most, if not all, class time?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Question</td>
<td></td>
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<td>---</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Do you ask them whether they understand?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Do you check to see if they have understood your instructions?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Do you finish their sentences for them?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Is your classroom management poor or non-existent?</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Do you lose your temper?</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Do you storm out of class?</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Do you ignore the boundaries between student and teacher?</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Do you say out loud things you later regret?</td>
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**IV. SOURCES OF RESILIENCE**

Any educator can rely on three main sources for power, stamina, and sustainability in this challenging and demanding profession. *I am* is the first source of resilience. Yes, your skills, abilities, training, and certainly experience should literally be your shield and protection. Cultivate them and take stock, as these are your support and guide when facing both your students and your administration. *I have* is the vital second source of power. What do you have should be a great deal of role models whether real or imagined. Other colleagues, veteran teachers, or even big names in the field fit this criterion. We learn from them, emulate them, and build on what we learn from them. *I can* is the final
source for your power. This refers to your skills, abilities, and areas of strength which you can capitalize on and make use of in your day to day teaching. As the famous Steven Covey (2004) suggested, we need to sharpen our saw. Professional development in the form of attending conferences, getting published, or observing other colleagues’ classes are effective means to problem solve and tweak any issues you may have with your teaching practices. Added to this, as the simple above-mentioned checklist indicates, you need to identify the areas needing your attention and begin to develop your own coping skills with any areas of weakness you may have.

a) I am
A teacher needs to like her students but love her teaching, or else he/she can never become resilient. This would make him/her likeable and loveable, which is a major boost to one’s self-esteem. A teacher needs to show concern for the needs of her students and be respectful and as a result respectable. And, a resilient teacher is responsible for what he/she does in class, but at the same time be sure of what he/she is doing, its purpose and its value. A resilient teacher exudes confidence.

b) I have
You must have colleagues whom you trust since you know they have your best interest. They set limits, guide you, and show you how to do the right thing. They are your mentors who want you to experiment and learn from your mistakes. They help you when you need to learn. But, remember, they are there only to guide you and answer specific questions that you may have. They are not there to make decisions for you. They only assist and advise you, but what worked for them might not suit your own teaching style. Certainly,
learn from their mistakes, but remember your own mistakes are valuable learning experiences for the resilient teacher.

c) I can

To reach the stage of “I can”, you need to talk to others about problems you face. Always consult. Ask your colleagues to help you when you need it. Seeking help is the first step to learn, and it is the way to find the right solution to problems whether in lesson planning, classroom management, or even controlling your emotions. Find out when it is convenient to bring up issues with colleagues and pick their brains about what to do if students misbehave, do not come to class prepared, or are unmotivated. A resilient teacher is a decision maker who is self-controlling.

V. HOW TO BE RESILIENT

Being stressed is normal. So, have a positive attitude, ask for assistance, and create an action plan. You need to consider your own emotional health and well-being. Focus on the issue you pinpoint in your teaching. Ignoring the fact that you are having a problem in your teaching will not make it go away. Depend on your own areas of strength to get through this problem. Resilient teachers always take stock of their skills and abilities as coping mechanisms to enable them to change any negative event into a learning experience to excel in the near future (Hong, 2012).

In class, you model resilience on several levels at the same time. First, you need to create a positive environment for learning, which is done by providing a number of opportunities
for acquisition, investigation, and curiosity. This not only allows for critical thinking, but it also allows the shy learner to engage. Do not forget to offer a variety of types of praise and encouragement. Respect them and teach them to respect one another. By modelling this positive behavior, you will be able to later on, when needed, enforce rules and either reward or punishment.

Out of class, always keep a journal to improve your resilience. This would enable you to learn from any negative experiences, accept mistakes, anticipate new changes, and maintain a balanced perspective. It is essential to always remain positive and hopeful. Set small goals and work toward achieving them. For instance, this semester my goal is to remain calm, cool, and collected, especially when dealing with problem students. I decided to listen well to my students. I do always show them respect for whom they are. I have always given them honest advice about their level and potential, but I only give praise when they actually do well. They need to earn it. On the other hand, when my students do something wrong, I give the agreed upon consequences at the beginning of the semester. However, sometimes students do not respect each other in case of mistakes, differences, or failure. They can be ruthless when dealing with each other. The resilient teacher needs to step in since such situations can blow out of proportion and may disrupt the whole teaching/learning situation.

VI. ATTITUDE

Whose attitude? Your attitude. It certainly counts. Your attitude towards your students, your workplace, and teaching in general is pivotal to your becoming resilient. Tell the
students you are available to assist them because you are their super-hero! Yes, the resilient teacher in the eyes of students is a model to imitate. This means you need to be professional in the way you share your expectations and address their needs. Teaching is a very demanding situation for which, for example, you need to dress the role, be on time, be prepared for class, know your material well, and be organized.

On another level is the need to have a positive attitude about your own teaching. Do not be afraid to question any traditions or pre-conceived notions. What was traditionally the norm may no longer apply today in your own teaching context. Think critically. Accept the fact that you will make mistakes, but do not tolerate them. Work on solutions to any issues you may have. For example, first focus on the weak students in order to assist them to take the first step toward improving their skills. Never apologize when making mistakes in class and never show your lack of knowledge. Always figure out what you need to learn or do to boost your competence in teaching, for example grammar rules or how to develop a written argument. This is because your competence builds your resilience. If you persist in learning from your mistakes, your resilience will gradually develop.

**VII. DISCUSSION**

Pause from your daily teaching to assess yourself whether you are a new or veteran teacher. However, prepare to be flexible. Be prepared for change. Be prepared to learn in order to become resilient over time. Write down your issues, any progress you make, and reflect on your achievements. Remember if you do not write it down, it never happened as you will forget. A resilient teacher builds his/her authority in class overtime,
but the first step is to acknowledge that you could have done better by assessing what goes on in class. The goal eventually is to improve your teaching effectiveness.

VIII. REFERENCES


6. Effective Instruction for English Language Learners with a Learning Disability in Higher Education in Egypt

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Abstract

There is a large number of students with learning disabilities (LD) today in many private higher education institutions in Egypt. It is fair to say that their challenges although have gained some attention from academics and researchers that they are still under-studied. Many of those students also happen to be English language learners (ELLs). This complicates matters even more not just for the student with the learning disability, but for the untrained instructor in the classroom. Research indicates that ELLs with LD are less likely to engage actively in classroom tasks and are more prone to failing. Providing an inclusive and effective educational experience for them poses a challenge for many academics. This necessitates that more awareness is raised in our academic institutions and instructors need to seek professional development that would support their understanding of the needs of ELLs with LD. This paper focuses on differentiating between ELLs who are struggling with language proficiency and ELLs with LD. It also highlights the learning priorities of ELLs with LD and how to leverage their strengths through proactive preparation, inclusive lesson plans, adapted assessment and suitable technology to support their learning process.

Finally, this article calls for action on the part of universities to ensure they promote inclusive learning environments and provide learning support that is appropriate and meets the needs of a diversity of learners.

Key words: English Language Learners with Disabilities, Learning Disabilities (LD), Higher Education, Egypt.
needs as learners. In many cases, the curriculum is designed with the principle that all students must learn in the same way for the sake of fairness (Meyer, Rose, & Gordon, 2014). This immediately excludes English language learners (ELLs) with learning disabilities (LD). In order to achieve and progress academically, ELLs with LD require “instruction that is simultaneously responsive to their disability [and] English language status” (Garcia and Tyler, 2010, p.113).

Research (Kangas, 2017; Wanzek et al., 2016; Marom & Weintraub, 2015; Baker et al., 2014; Geishhardt & Munsch, 1996) indicates that students who have a learning disability (LD) are less likely to engage in classroom tasks. Many students with learning disabilities struggle with reading and as a result, are more prone to failing. Accordingly, being familiar with instructional approaches the will support ELLs with LD in their language development and literacy has become of great importance. The spreading of inclusive practices and the creation of safe learning environments means that instructors are responsible for providing an engaging and interactive learning experience to all students including ELLs with disabilities. It also necessitates that they seek the guidance of a number of specialists to help them better understand the challenges in the classroom and determine the type of support that could be provided.

Unfortunately in the absence of appropriate academic and social support for ELLs with LD, these students are deemed at risk. This is reflected in higher failure rates, lower retention rates and significantly lower rates of graduation by these students. Lombardi, Murray & Kowitt, 2016; Sanford et al., 2011; Hurst & Smerdon, 2000; Horn, Berktold & Bobbitt, 2009 support the view that students with LD who pursue higher education, experience difficulty in adjusting to the academic and social demands of university life. A
twenty-first century learning environment mandates that academic institutions optimize learning for all students and recognize that it is the curriculum and the learning environment which need to be modified to meet the learning needs of all learners. Strategies which improve access, success and retention are now receiving increased attention Abreu et al., (2016) by private universities in Egypt.

