

FROM COERCION TO AUTONOMY: DESIGNING A LITERATURE PROGRAM FOR 'GENERATION Z' LEARNERS

By

JOHN PAUL OBILLOS DELA ROSA

PhD Scholar, Philippine Normal University - Manila and Master Teacher I, Tarlac National High School – Annex, the Philippines.

Date Received: 15/03/2017

Date Revised: 03/08/2017

Date Accepted: 05/08/2017

ABSTRACT

The 21st century educational platform clamors for the affordance of learner autonomy and empowerment more than control and coercion. This study, therefore considers the reading preferences, motivations, issues, and other factors that govern the choice of literary texts from the perspectives of students towards designing a relevant literature program. Using both descriptive and developmental research designs as empirical approaches, responses from 59 English as a Second Language (ESL) learners coming from a homogenous, high performing group, were studied and analyzed. The results revealed that respondents generally read for pleasure and that themes related to happiness, adventure, mystery, and other issues relevant among adolescents were more favored. The students also reported that personal choice, contexts of literary texts, and academic workload affect their reading preferences. On a relative note, majority of the respondents were more interested to read novels and narratives written by contemporary, foreign authors, while several would want to learn more about classic, award-winning literary pieces from the Philippines. Based on the data collected, an online literature program for centennials or 'Generation Z' students was developed, the Generation Z Online Literature Program (GZOLP). Implications on the use of reading preferences and motivations in teaching literary texts and the rendering of literature programs among adolescent readers and other recommendations for further research are also provided in this paper.

Keywords: Reading Preferences, Learner Motivations, The Teaching of Literature, Literature Program, GZOLP.

INTRODUCTION

Literature lessons have been part of the academic undertaking of students, be it in basic or higher education. History speaks that prior to the actuality of language teaching, literature has propelled great, ancient civilizations into enriching their cultures and providing for a source of entertainment, enlightenment, and instruction to many readers, listeners, and observers (The Literary Encyclopedia, 2016). As fantastic as it may seem, literature has filled in a heroic space in preserving the wonders humans have produced since time immemorial.

At present, reading literature is generally included in the language curricula of both primary and secondary education (Pieper, 2006). More often than not, the usual practice in language classrooms is that literary pieces are used as a springboard to teach language concepts,

particularly grammar. Though prevalent in English Language Teaching (ELT), the British Council (2014) underscores that as part of traditional language teaching approaches, literature became less popular when language pedagogy started to focus on the functional use of language. However, the dawn of 21st century has opened more rooms for (re)considering the teaching of literature. These include re-assessing the role of literature in the ELT classroom, such as the use of literary texts to provide richer linguistic input and as an effective motivator for learners to express themselves in other languages (British Council, 2014). Nonetheless what happens when learners are demotivated in studying literature? Does the case stem from the way literature lessons are taught or is there a need to look into other relevant factors that affect learners' acceptance and preferences?

Students' Motivations in Learning Literature

Motivation is the main factor that plays an important role in determining a student's achievement (Yahaya et al., 2010). It is needed to carry out the learning process. Hamjah, Ismail, Rasit, & Rozali (2011) avow that motivation is also one of the main factors that could influence students to have encouragement and aspire to perform learning activities. At most, learning motivation determines students' realization of their academic performance, which is also anchored on good learning strategies and diligence in learning. The assumption is best exemplified on how students should be guided towards drawing their attention to reading literature in which the key could be good motivation.

In this digital age, learning motivations come from diverse, more complex forms. Students derive more motivation on multimodal, contemporary resources which are mostly provided in the virtual space. As such, according to National Literacy Trust (2012), in Great Britain, less than 30% of children read in their daily leisure time, down from 38.1% who read outside school in 2005. Further, the phenomenon of reading migration from print to digital media, most of the time, does not even include reading or writing text in any way. What is apparent now is that, they embrace video/image-based communication or things that occur in an instant. The decline in actual reading needs to be addressed by educators, especially the literature teachers in many literature lessons, as they are in close proximity to the youth and the most interested in students' willingness to read extensively (Lirca, 2014). Indeed, as a form of assertion, one of the factors that ought to penetrate the teaching of literature is the reading motivations of the learners. This time, a modest consideration of students' reading preferences and interests is highly sought.

Different motives promote reading and reading habits among young children and adolescents (Hussain & Munshi, 2011). Their interests and other contexts are primary elements that could motivate them further to acquire knowledge through reading. This urge would actually lead them towards appreciating books, newspapers, novels, research papers, and other reading contents. As regards reading preferences, Hussain & Munshi (2011), concluded

that all individuals may be different according to their specific age groups and needs of information. This calls for scaffolding from someone to help in selecting books to read according to their age, interest, and cognitive level.

For Gwin (1990), literary appreciation is the true key to understanding and enjoyment of work of literature. Such level of appreciation may only stem from reading texts that have genuine and meaningful impact on the individual (Keshta, 2000; Ballentine & Hill, 2000). Appropriate selection of texts should therefore be highlighted. The reason is that, the key to success in using literature in ESL classrooms depends primarily on the texts selected (Isa & Mahmud, 2012). On the one hand, Isa & Mahmud (2012) emphasized in a research report that, if the aim of the literature component in the English language syllabus is to be achieved, the text used needed due consideration. The authors even suggested that texts used should relate to students' life experiences, activate their prior knowledge, and convey an impactful message. The titles alone must maintain the interest of students and should provide avenues for spontaneous responses and involvement.

Providing a lower filter in the literature classroom also contributes towards maintaining learners' interest and level of motivation. Boo & Kaur (2000) contend that contrary to beliefs and expectations, learners are often intimidated by the idea of learning literature because, they think it is all about a lot of difficult and incomprehensible words. For an instance, the unusual stylistic devices in most poetic pieces like those of Shakespeare make comprehension near impossible (Gwin, 1990). This was supported by the study of DeBlase (2005), which revealed that students often struggle with Shakespearean language. One of the mechanisms to address the said difficulty is to make learners identify with the cultural and social contexts of some texts.

