Proceedings of 1st International Conference “Supporting Educational Innovation to Ensure Quality Teaching”
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## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article Titles &amp; authors</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team of the Proceedings</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Research to Enhance Quality Teaching</td>
<td>4-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hacène HAMADA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Use of ICT in Search of Quality of Teaching at the University</td>
<td>13-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nabila BEDJAOUI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigating the Effect of Social Media on EFL Students’ Written Production:</td>
<td>24-39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case of Third-Year EFL Students at Tlemcen University, Algeria</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamila GHOUALI &amp; Smail BENMOUSSAT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Advising as a Pre-Step for the Introduction of the Human Capital Approach</td>
<td>40-50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to Solve the Issue of Quality in the Algerian University</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amal Boukhedenna</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algerian University Teachers’ Disposition and Experiences in Using MOOCs</td>
<td>51-64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for their Continuous Professional Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selma SIA &amp; Imane CHERIET</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Significance of Theoretical Foundations in Enhancing Teaching Practices:</td>
<td>65-77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ Perceptions and Use of Learner-centered Approach in EFL Classrooms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mustapha BOUDJELAL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Proficiency through Vocabulary Development: A Framework</td>
<td>78-85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boumediène BENRABAH</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing Students’ Effectiveness through Motivational Strategies</td>
<td>86-96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haron BOURAS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Learn Platform to Teach Legal English for Law Professionals</td>
<td>97-108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chams-Eddine LAMRI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Towards more Liable Use of Internet Sources among University Students:</td>
<td>109-121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rethinking Teacher’s Routine Evaluation Methods</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nadia KHIATI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Foreword

We are tremendously delighted to write the Foreword to the 1st International Conference “Supporting educational innovation to ensure quality teaching” organised by “Laboratoire de Recherche: Technologies de l’Information et de la Communication dans l’Enseignement des Langes et Traduction” in Collaboration with “The Center of Intensive Language Teaching” CEIL, and Hassiba Ben Bouali University of Chlef, Algeria, on the 28th and 29th of November, 2018.

The main conference themes, which are thoroughly picked out, provide a fertile soil to tackle new issues and handcuffs that put the educational system and university education under pressure, especially with the quick and streamed globalization. These challenges have raised many inquiries on the reforms which are made in the education sector and the teaching methods being adopted. The prime goal of the conference was to put higher education in the Algerian context and the quality of teaching under the lens, hoping that the scholarly contributions of the participants can give life to new teaching approaches to push the wheel of higher education even further, so that it meets the continued changes of globalization and the demands of the market.

Since independence, the higher educational system in Algeria has noticed considerable reforms; most importantly, the inclusion of the LMD system (2004/2005) as in many countries. However, the adoption of this framework to higher education has presented queries for teachers and learners since these reforms are not supported with methods and techniques that ensure the quality of teaching and the markets’ needs.

The diminishing quality of higher education in the Algerian context can be limited to the fact that no appropriate evaluations of the sector were conducted before the incorporation of these changes; in addition, these reforms did not take into account the national context of Algeria which is totally distinct from Europe, mainly France. Apparently, the application of a system, which is blindly dropped from its real context to be incorporated into another, leads the higher education in Algeria to swim against the current.

In light of the aforementioned crises, policymakers, educators, researchers, and teachers are striving to evaluate the system, so that they can improve and ensure the quality of higher education. They have also to innovate in order to cope with changes in language education in general and teaching languages in particular. Given this situation, the conference provided a pertinent place to tackle different issues related to the quality of education including how to evaluate higher education, approaches to quality assurance, quality assurance framework into practice, pedagogy enhancement, course design and market demands, and mission of higher education…etc.

