

The Teaching of Afro-Asian Literature: A Comparison between the Nonconventional Learner-Centered and the Conventional Teacher-Centered Approaches

Wilkinson Daniel O. Wong Gonzales

(wdwgonzales@gmail.com)

De La Salle University – Manila, Philippines

Abstract

In the past few decades, nonconventional learner-centered (NLC) trends in ELT have emerged amidst the current and dominant conventional teacher-centered (CTC) approaches used by majority of private and public schools in the Philippines. The argument of which approach is more effective seems to have surfaced in the recent years. In several literatures, both approaches have been found effective in teaching in different disciplines. However, in the teaching of literature, specifically Afro-Asian literature, it seems that limited studies have been conducted in the Philippine private school context. This comparative study focuses on the Grade 8 ESL literature classes of Hope Christian High School, Manila, Philippines and aims to determine which approach is more effective in teaching Afro-Asian literature. The teacher preferred the CTC approach while students preferred the NLC approach based on qualitative data. The quantitative results showed that there were no significant differences in the Afro-Asian literature test scores immediately after the CTC or NLC instructional sessions. I conclude that there is no particular teaching approach that is more effective and suggested that an eclectic or mixed approach would be more beneficial in teaching Afro-Asian literature.

Key words: teacher-centered, learner-centered, ESL, Afro-Asian, approach, literature

Introduction

On May 15, 2013, the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, more commonly known as the K-12 Program, was signed into law in the Republic of the Philippines (Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines, 2013). According to the Department of Education of the Philippines (DepEd) Grade 8 curriculum guide, the English curriculum for students in the eighth grade level of the K-12 Program will primarily focus on African-Asian or Afro-Asian literature (Republic of the Philippines Department of Education, 2012). By the end of the first quarter, students in the eighth grade are expected to demonstrate “understanding of the different genres through the types contributed by Afro-Asian countries to express appreciation for Afro-Asian heritage” (Republic of the Philippines Department of Education, 2012, p. 34). This ensures that the learners are exposed to Asian and African cultures through literature.

Educators teaching Afro-Asian literature to Grade 8 ESL learners must consider their reading comprehension skills. Concannon-Gibney & Murphy (2012) said that one of the goals of reading literature is comprehension, aside from the act of decoding. The ability to improve the reading comprehension of learners may determine the effectiveness of the approach utilized by the teacher. However, there are many concerns that language and literature teachers face. These concerns differ from one context to another and evolve with the diverse needs of the learners. According to Musa (2007), students in the Asian context are more likely to be deficient in comprehension and analysis skills in literature. In Japan, the standards of English reading comprehension for university students have been “steadily declining” (Nishida, 2013, p. 164). In the Philippines, one out of four people cannot read in English (Social Weather Stations, 2008). Also, a classroom analysis by Protacio & Sarroub (2013) suggested that being a good reader in a Philippine classroom is not about the reading

comprehension but rather the fluency. In other words, the importance is placed on the performance rather than the comprehension.

In the field of education, another indicator of the effectiveness of the teaching approaches an ESL teacher implements is the teacher's ability to raise the achievement test scores of his or her students (Imig & Imig, 2006). A teacher would most likely be deemed "ineffective" if he or she is unable to raise the level of student achievement in their classrooms. The Philippines used to be the top education performers in Asia; currently, it is among the lowest performers not only in Asia, but also the rest of the developing world (Raya, 2007). National Achievement Test (NAT) scores for the school year 2009-2010 for high school students dropped from 47.40% to 46.38% (Republic of the Philippines Department of Education, 2010). Statistics on an article by Raya (2007) also point out that scores on achievement tests administered by the Department of Education to Filipino students over years are "erratic and consistently low" (Raya, 2007, p. 23).

The aforementioned statistics challenge ESL teachers in the Philippines, such as those teaching Afro-Asian literature, to reassess the effectiveness of their teaching approaches so that their learners may be able to attain high scores in achievement tests, but more importantly, to actively comprehend the Afro-Asian text that they have been taught. The following section discusses the two approaches that form the focus of this study.

Conventional Teacher-Centered (CTC) Approach

In the traditional or conventional approach, the teacher is a "sage on the stage" (King, 1993). The conventional approach is called the prescriptive approach of teaching because it focuses on the teacher's monologue rather than the dialogue between the teacher and the students. In a conventional teacher-centered (CTC) classroom, the teacher is the didactic instructor and the authoritative figure (Leindhardt, 1993). The teacher transmits information instead of transforming prior knowledge. In addition, teachers who use this approach usually test the students' ability to recall information and demonstrate mastery over a narrow set of skills. The CTC approach is influenced by many theories, one of which is the Mental Discipline Theory. It advocates repetition and emphasizes learning activities that require the mind of the learners to be disciplined and trained (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). Aside from that, the teaching as telling or transmission theory of Paul Ramsden is also under the CTC approach (Ramsden, 1992). In a CTC literature classroom, ESL teachers would probably employ the lecture method. Aside from being cost-effective and economical, the lecture method is also efficient in large classrooms (Eison, 2010). According to Gibbs (2013), not all lectures involve uninterrupted presentation as student attention can be maintained. The lectures that a teacher gives in class may be interactive and are called interactive lectures (Eison, 2010; Steinert & Snell, 1999). Also, Tierney, Readence, & Dishener (1990) suggest the Listen-Read-Discuss (L-R-D) strategy where typically, fifteen minutes of direct instruction or lecture is given before the class reads the selection and the teacher guides the discussion; the emphasis of the activity is "content-driven".