Another crucial factor that affects learners' motivation towards reading literature may be linked to their own personal choice of what counts as interesting or what counts as "unremarkable." Burgess (1985), for example, reported that young and adolescent students tend to select books according to their favorite authors. Hence, the appearance of the book, including cover and title page, illustrations, content of the first page, and its length has

significant effects on students' preferences (Hussain & Munshi, 2011). Though Wilson (1985) advanced that, these preferences are linked with lower-achieving students, there is still a need to consider what motivates them in reading literary texts. To ignite their interest, teachers should be cognizant on how the subject matter of a book and its surface features significantly affect possible choices of the learners.

Finally, the way students are assessed in a literature class may also provide either negative or a more desirable effect on students' motivation. Among others, the assessment system must be highlighted. Hussain & Munshi (2011) found out in their study, that students from Pakistan were bogged down by the type of assessment system employed in their literature classes. As such, the students are advised to do homework (course assignments), and prepare for their examinations. This eventually limits their extensive reading. Less exposure of students to reading may also lead to lower performance and grades of students in school. Nilsen & Donelson (2005) concluded that an inadequate reading skill is one of the factors responsible for teen's poor performance.

1. Related Studies

Reading preferences and interests of young children and adolescents studying at different levels have been addressed by many researchers in varying contexts (Hussain & Munshi, 2011). The following review of related studies present significant results on the importance of considering learners' reading preferences and motivations towards formulating lessons, activities, and on a larger scale, programs that are aimed at supporting the learning of literature.

Isa & Mahmud (2012) conducted a two-year research sponsored by the Education Ministry of Malaysia on the selection of literary texts needed for Malaysian Secondary Schools. Participants were drawn from six teachers and 422 students in non-residential schools in all districts of Perak. The students think that, the choice of themes should differ across gender and class levels. Results also revealed that females love themes much more than males, while males are into mystery and adventurous texts. Generally, the study proved that Malaysian secondary students should be given

texts, that are contextual and culturally-bound. Moreover, more local texts should be used.

Hussain & Munshi (2011) identified the reading preferences of secondary school students in Pakistan and some relevant issues. A total of 387 secondary school students from Bahawalpur District in Pakistan participated in the study. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected through questionnaire and interview schedule, respectively, by employing the survey method. The study revealed that secondary school students preferred to read books, magazines, poetry, and other reading materials to get pleasure through entertainment, kill leisure time during holidays and/or at weekends, and for their emotional gratification. Some of the problems reported, include high costs of books, context and circumstances, availability of books, time and their time management ability, examinations, and academic workload, lack of guidance, personal interest, and their study circles or groups.

In a descriptive survey initiated by the Government of Quebec (2005), it was found out that girls read more books and magazines and they had a greater tendency to read for longer duration. Their counterparts preferred comic and humorous books and they appeared to be more interested in reading science fiction, scientific information, and sports pages in newspapers. These students are given chances to read textbooks with wishful choice of other books.

Bouchamma, Poulin, Basque, & Ruel's (2013) study explored on the reading preferences of 13-year-old boys and girls. It further identified the factors determining reading achievement. A total of 20,094 students completed a survey questionnaire on the types of in-class reading activities they got engaged in. The study provided relevant data that boys spent more time reading textbooks, magazines, newspapers, Internet articles, and electronic encyclopedias, while girls read more novels, fiction, informative or non-fiction texts, and books from the school or local libraries. Finally, logistical regression shows that, the reading achievement for both sexes was determined by identical reading preferences.

Aharony & Bar-Ilan (2015) answered two relevant questions in their study,

1. What are the reading preferences of information

science students at the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century?;

2. How do different variables, such as relative advantage, comprehension, and learning strategies affect students' reading preferences?

The study was conducted in Israel during the first semester of the 2015 academic year, encompassing a total of 117 Library and Information Science (LIS) students in the Information Science Department in the aforesaid country. The study showed students' preferences towards printed materials. Consequently, the researchers put emphasis on the importance of personal variables that may affect students' will to read electronic materials relative to both academic advantage and comprehension.

The foregoing researches highlight the central role of identifying learner preferences in reading and the factors that give them the urge to engage themselves towards reading texts. Based on the results of the studies, provisions must be provided on what and how to tap on the reading preferences of students (Ilsa & Mahmud, 2012; Hussain & Munshi, 2011). One study also dealt with identifying variables that affect the reading preferences of students, such as comprehension and learning strategies (Aharony & Bar-Ilan, 2015). The study of Bouchamma et al. (2013) brought forth connection between students' reading preferences and their reading achievement. The usual themes that capture the interest of students were also provided in a survey conducted in Quebec, Canada in 2005.

Owing to the aims of the present study, the researches cited are of great relevance in uncovering the need to give opportunities for students' voices to be heard in the preparation of reading lessons and activities. This could be effectively met if there is congruence between what the learners expect and enjoys learning and what the language instructor brings into the classroom. Though not directly stated as one of the research variables from the researches reviewed, attitudes of learners towards reading literary pieces may be associated with the effective accommodation of reading preferences and motivations. The results presented would further give inputs on how literature classes could be managed based on literatures that students would best appreciate. The study therefore

provides for the creation of a literature program that empirically reflects the preferences and inclinations of centennial learners as clientele.

2. Research Questions

This study aimed at developing a literature program that would suffice the reading preferences of a homogenous, grade 10-level English as a Second Language (ESL) class at a public educational institution in the Philippines. Specifically, the following questions were answered in this paper:

- What are the reading preferences of the grade 10-level ESL students along the following:
 - (i) purpose/s in reading;
 - (ii) types of books;
 - (iii) themes of preferred texts; and
 - (iv) source/s of guidance when selecting reading materials?
- What issues affect the reading preferences of the grade 10-level ESL students?
- What literature program could be proposed based on the reading preferences of the students?