Higher education institutions regardless of discipline, in order to provide effective learning for all students, must recognize the importance of their programs being accessible, appropriate and inclusive. Learners with a learning disability should not be stigmatized or defined by their impairment simply because they require specialized learning support. When the abilities of ELLs with LD are undervalued or misunderstood, they do not benefit from the learning experience. It is the higher education institution that must reform its pedagogy and student support services as part of its strategic plan for teaching and learning. This shift in thinking helps academics understand that all learners can with the appropriate learning support, develop mastery of knowledge. By mastery of knowledge we mean that the instructor provides learners with multiple means of delivery, presentation of content and assessment which foster deeper understanding of concepts and give ample opportunities for all students to demonstrate their achievement. The ultimate goal of higher education for all students is a sustained engagement in learning and the management of progression of students at risk.

Academics however do face challenges when they design programs that aim to accommodate students with LD. More specifically, English language instructors often indicate that they are not well trained to write goals and objectives of learning for ELLs with LD, let alone design appropriate assessments that measure achievement and
mastery of knowledge. There is a serious lack of research and awareness on the needs and challenges of ELLs with LD in Egypt, but this is slowly changing due to the efforts of specialists, parents, and evolving university policies.

II. IDENTIFYING ELLS WITH LD

Discerning the differences between a disability and the difficulties of acquiring a new language is of vital importance. Research by Rinaldi and Samson (2008) argue that finding an appropriate method to differentiate between struggling ELLs and ELLs with LD is essential to their achievement in the education system. ELLs with low language proficiency who are assessed for English language on entry to higher education institutions can often be classified as students with a learning disability. Special needs students on the other hand, may not be easily identified if their disability is not declared on their university application. Accordingly, these students may not receive the appropriate support required to assist them in their teaching and learning process. Informal discussions with academic staff from a number of higher education institutions in Egypt indicate that their programs are not flexible enough to provide the language learning modifications required to support the learning of ELLs with LD.

A learning disability is defined as: “a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, speak, read, write, [or] spell” (Garcia & Tyler, 2010 p.115). The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario (IDAO) in their report *Accommodating Students with LDs in Postsecondary Studies* (2012) highlight that learning disabilities range in severity and consistently hinder learning acquisition and the use of one or more of the following key skills:
1. oral language (listening, speaking, understanding)
2. reading (decoding, comprehension)
3. written language (spelling, written expression)

Learning disabilities may also interfere with the learner’s organizational skills, social discernment and social relations. The impairment is generally life-long. The effect of the impairment may be articulated differently over time, depending on the learning environment and the learner's characteristics.

Students with LD including ELLs with LD, struggle to obtain and remember new information because of difficulties with note taking, study skills, active participation in class, working memory and long-term memory (Scruggs, Mastropieri, Berkeley, & Graetz, 2010). Some of the signs which can be identified are:

- Limited vocabulary (even in their native tongue) (Nguyen, 2012)
- Exhibiting deficits in expressive and receptive language (Nguyen, 2012)
- Demonstrating difficulty with interpreting non-verbal language (Echevarria et al., 2008)

III. MEANINGFUL LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR ELLS WITH LD

The role of faculty members in supporting ELLs with LD can be very influential to student achievement (Hartman-Hall & Haaga, 2002; Stein, 2014). Academics by default are expected to address the complex needs of students’ learning and to ensure the learning
experience is meaningful and engaging for all students. Students in higher education are expected to accomplish extensive reading and writing on an academic level, often within a limited period of time. ELLs with LD may feel stressed and anxious that their usual strategies for handling reading and writing might fail them when taking an exam or writing a report with a short due date. According to Hatcher et al., (2002) a wide range of support strategies are required to meet the needs of each individual learner. Identifying instructional approaches which prove to be effective for ELLs with LD is a key area of need as stressed by McCardle et al., (2005). Students with disabilities who are ELLs often have difficulty acquiring basic knowledge. This can be due to the lack of background information, unfamiliar terminology and academic skills Francis et al., (2007). ELLs with LD have a neurological disorder that makes processing and recalling information and performing tasks challenging (Artiles & Ortiz, 2002). Modifications to classroom tasks means that the instructor must have a sound understanding of a wide range of factors which affect learning such being familiar with the social and cultural context of the content when teaching and learning are happening. The ability of the instructor to enact these complex understandings in the classroom ensures that the higher education institution is able to serve an increasingly diverse body of students.

IV. RESEARCH BASED STRATEGIES WHICH SUPPORT THE COGNITIVE AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT OF ELLS WITH A LD

A set of instructional practices are required to address the instructional needs of ELLs with LD. ELLs with LD tend to have limited vocabulary even in their native language and struggle to find the right words; they may also show a shortage in expressive and receptive language (Echevarria et al., 2008).
Academic staff, in order to support learners with their language acquisition, can resort to what Krashen and Terrell (1983) call the “Natural Approach” (p.51). Instead of focusing on error correction, this process urges instructors to embed concepts and vocabulary within comprehensible content which includes: gestures, body language and facial expressions. It also includes the use of high frequency vocabulary, simplified syntax, less pronouns, clear pronunciation, longer natural pauses, the use of high quality visuals, and increased repetition. Moreover, the use of formative feedback allows ELLs with LD to review what was required against what they actually did (Wormeli, 2006). Cognitive strategies which target vocabulary and background knowledge include: summarizing, clarifying, facilitating dialogue through questions and peer interactions. Approaches such as Sheltered Instruction (Echevarria & Graves, 2007), support language acquisition for ELLs with LD. Some of the strategies include identifying students' learning style, working with the student to identify their stronger language skill and use it to develop the other language skills (writing, reading, listening and speaking), providing checklists and peer assistance in order to reduce the amount of information which students may need to generate independently, teaching students coping strategies to support the areas which are affected by the disability and listing the day’s agenda on the board as ELLs with LD tend to get easily distracted and as a result could suffer from anxiety. Providing a familiar pattern reduces the anxiety factor and provides them with external predictability (Echevarria et al., 2008).

Consistent and predictable classroom management routines give equal opportunity for all students to demonstrate their capacity for learning. Furthermore, academic staff should consider collaboration with specialised professionals for supplementary, intensive reading
interventions provided by a reading specialist or special education teacher who is familiar with ESL adaptations (Garcia & Tyler, 2010), this feature ensures the pedagogy is student-centered and appropriate to the skill and matched to the ELLs impairment. Student centered learning or constructivist approaches to teaching and learning embed learning in real life experiences and rely heavily on hands-on activities which help ELLs with LD to comprehend abstract concepts. It is an effective method for engaging all classroom participants.

Researchers Hong (2015) and Sabornie & de Bettencourt, (2009) recommend the following steps for academic staff when developing a learning strategy for ELLs with LD:

- break down tasks to seven sequenced steps
- write down processes as ordered steps
- develop a mnemonic to help students remember each ordered step
- use interesting instructional methods to teach each step (a video, modeling, demonstrating)
- select appropriate technology to support the learner’s academic needs
- list the objectives of the day on the board to provide external predictability and reduce anxiety because ELL with LD are environmentally dependent
- modify formative assessment appropriately.

A Pre-reading Cognitive Strategy

To guide ELLs with LD in reading, instructors can use the following steps: guide students in reading the title of the reading passage, ask them to find the author’s name, give them clues to the background information and ask them to complete it. Step two: ask students to read the subheadings and the first sentence of each paragraph. Use cues to help them such as words in italic, underlined words, bold, pictures, graphs. Step three: ask students to read the concluding paragraph or last few lines. Step four: ask questions to check their
understanding about vocabulary, main ideas and information about the reading passage (Kinsella, 2002).

\textit{Reading Comprehension Strategy}

Conderman et.al. (2013) share another classroom reading comprehension strategy which they call BIRDS. This strategy helps students to:

- systematically organize a text
- analyze the information
- understand its meaning

B- Break reading into smaller parts
I- Identify confusing words or phrases
R- Reword or rephrase to clarify
D- Decide if it makes sense
S- Summarize in your own words

It is important to remember to allow students to use various support tools such as a thesaurus, dictionaries or computers. The support strategies will vary depending on the ELLs’ learning disability and the nature of the task. It is worth noting that it is natural for the learning process to yield little progress in the first year. Oral proficiency is expected to develop between three to five years while academic proficiency may take between four to seven years (Cummins, 2000).

\textbf{V. ADDRESSING DIFFERENTIATION}
Academic staff working with ELLs with LD must ensure they make the necessary adaptations or modifications to the curriculum content for individual students with impairment. Adaptations may include modifications to the instructional content, teaching methods and materials, or the physical learning setting (Janney & Snell, 2000). It is also important to note that English language learners with a learning disability by the time they are in higher education, may not have necessarily mastered the skills of note taking or active listening. An inclusive classroom must ensure it reinforces these skills which require time and practice to show results (Nguyen, 2007). This may require the instructor to address the individual academic needs of the learner by inspecting their notes for organisation, pairing them up with other peers to help them compare notes and complete missing information.