The current research papers provided a thoughtful and relevant analysis of some issues in higher education, language education and new trends on English language teaching and learning including: Action research to ensure quality teaching, The use of ICT tools to improve the quality teaching, E-Assessment and its effects on the students’ writing production, ESP teaching new development, ICT and English language teaching and learning…etc.
We believe that it is through evaluation; we can promote innovation and ensure the quality of university education. It is time to construct the right decisions and put the Algerian educational system on the right path. We hope that the points recommended during the conference will be put into practice. We also believe that these contributions will open the gateway for more scholarship.

Dr. Nadia GHOUNANE
Action Research to Enhance Quality Teaching

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Abstract  
Quality teaching is and will remain a challenge for procedural educational innovation, as it is both the target objective and the vehicle of change. The main contributor to this process is always the teacher who has to adhere to the process of change for the purposes of developing his/her own career and improving the quality of teaching. This study aims to determine how action research would improve quality teaching in pre-service and in-service teacher training, and shed light on the reciprocal relationship between action research and innovation. In this paper, action research is considered as a constant independent variable that can enhance the dependent variables of pre-service / in-service teacher training and quality teaching requirements. The latter are supposed to be two purposes of innovation. Innovation is, thus, performed as the usual practice of innovative teachers who take risks of improving quality teaching in a methodological procedure according to their teaching contexts. The study attempts to answer the following questions: What is quality teaching and how does it impact innovation within the quality teaching assurance framework? What is action research and how does it help teachers improve their research and innovation potential? What does the ENS programme course provide as qualitative training to improve quality teaching and innovation? And, What are the results achieved, so far, at the ENS Constantine? We will illustrate the whole procedure with a specific example of teacher training at Ecole Normale Supérieure of Constantine.

Keywords: Action research, innovation, quality teaching, teacher training

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Introduction
During the last 13 years, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education (MHE, henceforth) introduced major reforms in the organization, implementation, and evaluation of course programs in order to improve the rates of quality assurance (QA) and adhere to worldwide referential frameworks. Its mission consisted of supporting opportunities for every citizen through democratic values of social and economic development to meet the increasing needs of the Algerian community.

The whole process of reforms was led and managed by the MHE; it was organized in a hierarchy of roles and responsibilities according to a top down / bottom up model. At the top level, the ministry acted as a leader and organizer of reforms through pedagogical meetings hierarchically organized locally (every HE institution) and regionally (East, West, and Central regional conferences) to disseminate norms and conventional frameworks of the Unit Credit system of the BA, MA, and Ph.D. degrees. At the bottom level, and at every pedagogical committee, teachers met to suggest the implementation of program courses of all disciplines.

This dynamic activity of reforms and change brought about some improvement in course contents but required a much better pedagogical and evaluative quality in teaching and assessment methods and tools. QA came into play to evaluate, on the one hand, the efficiency of testing students’ achievements according to the competency-based approach (Bader & Hamada, 2015) and, on the other hand, to check the quality of teaching according to QA criteria. Accordingly, the changes in course contents and methodology required assessment efficiency by shifting from summative assessment towards a formative and criterion reference assessment. Pencil and paper tests remained as term exams of knowledge while additional continuous assessment tools were introduced to evaluate students’ achievements in terms of performance. As far as QA is concerned, the MHE introduced Competency Based Assessment (CBA) to ensure triplet evaluation that consists of associating the three partners involved in HE (The educational institutions, the employment departments, and the employers); this partnership resulted in the Algerian QA Framework: Commission d’Implémentation de l’Assurance Qualité dans l’Enseignement Supérieur (CIAQES, henceforth).

The reform mentioned above concepts enhanced the practical contribution of teachers, researchers and course designers by Action Research (AR, henceforth) to achieve two major purposes of HE that are teacher training and quality teaching. At the HE institution level, like the Ecole Normale Supérieure of Constantine (ENSC, henceforth), the contribution consisted of providing the teaching and learning environment with libraries, computing facilities, and virtual learning environments like e-Learning, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) and OER (Open Educational Resources). Furthermore, the MHE recently improved and developed an Evaluation Grid (MESRS 2018) to assess and reward teacher/researcher contribution according to QA requirements. At the teachers’ level, the contribution consisted of adopting an innovative model through pedagogy enhancement, organization, implementation, and evaluation of program courses for pre-service and in-service teacher training according to market and employment demands.