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed descriptive research in describing the reading preferences of the respondents. Specifically, the study was anchored on the creation of a literature program for centennials. Hence, it was also based on a type of developmental research. The Type 1 studies of development research that focuses on either product design or development or evaluation (Richey, Klein, & Nelson, 2004) was adopted for the current study. The scope of development research was delimited to the formulation of a literature program that caters the preferences and motivations of centennial learners.

3.2 Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the study were selected using the convenience sampling technique. There were a total of 59 English as a Second Language (ESL) students in a public secondary school in the Philippines who participated in the study. Specifically, the respondents came from a homogenous class in which learners have to maintain a

grade-point average not lower than 85% in all learning areas. One of the subjects, that they were enrolled in at the onset of the study was English 10, a learning area which exposes them to multiculturalism through world literature (Almonte et al., 2015). Hence, the group is a type of an academic class where learners are regularly exposed to studying literary pieces. The class consists of 21 male students and 38 female students, respectively.

3.3 Research Instruments

Two research instruments were used to gather pertinent data from the respondents. The first one was a survey-questionnaire adopted from the study of Hussain & Munshi (2011) to collect quantitative data. The questionnaire was in a five-point Likert scale and has been pilot tested in many studies such as the one cited in the present research undertaking. For the purpose of applicability, the researcher modified the aforesaid survey-questionnaire to fit it into the context, where the current research was based. Originally, the questionnaire includes four subscales, such as purpose in reading, types of books, source of guidance when selecting reading materials, and problems/issues affecting reading preferences. To better describe the preferences of the respondents, preferred themes of texts as another subscale, was added. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was checked and validated by three English teachers who have been in the field for more than 10 years.

To support quantitative data gathered, the researcher also devised an interview protocol. The interview questions focused on delving deeply into the preferences and reading motivations of the respondents. The responses of the students further qualified their answers from the survey-questionnaire completed.

3.4 Data-Gathering Procedure

The grade 10-level students who served as respondents were asked to complete the survey-questionnaire to determine their reading preferences. Before the conduct of the survey, instructions were clarified and the purpose of the current study was presented. After the survey administration, the researcher set an interview schedule with the participants. During the interview, answers of the respondents were clarified and given more depth. After collecting the needed data, they were then interpreted,

analyzed, and presented to answer the research questions raised in the study. Finally, both responses of the students from the survey-questionnaire and the interview protocol served as bases in designing a literature program appropriate for centennial ESL students.

3.5 Data Analysis

To describe the data statistically, they were presented using descriptive statistics. These include the use of simple frequency counts and percentages, respectively. Responses from the interviews were also considered in analyzing the research variable measured. Hence, both quantitative and qualitative analyses gave more depth to the present study.

4. Results and Discussion

According to Wisniewski (1996), one of the objectives of a literature program is to cater children's interests as well as create interest in new topics. The author also emphasized that, the educators must know these interests and understand ways to stimulate ones. For Rosenblatt (1995), a good literature program should also encourage readers to pay attention to their own literary experiences as the basis for self-understanding or for compassion with other's evocations. This paper, therefore asserts the importance of drawing interests from students in the formulation of a literature program, and in literature planning at large. More importantly, dedicating discussion based on preference and exploration of literature would motivate students to continue reading as they grow older (Mead, 2012). Accordingly, the following data and discussions illustrate the reading preferences of the grade 10-level centennial students who served as respondents of the present study. Discussions dwell on their preferences as regards their purposes in reading, types of books, themes of preferred texts, sources of guidance in text selection, and some issues that affect their reading preferences. A carefully-designed literature program for centennials based on data generated is also presented.

4.1 Preferences in Reading/Selecting Texts and Relevant Factors

4.1.1 Purposes in Reading of the Grade 10-Level Students

Based on the given data in Table 1, the grade 10-level ESL

students reported that their strongest purpose in reading is to read for pleasure, followed by reading for knowledge and reading as hobby, respectively. The reading purpose which received the lowest number of responses from the students appears to be reading to kill the time and reading for snobbery.

The preferences of the students towards reading for pleasure, knowledge, and as a hobby underscore the views they have about the reasons behind their engagement in reading. Reading for pleasure, in which reading as a hobby may also be associated, means that the students derive personal satisfaction and at the same time, personal development and a sense of well-being as they traverse the pages of the material they are reading. Reading for pleasure is an important part of engaging in literature learning. It does not only provide enjoyment and touch learners' interests- that is, as Clark & Rumbold (2006) assert, reading for pleasure is not only a form of play or escapism, it also brings forth a creative activity that is far removed from the passive pursuit it is frequently perceived to be (Holden, 2004). Further, research from the Organization for Economic Cooperation (OECD) in 2002 revealed that reading enjoyment is more important for children's educational success than their family's economic status. Hence, reading for pleasure could be one of the ways to help combat social exclusion and raise educational standards (Clark & Rumbold, 2006).

On the one hand, part of deriving pleasure from a text is the chance of learning something or widening one's knowledge and experiences. This is called reading for knowledge, which is the second most preferred purpose of the respondents. As such, equally important just like

reading for pleasure is reading to know. In an article, Horner (2014) emphasizes that reading is a way to feed one's mind with quality information and ideas. It does not only help propel an individual academically, but it also allows one to ideas that may change his or her lives forever. Consequently, reading quality books helps one become wise, too (Horner, 2014). On the contrary, the respondents do not view reading as a form to kill time and as a way to incur snobbery and vaunt. It can be gleaned further from the results that the respondents' purposes in reading are on the deeper spectrum of learning and enjoying. These ideas were carefully acknowledged in the proposed literature program.

4.1.2 Types of Books preferred by the Grade 10-Level Students

The types of books that students read also serve as a pane into what gives them the interest to read literature. The types of book preferred by the grade 10 level students are shown in Table 2. The responses of the grade 10-level students reveal that majority of them were into reading materials relative to novels, literary books, romantic literature, tragedy drama, and story books. Apparently, these are the five most preferred types of reading materials of the respondents. These are reading resources where imaginative stories or narratives are usually presented.