Addressing differentiation in the English language classroom for ELLs with LD takes into account students’ language limitations. Tomlinson and Moon (2013) and Visser (1993) support the view that addressing differentiation is a process by which “teachers meet the need for progress ... by selecting appropriate teaching methods to match the individual student’s learning strategies, within a group situation” (p.15). Fahim and Khalil (2015) further reinforce this view by arguing that having prior knowledge of the students’ language abilities and knowledge level through reliable and valid diagnostic assessments ensures that the learning needs of all students are met. The information yielded by the diagnostic assessments allows academic staff to tailor the curriculum and the lesson plan for an inclusive learning environment that fosters appropriate student support strategies. At the same time using classroom assessment techniques (CATs) allows the academic staff member in the English language classroom to monitor and gauge students’ progress,
plan effective grouping and use relevant instructional strategies that match students’ skills, knowledge and learning disability.

Classroom Assessment Techniques (CATs)

Classroom assessment techniques are simple, non-graded in-class activities designed to give feedback on the teaching-learning process as it is happening. This strategy advocated by Angelo and Cross (1993) is an ideal method to use not just to assess students’ achievement but to collect meaningful data that would help in effectively planning an inclusive learning environment. CATs address the following questions:

- How much is each student grasping from what is being taught?
- What am I doing that is useful for these students?
- What am I doing that is not useful for these students?
- What are their muddy areas?
- What type of intervention is required?

Scaffolding

Breaking down tasks into chunks based on identifying the students’ zone of proximal development (ZPD) reflects that care has been given by the academic staff member to evaluating the extent to which an ELL with LD needs assistance or scaffolding. Determining the learner’s ZPD allows the instructor or classroom peers to offer the appropriate guidance to allow the ELL with LD to accomplish academic tasks successfully. Selecting shorter passages to read or setting shorter reading time helps students with a learning disability to build confidence that they can achieve tasks and complete them like
their more capable peers. An Intermediate level student with a learning disability may need more time to complete a grammar task (fill in the blanks) and may be given fewer items to complete. At the same time, an ELL with LD in the advanced level, may be able to independently complete a gap filling exercise but struggle with the questions that start with “Why” or “How” (problem solving). Checking for understanding and verbal scaffolding include: paraphrasing and the repetition of students’ responses using slow speech. These simple strategies help ELLs with LD to process information better. It is important to keep in mind that processing information for ELLs with LD is a double cognitive task which includes: processing the question posed by the instructor in English and translating it mentally into Arabic or their first language; secondly, processing the response to the question in Arabic / first language and then translating it into English. Struggling learners can benefit at this stage from what Nguyen (2012a) calls “wait and think time” (p.143). Instructors can count to five after posing a question to allow students sufficient time to process information. When instructors scaffold for students based on their ZDP, it reduces their anxiety and enhances their confidence level as anxiety has been known to be a hindrance to the process of second language acquisition (Sultan, 2012). This encourages risk taking and reinforces their language competency.

VI. ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Technical equipment to support the learning process of ELLs with LD can be used at different times and in variation according to the need and the disability of the student. Quite often, a student with a learning disability is able to manage his/her learning process by using assistive technology. However, assistive technology if not appropriately selected
or assigned to students at appropriate intervals of their learning can prove to be a hindering factor. Students can be overloaded with too many facilities or if the technology does not meet the actual need of the student or if the equipment is too complicated to be used independently. In this case the technology becomes a barrier to the learning and their academic achievement. Nonetheless, assistive technology has been known to play a positive role in supporting ELLs with LD to achieve their learning goals. Below is a list of appropriate and effective technological tools:

- Job Access with Speech (JAWS) that converts text on the screen to synthesized speech;
- Kurzweil 1000 digitizes books or articles, class assignments and exams into a format that is readable by JAWS.
- Braille printer that prints e-books, PDF and even Arabic Text into Braille.
- Braille Note Display
- Plextalk, a portable audio recording device.

**VII. ASSESSMENT FOR ELLS WITH A LD**

In order to effectively evaluate the academic achievement of ELLs with LD “a university must provide methods for evaluating the achievement of the student with the [LD] as will best ensure that the results of the evaluation represents the student’s achievement rather than reflecting the student’s impaired sensory, manual or speaking skills” (Legal Information Institute- Academic Adjustments, 2000). Research has often recommended that academic staff in higher education in order to assess ELLs with LD, they resort to
alternative assessment. Formative assessment is ideal as it is mainly for planning, guiding, and evaluating instruction, it is also ongoing and diagnostic (Tomlinson, 2014). Konur 2000; Tindal and Fuchs, 2000; and Messick, 1999 believe that by making adjustments to four areas in assessment, a fair and valid assessment of ELLs with LD can be guaranteed. The recommendations include the following: adjustment to the presentation of the assessment material, adjustment to the assessment directions and the use of devices to assist and support the learner, adjustment to the response of the students and adjustment to the setting, timing and scheduling. However, Sharpe and Earle (2000), argue that “the use of alternative assessment is compensatory in nature and, as a result, ultimately threatens to subvert the equality of opportunity it aims to provide… thus violates the principles of assessment and undermines the validity of assessment in higher education” (p.191). This point is debatable and open to a number of speculations.

Adjustment to the Presentation of Assessment

It is important to note that assessment adjustments made at the end of a semester or during the semester, are merely an extension to the adjustments and accommodations made for ELLs with LD in accessing their curriculum throughout the academic year. Assessment material being available in different formats ensures that students with a learning disability in the English language classroom are accommodated.

Presentation of Material and Assessment Instructions
The way in which the assessment is presented to an ELL with LD can aid in ensuring that the student easily comprehends the requirements of the task. The content can be broken down into chunks; additionally, assessment instructions can be broken down to simple steps or simplified by highlighting key words through the use of a technological device. The invigilator can also read the instructions to the student, simplify the language, or provide the assessment prompt as a recording or use the text-to-speech presentation feature. Additionally, depending on the disability, the exam paper can be provided in large print or in Braille. Other devices related to student support can include speakers/amplifying devices, magnifying devices and speech synthesis.

Adjustment of Students’ Responses to Assessment

Students who have a learning disability whether they are English language learners or not, may need to make adjustments to the way they communicate their response in an assessment. Learners with a learning disability may not need to write down their responses, but rather dictate it to an invigilator or record it on a voice synthesizer. They may also need to use a spell checker, require wider spacing of the text, lines or margins on the examination paper or response booklet. Students with a learning disability may also need to respond in a number of formats such as taping their responses for later verbatim transcription, use a spelling dictionary, dictate their answers to a proctor, use a voice recognition system or a personal laptop.

Adjustment to the Assessment Setting
For higher education institutions to make it possible to assess students with a learning disability, they must ensure that students have been provided with the necessary training that allows them to effectively use assistive technology and that they have been sufficiently trained in assessment strategies. Students with a learning disability in the English language classroom may require adjustments to the assessment setting such as: being examined in a small group or individually, use auditory simulation, special furniture/equipment, require good lighting and possibly a sound proof room for students with an attention deficit disorder to ensure minimal distractions. Brigham & Bakken (2013) point out that those students who may need sign language interpreters or access to voice synthesis software or transcribers are better off taking their assessment in a separate room.

**Adjustment to the Timing and scheduling of Assessment**

ELLs with LD may require taking their assessment over several days or intervals. This may require giving the student more time, breaks or extend the deadlines for assignments. Zuriff (2000) argues that this is the most debated area of adjustment in assessment for learners with a disability. Recent studies show a clear correlation between the implications of extending assessment timing in the classroom and the academic achievement of dyslexic students. In most studies (Zuriff, 2000), the extended time assessment had positive effects for ELLs with LD. Tindal and Fuchs (2000), argue that extended time adjustment without other accommodations, may not be useful at all times for ELLs with LD, but for maximum benefit, it must be designed and implemented to meet the individual needs of the ELL with the LD as part of a whole supportive system. It is
worth noting that academics without the appropriate training in supporting ELLs with LD can implement an adjustment which can be wrongly forced on a disabled learner which would be of little to no use in measuring their academic achievement regardless of their learning disability.

Accommodation in assessments necessitates that for the purpose of validity and reliability, the assessments must follow two core principles: accommodations must not alter the construct of the test measure; changes should be based on individual needs as changes have differential effects. With a lack of appropriate assessment adjustments, the assessment results of ELLs with LD would be measuring their disability rather than their academic achievement. Such measures necessitate that changes are made based on informed decisions by the higher education institution and the welfare office support staff.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

ELLs with LD who enroll at university, may find that they need to have a psycho-educational assessment completed. Psycho-educational assessments have specific criteria and result in a clear diagnosis.