Action Research and Innovation
Innovative models and approaches for teacher professional development may vary from one
educational system to another. Depending on the educational policy, the educational reforms may affect educational objectives, course contents and programs, and social, demographic, and economic requirements. As educational reforms may emphasize one or some of these purposes, the innovative models and approaches for teacher professional development would be interested in improving teaching quality according to the context requirements, educational policy guidelines, course, and program designers. The former always claim for improvement, innovation, and change that have to be applied during the pre-service and in-service experience. Would teachers and teacher-trainees adhere to the process of educational innovation, reform, and change with or without training? The fossilized teaching practices proved to be a major hindrance to innovation and reform. However, motivation and awareness are necessary for discussions on qualitative teaching criteria to enhance quality teaching through innovation.

A positive atmosphere should provide a methodological framework for AR and innovation. The claim for innovation by thinking outside the box- is a misleading procedure when it does not take into consideration the contextual variables of innovation. The former are demographic/societal needs, national and international challenges, financial resources, and specific educational purposes.

In the case of teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at the ENSC, AR focused on sharing experiences and research results of innovation in real contexts of teaching. It targeted the enhancement of teacher career development through and by research commitment to their teaching tasks and encouraging research publication among the academic community, not through administrative decisions,

The overall study of this particular case of innovation and AR aims to:
• Determine to what extent AR would improve quality teaching in pre-service and in-service teacher training;
• Determine the reciprocal relationship between AR and innovation.

It also seeks to answer the following questions:
• What is quality teaching, within the quality teaching assurance framework, and how does it impact innovation?
• What is AR and how does it help teachers improve their research and innovation potential?
• What does the ENS programme course provide as qualitative training to improve quality teaching and innovation? And
• What are the expected and achieved results, so far, at the ENS Constantine?

Quality Assurance and Quality Teaching/Learning at the ENSC
The required criteria of QA to assess quality teaching are determined by the national referential framework that emphasizes the aspects of evaluation, accreditation, and audit. The institution’s QA team carries out an internal evaluation while accreditation is accepted or refused by the national CIAQES; consequently, the audit is a report that is elaborated by the CIAQES. In sum, the major criteria of QA evaluation regarding the ENSC consist of evidence regarding the following criteria:
• Quality Teaching/ Learning Results and Outcomes;
• The expected results allow teachers to correlate their teaching with the overall objectives of a course;
• The expected results must be expressed in terms of knowledge, performance, attitudes and values;
• The results must be expressed in performance/ Action verbs (Avoid using verbs like ‘understand’, ‘learn’, ‘know’ that express internal mental processes);
• The results must consist of 3 to 8 outcomes that focus on what learners are supposed to DO, to PRODUCE, to DEMONSTRATE that are included in the course units/ lessons, and written in a language that the learners can understand.

To satisfy the required criteria of QA, the ENSC provides an EFL course and training program that is highlighted below.

**Quality Assurance and EFL Course Design**

According to the knowledge requirements and objectives of an EFL course, the syllabus includes background knowledge and language skills to be improved throughout the undergraduate course and initiation to TEFL pedagogy (see ENSC nouveau programme). It consists mainly of four major units of competency development that are:

- Language knowledge: Grammar, Written expression, Oral Expression, Reading Techniques, Linguistics, Phonetics, Speaking and Intonation,
- Language Teaching: Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Psychology (psychology of learning; memory and thought; intelligence)
- Psycho-pedagogy (Child and adolescent psychology; developmental psychology; learning styles and strategies; educational objectives; classroom management).
- Culture and communication: Communication and attitude preoccupations, English speaking literature, Civilisation, Cultural issues, and ICT).