It can also be noted from the data, that the students appreciate reading narratives or stories that relate to romanticism, tragedy, and other themes, such as adventure and drama. On the one hand, it appears that the students do not generally prefer more authentic reading materials like newspapers and autobiographies. They also do not favor reading classical poetry and

Purposes in Reading	Level of Agreement											
	SA		A		UND		D		SD			
	f	P	f	P	f	P	f	P	f	P		
Read for pleasure	34	58.62	22	37.93	2	3.45	0	0.00	0	0.00		
Read for learning	20	34.48	12	20.69	5	8.62	20	34.48	1	1.72		
Read for knowing/Knowledge	27	46.55	6	10.34	3	5.17	19	32.76	3	5.17		
Read to kill the time	7	12.07	3	5.17	16	27.59	30	51.72	2	3.45		
Reading as hobby	43	74.14	2	3.45	0	0.00	12	20.69	1	1.72		
Emotional satisfaction	23	39.66	11	18.97	23	39.66	1	1.72	0	0.00		
Read for snobbery	5	8.62	2	3.45	12	20.69	35	60.34	4	6.90		

Note: SA-Strongly Agree; A-Agree; UND-Uncecided; D-Disagree; SD-Strongly Disagree

Table 1. Purposes in Reading

RESEARCH PAPERS

magazines. The same results were reported from the study of Isa & Mahmud (2012) when they found out that students prefer prose forms with local and foreign content more than other types of texts with specific themes. Further, the respondents believe that the poems should be introduced at a much later stage in the upper secondary classes.

Significantly, in selecting texts for a literature program, consideration on the types of books or texts preferred by the readers is of equal importance.

The themes presented in Table 3, also give ample data on what preferences the grade 10-level students have about the ideas they would want to dwell on as they read different

Types of Books	Level of Agreement									
	SA		A		UND		D		SD	
	f	P	f	P	f	P	f	P	f	P
Religious Books	13	22.41	12	20.69	0	0.00	23	39.66	10	17.24
Literary Books	46	79.31	5	8.62	1	1.72	5	8.62	1	1.72
Novels	51	87.93	0	0.00	2	3.45	5	8.62	0	0.00
Story Books	30	51.72	23	39.66	3	5.17	2	3.45	0	0.00
Romantic Literature	34	58.62	18	31.03	0	0.00	2	3.45	4	6.90
Newspapers	2	3.45	3	5.17	14	24.14	25	43.10	14	24.14
Traveling Story	29	50.00	11	18.97	3	5.17	12	20.69	3	5.17
Magazines	5	8.62	1	1.72	3	5.17	33	56.90	16	27.59
Romantic Poetry	7	12.07	12	20.69	6	10.34	12	20.69	21	36.21
Classical Poetry	2	3.45	3	5.17	5	8.62	34	58.62	14	24.14
Scientific Books	12	20.69	12	20.69	5	8.62	23	39.66	6	10.34
Autobiographies	2	3.45	3	5.17	1	1.72	50	86.21	2	3.45
Comedy Drama	24	41.38	20	34.48	8	13.79	6	10.34	0	0.00
Tragedy Drama	34	58.62	3	5.17	17	29.31	1	1.72	3	5.17

Note: SA-Strongly Agree; A-Agree; UND-Uncecided; D-Disagree; SD-Strongly Disagree

Table 2. Types of Books Preferred

Themes	Level of Agreement									
	SA		A		UND		D		SD	
	f	P	f	P	f	P	F	P	f	P
I like themes related to family life.	21	36.21	3	5.17	4	6.90	18	31.03	12	20.69
I like themes on love and care.	30	51.72	8	13.79	0	0.00	20	34.48	0	0.00
I like themes on mystery.	43	74.14	3	5.17	3	5.17	4	6.90	5	8.62
I like themes on horror.	35	60.34	4	6.90	2	3.45	12	20.69	5	8.62
I like themes on adventure.	50	86.21	2	3.45	2	3.45	3	5.17	1	1.72
I like themes on happiness.	41	70.69	12	20.69	2	3.45	3	5.17	0	0.00
I like science fiction themes.	17	29.31	2	3.45	12	20.69	23	39.66	4	6.90
I like themes on issues of adolescents.	42	72.41	11	18.97	2	3.45	1	1.72	2	3.45
I like short stories and novels, which are related to my life.	38	65.52	0	0.00	1	1.72	9	15.52	10	17.24
I like short stories and novels, which are related to my society.	30	51.72	15	25.86	5	8.62	3	5.17	5	8.62
I like novels and short stories with foreign content.	36	62.07	11	18.97	2	3.45	0	0.00	9	15.52
I like poems which are related to my life.	11	18.97	2	3.45	23	39.66	16	27.59	6	10.34
I like local poems	7	12.07	12	20.69	0	0.00	23	39.66	16	27.59

Note: SA-Strongly Agree; A-Agree; UND-Uncecided; D-Disagree; SD-Strongly Disagree

Table 3. Themes of Texts Preferred

types of texts. The data further illustrate that themes related to adventure, mystery, adolescent issues, happiness, novels relevant to authentic human experiences, and narratives with foreign content were most preferred by the students. On the one hand, it is interesting to note that three of the least preferred themes of the respondents are on local poems, science fiction, and poems which are related to life.

The result shows, that more imaginative stories better capture the interests of the respondents as compared to themes that are more realistic such as those that celebrate stories of families and science fiction stories. Also, the grade 10-level students have less interest towards poetry in general. In the study of Kraaykamp (2003), it was also found out that youth-respondents preferred literary books and suspense novels, those that contain imaginary themes that invoke more entertainment on the part of younger readers. On the contrary, though the student-respondents strongly preferred literary narratives, the author put emphasis on the promotion of cultural and extensive humanities education that would stimulate students' interest towards literature. In the present literature program, the value of considering the themes preferred by students for reading texts was greatly acknowledged.