The Egyptian National Council for Human Rights, states “…..all private and public educational institutes do not discriminate among learners on the basis of gender, ethnic origin, religion, creed, social status or disabilities…” (Law No. 94 of 2003, 2010). In 2007, Egypt signed an agreement with the CRPD (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) and ratified it in 2008 with the appropriate policies addressing to remove discrimination and promote equal opportunity among all individuals with a physical or a learning disability.
In light of the above, providing an all-inclusive learning environment that guarantees a rewarding experience for ELLs with LD, requires that those in the management of the establishment, direct their efforts towards optimizing the learning experience of all students. Accommodations and interventions will differ significantly from one student to the other. Each student should have an individualized academic plan which outlines how they will access material, how they will go about the teaching and learning on and off campus and the tools/resources which match the impairment to ensure equal opportunity. However, higher education institutions should ensure that introducing accommodation and modifications for an inclusive learning environment does not push them to compromise on standards and the validity of assessment. Furthermore, Abreu et al., (2016) recommend expanding locations/hours/availability of academic and support staff, inform students about the services available to them and ensure availability of specialized equipment and software.

Having a better understanding of the academic needs of ELLs with LD, requires professional development (PD). Carefully planned professional development will help academics face the classroom challenge and enable them to deliver effective instruction for struggling English language learners with a learning disability. It will also ensure that they are providing developmentally appropriate learning experiences and adaptations that are suitable and feasible. Academic staff who had received appropriate training related to the many facets of handling English language learners with a learning disability (Nguyen, 2012) should be able to:

- identify ELLs with LD,
• understand how these students qualify for LD accommodations and modifications in the teaching, learning and assessment cycle,

• appropriately facilitate the learning objectives based on individualized lesson plans which address their learning style, learning disability and language proficiency,

• know what type of support they can reasonably offer each student on campus and off campus.

Professional development can also be supplemented with other resources available on the web or at the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) in Maadi, Cairo.

http://lrcegypt.org/workshops/index

IX. WORKS CITED


7. Sustaining Language Learner Motivation via Reflection: Case Study

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Abstract

English courses are taught in all universities to enhance students' educational and professional opportunities. Unfortunately, student motivation varies and some students believe the language course does not really reflect their needs and requirements. Sustaining motivation is critical in English language learning, EFL teachers try to find ways to effectively motivate students in English learning. This paper expounds this importance of sustaining language learner motivation and shows how student reflection can sustain motivation and eventually enhance the learning process.

Keywords: motivation, reflection, active learners, learning process

I. INTRODUCTION

Language learning is influenced by many factors. Motivation, attitude, interests, age, methods, will, and character, which directly affect language learning. Motivation enhances actions. Teachers can use this fact in language learning to push students to work more on their own to enhance their language proficiency. One way to sustain intrinsic motivation is reflection. Making students get in the habit of reflecting will sustain students' motivation, make them active learners, and increase their inclination to experiment and perform willingly. This case study investigates the value of reflection in sustaining students' motivation. Initially, motivation and reflection are defined. Then, the writer proposes how reflection can be used as a tool to peak students' interest and to keep them motivated. Once motivated, students would engage in the proper behavior to
reach their ultimate goal, namely learning and using the language to enhance their educational and professional opportunities.

II. MOTIVATION AND LANGUAGE LEARNING

Motivation is generally defined as any influence that triggers, directs, or maintains behavior. Motivation is the kick which stimulates the accomplishments of our actions. A motivated individual is a person who shows a certain degree of interest towards a subject. Motivation is considered the key in terms of language learning because it drives behaviors. Motivation is divided into extrinsic and intrinsic types. Intrinsic is considered the real driving force. Nonetheless, extrinsic motivation can be a tool that can enhance the inner desire. Extrinsic motivation is as an outward force in the form of expectation, praise, and rewards (Cheryl L. Spaulding, 1992, p.4). Eggen Paul and Don Kauchak explain that intrinsic motivation includes factors such as curiosity, the need to know, and feelings of competence or growth (1994, P.428). Cheryl L. Spaulding (1992) explains that intrinsic motivation is an inner desire to accomplish a task successfully (4).

In language learning, motivation ignites students’ desire to work more on their own, directs their determination, enhances autonomous work, and encourages experimentation with the language. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation complement and enforce each other. Teachers should work on both, and especially intrinsic motivation, to develop autonomous learning skills. Knowing about the role of motivation in language learning made me try to find ways to sustain motivation, and especially intrinsic motivation. I thought about reflection as I received training on reflective teaching.

III. REFLECTION AND ACTIVE LEARNING
Reflection is a conscious process involving thinking about where one is and what and how one is doing. Reflection is a tool that enhances and improves performance. Reflection on what we do is basically self-awareness and a standing of our views, efforts, attitudes, and needs (Bassot, 3). It is a "questioning approach" that assures "personal involvement" (3). Reflection is a tool that allows people who reflect to learn from their experiences, as it is an assessment of their steps, actions, and reactions. Yuonne Hiller (2005) denotes: "So, when we reflect, we not only challenge our assumptions about why we do what we do, but we can also help ourselves identify where we feel lacking and why; we may be setting ourselves unnecessarily unachievable standards. How can we reflect on our approaches to our practice? What can we do? What can we uncover in the process?" (7). Reflection enhances active learning as students become aware of their role in education. Bonwell and Sutherland (1997) claim the effectiveness of reflection and active learning approaches as a way to facilitate learning. Brewer (1997) confirms that reflection is empowering as it enhances attention and consciousness. Small (1996), and (Brewer, Burgess 2005) report that reflection promotes interest and prevents boredom. Reflection encompasses individual, contextual, relational, and developmental aspects. Reflection helps learners to understand what they already know (individual), identify what they need to know in order to advance understanding of the subject (contextual), make sense of new information and feedback in the context of their own experience (relational), and guide choices for further learning (developmental) (Dörnyei, Z. (2001) 55; Dörnyei and Ottó (1998) 4).

Reflection is an empowering force that helps students develop autonomous learning skills, do extra work on their own, and experiment. Student motivation is
increased if they feel that they have control on their learning outcomes (Callahan, 2012). Reflection is a tool that helps one improve by being conscious (Moon, 1999a) and (Moon, 1999b). Pollard (2014) explains that as students will have to be autonomous throughout their adult lives, autonomy is an important thing for students to experience. Reflection helps students establish goals based on their proficiency levels. Such goals will help them develop in both language skills and study skills. Reflection helps students plan, manage their time effectively, use the available resources to the full potential, and become conscious learners.

IV. Research problem

The research problem is: examining the impact of reflection on sustaining language learner motivation.

V. FORMAL STATEMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTION

How does reflection impact student motivation and interest for the course? This research is also concerned with the question: What impact does reflection have on students of all levels of proficiency and if it will help improve students’ critical thinking skills, and assist them in making judgments, being decisive, synthesizing information, evaluating, and applying skills. The case study will also examine the idea whether reflection will empower students, give them a sense of autonomy, and help them develop skills for self-directed learning.

VI METHOD
a. Research Context and Description of Participants

After carefully analyzing available research and publications in this field, I developed the following steps for the implementation of the action research. The action research was carried out in the first semester of the academic year 2017-2018 (September-January term). It was conducted on language A students, group 7. The group (class) was comprised of 55 students. 40 students were males and 15 were females. A total of 55 students (the whole group) were enrolled in the action research.

Students were asked to reflect on what was covered in class, to comment on what was assigned as reading, and asked to choose two readings from the Internet on topics they like. They were asked to read, summarize and comment on them over the course of a term (15 weeks). Students were given the choice to weekly reflect whether paper-based or online by writing a weekly entry on a blog they create on Blogger. Over the course of 12 weeks, two questionnaires and an interview of eight students were completed. 45 students responded to the first questionnaire and 48 to the second questionnaire. Only 8 students of the 55 agreed to be interviewed.

As for the concerns before and while conducting the action research, I was not sure that all students would like the idea of reflection. I was also concerned about the format of reflection and the need to stick to a single format (either paper-based or electronic). Another point of concern was the students' acceptance of the idea of reflecting and expressing their opinion, as Egyptian students are not used to expressing their opinion. The administration’s acceptance of the idea of making students reflect on the material and allowing them to choose extra readings on their own was also a major
concern. As for the steps I took to make things go smoothly, I spoke to my colleagues and supervisors before taking action. I also spoke to students and explained to them the relevance of reflective practice in understanding what they already know, identifying what they need to know in order to advance their educational and professional opportunities, and guiding their choices for further learning.

b. Instructional Context

I teach in the Higher Technological Institute. I am highly interested in improving the quality of my teaching and making a real difference in students' lives. I believe in a student-centered approach. I believe that reflection would help students improve and become active learners. My reflective practice enhanced my knowledge, my practice, and my career.