**Quality Teaching Objectives and Action Research Procedure**

The quality teaching objectives cannot be achieved unless they target the actions that teachers at the ENSC have to undertake in order to make the trainees practice AR at the various levels of their education. According to Norton (2009):

> Reflective practice should be seen as a core element of teachers’ work, not as an optional extra’ because ‘ it has benefits not only to the teachers for thinking about how to improve their own practice but also for their students. (p. 22)

Those actions are relevant to research methodology which paves the way to and enhances logical reasoning before taking pedagogical action (Whitehead & McNiff, 2006). They develop the ability to Observe, Analyse, Implement and Evaluate academic/professional courses, textbooks and teaching materials during workshops at the ENSC. Furthermore, the trainees put into practice the abilities to Observe, Analyse, Design, Plan lessons and act as teachers by assuming roles, tasks, and interactions with their pupils during the training.

From these two perspectives of teacher education (at the ENSC and during the training), the teacher trainees are supposed to develop a quasi-experimental design of their critical and
innovative actions. During the training, they are given the opportunity to experiment their design of innovative actions through design, manipulation, and treatment of a particular teaching aspect (lessons and course content, communication, interaction in EFL, and classroom management) and evaluate their study by using test, checklists, observation grids and questionnaires. In addition to pencil-paper tests and quizzes, the outcome of this experience is reflected in two documents: every teacher trainee produces, individually, a training report as a reflection on the training program. Additionally, in pairs or small groups, the trainees produce a term paper that includes a review of literature and a practical implementation and evaluation of their AR results. To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, some potential requirements and innovations must be provided for AR and QA to take place.

**Action Research Requirements**

As members of the educational community, future teachers are supposed to be committed to the educational system according to its reform for the purpose of improvement by bringing into play the innovative changes. AR “like all forms of research, requires time, commitment and resources in order to carry it out successfully” (Norton, 2009, p. 1). To do so, AR requires the distinction of a particular aspect or a problem of teaching for innovation purposes in a particular context (Djouimaa, 2016). This initial step of commitment and distinction leads the trainees to logical reasoning of problem sensing and risk-taking of suggesting a solution.

The problematic statement of an AR topic increases the logical design of the study and improves the methodological procedure of trying out and testing a probable solution. In a collaborative AR, the future teachers should accept to share this experience with a supervisor (a tutor or a mentor from the ENSC teaching staff and a teacher trainer at the secondary school) and accept peer evaluation and criticism. To promote AR, every teacher trainee is supposed to provide a written report and a graduating term paper / dissertation by the end of the academic year. Occasionally, an account and a poster of that experience are required at the end of the graduating term for publication.

**Innovation and Evaluation of Pre-service Teacher Training**

Since 2008, additional subjects to the basic EFL course have been designed, implemented and updated for the last two academic years -4th and 5th year of graduation (see ENSC- Nouveau Programme 2008/2018) in order to improve teaching quality through AR. Every subject consisted of weekly lecture and workshops that included topics that directed the trainees’ attention towards language varieties, academic and professional genres to gather for the teaching of EAP and ESP, and introduced worldwide educational systems and pedagogical trends to widen the scope of trainees’ knowledge about old and new educational practices.

Pedagogically, learning styles and strategies, classroom discourse, and communication attitudes consisted also of lectures and workshops in order to provide the trainees with alternatives for change and possibilities of innovation whenever they have to conduct an AR project (Djouimaa, 2011a). Food for thought about change and innovation focused on the teaching means that are necessary for every foreign language class: the EFL syllabus, the textbooks, and the teaching materials. The subject of Syllabus Design and Textbook Evaluation is also organised in lectures and workshops for the purpose of theoretical illustration and practical analysis of the
present syllabuses’ objectives and contents in addition to analysis of textbooks’ relevance to the designed objectives, language proficiency development, and editing quality.