The CTC approach is a very well known approach in most schools and institutions around the world since it was used before learner-centered practices became the trend (Adib-Hajbaghery & Aghajani, n.d.). According to an article, several researchers have discovered that the Philippine educational system seems to emphasize on educational goals that are related to attainment and the mastery of predefined and pre-described knowledge and skills (Bernardo, Zhang, & Callueng, 2002). The researcher, having resided in the Philippines for more than ten years and having been exposed to the CTC approach in several schools in the Philippines, attests to the fact that a lot of Philippine schools, both public and private, utilize the conventional teacher-centered model in their curriculum. Most of the time, schools in the primary to the secondary level primarily adopt this approach of teaching and expect the students to learn skills and information in a limited period of time while emphasizing mastery. Although more than 700 studies have confirmed that the lecture method is less effective, findings show that the deductive method of teaching figurative language to eighth graders produced better results on achievement test rather than the inductive, or nonconventional, method (Purves & Beach, 1972; Gibbs, 2013). According to Karagiorgi and Symeou (2005), the pre-determined conventional approach is more effective for

introductory lessons. This statement can be supported by the Bloom's Taxonomy, where the largest part of the pyramid is the Knowledge or Remembering section. In an introductory course, the teacher may choose to expose his or her students to as much knowledge they can absorb because only then can students reach the Comprehension or Understanding level. Furthermore, Michael Charleston Chua, a distinguished Philippine historian, media personality, and a notable lecturer, hypothesizes that the CTC approach may be more effective in the Philippine context. He anchored his hypothesis on the fact that Filipinos are very accustomed to the one-way oral relay of stories and past experiences, which began long before the Spanish's colonization of the archipelago (Daroy, 1969). The elders shared epics, myths, and legends to younger members of the community. Oral traditions are evident in the Philippines such in the Central Luzon province (Manuel, 1980). As a matter of fact, until the present day, these can still be observed in the Ifugao people of the Cordillera of Northern Luzon (Blench & Campos, 2010). Generally, Filipinos, as a people, are accustomed to the oral traditions. Since the one-way generation-to-generation transmission of the language is a feature of the CTC approach, the Filipinos may actually be more effectively taught in the mentioned approach since they are more accustomed to it.

Nonconventional Learner-Centered (NLC) Approach

In the nonconventional learner-centered (NLC) approach, the teacher, who provides the necessary resources, enhances the quality of discussion by allowing the students to tap into their curiosity, engage in intellectual interpersonal discourse with their peers, and encourages them to discover vital information themselves by shifting from being a "sage on the stage" to becoming a "guide on the side" (King, 1993). Instead of being the center of attention, the teacher places much importance on the enhancement of learning by giving control of learning to the students. The NLC approach is also known as the descriptive approach because it involves the aspect of interaction between students (Allwright, 1983). For this study, the approach is only considered to be nonconventional when the teacher is not the sole source of knowledge; moreover, the learners should be actively involved in the learning process. The NLC approach is influenced by theories such as Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel's Unfoldment Theory, which stresses that the students should be encouraged to allow curiosity and interests to guide one's self in learning (Tracey & Morrow, 2012). Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory is also under this approach and stresses that experience plays a major role in the learning process (Kolb, Boyatzis, & Mainemelis, 1999). Another theory that advocates the unorthodox student-centered learning is John Dewey's theory of interest, experience, and learning, more commonly known in the field of education as Inquiry Learning. Constructivism is also one of the learning theories that is categorized with this approach. Probable NLC activities implemented in a reading class would include the Sketch to Stretch strategy by Harste, Burke, Siegel, and Feathers. Educators who use this strategy requires the students to make a sketch according to their interpretations and share the sketch with the class; learning is reinforced through this activity as it does not only cover reading, but also drawing. It also takes advantage of the schema of the reader. The Jigsaw activity helps students learn cooperatively using team-learning approach; in here, a student become the expert on one part of the lesson and becomes responsible in teaching what he or she knows to other members of the group. Other NLC activities include role play and the use of buzz groups or the collaborative sharing of ideas and concepts (Tierney, Readence, & Dishner, 1990).

Despite the prevalent CTC scenario of many public and private high schools in the Philippines, Guzman (2004) highlights that the Philippines integrates the NLC approach in its "overall education framework" (Guzman, 2004, p. 223). Substantial evidence of the use of the NLC approach is found in the Philippines, typically in tertiary educational institutes such as the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, where the use of "interactive and modern strategies" is apparent (Jacolbia, n.d.). De La Salle University-Manila has a curricular framework that advocates the NLC approach. Majority of the sessions in the university comprises of learner-centered, self-exploratory, authentic, and guided activities, which is in line of the University's vision and mission statement. In a study by Weinberger and McCombs, NLC practices seem to prevail over CTC practices to improve learning; learner-centered pedagogy is a tool to improve the performance of students (Bell, 2012). In

Israel, an increase in attendance and participation in English class is evident in a student-centered reading comprehension course (Peretz, 1988). In achievement tests, students who were exposed in the NLC approach of teaching had answers that involve more classifications, comparisons, generalizations than their conventional counterparts; the Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome (SOLO) was higher, too (Tynjala, 1998). In the Philippines, the NLC approach is effective in a community college, although it does not garner high ratings based on student evaluation (Magno & Sembrano, 2007). Moreover, a significant degree of improvement in understanding can be found in students of a Philippine state university when exposed to the NLC approach compared to the CTC approach (Gravoso, Pasa, Labra, & Mori, 2008).