4.1.3 Sources of Guidance in Selecting Texts by the Grade 10-Level Students

As regards sources of guidance for reading texts (Table 4), the respondents reported that they would want to be guided or generally, they get their ideas from advertisements –media and the Internet. Second in rank is the autonomous response to choices in reading texts, and the third goes with suggestions for reading given by their teachers. The data also revealed that, the students do not ask referral from their parents and friends when selecting a text to be read.

Sources of guidance from where the learners get ideas about good reading texts are equally important towards a learning situation that would help them learn and at the same time, enjoy. In independent reading, students choose based on how books appeal to them visually. However, more than visual appeal, Park (2004) suggested for the selection of texts that students can actually read independently and with success. Consequently, there should be a balance between accommodating what students want to read and what they should be engaging in to help them succeed academically. Routman (2003) asserts, that a carefully designed program includes teaching how to choose a book, monitoring the process, and evaluating impact of reading achievement. In the case of the respondents, what they perceive as good source of guidance are advertisement-media and the Internet. This may be due to the fact that the learners featured in the present study comprise centennials that have advantages of being digital natives (Taccone, 2015). According to Growing Leaders USA, 'Generation Z' learners put technology in the same category as air and water. Hence, it is justifiable to note that even in the selection and preferences of platforms, media and the virtual space are thriving sources for them.

In the literature program proposed, an appropriate platform that matches the preferences of the respondents was considered. The Internet as an information superhighway will be utilized to expose the grade 10-level learners to the kind of literature most appealing to them.

4.1.4 Other Qualitative Responses from the Grade 10-Level Students

Heeding to learners' opinions and voices deepen and prepare young people to meet the demands and take

Sources of Guidance	Level of Agreement									
	SA		A		UND		D		SD	
	f	P	f	P	f	P	f	P	f	P
Teachers	32	55.17	12	20.69	0	0.00	13	22.41	1	1.72
Parents	15	25.86	4	6.90	9	15.52	23	39.66	7	12.07
Friends	12	20.69	2	3.45	2	3.45	31	53.45	11	18.97
Advertisements-media/the Internet	53	91.38	1	1.72	1	1.72	2	3.45	1	1.72
Self-selection	37	63.79	0	0.00	3	5.17	18	31.03	0	0.00

Note: SA-Strongly Agree; A-Agree; UND-Uncecided; D-Disagree; SD-Strongly Disagree

Table 4. Sources of Guidance in Selecting Texts

advantage of the opportunities of the 21st century (Toshalis & Nakkula, 2012). Hence, part of revolutionizing learner-centered approaches in all domains of education is to look at “where the students are coming.” It is a notion that champions the practicality of providing what the students prefer and are most interested with.

In the present study, selected students had provided more qualitative data that supported the answers from the survey-questionnaire. Based on the analysis of the interview data, the learners were driven by literary pieces written by contemporary authors who are mostly foreign writers. Their works have been proliferated in the virtual space, and students said that practically, these are works that they learned and read from the Internet, since, they are popularly commented upon by readers across the globe and are most talked about in many social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Significantly, when asked about contemporary authors, selected students responded that they would want to read and learn more about the works of Mitch Albom, Rick Riordan, Paulo Coelho, John Greene, and Nicholas Sparks. For further justification, the following extracts from the interview are presented:

[EXTRACT #1] – R-Researcher; S-Student

- R: Is reading literary pieces, novels for an instance, one of your interests?
- S5: Yes, Sir. Ahmm...It is...ahm...It is a good way to widen your knowledge about life.
- R: Do you know a particular author? Do you read his/her works?
- S5: I was able to read summaries lang po (only). The works of Mitch Albom are very interesting. Nabasa ko po (I read) from comments po that readers cried after reading “Tuesdays with Morrie”.

[EXTRACT #2] – R-Researcher; S-Student

- R: Are there things that you want to learn more about literature?
- S17: I write in Wattpad, Sir...romantic stories po. I get inspiration, Sir from soft copies of stories that I read online. Gustung-gusto ko pong basahin yung mga gawa (I would always want to read the works of)

Nicholas Sparks. Ang ganda po ng kanyang “A Walk to Remember” (His “A Walk to Remember” is a good novel). I also love to watch film adaptations of his novels. Sana po mabasa ko pa iba niyang works gaya po ng “Dear John.” (I wish I could read more of his novels like “Dear John”).

[EXTRACT #3] – R-Researcher; S-Student

- R: Is there a particular work in literature that you want to study more or works that you would want to read more?
- S50: I think of reading the works of Rick Riordan, Sir lalo na po yung kanyang Olympian series (especially his Olympian series). Maganda po basahin mga adventure stories (Adventure stories are interesting to read). Pero sana po ma-expose din po kami sa mga literature sa Philippines. (I hope we students would also be exposed to Philippine literature).
- R: Bakit naman? (Why?)
- S50: Parang nakakalimot na po kasi tayo (It seems that we have already forgotten to read them). There are good stories din po from our own literature (There are also good stories from our own literature).
- R: Kindly name one story that you were able to read.
- S50: I read po yung New Yorker in Tondo.
- R: Ah yes, Marcelino Agana, Jr.?
- S50: Yes, Sir. Okay din po sila basahin (It's okay to read them, too).
- Generally, the students would prefer reading narratives or stories of different kinds that are mostly written by authors the youth commonly know. It is apparent from the transcripts that the Internet is the most preferred and is considered as a useful space for learners to get to know more about literary works. Though there is much popularity with “commercialized” novels such as those from Riordan and Sparks, a number of students considered Philippine literature in English as interesting pieces. Hence, these qualitative data were also deemed as crucial in the creation of the literature program embedded in this study. Though these data were already underscored in the survey-questionnaire responses, the actual answers of the students confirmed their dependence on the Internet and their strong preference for

stories that contain romantic, adventure, suspense and mystery, realistic themes and those from which they could learn a lot of life lessons. Culturally-inspired stories, stories written by Filipino writers in English, also need careful consideration in a literature program for centennials or adolescent readers. Manning & Bucher (2012) describe that in planning literature lessons for adolescent readers, themes or topics should deal with contemporary issues, problems, and experiences with characters to which adolescents can relate. It may also encompass contemporary world perspectives including cultural, social and gender diversity. Evidentially, such considerations are captured in the literature program created.