In a detailed examination of teaching materials, the ENSC introduced the subject of materials design and development (MDD, henceforth) to familiarize the trainees with the existing teaching materials in terms of functional communication outcomes, objectives, authentic materials, illustrations, and activities organization according to the taxonomy of educational objectives (Bloom, 1956) and language learning strategies (O’Malley & Chamot 1990; Oxford, 1990). Purposefully, designing language learning activities and items takes a lion share in MDD process of analysis and evaluation in order to lead the trainees gradually to critical thinking and designing their own teaching materials by the end of the academic year (Hamada, 2013). Involving novice teachers and teacher-trainees in materials analysis, evaluation and design increases their exposure to the profession and enhances their self-confidence and their self-efficacy in designing their own teaching materials (Graves, 1996, 2000).

Comprehensively, the subject of research methodology in education had also to include lessons of Writing a Research paper in Education to enable the trainees edit their training reports and term papers as a contribution in AR. In a gradual progression of the training programme, the trainees are provided with a teaching portfolio (Beleulmi & Hamada, 2014) and an observation grid where they can note their comments and reflect on their experience (Djouimaa, 2011 b). These tools would help them write their training report in an academic style. The exposure to all these activities (lecture notes, workshop productions, training report and portfolio) actively guide the trainees to focus on a problematic issue of EFL, design an appropriate methodology and carry out their AR project. The latter is then drafted and edited as their graduation term paper or dissertation.

**Quality Assurance and In-service Teacher Training**

Action research for innovation is a continuous process throughout a teacher’s career development and needs evidence of achievement. We consider, below, how quality assurance can be demonstrated by teacher qualifications at secondary school and at higher education.

**In-service Teacher Training and Career Development at Secondary School**

The moment novice teachers are assigned to start their job, they are supposed to gain more experience and prepare accreditation examinations. The latter is subject to visits and examinations that are performed by an inspector and a board of examiners (experienced teachers); the feedback from national education authorities are very positive as they show that the majority of former ENSC trainees pass the accreditation for their performance, good collaboration with peers in teaching contexts, and innovation in classroom dynamics and activities.

Furthermore, the postgraduate contests’ results of 2013 and 2015 (ENSC - Ecole Doctorate in Applied linguistics and language teaching) show that 90% of the accepted candidates are former ENS trainees; those successful candidates demonstrated qualifications for postgraduate studies, carried out their research projects and completed their Magister dissertations in due time. All candidates focused their research topics on problematic issues of EFL teaching through an AR methodology. This shows to a great extent that when AR is administered progressively through the training it will be a fruitful seed for innovation and quality assurance.
**In-service Teacher Training at Higher Education**
Since 2015, the Ministry of Higher Education required from all novice teachers of all disciplines to attend a compulsory teacher training course that would help them get accreditation for a permanent job. The purpose of such a compulsory measure is to improve teaching quality assurance in HE. Given its specific role in teacher training and education, the ENSC complied immediately with the HE specifications and accepted to provide the course for teachers coming from 15 HE institutions under the labels of Quality, Efficiency, and Diversity. Regarding QA requirements for innovation, one has to question what are the objectives and contents of such a course? These requirements are specified below.

The objectives of the course are specified in the training format (see MHE-Programme de la Formation Pédagogique des Enseignants) and indicate that by the end of the course every novice teacher should be able to perform the following tasks:
- To distinguish educational policy objectives, teacher-researcher role, pedagogical and scientific tasks; principles of ethics and deontology;
- To adapt one’s behavior to the above-mentioned objectives;
- To distinguish the main characteristics of the reforms (LMD system);
- Selecting adequate methodology and evaluation tools.

Consequently, the course content consisted of relevant issues to comply with HE values, norms, and principles of QA and AR that focus on:
- Higher education legislation, Charter of Ethics, Teachers’ rights and obligations;
- Program course structure (Unit Credit System);
- Competency Based Approach and methodology (active learning, objectives, and assessment);
- Course design; SMART objectives, course content and evaluation tools, human and material resources;
- Portfolio and training pedagogy (WORKSHOPS);
- Psychology and psycho-pedagogy;
- Collaborative teaching team, autonomous learning and tutoring;
- ITC and e-learning perspectives for course design;
- Writing academic research and scientific reports.