A Practical Framework

As illustrated in the framework below, a teacher has to prepare by having a background of the theories while being grounded on certain beliefs and equipped with learning theories to prepare lessons that may be either teacher-centered or learner-centered; some of these theories or beliefs include Unfoldment Theory, Constructivism, and Experiential Learning Theory (Tracey & Morrow, 2012; Cornelius-White, 2007). A teacher's beliefs and philosophies will influence how he or she interprets and views events to make educational decisions. In other words, the practices that are implemented by a teacher have a relationship with the personal beliefs of an educator (Gutierrez, 2004; Saroyan & Snell, 1997). According to several literatures, teachers and their teaching methods or practices seem to have an effect on reading comprehension (Samuels & Farstrup, 2011; Richardson, Anders, Tidwell, & Lloyd, 1991; Mastropieri, Scruggs, & Graetz, 2003; Yussof, Jamian, Roslan, Hamzah, & Kabilan, 2012). In addition, the type of teaching approach also has a direct affect on achievement test scores across many disciplines that include medicine, engineering, mathematics, and English (Purves & Beach, 1972; Tynjala, 1998; Terenzini, Cabrera, Colbeck, Parente, & Bjorklund, 2001; Ilyas, Rawat, Bhatti, & Malik, 2013; Khalid & Azeem, 2012). In summary, the teacher-centered or student-centered theories that an educator believes in have an effect on the practices and educational decisions that he or she makes in the classroom (the activities and strategies employed by the teacher), which affects the reading comprehension-based Afro-Asian literature achievement test scores.

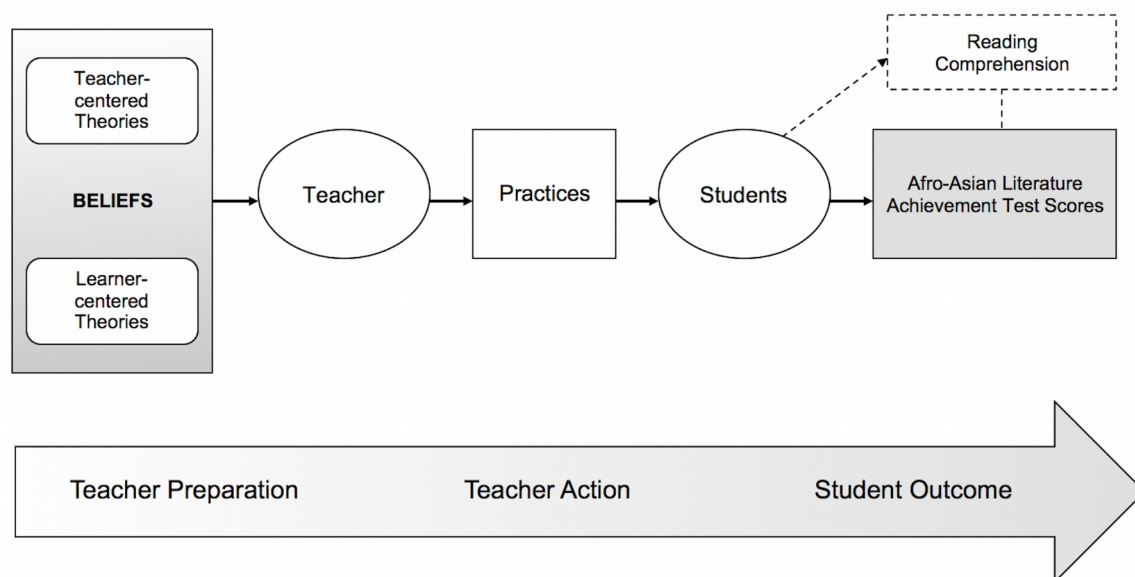


Figure 1. A Conceptual Model of the Relationship of the Choice of Theory-Influenced Approach or Approaches to Teacher Practices and Student Outcomes

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework, literature, and results of similar studies, I aim to determine which approach would be better for teaching Afro-Asian literature. This study would make a good contribution to the ESL classroom because it seems that there are only a limited number of studies that compare the CTC and NLC approaches in the Philippine context; moreover, in the teaching of Afro-Asian literature. The study could also contribute greatly to the liberal arts subject areas.

I would like to answer the following questions: (1) Which between the CTC and NLC approaches does the teacher consider more effective in teaching Afro-Asian literature? (2) Which between the CTC and NLC approaches do the students consider more effective? And (3) Which between the CTC and NLC approaches is more effective in enhancing reading comprehension-based test scores in Afro-Asian literature?

Four null hypotheses were formulated for the purposes study and will be tested by the descriptive and inferential quantitative statistics:

- H1: There is no significant difference between the CTC class and the NLC class on the standardized reading assessment/ diagnostic test.
- H2: There is no significant difference between the CTC class and the NLC class on the reading comprehension-based *Asian* literature test.
- H3: There is no significant difference between the CTC class and the NLC class on the reading comprehension-based *African* literature test.
- H4: There is no significant difference between the CTC class and the NLC class on the reading comprehension-based *Afro-Asian* literature test.

Methodology

Research Design

I incorporated the two-group experimental mixed method of research to compare the effects of the CTC and NLC approaches of teaching on the students' reading comprehension through Afro-Asian literature achievement test scores. As stated by Creswell and Plano Clark in 2007, having a mixed method of research will provide strengths that will outweigh the weaknesses of both qualitative and quantitative research; it will also provide a better understanding of the situation (Scruggs, 2008). Similar to comparative study done by Scruggs, this method was selected to address the research questions of this study and to give a more accurate picture of the results through the use of the Convergence Model (see Figure 2).

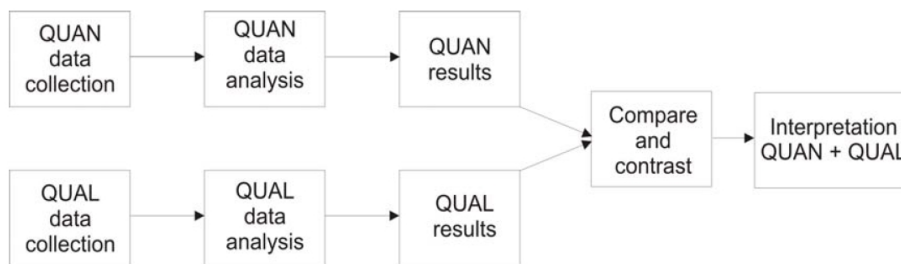


Figure 2. The Convergence Model (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007 as cited in Scruggs, 2008, p. 36)

Quantitative data includes a) the Afro-Asian achievement test scores collected after the lessons and b) the standardized reading assessment results. Qualitative data, on the other hand, will consist of a) the responses from the resource teacher in the interview protocol and b) the observations in the observation checklist.