The students' ages are 18-23. The number of the students in each class varies from 60 to 90. Their proficiency in the language varies as they come from different educational backgrounds. The students come from all over Egypt: Cairo (30%), Ismailia (15%), Suez (5%), Sharkiya (10%), and Upper Egypt (40%). They are low-middle, middle, and upper-middle class. Many of them own laptops, have Internet access via their phones, in the library of the Institute, and at home. Most of my students are graduates of public schools, but only 20 per cent are graduates of either private (19%) or international schools (1%). As such, most need to work hard on their English to prepare themselves for the job market.

The course is basically general English. The choice of the curriculum is based on the idea of preparing students for the market. As such, it tries to tackle the four language
skills. Class time is three hours twice a week. As the curriculum is elementary level, and language is a secondary subject in comparison to engineering subjects, some students underestimate it and do not put real effort in the assigned assignments. Students who understand that the English language can enhance their educational and professional opportunities ask for extra curriculum activities and start taking courses. As all the students are assigned the same course without leveling, the problems I face, on a continuous basis, are students’ different levels of proficiency, their large numbers, and students’ lack of motivation. To enhance student motivation and improve their proficiency, I added extra reading material and asked students to read extra topics they choose. I also asked them to reflect on a weekly basis on the extra reading material I assign and on the topics they choose to read.

**c. Intervention Procedure**

Students were asked to write a weekly reflection on the English class, the extra reading material, and the topics they chose to read and submit to me in class (the paper-based) or online-based. They sent me the links of the new entries on their reflective blogs via mail. I gave students the right to choose the format of reflection to make them at ease and increase the possibility of continuing the habit of reflection after the course ends.

**d. Data Collection Procedure**

I collected data from various resources, namely the 2 questionnaires and interviewing students. The main purpose of the questionnaires was to gather as much information as possible. I analyzed the different answers provided by the students to make sure whether things were going well or the plan needs adjustment. The first questionnaire was
conducted at the beginning of the course. The second was conducted at the end of the course. The interviews were conducted two weeks after the course. In the following section, I will explain how I used the data collection tools:

**Questionnaires:**

The two questionnaires were paper-based. The first questionnaire consisted of 18 statements. Students were asked to give their ratings according to their thoughts. They were required to choose between often, usually, sometimes, rarely, and never. The first questionnaire was given to understand whether they practice reflection and to raise their awareness about the tool of reflection. The second questionnaire was conducted at the end of the course. It consisted of six open-ended questions. All the 55 students took the second questionnaire for two bonus marks to be added to the year's work.

*The First Questionnaire*

*The purpose of this instrument is to assess your level of reflection. Your honest responses to the questionnaire items are highly appreciated. Thank you very much for the time you are devoting to our research project.*

**Gender:**

For each indicator, please select the rating that best represents the current state of your practice. Use O (often), U (usually), S (sometimes), R (rarely), or N (never).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I always think (reflect) about what I take in class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. I assess what I learn after the term.

3. I am willing to take things for granted without questioning.

4. I discuss problems simplistically or unidimensionally.

5. I do not see beyond the immediate demands of a reading/studying episode.

6. I fail to consider my needs as an English language learner.

7. I see myself as a victim of circumstances.

8. I strive to enhance my learning opportunities.

9. I seek ways to connect new concepts to my prior knowledge.

10. I have genuine curiosity about the effectiveness of what I learn, leading me to experiment and take risks.

11. I engage in constructive criticism of the topics covered or discussed in class.

12. I have commitment to continuous learning.

13. I observe myself in the process of learning.

14. I am aware of incongruence between beliefs and actions and takes action to rectify.
15. I am an active inquirer, both critiquing current conclusions and generating new hypotheses.

16. I suspend judgments to consider all options.

17. I call commonly held beliefs into question.

18. I acknowledge that my practices can either contribute to or hinder my success in the language course.

Adapted From “The 40 Reflection Questions”
Thanks for Your Cooperation

The second Questionnaire

Answer the following questions:

1. Did the reflective practice sustain your motivation throughout the course? Why or why not?
2. If we do this again, what can I do differently to help you learn more?
3. Did the reflective activity help you learn more?
4. Did you start using reflective practice when studying other subjects? Why or why not?
5. Did reflection help you create your own studying materials?
6. Did reflection help you plan, set goals, and accomplish these plans and goals?

The interview questions:

The interviews were conducted after the course. The interview questions were four:

1. Did you like starting a reflective journal?
2. How can you judge the experience of reflection?
3. Will you continue the practice?
4. Will you teach your mates about this practice?
Eight students agreed to be interviewed after the end of the course. The number is small as most students concentrate on studying for the final exams. Six students were males and two were females. Six out of eight answered that they found the idea of reflection effective. Two believed it is helpful but time consuming. Five out of the eight students indicated that reflection made them focus on their weakness and try to ask for peer and teacher support.

Two students' answers are included in the paper. One represents those who liked the reflective practice and the other represents those who believe that reflection is not that helpful. Their names are omitted to maintain participant anonymity. In addition, students' opinions for reflection and against reflection are summarized.

Student A stated that s/he liked starting a reflective journal and that the reflective experience was really helpful, as for the first time, s/he began to understand that he plays a real role in improving his educational level. Reflection made her/him connect ideas and think about how s/he will use or apply what s/he learns. Student A explained that s/he liked the practice of reflection and that s/he already spoke to her/his friends in other classes about reflection and how it helped her/him improve in the English language and in all the subjects s/he is enrolled in.

Six out of the eight interviewees liked starting a reflective journal and indicated the effectiveness of the experience and its positive effect on sustaining intrinsic motivation. Reflection made them set goals, look for extra material, read, experiment, and think about the future benefit of what they are studying. Though the reflective practice started in the English language course, they extended it to other subjects.
Student B disliked the reflective practice and found it time consuming. S/he said that one did not have to write to understand how things are going. S/he indicated that reflection needs more time than a weekly entry, which s/he has to write to "please" the teacher. S/he stopped the practice of writing reflective entries once the course ended. S/he stated that s/he will not speak about the practice, as s/he will lose time speaking about something s/he disliked.

VII. RESULTS

The second questionnaire and the interview show how students perceive the benefits of reflection and how it sustained motivation. The reflective practice provided students with an opportunity to look back on their experiences in and outside the ESL class. At the beginning of the course, students were extremely timid and did not know how and what to write in their reflections. As the semester progressed, students began to feel more and more comfortable. Reflection provided an excellent opportunity for students to discuss what took place in class, understand their active role in language acquisition, and sustain their motivation. The students became comfortable enough with the professor and their peers. Qualities such as self-motivation and a truly dedicated work ethic were enhanced as a result of the weekly reflective practice. Students began to put academic goals in mind and work on them.

As a result, ESL teachers should make students get in the habit of reflecting via assigning reflective assignments. These reflective assignments can be scheduled based on the teacher's design of the curriculum. The reflective practice will sustain student
motivation, make them active learners, and increase their inclination to experiment and perform willingly.

VIII. DISCUSSION

VIII.1 Implications

Evidence from the literature and from the case study indicates the beneficial effect of reflection. In the present case study, reflection helped enhance the learning experience of ESL students and sustain motivation. The students’ responses provided self-reported data in the questionnaires. The students’ responses in the second questionnaire and the interview indicate that when reflection was practiced, student motivation was sustained. The reflective experience helped students understand that they play a definite role in their own education. Reflection not only sustained motivation, but also made students know their weaknesses and do additional activities willingly. Thus, teachers should add reflective assignments to the curriculum. Teachers could schedule the reflective assignment(s) based on the curriculum design.

VIII.2 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The time constraint hindered me from reading all student reflections and studying and analyzing the data provided in all the submitted reflections. I cannot also know whether students will stick to the habit of reflection in other English language courses. Besides, the case study was administered to students (adults) in a single university class and the results may not be the same in different class settings. More research needs to
be done to delve into the effectiveness of reflection in sustaining motivation and into the optimal number of reflective assignments.

IX. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, motivation is relevant in English language learning. Making students reflect on what they learn can sustain motivation and enhance the learning process. English language teachers can encourage the students to keep a weekly journal of what they learned. This journal can be paper-based or Internet-based depending on students' preferences. This is not about documenting the course, but about being conscious, working more on their own, taking responsibility, doing more activities to improve their proficiency, choosing extra-curricular material, and putting plans for extra work on their own to enhance their educational and professional opportunities.