**Results of Innovation and Quality Teaching**
The combination of the EFL course with the practical implications of pre-service teacher training and AR methodology cannot be evaluated in the traditional summative, pencil and paper tests though they are necessary to measure the knowledge and language proficiency. However, the written reports and oral presentations are continuous assessment of the trainees’ knowledge and their ability to transmit that knowledge to an audience during the workshops; teacher and peer evaluation provide, in this case, a fruitful feedback. Furthermore, a criterion-referenced assessment is most relevant to suit the requirements of QA that are always guided by the indicators of performance. Written reports, oral presentations, training reports, and term papers are evaluated according to norms of objectivity and competency based evaluation that gains validity by relying on three assessors: the teachers, the trainers, and the external examiners.
The in-service course implementation and evaluation had to obey to the same criterion evaluation of the pre-service course. As far as implementation is concerned, the course consisted of online lecture notes that the candidates had to consult; on a periodic and regular basis, those candidates had to attend compulsory tutorials and workshops at the ENSC for practice. The evaluation process had to consist of Power Point Presentations during the tutorials, written reports on personal projects during the workshops, and self-evaluation through questionnaires and checklists.

Conclusion
Innovation is an endeavor, a continuous and challenging activity, for teachers as researchers, that can be methodologically achieved through Action Research. The latter is the vehicle of innovation and change, surplus value of teachers’ efforts in innovation, and a major criterion for career development. Administrative evaluation of career development does not reflect teaching quality as it may be biased by unfair decisions. Action Research, Innovation, and change are the only observable and measurable evidence of quality teaching. Through the revision, innovation, and updating of the training program, the ENS Constantine could achieve valuable qualitative results in terms of quality teaching of its graduates who demonstrated positive behavior towards the teaching profession. The adherence of higher education institutions to the ENSC in-service teaching program proves the notoriety of organized action research to bring change, innovation, and improvement of quality teaching. So, as teachers, we should not wait for change to happen; we have to make it happen by taking action through methodological research to improve quality teaching.

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Professor Hacene HAMADA (Ph.D., 2007) is full-time lecturer and researcher in applied linguistics and language teaching, materials design, and teacher training at the Teacher Training School (ENS) of Constantine. During the last ten years, Prof. Hamada has been supervising postgraduate courses, Doctorate theses, and Magister dissertations, and managing a foreign language research laboratory. https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6911-1882

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The Use of ICT in Search of Quality of Teaching at the University

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Abstract
The use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) gives another vision of language learning and provides learners a certain pleasure to deal with these languages. The current work aims at shedding light on the existing link between the use of ICT and the improvement of the quality of teaching languages at the university. We will articulate our research around the following questions: what are the implications of using ICT in the process of teaching/learning foreign languages? Does ICT provide more independence for the learner? As a hypothesis, we propose the following: ICT sharpens learners' willingness and desire to learn while facilitating their access to language and culture. It installs them in a report of independence thus favoring the acquisition of the skills. To report on this problem, we will rely on a survey conducted within the Center of Intensive Language Teaching of the University of Biskra, Algeria. We used a questionnaire, as a mean of investigation. We subjected our corpus to a quantitative analysis followed by a qualitative interpretative analysis.

Keywords: Algerian context, ICT, languages, quality, teaching

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Introduction
Conventional means oppose technological or modern means, in the field of education as in all other areas of life. The ultimate goal of the human being is to perfect his environment to make it as conducive as possible. To palpate this reality, we need only to consider the evolution of man from the Ramapithecus to the Cro-Magnon, as a first step, and from the Cro-Magnon to the cybernetic man as a next step.