Participants

For the comparative study, 62 respondents belonging to the Grade 8 level with ages ranging between 13 and 15 is included in the study. CLASS A is composed of 30 students (12 female and 18 male); CLASS B is composed of 32 students (15 female and 17 male). The respondents of the research are high school students taking up Afro-Asian literature from two sections of the eighth grade level. The teacher and the respondents of this study are from Hope Christian High School, where classes are conducted in English and Filipino in the morning and Chinese Mandarin in the afternoon, which makes the institution trilingual.

Research Instruments

An observation checklist based on the review of literature is utilized and is accomplished during the observation of classes of Grade 8 students. The first part, *Teacher Behavior*, concentrates on the practices of the teacher in the classroom. The second part, *Student Behavior*, concentrates on the explicit behavior and attitude of students in the classroom. This checklist determined the emergent approach the teacher is using in the classroom and also the reaction of the students on the type of pedagogy used by the teacher. In addition, interview protocol is administered to the subject adviser. It will be used to measure the teacher's perception regarding the effectiveness of the implemented approaches: either the CTC or the NLC approach. For the study, a diagnostic test measuring reading comprehension was also administered to the respondents. The assessment contains a multiple-choice test that is adapted from Richmond, Virginia's Department of Education's Grade 8 Reading *Standards of Learning* (SOL) test released in Spring 2008. The test originally consists of 45 items focusing on analyzing printed materials, word analysis, and identifying meaning based on world literature. However, due to the constraints in time and context, slight modifications have been made. Instead of 45 items, 30 items on reading comprehension and word analysis strategies are included in the standardized reading assessment. For the purposes of this study and due to time constraint, the students are only given 30 minutes to complete the test. Furthermore, reading comprehension-based teacher-made achievement tests were given at the end of the two classroom sessions and are designed to measure the effectiveness of the approach by gauging the amount of correct items the respondents got based on his or her understanding and ability to grasp content knowledge in a typical Afro-Asian lesson. The test is based on the readings done in class and is constructed by the researcher. The 10-12 item multiple-choice test has been aligned to the learning intents of the lesson plan created by the researcher and the resource teacher.

Data Collection

Figure 3 outlines the data collection procedure. First, I conducted an interview with the teacher and asked her the questions in the interview protocol. After the interview, the teacher provided the weekly lesson plans. After that, I made and suggested four lesson plans—2 NLC lesson plans and 2 CTC lesson plans—to the cooperating teacher. I used the lesson plans to construct two multiple choice reading comprehension-based achievement tests on the topics: *The Tale of Genji* by Lady Murasaki and *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe. Also, I prepared the booklets and answer sheets on the standardized reading assessment, which will be used as a diagnostic test.

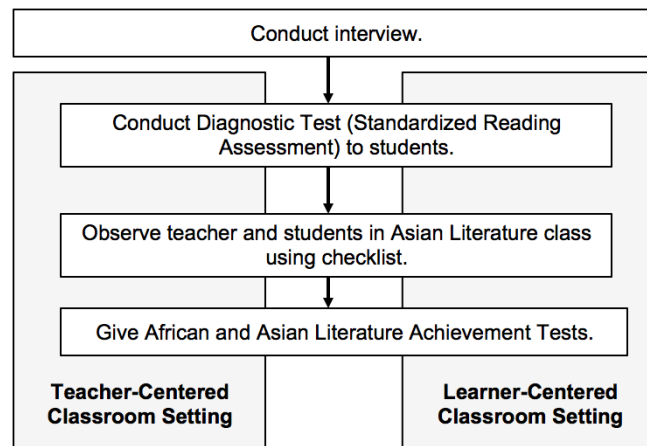


Figure 3. The Process of Administering the Research Instruments

During the students' homeroom period, the diagnostic test was administered to the students to measure their reading comprehension and analysis skills. After the diagnostic test, observation of eighth grade Afro-Asian literature classes on both sections was conducted. The observation took place in two classrooms. The same teacher taught Japanese Literature (Asian Literature representative) to the two sections the same material using the CTC approach and the NLC approach respectively. The class that is taught using the CTC method, for the purposes of this study, will be referred to as CLASS A, and the other group, CLASS B. CLASS A was exposed to the L-R-D procedure where two-way communication is minimized. CLASS B, on the other hand, was taught using the NLC approach and was exposed to an inductive discussion, jigsaw group activity, and synthesis; interaction was encouraged. During the classes, I utilized an observation checklist to record classroom practices of teacher participants. After the lessons, I gave a 10-item multiple choice reading comprehension-based achievement test that is related to the Asian literature lesson. Fifty minutes were allotted for each class.

After two weeks, I asked the cooperating teacher to execute another set of lesson plans focusing on African literature. The CTC and NLC approach is again used on CLASS A and CLASS B, respectively. CLASS A was taught using the L-R-D procedure while CLASS B was taught using collaborative activities such as buzz groups. CLASS B was also instructed to make a group collage on their understanding of the novel. After that, a 12-item multiple-choice test was administered. Fifty minutes were allotted for each class.

Analytical Procedure

Descriptive and inferential analysis was conducted on all quantitative data. SPSS Version 22 for Macintosh was used to analyze the data along with Microsoft Excel 2011 for Macintosh.