4.2 Problems that affect Reading preferences of Grade 10-Level Students

Problems and issues arise in the teaching and learning of literature. As per Wahyudi (2013), teaching literature alone is a difficult one. It requires a clear idea of what literature is, of what is entailed in reading and characterizing. What needs to be clarified are prevalent issues that affect how learners, especially those from non-native speaking countries, receive and appreciate literature. These factors must be considered in the event of making learning of literature effective. This time, a careful understanding of what students prefer in reading and on what counts as issues that influence their choice of texts. Hence, Table 5 presents data on the problems perceived by the respondents as linked to their reading preferences.

In selecting books and other reading materials to deal with, other factors should also be looked into. In the given data, the respondents perceived personal interest as one of the issues that affect their reading preferences. Based on the frequency of agreement, both context and examinations, on the other hand, were the two problems that affect reading preferences of the students, next in rank to personal interest. Also, time and time management and availability of books were reported as issues. Significantly, study circles and groups where the students belong were not strongly perceived as a factor that influences their reading preferences.

It can be deduced from the data that the personal interest would significantly impact the reading preferences of the respondents. It was also perceived by many researchers that choice is widely acknowledged as a method for enhancing motivation (Gambrell & Marinak, 2011). Worthy & McKool (1996) also relate student choices towards reading materials with increased likelihood in reading engagement. Further, it was reported that providing genuine student choices increases effort and commitment to reading (Guthrie & Wigfield, 2000). On the one hand, issues on contexts would relate to texts that do not match the preferences of the learners when it comes to prevailing themes. Examinations were perceived as an issue, since a lot of learners would think of reading texts as a source of enjoyment, not as a way to test their skills and measure achievement. In this regard, it was found out that

Problems that Affect Reading Preferences	Level of Agreement											
	SA		A		UND		D		SD			
	f	P	f	P	f	P	f	P	f	P		
Cost	30	51.72	12	20.69	7	12.07	9	15.52	0	0.00		
Context	43	74.14	2	3.45	6	10.34	7	12.07	0	0.00		
Availability of books	31	53.45	12	20.69	15	25.86	0	0.00	0	0.00		
Time and time management	39	67.24	1	1.72	15	25.86	1	1.72	2	3.45		
Examinations	43	74.14	3	5.17	12	20.69	0	0.00	0	0.00		
Lack of guidance	23	39.66	12	20.69	0	0.00	18	31.03	5	8.62		
Personal interest	53	91.38	2	3.45	0	0.00	1	1.72	2	3.45		
Workload	30	51.72	9	15.52	12	20.69	5	8.62	2	3.45		
Study circles/groups	2	3.45	33	56.90	2	3.45	19	32.76	2	3.45		

Note: SA-Strongly Agree; A-Agree; UND-Uncecided; D-Disagree; SD-Strongly Disagree

Table 5. Problems Affecting Reading Preferences

when English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students are exposed to testing, their anxiety level increases and their performance decrease. Availability of books and time management were also determined as reading preference problems, since there is a need for learners to access books with fewer constraints. Time is also a factor, especially when learners balance their academic workloads and their time to read books and other materials that appeal to them.

In the proposed literature program serviceable to grade 10-level students, the clientele's personal interest became the springboard for the development of the material. Significantly, other factors are also relevant to the context the grade 10-level students are situated, since they came from a homogenous, high-performing ESL class where academic tasks are numerous (time and time management) and most of the time, reading texts are pre-determined based on the curriculum guide followed. The literature program addressed these issues and problems to fully accommodate the preferences of the respondents and their nature as centennial learners.

4.3 An Online Literature Program Based on Empirical Data

The empirical data provided in the present study were taken as references so as to design a literature program capable of capturing the interest of centennials who are further described as 'Generation Z' learners. According to Roe & Ross (2010), developing love of literature as a recreational activity is possibly the most important outcome of a literature program. As such, the literature program embedded in the study provides for the delivery of literature learning experiences anchored on learner preferences and on the vibrant space provided by the online environment.

The proposed online literature program, Generation Z Online Literature Program (GZOLP), contains the rationale, program description, objectives, program content, sample online content outline, program delivery and implementation, student/program evaluation, resources needed, and information on costing. Snippets of the proposed online literature program for 'Generation Z' learners or "centennials" are provided in the Appendix herein found at the latter part of this paper.

Conclusion

This study puts forward the creation of a literature program that makes use of empirical data, consolidating learners' preferences towards reading literature. Further, the literature program, the main output of the present research undertaking, highlights the motivations of learners, matching content with the pragmatic and vibrant nature of the present generation while accommodating the vogue that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) contributes to education. The following conclusions may be drawn from this study:

First, the preferences of the learners on their purposes in reading, types of books, themes of preferred texts, and sources of guidance in reading literature reveal less predictable and more unorthodox responses from the students. Significantly, the students favored reading for pleasure and on dealing with novels with themes focusing on subjects like happiness, adventure, mystery and those that relate to the aspirations of adolescents. Further, they confirmed that the Internet and media play significant roles in influencing their reading preferences. This may disclose the changes that occur among the motivations of students in literature reading. Hence, the youth of today may represent the populace of readers who has more autonomy in learning and are more self-driven. The virtual opportunities provided to the youth by the Internet may have greatly triggered these changes. Moyer (2010) therefore posits that the methods and formats of reading generated by the youth are so different from the older generations that these are mainly caused by changes in reading formats, habits, and comprehension brought about by different kinds of media.