X. REFERENCES


8. Online Dynamic Assessment for Developing Listening Comprehension Skills of Engineering Students

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Abstract

This study investigated the effectiveness of online dynamic assessment in improving listening comprehension skills of engineering students. The study employed two instruments: Listening Comprehension Skills Checklist and Listening comprehension Skills Test. The checklist was intended to determine the most important listening comprehension skills required for engineering students. Hence, it was administered to 10 engineering students, 10 in-service engineers, and 10 staff members of English as a Foreign Language and English for Specific Purposes. This study adopted the pre/post-test one group pre-experimental design. The proposed program was applied to a sample of 16 students at the second year of the College of Engineering and Technology, Arab Academy for Science Technology and Maritime Transport. The program lasted for 9 weeks. Then to measure its effectiveness, the participants' mean rankings on the pre-program administration of the listening comprehension skills test were compared with their mean rankings on the post-program administration of the same test. The results indicated a significant improvement in engineering students' listening comprehension skills. This improvement can be attributed to the effectiveness of the online dynamic assessment proposed program.

I. INTRODUCTION

English language is an essential medium of communication in all aspects of life including the area of engineering. More specifically, needs analysis studies affirm the significance of listening comprehension skills for engineering students (Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2010; Şahan, coban & Topkaya, 2016; Sanmugam, 2013; Sattar, Zahid,
Mahmood, Tahir & Ali, 2011; Tinh, 2015; Venkatraman & Prema, 2007). These skills are crucial for communicating effectively and properly in the current globalized work market; likewise, they are needed for getting access to updated information presented in English (Tardy, 2004). In spite of this importance, engineering students encounter difficulties when dealing with listening comprehension tasks. In addition, there is some sort of deficiency in teachers’ perceptions and the teaching methods they adopt for developing listening comprehension.

Current studies in the field of EFL, such as Ashraf, Motalebzadeh, and Ghazizadeh (2016); Heidar and Afghari (2015); Poehner, Zhang, and Lu (2015), affirm the effectiveness of online dynamic assessment in language classes, yet it is still in its infancy. Therefore, studies analyzing this area will add to the area of EFL teaching and learning in numerous ways. They will provide educators with the pedagogical practices and guidelines to incorporate online dynamic assessment in teaching listening comprehension and to discover the problematic areas in the skill.

I.1 Context of the Problem

The close contact of the researcher with the engineering students through her work as an ESP instructor since 2009 and an ESP academic coordinator since 2014 in the College of Engineering and Technology at the Arab Academy for Science, Technology and Maritime Transport (AASTMT) has enabled her to become aware of the status and importance of English in the area of Engineering. For such a group of learners, English is an essential medium for communication. To prove the significance of the current study, the researcher reviewed related literature (e.g. Al-Tamimi & Shuib, 2010; Şahan et al.,
which indicates the following:

- Engineering graduates' low proficiency in English minimizes their opportunities to join the work market.
- Engineering students' proficiency in listening comprehension enables them to understand lectures or classes in which English is the medium of instruction.
- Listening comprehension skills are demanded for engineers, as it is the predominant part of communication at workplace.
- Mastering listening comprehension skills ensures precision and saves time.
- There is a scarce body of empirical research related to the Egyptian context done to reveal the linguistic needs of engineering students and the methods for improving listening comprehension skills.

Furthermore, the examination of the materials of the existing ESP course offered at the College of Engineering and Technology at AASTMT and the informal interviews conducted with a sample of ESP specialists in the Institute of Language Studies at AASTMT, as a part of the pilot study, indicated the following:

- The material presents only audio tracks and ignores other beneficial media, like videos.
- The audio tracks are accented and do not match students' proficiency levels.
- The current material does not cater to all the listening comprehension skills required for engineering students.
- The teaching techniques employed are incapable of developing listening comprehension skills.
- The adopted materials and teaching methods affect students' perceptions of listening comprehension negatively.
- Students' poor performance in listening comprehension skills is owing to the insufficiency of the material and the problematic teaching methods as asserted by the pilot study.

I.2 Statement of the Problem

In light of the above results, the problem of the present study could be formulated in the weakness of engineering students at AASTMT in listening comprehension skills, in
addition to the insufficiency and the inappropriateness of the materials and the teaching
techniques which are intended for these skills. The present study attempts to find answers
to the following main question:

*What is the effectiveness of an online dynamic assessment-based program in
developing the English listening comprehension skills of engineering students?*

In answering the above main question, the following sub-questions are also answered:

1) What are the listening comprehension skills needed for engineering students?
2) What are the characteristics of the proposed online dynamic assessment program?
3) How effective is the proposed online dynamic assessment based program in
developing listening comprehension skills of engineering students?

**I.3 Hypothesis of the Study**

The hypothesis of the study states that there are statistically significant differences
between the mean rankings of the experimental group on the pre-program administration
of overall listening comprehension skills test and their mean rankings on the post-program
administration of the same test in favor of the latter.

**I.4 Significance of the Study**

1. The current study attempts to cater to the listening comprehension needs of
Egyptian engineering students to cope with the requirements of the current globalized
work market.

2. The study introduces ESP instructors and curriculum developers to a way that
takes students' differences into consideration while developing listening comprehension
skills.
3. The proposed program provides a technology-based model in teaching specialized and tailored English language listening comprehension programs, particularly in Egypt.

4. The present study proposes a list of mediational prompts that can be integrated in online Dynamic Assessment procedures to scaffold listening comprehension skills required for engineering students.

5. The proposed online dynamic assessment program can serve as a model to be followed when designing listening comprehension programs for students of other majors (i.e. Tourism, Maritime, Medicine, Pharmacy and Basic Science).

6. The current study can contribute to expanding research related to employing online dynamic assessment in EFL and ESP.

I.5 Delimitations of the Study

Since it was beyond the limits of a single study to consider a wide range of factors, the current study was confined to:

- EFL listening comprehension skills required for engineering students, namely guessing the meaning of technical and non-technical terms from context, identifying the main idea of an engineering discourse, identifying specific information and details of an engineering discourse, making inferences related to engineering contexts, inferring relationships among the different parts of an engineering discourse, responding to engineering discourses.

- Using some authentic audios / videos related to the engineering context.
A list of mediational prompts (proposed by the researcher) that can be used for developing listening comprehension skills: strategy hint, listen again, listen to a part, listen to a part with subtitles, listen to different parts added together, eliminate options, examples of the word in other sentences, note taking, and the correct answer and explanation.

A limited duration for applying the proposed program within nine weeks in the Fall semester 2016/2017.

A sample of one experimental group (n=16) drawn randomly from second year students enrolled in the College of Engineering and Technology at AASTMT, Port Said branch.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

II.1 Listening Comprehension

In most methodology manuals, listening and listening comprehension are synonymous. This view of listening is based on the assumption that, "the main function of listening in second language learning is to facilitate understanding of spoken discourse" (Richards, 2008, p.3). Therefore, it can be elicited that the general purpose of listening is to comprehend a message.

According to Caldwell (2008, p.4), comprehension is an unobservable process which is extremely complicated and includes different aspects. Therefore, he defines listening comprehension as "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning through interaction with oral language." Similarly, Amin, Ali and Amin (2011, p.13) define listening comprehension as "a complex process in which listeners have the
ability to use information in the auditory text to guess meaning of new items; predict outcomes; understand meaning; find the specific facts, or information; and determine the central thought represented in the text."

Listening comprehension is the most significant skill among other communication skills, as it ensures better communication (Adrian, 2002). Additionally, students use listening comprehension more than another language skill in the classroom (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000). Academic success also depends considerably on mastering listening comprehension (Alderson, 2005; Brown, 2001; Jeon, 2007; Lin, 2002).

Listening comprehension is basically a complicated skill. Listeners need to do various mental processes simultaneously including identifying sounds, comprehending lexicon and structures, and employing schema to build meaning (Alderson, 2005). Listening also includes two different processing techniques, bottom-up and top-down processing which require several cognitive processes (Rost, 2005).

**II.2 Online Dynamic Assessment**

Researchers have started to take listening comprehension teaching seriously. Amin (2012, p.17) pointed out "This interest is influenced by studies conducted in foreign language acquisition, discourse analysis, cognitive processing theory, and language learner strategies." Hence, several teaching strategies and techniques related to listening comprehension skills instruction emerged. Among the recent trends in this area is Online Dynamic Assessment (ODA). It not only enables instructors to understand the process of listening, but also gives priority to a learner's individual needs and competences.
Dynamic Assessment (DA) combines teaching and assessment in a single and continuous process. It mainly aims at enhancing learners' development by providing mediation that suits the current abilities of a specific learner or sometimes a group of learners (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004). Consequently, DA assists in promoting a learner's cognition in numerous educational settings (Ableeva, 2008; Duvall, 2008; Lantolf & Poehner, 2004; Poehner 2005). DA, unlike the usual purpose of traditional assessment, "promotes functions that are maturing" in the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and "foregrounds future development" (Lantolf & Poehner, 2004, p. 54).