Results

Qualitative Data

Interview Protocol

The resource teacher strongly believes that a combination of approaches would be for the best. Since she advocates the injection of culture in literature class, what she usually does is give a summary (direct instruction) and then give learner-centered activities (indirect instruction). However, she also believes that currently, the CTC should be more emphasized compared to the NLC approach. She thinks it would be more effective for the Grade 8 students because they do not have much prior knowledge on the literary works she presented. She believes that the effectiveness of an approach is determined by how well the objectives of the day are met.

Observation Checklist

CLASS A. In the class that was taught using the CTC approach, the teacher gave a lecture, was the center of attention, and acted as the “sage on the sage”. The teacher attempted to discipline those who did not behave by telling them to keep quiet and asked that they raise their hands if they wanted to talk. In addition, it was observed that the teacher transmits the information instead of transforming prior knowledge. During the class period, the teacher lets the students work alone. However, the teacher was lenient and allowed the free sharing of ideas. The lecture was a little interactive. The teacher also contextualized the activity or discussion based on the interests of the students.

Less than half of the students were engaged in the discussion. Only some were enthused by the topic of the day. Most of the students were misbehaved; however, the content of their discourse is highly intellectual. There are instances in class where I caught two students sleeping in class. I also observed that none of the students were taking notes during the class.

CLASS B. In the class that was taught using learner-centered strategies, the teacher gave a group work and encouraged group members to collaborate. I observed that the teacher is the “guide on the side” and serves as the facilitator. Although she could have just shared the story to the students, the teacher allowed the exploration of the material and the free expression of ideas while contextualizing the activities. It can be seen from the observation period that the teacher tries to make the students the source of information by making them experts of the content they hold during the Jigsaw activity. The teacher also tries to discipline the class by making them keep silent and telling them to raise their hands whenever they want to ask a question.

All of the students were enthusiastic about the topic, but not all are engaged. I observed that due to the lack of resources and space, some of the students were not able engage in the Jigsaw activity. Most of the time, the students are not behaved and are caught talking to each other. However, I listened to them closely and observed that their discourse is intellectual. As a matter of fact, the quality of questions that were asked was in fact very critical. No one in the class slept. None of the students in the class that are taught using the NLC approach were taking notes.

Quantitative Data*Standardized Reading Assessment / Diagnostic Test*

Administered Test	Sig.
Diagnostic Test	0.946
Asian Literature Achievement Test	0.012
African literature Achievement Test	0.622
Afro-Asian literature Achievement Test (averaged mean scores)	0.013

Figure 4. The Significance Values of the Scores Based on Levene’s Test for Equality of Variances

The descriptive and inferential statistics showed that the mean score of CLASS A (10.967) and CLASS B (11.469) in the standardized reading assessment has a significance value of 0.946 based on Levene's Test for Equality of Variances (see Figures 4 and 5). Since it is above 0.05, I interpreted the results assuming that the variances were approximately equal. The variance for CLASS A has a value of 35.62 while CLASS B has 30.13. The t-test indicates that p-value 0.731 is insignificant at $\alpha=0.05$ level of significance (see Figure 7). The first null hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between the CTC class and the NLC class on the standardized reading assessment or diagnostic test. The hypothesis is, therefore, accepted, since the t-value is greater than 0.05 (Figure 7). Since there is no significant difference between the CTC class and the NLC class on the standardized reading assessment or diagnostic test, it is safe to assume that both CLASS A and CLASS B were equal based on their diagnostic test scores in reading comprehension.

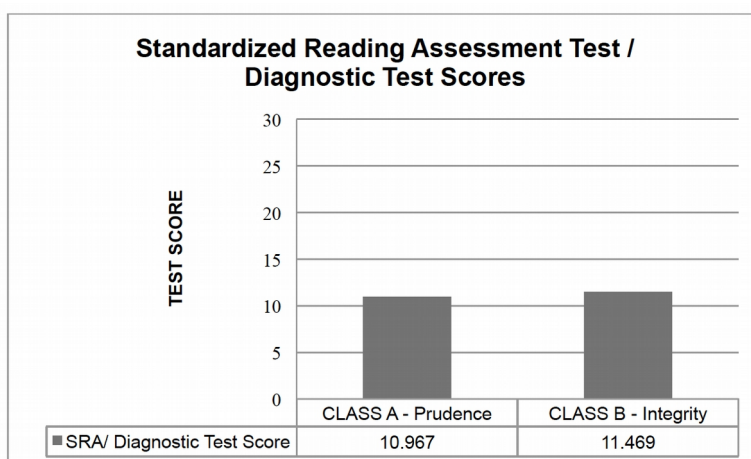


Figure 5. Standardized Reading Assessment Test Scores for Selected Grade 8 Students in Hope Christian High School

Reading Comprehension-based Achievement Tests

The second null hypothesis of the study was that there is no significant difference between the CTC and NLC classes in Asian literature test. The results showed a difference between the mean scores of the CTC class (6.167) and the NLC class (4.938) (see Figure 6). The significance value in Levene's Test for Asian literature test scores was 0.012 (see Figure 4). Since it is below 0.05, I interpreted the results assuming that the variances were not equal. The significance of the difference was tested using t-test for independent samples t-statistics revealed that p-value 0.051 is insignificant at $\alpha=0.05$ level of significance (see Figure 7). Thus, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between CLASS A and CLASS B on their Asian literature test is accepted, although it was evident that the performance of the CTC class is slightly better than the performance of the NLC class.