In Algeria, as everywhere in the world, learning foreign languages has become a necessity to evolve in a society that wants to be open to the world. The number of private foreign language schools is increasing. The activity of the CILT (Centers of Intensive Language Teaching) is reinforced by the use of teaching methods redesigned by the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR), which sets itself the goal of introducing new concepts and methods for teaching foreign languages. The use of language labs, projection screens, data show, internet, podcasts and digital devices such as tablets, smartphones, gives another vision of language learning and gives learners a certain pleasure in learning.

Our paper will be articulated around the following problematic: What are the implications of using ICT in the process of teaching/learning foreign languages? Does the digital age provide more independence for the learner? As a hypothesis, we propose the following: ICT sharpen learners' willingness and desire to learn while facilitating their access to language and culture. It installs him in a report of independence thus favoring the acquisition of the skills.

To report on this problem, we will rely on a survey conducted within the Center of Intensive Teaching Languages of the University of Biskra, Algeria, with the learners. We used a questionnaire, as a mean of investigation. We have tried to collect information from a sample that will be as representative as possible. We subjected our corpus to a quantitative analysis followed by a qualitative interpretative analysis.

Regarding the architecture of our paper we will, at first address the field of ICT, the benefits and limits of their use. Second, we will try to highlight the notion of quality through an investigation that we conducted as a part of our PhD thesis. Therefore, we chose to work on issues related to our problematic.

Our aim is to emphasize the importance of using ICT in order to achieve quality in the field of foreign language teaching / learning within the Intensive Language Learning Center of the University of Biskra, Algeria. The reason we chose a sample of learners from this center is that most of them are students who aspire to improve their level in foreign languages in order to ensure a certain quality in relation to the skills required in their fields.

Elements Definitions
Information and Communication Technologies
Nowadays, technology is everywhere; it has invaded even the personal and intimate space of individuals. This invasion can only have consequences at all levels and in all areas: social, economic and political ...etc. The University is also an area where the use of ICT has seen a
growing development. Not only teachers but also students use this method to improve high quality teaching / learning, both in terms of performance and skills.

Crawford (2013) explains the importance of the ICT as a mean of teaching. He argues that it is a powerful tool as it improves people’s abilities, and that it is particularly effective as a learning tool. According to the same author, when people learn how to use ICT, they interact with this tool and learn dynamically. Using ICT in teaching makes it easier and more attractive for the students. "One of the hallmarks of using ICTs for language teaching and learning is that it allows learners to work independently" (Foucher, 2008, p. 53)

In a study entitled “What place for ICT in class of FFL? The time of balance sheets”, Defays & Mattioli-Thonard (2012), deal with the different aspects of the use of ICT in the teaching of the French language. One of these aspects concerns the teaching practices induced by ICT, on different levels: mental, intellectual, cultural, professional, which condition the construction of knowledge.

In the context of our paper, we discuss, among other things, the benefits and risks of using ICT, and their use in teaching / learning foreign languages, including French. We can possibly mention among the advantages, the enrichment, the independence, and the motivation...etc. As for the limits, we will put the stress on the isolation of which the user of ICT could be a victim. The authors mentioned above propose in detail the benefits of ICT for learners on different levels. Psychologically, for example, they mention the fact that the use of ICT stimulates the motivation and interest of the learner and at the same time helps him to get rid of his shyness. On the social level, the internet promotes exchanges through social networks and helps to create possible collaborations. Pedagogically, the context becomes richer and pushes the teacher to explore new perspectives while trying to adopt and adapt their learners, which encourages interactivity into the classroom. In addition, we will choose one last aspect of the use of ICT that focuses on convenience and this in relation to the accessibility of the internet and the computer compared to other means such as the library.

What about the disadvantages and limits of ICT? We have seen above that ICT presents a significant series of advantages, but like any invention, they also present limits such as dependence, isolation and even physical and mental fatigue due to the excessive use of this tool.