The integration of mediation into assessment is the most prominent aspect of DA that distinguishes it from other forms of assessment. Mediation refers to the leveled prompts and hints that the mediator provides the learner with during the assessment procedure to enable the learner to fulfill the objectives of a task. Recently, computers have taken the role of mediators through offering the appropriate scaffolding techniques to the learners.

Using computers in DA ensures assessing and assisting more learners simultaneously (Jacobs, 2001; Summers, 2008; Tzuriel & Shamir, 2002). Computerized Dynamic Assessment (CDA) solves problems related to distance, space, time, and shortage in human mediators (Poehner, 2008; Teo, 2012).

Online Dynamic Assessment (ODA) follows the same principles of CDA in addition to benefiting from the wide range of facilities offered by the Internet. ODA offers a list of prefabricated prompts and hints to scaffold learners' abilities. The hints are revealed from implicit to explicit, according to learners' needs and current abilities (Poehner, 2008).
Recent studies in instruction emphasize the crucial role of ODA in developing listening comprehension skills. Poehner et al. (2015) examines the diagnosing development capabilities of ODA in relation to second language listening and reading comprehension. The researchers devised a listening test and administered it to a group of 68 students, in addition to a reading test that was administered to 82 students. The students were studying a Chinese language course at a North American university. The researchers point out that the mediation offered by ODA has benefited students generally; furthermore, it reveals the sources of difficulties that hinder second language comprehension.

Wang (2015) investigates the potentials of DA for enhancing listening comprehension assessment and instruction and promoting students' listening comprehension skills. The sample of the study included five students majoring in English in the second year of a technical college in China. The analysis of the data drawn from the students', teachers', and researcher's notes shows that DA helps in clarifying the problems associated with Listening comprehension.

Ashraf et al. (2016) examines the effect of CDA on Iranian EFL students' listening comprehension. Forty female upper-intermediate students enrolled in two language institutes were the sample of the study; a control group (N=20), and an experimental group (N=20). The participants in the control group were taught using CDA and the participants of the other group were taught using DA in a physical classroom. The findings emphasize that CDA is more effective than DA in promoting students' listening comprehension.

III. METHODOLOGY
The study proceeded in two phases: the first adopted a descriptive/qualitative methodology, whereas the second adopted a pre-experimental/quantitative methodology. The descriptive methodology was devoted to analyzing engineering students' need for listening comprehension skills and for designing the program. The sample (n=30) included 10 engineering students who were selected randomly from the College of Engineering and Technology Fourth year students, 10 in-service engineers, and 10 EFL and ESP staff members from different universities.

**III.1 Design**

The pre-experimental methodology was employed to assess the effectiveness of the proposed program. The design utilized in this study was the pre/post-test one group quasi-experimental design. The proposed program was applied to a sample of 16 students at the second year of the College of Engineering and Technology, AASTMT. The sample of this phase included participants, from Architectural Engineering and Environmental Design department, who were enrolled in the English for Specific purposes course in the Fall semester 2016/2017.

**III.2 Instruments of the Study**

To achieve the aim of the present study, two instruments were employed. These instruments are as follows:

1. Listening Comprehension Skills Checklist (LCSC), prepared by the researcher: The checklist was used to identify the most important listening comprehension skills required for engineering students. The checklist was validated by jurors, then
administered to engineering students, engineers, specialists in ESP, and specialists in curricula and English language instruction for data gathering.

2. Listening Comprehension Skills Test (LCST), which was administered pre and post the proposed program. The test was intended to assess the effectiveness of the proposed program.

**III.3 Procedures of the Study**

The listening comprehension skills test was administered to the study group. Then, it was included in the online dynamic assessment proposed program. Having finished the intervention, the group's mean rankings on the pre-program administration of the listening comprehension skills test were compared with the mean rankings on the post-program administration of the same test to measure the effectiveness of the proposed program. Then, the data were analyzed statistically.

**IV. OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAM**

English Listening Comprehension for Engineering (ELCE) is a web-based application (designed by the researcher), which provides a set of eight engineering audio and video tracks. Every track is accompanied by a group of multiple choice questions (with five distractors) which cater to the listening comprehension skills targeted by the current study. Each item is accompanied by a set of mediational prompts (hints), arranged from implicit to explicit. ELCE creates a student's profile, i.e. it keeps a record of student's performance per track. The student profile includes the initial score (gained independently) in the non-dynamic assessment phase, the number of hints used per
question, and the number of hints used per track. The student profile provides the teacher with an insight into student performance, progress, and sources of difficulties.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The descriptive phase which was conducted in the present work aims to identify the listening comprehension skills required for engineering students in Egypt. Hence, this section answers the first sub-question of the present study: What are the listening comprehension skills needed for engineering students? Analyzing the results gained from the checklist reveals that listening comprehension skills required for engineering students in Egypt are:

1. Guessing the meaning of technical and non-technical terms from context.
2. Identifying the main idea of engineering discourse.
3. Identifying specific information and details of engineering discourse.
4. Making inferences related to engineering contexts.
5. Inferring relationships among the different parts of engineering discourse (e.g. cause, effect, conclusion, comparisons, results, etc.)
6. Responding to engineering discourses (e.g. formulating opinions and judgments and collecting evidence to defend opinions and judgments).

Analyzing listening comprehension skills, which were specified as required for engineering students, shows that these skills belong to a top-down processing model. This model aims mainly at constructing meaning and comprehending the message. This result is reasonable, as the specified skills cater to the global purpose of listening comprehension as viewed in the engineering context. This view considers listening as a crucial component for constructing meaning that fosters communication.
The hypothesis of the study will be the basis for discussing the results of this section.

The results are as follows:

Table 1.1

Results of Pre and Post-program Administration of (overall) Listening Comprehension Skills Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LCS for Engineering Students</th>
<th>Ranks</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean Rank</th>
<th>Sum of Ranks</th>
<th>Z</th>
<th>Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative Ranks</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>-3.4</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Mark</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Ranks</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ties</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results in Table 4.2 show that the "Z" value ( -3.4) is significant at 0.01, which indicates that there are statistically significant differences between the mean rankings of the study sample on the pre-program and the post-program administration of (overall) listening comprehension skills test in favor of the post-program administration. Thus, the hypothesis is confirmed. See Figure 1.1 and 1.2.
Figure 1.1. The Sample's Mean Ranks on Pre and Post-program Administration of (overall) Listening Comprehension Skills Test.

Figure 1.2. Pre and post-program sample's mean rankings on listening comprehension skills test.

The data presented in Table 1.1, Figure 1.1., and 1.2. indicate a significant improvement in engineering students' listening comprehension skills. This improvement can be attributed to the effectiveness of the online dynamic assessment proposed
program. The results are of significant importance owing to the initiative of the study in applying online dynamic assessment in an ESP context. This result is consistent with Ableeva (2010), Alavi, kaivanpanah and Shabani (2012), Ashraf et al. (2016), Birjandi and Azad (2014), Heidar and Afghari (2015), Li and Li (2015), Mathew, Al-Mahrooqi and Denman (2017), Poehner et al. (2015), Modarisi and Alavi (2014), Teo (2012), Thouësny and Bradley (2014), Wang (2015), Wang and Chin (2016), and Yakışkı and Shakır (2017).

To calculate the total effect size of the online dynamic assessment proposed program on developing listening comprehension skills of engineering students, the following formula was used (Hassan, 2011, p.280):

\[ r_{prb} = \frac{4 (T1)}{n(n+1)} - 1 \]

Where:
- \( r_{prb} \) is the effect size value
- \( T1 \) is the sum of positive rankings
- \( n \) is the total number of the sample pairs

Effect Size Descriptors
- Small effect size: \( r < 0, 4 \)
- Medium effect size: \( 0, 4 \leq r < 0, 7 \)
- Large effect size: \( 0, 7 \leq r < 0, 9 \)
- Very large effect size: \( r \geq 0, 9 \)
Table 4.9

The Total Effect Size "rprb" of the C-DA Proposed Program on Listening Comprehension Skills of Engineering Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>&quot;rprb&quot; Value</th>
<th>Effect Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C-DA based Program</td>
<td>Identifying the meaning of technical and non-technical terms from context</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>Very Large Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identifying the main idea of an engineering discourse</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>Large Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identifying specific information and details of an engineering discourse</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very Large Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>making inferences related to engineering contexts</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>Very Large Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Inferring relationships among the different parts of an engineering discourse</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>Very Large Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Responding to engineering discourses</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>Very Large Effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall Listening Comprehension Skills for Engineers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Very Large Effect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 4.9. The Total Effect Size "rprb" of the C-DA Proposed Program on Listening Comprehension Skills of Engineering Students.