The third null hypothesis of the study was that there is no significant difference between the CTC class and the NLC class in the African literature achievement test. The results showed a difference between the mean scores of CLASS A (4.167) and CLASS B (4.188) (see Figure 6). The variance for CLASS A has a value of 2.971 while CLASS B has a value of 4.222. The significance value in Levene's Test was 0.622 (see Figure 4). Since it is above 0.05, I interpreted the results assuming that the variances were approximately equal based on Levene's Test. T-statistics revealed that p-value 0.966 is insignificant at $\alpha=0.05$ level of significance. So the null hypothesis that states that there is no significant difference between the CTC and NLC classes is accepted. Therefore, there is no statistically significant difference between the CTC and NLC class in the African literature test.

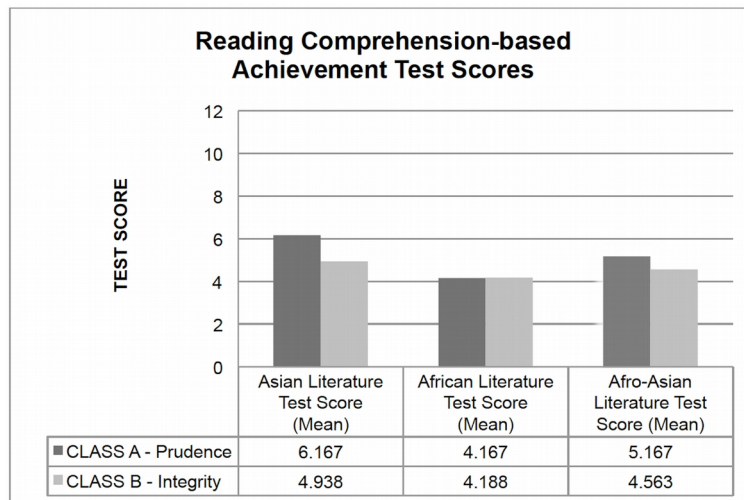


Figure 6. Reading Comprehension-based Test Scores of Selected Grade 8 Students in Hope Christian High School

The fourth null hypothesis of the study was that there is no significant difference between the CTC and NLC classes in Afro-Asian literature. Since the study focuses on Afro-Asian literature and not independently Asian or African literature, I averaged the test scores of both CLASS A and CLASS B on their Asian and African tests. The averaged mean score of the CTC class is 5.167 unlike the averaged mean score of CLASS B, which is 4.563 (see Figure 6). The significance value in Levene's Test for Afro-Asian literature test scores was 0.013 (see Figure 4). Since it is below 0.05, I interpreted the results assuming that the variances were not equal. The significance of the difference was tested using t-test for independent samples t-statistics revealed that p-value 0.135 is insignificant at $\alpha=0.05$ level of significance (see Figure 7). Thus, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between CLASS A and CLASS B's Afro-Asian literature test score is accepted, although it was evident that the performance of the CTC class in Afro-Asian literature is slightly better than the performance of the NLC class (see Figure 6).

Since the reading comprehension of both classes in the diagnostic test is equal according to Levene's Test for Equality of Variances, it is safe to assume that the t-test for the averaged means of the Afro-Asian literature test scores between the CTC and NLC classes is valid.

Hypothesis	Cl.	n	Mean	σ^2	SD	Mean Diff.	t	Sig. (p)	Decision
Ho1: There is no significant difference between the CTC class and the NLC class on the standardized reading assessment/diagnostic test.	A	30	10.967	35.62	5.97	0.502	.345	0.731*	ACCEPTED
	B	32	11.469	30.13	5.49				
Ho2: There is no significant difference between the CTC class and the NLC class on the reading comprehension-based <i>Asian</i> literature test.	A	30	6.167	8.005	2.83	1.229	-2.000	0.051*	ACCEPTED
	B	32	4.938	3.544	1.88				
Ho3: There is no significant difference between the CTC class and the NLC class on the reading comprehension-based <i>African</i> literature test.	A	30	4.167	2.971	1.72	0.021	0.043	0.966*	ACCEPTED
	B	32	4.188	4.222	2.05				
Ho4: There is no significant difference between the CTC class and the NLC class on the reading comprehension-based <i>Afro-Asian</i> literature test.	A	30	5.167	3.023	1.72	0.604	-1.517	0.135*	ACCEPTED
	B	32	4.563	1.851	1.36				

*Significance level $\alpha = 0.05$

Figure 7. Hypotheses Testing.

Discussion

There are several limitations to this study. One possible limitation is that some of the students were absent during the diagnostic test and the achievement tests. A score of 0 was given to those who cannot attend. This could be a limitation, as the scores may be extremely affected. Another possible limitation concerns the teacher-made tests in this study, as it may not accurately assess the students' reading comprehension in Afro-Asian literature, given that I am not an expert in creating reading comprehension assessments. In addition, time was very limited because I was only able to conduct observations on specific days, as allotted by the partner teacher. Furthermore, the number of respondents, both teachers and students, may also be a limitation of the study.

Despite these shortcomings, this study provides some interesting findings. From the qualitative data, more specifically the interview protocol, the teacher advocates the combination of the CTC and NLC approaches. However, she believes that the CTC approach should be more dominant compared to the NLC approach because from her experience, students with no prior knowledge are most likely clueless in her learner-centered activities. Her belief is consistent with the Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy model. In relation to the review of related literature, how can students reach comprehension or understanding without knowing? The resource teacher also mentioned that for an approach to be considered effective, it has to meet the objectives of the lesson.

If the objective of the teacher is to recognize characters in the story without any prior knowledge, then the teacher should opt to use the CTC approach. If the objective of the teacher is to let the students infer the plot of the story considering they have prior knowledge already, then the NLC approach would be deemed better. In connection to the findings of the interview protocol, if, according to the teacher, the learning objectives of the teacher are not accomplished under the utilized NLC approach, it should only mean that the approach is not that effective. However, this does not imply that the NLC is not effective while the CTC approach should be used for all settings. CTC can be used in selected scenarios. In the study by Karagiorgi and Symeou (2005), the CTC approach is more effective in introductory lessons.