Second, the most prevalent problems that the students face towards their reading preferences are linked with weak affordance of their personal choices on texts to be read, the contexts presented by the texts, and the blocking brought by their academic work load. These issues, as reported, greatly affect the reading preferences of the respondents. Hence, there should really be a careful consideration of the motivations of students along with their current situations and propensities as learners, since these

may largely identify how well they will be able to appreciate the literatures provided for them to read. Consequently, some constraints occur in formal classes where literary pieces to be read are not of their own choice but are just prescribed by the curriculum. A shift in such orientation may be initiated, since many literatures would say that reading for pleasure or independent reading benefits students in numerous ways. For an instance, Cox & Guthrie (2001) reported that the amount children read for enjoyment and for school has been found to be a major contributor to their reading achievement. It is also important to note that the preferences of the students on foreign works in literature may have been influenced by both media and the Internet. Moreover, there are also students who prefer to read texts with local content, focusing on interesting themes.

Third, by considering the reading preferences and some other relevant factors that influence such preferences, a "responsive" literature program could be designed. In the present study, it is the creation of an online literature program that would cater 'Generation Z' learners. The literature program provided in the present study is also a response to the clamor for more creative schemes to deliver education; an online literature program is one. Aside from its currency, it also designates the potential of distance learning or online classes to meet present educational demands and thrusts. Bowen (2013) agrees that it is high time that schools realize the potential and promise of online learning and take full advantage of the wonderful opportunities provided by ingenuity and technological prowess.

Finally, the GZOLP (Generation Z Online Literature Program) may revolutionize an educational effort for schools that aim to foster contextualized, inclusive, and 21st century-ready instructions. This time, it hails in the area of teaching literature. However, there is still a need to conduct further research investigations on the appropriateness and effectiveness of the proposed program. The use of GZOLP is therefore highly recommended, while experimental studies would qualify more its effect towards learning of literature. Survey studies could also be conducted to gather data on the affordances of both students and

teachers on the use of an online platform in both teaching and learning of literature in various contexts.

References

- [1]. Aharony, N., & Bar-Ilan, J. (2015). Students' reading preferences: An exploratory study. Retrieved on December 24, 2016 from http://meital.iucc.ac.il/conf2015/papers15/B1_1.pdf
- [2]. Almonte et al. (2015). *English teacher's guide: Celebrating multiculturalism through world literature*. Pasig City: DepEd-IMCS.
- [3]. Ballentine, D. & Hill, L. (2000). Teaching beyond once upon a time. *Language Arts*, 78(1), 11-20.
- [4]. Boo, D. & Kaur, N. (2000). *The literature component in English Form Four*. Bangi: PelangiSdn. Bhd.
- [5]. Bouchamma, Y., Poulin, V., Basque, M., & Ruel, C. (2013). Impact of students' reading preferences on reading achievement. *Creative Education*, 4(8), 484-491.
- [6]. Bowen, W. (2013). *The potential for online learning: Promises and pitfalls*. Retrieved on December 29, 2016 from <http://er.educause.edu/articles/2013/10/the-potential-for-online-learning-promises-and-pitfalls>
- [7]. Burgess, S. A. (1985). Reading but not literature: The Child Read survey. *School Library Journal*, 31, 27-30.
- [8]. Clark, C. & Rumbold, K. (2006). *Reading for pleasure: A research overview*. Retrieved on December 18, 2016 from http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/0562/Reading_pleasure_2006.pdf
- [9]. Cox, K. E. & Guthrie, J. T. (2001). Motivational and cognitive contributions to students' amount of reading. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 26(1), 116-131.
- [10]. DeBlase, G. (2005). Teaching literature and language through guided discovery and informal classroom drama. *English Journal*, 95(1).
- [11]. Gambrell, L. & Marinak, B. (2011). *Reading motivation: What the research says*. Retrieved on December 28, 2016 from <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/reading-motivation-what-research-says>
- [12]. Gouvernement du Québec (2005). *Profiles of secondary school readers: Concerted action to support reading research*. Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisiret du

Sport.

- [13]. Guthrie, J. T. & Wigfield, A. (2000). Engagement and motivation in reading. In M. Kamil, R. Barr, P. Mosenthal, & P. D. Pearson (Eds.), *Handbook of Reading Research* (3, 403-422). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- [14]. Gwin, T. (1990). Language skills through literature. *English Teaching Forum*, 28(7), 10-17.
- [15]. Hamjah, S. H., Ismail, Z., Rasit, R. M., & Rozali, E. A. (2011). Methods of increasing learning motivation among students. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 18, 138-147.
- [16]. Holden, J. (2004). *Capturing cultural value: How culture has become a tool of government policy*. Retrieved on January 2, 2017 from <http://www.demos.co.uk/files/CapturingCulturalValue.pdf>
- [17]. Horner, C. (2014). *The trends that will shape the future of curriculum*. Retrieved on January 2, 2017 from <https://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2011/02/04/three-trends-that-will-shape-the-future-of-curriculum/>
- [18]. Hussain, I. & Munshi, P. (2011). Identifying reading preferences of secondary school students. *Creative Education*, 2(5), 429-434.
- [19]. Isa, N. H. & Mahmud, C. T. (2012). Literary texts for Malaysian secondary schools: Needs versus policy. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(7), 76-86.
- [20]. Keshta, A. S. (2000). *Alternative approaches for teaching English literature to undergraduate students in Gaza Strip* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Houston, USA).
- [21]. Kraaykamp, G. (2003). Literary socialization and reading preferences: Effects of parents, the library, and the school. *Poetics*, 31(3), 235-257.
- [22]. Lirca, C. A. (2014). *Generating motivation for the study of literature at university*. Retrieved on December 19, 2016 from http://www.upm.ro/facultati_departamente/stiinte_litere/conferinte/situl_integrare_europeana/Lucrati/IETM5_Part83.pdf
- [23]. Manning, M. L. & Bucher, K. T. (2012). *Teaching in the Middle School* (4th ed). Boston: Pearson.
- [24]. Mead, M. (2012). *Reading motivation: The differences between boys and girls and their reading preferences* (Unpublished Master's Thesis. St. John Fisher College).
- [25]. Moyer, K. (2010). *How is the Internet changing the way you think?* Retrieved on January 2, 2017 from <https://www.edge.org/responses/how-is-the-internet-changing-the-way-you-think>
- [26]. National Literacy Trust (2012). *Children's and young people's reading in 2012*. Retrieved on December 23, 2016 from http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0001/8829/Young_people_s_reading_2012_-_Final.pdf
- [27]. Nilsen, A. P. & Donelson, K. L. (2005). *Literature for today's young adults* (8th edition). USA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- [28]. Park, Y. (2004). Glossont: A concept-focused ontology building tool. In *Proceedings of the 9th International Conference on the Principles of Knowledge Representation and Reasoning (KR)*, 498-506.
- [29]. Pieper, I. (2006). *The teaching of literature*. Retrieved on December 23, 2016 from https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Source/Pieper_EN.doc.
- [30]. Richey, R. C., Klein, J., & Nelson, W. (2004). Developmental research: Studies of instructional design and development. In D. Jonassen (Ed.), *Handbook of Research for Educational Communications and Technology* (2nd ed.) (pp. 1099-1130). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- [31]. Roe, B. D. & Ross, E. P. (2010). *Benefits of literature*. Retrieved on December 19, 2016 from <http://www.education.com/reference/article/benefits-literature/>
- [32]. Rosenblatt, L. (1995). *Literature as exploration*. New York: MLA. (Original work published 1938).
- [33]. Routman, R. (2003). *Reading essentials: The specifics you need to teach reading well*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- [34]. Taccone, L. (2015). *The digital native advantage*. Retrieved on January 2, 2017 from <https://kentcommstudiesblog.wordpress.com/2015/03/31/the-digital-native-advantage/>