The results presented in Table 4.9 and Figure 4.9 indicate that the total size effect of the proposed program is very large, as it is more than 0.9. This affirms the significant effectiveness of the proposed program.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results of this study were the basis for the following conclusions:

1. Using online dynamic assessment is effective when teaching listening comprehension skills for engineering students.

2. Computers can play the role of mediators effectively to assess and develop simultaneously various students' abilities.

3. Online dynamic assessment caters to different needs and abilities of students in ESP classes.

4. Using the Internet raises the flexibility of dynamic assessment and provides extra opportunities for learning at home.

5. Online dynamic assessment can provide an amusement tool for practicing listening comprehension skills. It provides a safe learning environment and raises students' motivation as well.

6. Online dynamic assessment raises autonomous learning and enables students to observe and assess their learning.
7. The list of mediational prompts suggested by the current study are effective in developing listening comprehension skills.

8. Adapting the mediational prompts included in online dynamic assessment according to students' preferences, ensures the positive response of students towards mediation.

9. The difficulty related to Engineering English and listening comprehension skills can be eased by integrating online dynamic assessment into teaching.

10. The repetitive exposure to the audio tracks through the hints can provide students with extensive practice and enhance familiarity with engineering lexical items and different accents.

11. Using authentic audios/videos encourages students' positive involvement in class. Accordingly, the validity of the program is increased.

Based on the results of the present study, the researcher recommends the following:

1. Adopting online dynamic assessment in teaching ESP, particularly for engineering students.

2. Considering web-based applications in dynamic assessment.

3. ESP instructors need to employ effective techniques to facilitate and simplify the complexity related to the nature of listening comprehension skills or these difficulties related to some ESP linguistic contexts, like English for Engineering.
4. Engineering course designers and instructors should dedicate more time for improving listening comprehension skills due to its significance for engineering students. They also should deal with it as a stand alone skill, i.e. not merely as an activity to present new lexical items or grammatical structures.

5. Considering the authenticity of audio/video materials in ESP courses, since it stimulates learners' positive attitudes towards listening comprehension.

6. Considering students' voice in designing ESP courses. Mediational prompts should be adapted to students' levels, needs, and views. This enhances students' progress positively.

7. Adopting mediational prompts for teaching listening comprehension.

8. Curriculum designing specialists must work closely with software programmers to produce innovative educational applications to cater to the needs of students and to provide feasible solutions to problematic areas.

VII. REFERENCES


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the emotional influences of computerized dynamic assessment on EFL learners


9. Professional Learning Communities and Life-long Learning

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Teachers First Egypt

Abstract

To sustain continued professional development and life-long learning, teachers are engaged in professional learning communities or PLCs. They work together to develop their reflective practice. Their goal is to develop teaching, so learning is developed, too. PLCs have different characteristics, such as reflective dialogue, trust, and values. There are lots of PLCs benefits, such as linking research and practice and enhancing student learning. To build effective PLCs, teachers need to get involved in professional discussions and share feedback. To keep PLCs sustainable, teachers need to be always engaged in reflective and challenging dialogues.

Keywords: professional learning communities, life-long learning and continued professional development

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning is no longer restricted to classrooms or school years. To act upon Dewey’s quote that “education is not preparation for life; education is life itself”, twenty-first century students need to be developed into life-long learners who always learn and develop everywhere. So, teachers need to focus on skills that students need to develop and practice to be life-long learners. They need to focus on keys that help them develop to become life-long learners inside and outside classrooms. According to Glabicka (2015), life-long learning is “pursued throughout life: learning that is flexible, diverse, and available at different times and in different places” (p. 51). Life-long learning is beneficial for the personal development of individuals, the social development of communities, and
the economic progress of societies. To help maximize life-long learning for individual and collective benefits, there are some different skills that students need to develop to become life-long learners. These skills include basic computer skills, speed reading, time management, effective study skills, financial management skills, negotiation skills, mental wellness and stress management, writing a resume, and searching the web. There are some keys that help educators develop learners’ life-long learning skills. Teachers need to set learning goals, encourage learning ownership, turn mistakes into opportunities, encourage curiosity at all ages, promote problem-solving, encourage creativity, teach resourcefulness, show students that learning happens every day, introduce them to new places and experiences, and help them expand their experiences.

In the twenty-first century, life, technology, and education have been changing continuously. Technology impacts on life and education. Education helps students to practise and impact on life. Professional development has been a key requirement for teachers. Life-long learning has been a key requirement for students. To sustain teachers’ professional development, PLCs help teachers reflect on, share, and develop their practice. To help prepare different students for life, teachers are engaged in PLCs that share common interests. Hord (1997) defines PLCs as school-wide communities that “aim at continuous improvement of teaching practices by involving staff in in-depth, systematic, and collaborative activities of professional development at the school level” (p. 2). DuFour (2004) stresses the idea that PLCs help teachers focus on student learning as teachers “work together to analyze and improve their classroom practice” (p. 1). They develop their teaching in order to impact on their students by helping them to get, practise, and develop different skills of life-long learning. As teachers continue their professional development
sustainably, they impact on students by helping them be life-long learners. Later on, those learners will start jobs that do not currently exist.

II. BENEFITS

To develop teaching and learning, teachers start professional learning communities that have lots of benefits. PLCs help teachers link research and practice. Teachers put theories into action in classrooms, reflect on, and enhance their practice. PLCs help teachers go through how things are done and how they should be done so that they can develop teaching practice collaboratively. They help teachers address challenges of practice by defining and overcoming them productively. They help teachers enhance student learning by defining twenty-first century skills that students should get and develop. They help teachers sustain students’ life-long learning and teachers’ continuing professional development. To help students practise life, teachers help develop students’ life-long learning, which is beneficial for the personal development of individuals, the social development of communities, and the economic progress of societies. Life-long learning helps students define, reflect on, and develop their goals continuously. It helps them communicate with others directly and indirectly. It helps develop students’ mindset and future career, so they take part in developing their societies socially and economically. It helps students develop their self-esteem and self-realization as they always define their needs and goals, learn from challenges, and change them into opportunities for themselves and their communities, too.

III. PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES
Professional learning communities help teachers continue professional development. To build effective PLCs, teachers need to get involved in professional debates and discussions, so they share, reflect on, and develop teaching strengths, challenges, and solutions. They use data to set and modify goals and instruction by reflecting on students' learning and progress. They learn from formative assessment in order to modify goals and teaching. They cut their workload and share practice and feedback. They share how they teach and how to overcome previous and anticipated challenges. To keep PLCs growing and sustainable, teachers need to be always engaged in reflective and challenging dialogues. They need to address the most pressing instructional challenges within their own contexts. They share and agree on the priorities to save time and effort. They need to provide constructive feedback and continuous support. Constructive feedback helps teachers deliver continuous support. So, teachers impact on teaching and learning productively. To put PLCs into action, the national continued professional development “Teachers First Egypt” has helped thousands of public school teachers be actively and productively engaged in professional learning communities since September 2015. Teachers are empowered to be reflective practitioners through an online associate program, workshops, mentoring, and lighthouse school networks.

IV. LIFE-LONG LEARNING

To help develop students’ life-long learning, teachers develop, reflect on, and share teaching practice. They help empower students in order to help them practise life. There are some skills that students need to develop to become life-long learners. Students need to develop their computer skills, learn how to write a resume, and learn
how to search the web, as these skills help them to be ready to join the workforce. They need to develop speed reading and effective study skills to be able to continue studying effectively. They need to develop time management, financial management, and negotiation skills to be able to make full use of time, material, and human resources. They need to develop mental wellness and stress management skills to be able to develop personally and professionally in an effective way. To develop these skills, teachers need to take some different actions. They need to set learning goals in order to help students achieve the learning outcomes. They need to encourage learning ownership by engaging students in problem-solving and learning projects and activities. They need to turn mistakes and challenges into opportunities by helping students assess themselves and their peers formatively. They need to encourage curiosity at all ages, as curiosity is very beneficial for students’ learning and progress. They need to promote problem-solving, encourage creativity, and teach resourcefulness to help students make full use of current and future learning resources. They need to show students that learning happens every day and everywhere, introduce them to new places and experiences, and help them expand their experiences, so students become open-minded, flexible, and life-long learners. Open-minded, flexible and life-long learners will be able to get, develop, and impact their future career and life. They will be able to join the workforce and impact on the social and economic development of societies and countries productively.

V. CONCLUSION

Are professional development and life-long learning important for teachers and students? In the twenty-first century, life, technology, and education have been changing greatly. Teachers need to continue their professional development. Professional learning
Communities or PLCs help teachers teach, reflect on, and share their practice and feedback. So, teachers have regular opportunities to highlight teaching strengths, challenges, and solutions within their contexts through debates, feedback, and discussions. Because life-long learning is important for students, teachers need to focus on how to develop students' life-long learning skills. These skills help students practise life and start their future career effectively.

VI. REFERENCES