Aside from the fulfillment of the teacher's objectives of the lesson, another factor that should be considered to determine the effectiveness of an approach is the interest of the students during the implementation of the approach. When a teacher implements a lesson using either the CTC or NLC approach and it sustains the students' attention for the duration of the lesson, then the utilized approach is considered effective by the students. From the qualitative data, more specifically the results of the observation checklist, it was discovered that in the CTC class, some of the students were not enthusiastic about the lesson at all. There were two students who were seen sleeping during the class. On the other hand, in the NLC class, all of the students were enthusiastic about the lesson of the day. No one was seen sleeping during the lesson. This shows that the students prefer the NLC approach over the CTC approach.

From the quantitative data, which includes the results of the standardized reading assessment/diagnostic test and the achievement test scores in Afro-Asian literature, several conclusions can be made. In Asian literature, although the data suggests that there is no significant difference, there is a minimal difference between the scores. The CTC class had a slightly higher mean score compared to the NLC class. This suggests that the conventional approach may appear to be slightly effective in teaching Asian literature. However, based on the data analyses, the choice of approach seems to have no bearing on the reading comprehension-based Asian literature test scores of the students. In African literature, there is also no significant difference between the test scores of the CTC and NLC classes. Again, this just proves that the type of approach used by the teacher may not have an effect on the reading comprehension-based African achievement test scores of the students. However, since the focus of this paper is in the Afro-Asian context, and independently assessed results may not effectively answer the question at hand, it was imperative to average the mean scores of the African and Asian literature tests of both classes. I discovered that there is no significant difference in the reading comprehension-based Afro-Asian literature test scores between the classes even after considering averaging the mean scores. Therefore, from the data analyses, it can be concluded that the choice of the CTC or the NLC approach has no significant effect in raising reading comprehension-based Afro-Asian literature test scores in Hope Christian High School. The findings of this study were consistent with other researches on the type of approach used (Chung, 2004; Chilwant, 2012; Ottman, n.d.; Hafezimoghadam, Farahmand, Farsi, Zare, & Abbasi, 2013).

Conclusion

For the study, triangulation was used so that the conclusions would be more comprehensive and reliable. The effectiveness of the CTC and NLC approach was looked at from the perspective of the student, teacher, statistics, and the review of related literature. According to teacher, the combination of approaches would be most effective as long as the objectives are met and as long as one knows when to use the approach. In the context of Hope Christian High School, the CTC approach would be more effective for the teacher since the students may lack prior knowledge. For the students, the NLC approach is more effective because it sustains their interest towards the lesson. From the statistical data, the choice of the CTC or the NLC approach has no significant effect in raising reading comprehension-based Afro-Asian literature test scores. Therefore, from the data analyses and the perspectives of students and teachers, I conclude that there is indeed no particular approach that is more effective in teaching Afro-Asian literature in Hope Christian High School, Manila, Philippines.

ESL teachers may use an eclectic approach instead of the pure CTC or NLC approach in teaching Afro-Asian literature. They may use the CTC approach for introducing lessons and vocabulary. They may also opt to use it to discuss the lesson; after all, the CTC approach may be interactive. Apart from using the CTC approach, educators may also use the NLC approach in Grade 8 Afro-Asian literature classes. After the lesson, the teacher may utilize NLC reading comprehension strategies such as the buzz groups, Jigsaw, or role play to improve the performance of the students. Using an eclectic approach may be more effective compared to an independent approach. Perhaps, the degree of learner-centeredness or teacher-centeredness is one factor that the teacher should consider in her classroom when he or she teaches Afro-Asian literature. Nevertheless, a mixed approach may be better than merely using either the CTC or NLC approach, especially in the teaching of Afro-Asian literature.

References

- Adib-Hajbaghery, M., & Aghajani, M. (n.d.). *Traditional lectures, socratic method and student lectures: Which one do the students prefer?* Retrieved February 7, 2014, from Web Med Central: <http://www.webmedcentral.com>
- Allwright, D. (1983, June). Classroom-centered research on language teaching and learning: A brief historical overview. *TESOL Quarterly*, 17(2), 191-204.
- Bell, C. D. (2012). *The Relationship of Learner-Centered Beliefs of Principals and Student Achievement*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: ProQuest LLC.
- Bernardo, A. B., Zhang, L. F., & Callueng, C. M. (2002). Thinking styles and academic achievement among Filipino students. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 149-163.
- Blench, R., & Campos, F. (2010). Recording oral literature in a literate society: a case study from the Northern Philippines.
- Chilwant, K. S. (2012). Comparison of two teaching methods, structured interactive lectures and conventional lectures. *Biomedical Research*, 363-366.
- Chung, I. (2004). A comparative assessment of constructivist and traditionalist approaches to establishing mathematical connections in learning multiplication. *Education*, 125(2).
- Concannon-Gibney, T., & Murphy, B. (2012). Reading comprehension instruction in Irish primary classrooms: key insights into teachers' perspectives on classroom practices. *Irish Educational Studies*, 433-449.
- Cornelius-White, J. (2007, March). learner-centered teacher-student relationships are effective: A meta-analysis. *Review of Educational Research*, 77(1), 113-143.
- Daroy, P. (1969). The novel in the Philippines. *Asian Studies*, 7(2), 180-185.
- Eison, J. (2010). using active learning instructional strategies to create excitement and enhance learning. 1-20.
- Gibbs, G. (2013, November 21). *Lectures don't work, but we keep using them*. Retrieved February 7, 2014, from Times Higher Education: <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/lectures-dont-work-but-we-keep-using-them/2009141.article>
- Gravoso, R., Pasa, A., Labra, J., & Mori, T. (2008). design and use of instructional materials for student-centered learning: A case in learning ecological concepts. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 109-120.
- Gutierrez, M. C. (2004). Studying teacher cognition: The interplay of teacher beliefs and instructional practice. *Kritika Kultura*, 53-78.
- Guzman, A. (2004). The hermeneutics of learner-centered approaches and initiatives in the Philippine basic education sector. *Educational Research for Policy and Practice*, 223-241.
- Hafezimoghadam, P., Farahmand, S., Farsi, D., Zare, M., & Abbasi, S. (2013). A comparative study of lecture and discussion methods in the education of basic life support and advanced cardiovascular life support for medical students. *Klinik Calisma*, 59-63.
- Ilyas, B., Rawat, K., Bhatti, M., & Malik, N. (2013, January). effect of teaching algebra through social constructivist approach on 7th grader's learning outcomes in Sindh (Pakistan). *International Journal of Instruction*, 6(1).