- [35]. The British Council. (2014). *Using literature - An introduction*. Retrieved on December 23, 2016 from <https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/using-literature-introduction>
- [36]. The Literary Encyclopedia. (2016). *Exploring literature, history and culture*. Retrieved on December 18, 2016 from <https://www.litencyc.com/litencycdescribed.php>
- [37]. Toshalis, E. & Nakkula, M. J. (2012). *Motivation, engagement, and student voice*. Retrieved on January 2, 2017 from http://www.studentsatthecenter.org/sites/scl.dl-dev.com/files/Motivation%20Engagement%20Student%20Voice_0.pdf.
- [38]. Wahyudi, (2013). *Literature Appreciation*. Retrieved on January 2, 2017 from <http://wahyudi.over-blog.com/>
- [39]. Wilson, R. J. (1985). Children's classics: A reading preference study of fifth and sixth graders. *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 47.
- [40]. Wisniewski, D. (1996). *Standards, literary elements, and book selection*. Retrieved on January 3, 2017 from http://catalogue.pearsoned.ca/assets/hip/us/hip_us_pearsonhighered/samplechapter/0132202964.pdf.
- [41]. Worthy, J. & McKool, S. (1996). Students who say they hate to read: The importance of opportunity, choice, and access. In D.J. Leu, C.K. Kinzer, & K.A. Hinchman (Eds.), *Literacies for the 21st century: Research and Practice*. 45th yearbook of the National Reading Conference (pp. 245-256). Chicago: National Reading Conference.
- [42]. Yahaya, N., Yahaya, A., Ramli, J., Hashim, S., & Zakariya, Z. (2010). The effects of extrinsic motivation factors in learning among students in secondary school in Negeri Sembilan. *International Journal of Psychological Studies*, 2(1), 128-136.

APPENDIX

Snippets from the Generation Z Online Literature Program (GZOLP)

I. TITLE OF THE LITERATURE PROGRAM: Generation Z Online Literature Program (GZOLP)


II. RATIONALE

Literature is a helpful material. What makes literature a knowledge aid in the classroom is the wide array of benefits it gives learners in general. The rich, multiple layers of meaning it provides can effectively be mined for discussions and sharing feelings or opinions (Clandfield, 2013). It may educate the whole person and could motivate learners towards higher achievement and humanistic understanding. However, teaching literature is not an easy task and is often challenging for both teachers and learners (Sean, 2010). For Davies (2016), the teaching of literature to modern language students constitutes an enormous challenge nowadays. He further asserts that the situation is aggravated by the fact that apparently, learners have been conditioned to believe that literary study is composed of black and white certainties.

V. PROGRAM CONTENT

The content of *GZOLP* was taken from empirical data provided by the present clientele, the grade 10-level students, during the administration of a survey-questionnaire and interview sessions that aimed to gather both quantitative and qualitative information on their reading preferences and motivations toward literature. The website's content in support of *GZOLP* as an online literature program will feature tabs that would introduce students to both foreign and local contemporary narratives, which they also reported as interesting on their part. These options are labeled based on online vocabulary terms commonly heard by 'Generation Z' students when using social media platforms and other Internet services. For further illustration, following are the contents of *GZOLP*:

SAMPLE OUTLINE OF LITERARY PIECES AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

AUTHORS	TITLE OF NOVEL/NARRATIVE	TABS AND RELEVANT ACTIVITIES
FOREIGN LITERATURE		
Mitch Albom 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tuesdays with Morrie (1997) 2. The Five People You Meet in Heaven (2003) 3. The First Phone Call from Heaven (2005) 4. Have a Little Faith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background Notifications • E-Reading (Rating of novels/narratives read) • Keep Vid (Providing

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

John Paul Obillos Dela Rosa is currently a Graduate Student taking up Ph.D in Linguistics with Specialization in Applied Linguistics at the Philippine Normal University, Manila, the National Center for Teacher Education in the Philippines. He is a Master Teacher I at Tarlac National High School - Annex, Department of Education, Province of Tarlac, Philippines. His research interests, include Contrastive Rhetoric, Second Language Acquisition, Socio Linguistics, and English Language Teaching.