- Imig, D. G., & Imig, S. R. (2006). The teacher effectiveness movement: How 80 years of essentialist control have shaped the teacher education profession. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 167-180.
- Jacolbia, R. B. (n.d.). Preferred and effective learner-centered strategies at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines. *International Conference: The Future of Education*.
- Khalid, A., & Azeem, M. (2012). Constructivist vs traditional: Effective instructional approach in teacher education. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(5), 170-177.
- King, A. (1993). From Sage on the Stage to Guide on the Side. *College Teaching*, 41(1), 30-35.
- Kolb, D. A., Boyatzis, R. E., & Mainemelis, C. (1999, August 31). The evolution of John Mezirow's transformative learning theory.
- Leindhardt, G. (1993). On teaching. (R. Glaser, Ed.) *Advances in Instructional Technology*, 1-54.
- Magno, C., & Sembrano, J. (2007). The role of teacher efficacy and characteristics on teaching effectiveness, performance, and use of learner-centered practices. *The Asia Pacific Education Researcher*, 73-91.
- Manuel, E. A. (1980). Philippine oral traditions: Theory and practice. *Philippine Quarterly of Culture & Society*, 7-27.
- Mastropieri, M. A., Scruggs, T. E., & Graetz, J. E. (2003). Reading comprehension instruction for secondary students: Challenges for struggling students and teachers. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 26(2), 103-116.
- Musa, M. A. (2007). A comparative study between English literature and Asian literature through the perceptions of the TESL Foundation Programme students. *Seminar Penyelidikan Pendidikan Institut Perguruan Batu Lintang Tahun*, 1-17.
- Nishida, H. (2013). The influence of chunking on reading comprehension: Investigating the acquisition of chunking skill. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 163-183.
- Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines. (2013, May 15). *Republic Act No. 10533*. Retrieved 6 2013, November, from Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines: <http://www.gov.ph/2013/05/15/republic-act-no-10533/>
- Ottman, L. (n.d.). The effect of student-directed versus traditional teacher-centered presentations of content on student learning in a high school statistics class. Haddon Heights, New Jersey, United States of America.
- Peretz, A. (1988). Student-centered learning through content-based instruction: use of oral report projects in the Advanced EFL Reading Class. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 181-192.
- Protacio, M., & Sarroub, L. (2013). A case study of reading instruction in a Philippine classroom. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 338-349.
- Purves, A. C., & Beach, R. (1972). *Literature and the Reader: Research in response to literature, reading interests, and the teaching of literature*. Urbana, Illinois: National Council of Teachers of English.
- Ramsden, P. (1992). *Learning to teach in higher education*. New York: Routledge.
- Raya, R. R. (2007). 'the missed education of the Filipino people' missing targets: an alternative MDG midterm report. *Social Watch Philippines*.
- Republic of the Philippines Department of Education. (2010, October). Discussion paper on the enhanced K+12 Basic Education Program: DepEd discussion paper. Philippines.
- Republic of the Philippines Department of Education. (2012, December). K to 12 curriculum guide: English (Grades 7-8). Pasig, Philippines.
- Richardson, V., Anders, P., Tidwell, D., & Lloyd, C. (1991). The relationship between teachers' beliefs and practices in reading comprehension instruction. *American Educational Research Journal*, 28(3), 559-586.
- Samuels, S., & Farstrup, A. E. (2011). *what research has to say about reading instruction*. Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association.
- Saroyan, A., & Snell, L. (1997). Variations in lecturing styles. *Higher Education*, 85-104.
- Scruggs, B. B. (2008). *Learning outcomes in two divergent middle school string orchestra classroom environments: A comparison of a learner-centered and a teacher-centered approach*. Atlanta, Georgia: ProQuest LLC.
- Social Weather Stations. (2008, May 16). *First quarter 2008 social weather survey: National proficiency in English recovers*. Retrieved August 26, 2014, from Social Weather Stations: <http://www.sws.org.ph/pr080516.htm>

- Steinert, Y., & Snell, L. (1999). Interactive lecturing: strategies for increasing participation in large group presentations. *Medical Teacher*, 37-43.
- Terenzini, P., Cabrera, A., Colbeck, C., Parente, J., & Bjorklund, S. (2001, January). Collaborative learning vs. lecture/discussion: Students' reported learning gains. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 123-130.
- Tierney, R. J., Readence, J. E., & Dishner, E. K. (1990). *Reading strategies and practices: A compendium* (3rd Edition ed.). Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.
- Tracey, D. H., & Morrow, L. M. (2012). *Lenses on reading: An Introduction to theories and models*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Tynjala, P. (1998). Traditional studying for examination versus constructivist learning tasks: Do learning outcomes differ? *Studies in Higher Education*, 173.
- Yusof, Y., Jamian, A., Roslan, S., Hamzah, Z., & Kabilan, M. (2012). Enhancing reading comprehension through cognitive and graphic strategies: A constructivism approach. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 151-160.