If the computer, the software, the Internet, further stimulate the curiosity of learners and respond more easily and quickly to their needs and interests, they can also create problems in terms of attention, understanding, memory, and even prevent the essential processes of synthesis and assimilation of knowledge thus acquired. (Defays & Mattioli-Thonard, 2012, p. 3)

Chaptal (2003) proposes to study ICT in a comprehensive way in order to understand the different dimensions of the problem. The aim is to highlight the actual use of ICT and emphasize its primary role in the different areas of use. Chaptal insists on the contribution of ICT not only to the learner but also to society. In Integrating Technology and Learning to Teach: a Systemic Perspective, Bangou (2006), explains, in turn, the importance of ICT and their integration into the teaching
process, yet he stressed the urgency of training ICT teachers, so that they could use them effectively in their teaching/training function. The training institutes are also concerned, they must take charge of the teachers and instruct them in the TICE. In this vein, Rivero (2014) underlines the impact of the use of ICT in the way of teaching foreign languages.

As a result of this technological revolution there is a change in the roles of language teacher and learner. The language teacher is now thinking about how to integrate technology into its course and how this change can improve the process of language acquisition. (p. 19)

To conclude, we can say that ICT can be used according to the objectives set in relation to the object of study. In the case of language teaching, ICT must accompany the learner in order to improve his level without making him dependent and isolated from the outside world.

The Notion of Quality
In this era of globalization witnessed by today's world, man has no choice but to try to adapt to change by perfecting his trajectory each time, and by providing himself with a suitable tool to facilitate his ascension. In our paper, we address this quest for quality in the university environment and more specifically in the field of teaching / learning foreign languages, especially the French language. Likewise, we link the use of ICT to high quality teaching.

For Cheng (2016), quality is a buzzword in university. He wonders what it is. Is it for university teaching or student learning experience… or a set of standards and criteria that we use to measure educational outcomes? “Quality has become a key term in higher education since the 1980s. There are a lot of debates on the meaning of quality and its evaluation methods, but quality remains an elusive and contested concept” (Harvey & Williams, 2010, as cited in Cheng, 2016, p. 1). According to Cheng, there are two important definitions for quality: fitness for purpose and value for money, but they are misused specially in university, because they were created for economic need, “The use of these definitions for management purposes ignores the emancipatory power of higher education and the development needs of academics and students” (Cheng, 2016, p. 1). One of the aims of fitness for purpose is management by objectives. Institutions can define their objectives and quality is demonstrated by achieving these objectives. The purpose has to deal with the students’ interest. The notion of value for money is closely related to the fact that the customers or the students are willing to pay for better quality (Cheng, 2016).

Methodology
Research in the language sciences involves several disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and didactics; they all aspire to the development of a scientific knowledge that is based according to Blanchet on “an explicit modality of accumulation of empirical experiments (the method) according to a project of answer to a questioning explicitly justified (the problematic)” (Blanchet & Chardenet, 2011, p. 10). For the sake of this work, we have exploited a research that we carried out as part of our doctoral thesis entitled The Perception of French among Algerian Learners of Private Foreign Language Schools. We distributed a questionnaire containing 35 questions from which we chose 06 to highlight the problematic of this research paper. Researchers, in general, and sociolinguists, in particular consider the questionnaire, as being the best means used in a quantitative survey, because it allows collecting precise information that best identifies the purpose.
of the research being undertaken. Like any research tool, the questionnaire is used to verify a hypothesis emitted by the researcher, who must measure all the parameters involved in order to guarantee an adequate result.

In what follows, we will submit the data of our survey to a double analysis. The first will be quantitative, and will deal with statistics that will help us to shed light on some details; the second analysis will be qualitative, therefore descriptive, and hermeneutical. It will help to justify our epistemological choices as to the formulation of our initial questioning. However, before, we would like to give an overview of the Intensive Language Teaching Center where we carried out part of our investigation.

**The Center of Intensive Language Teaching**

Faced with the phenomenon of globalization, the Algerian university, like the universities of other countries of the world, gives a great importance to the teaching / learning of foreign languages.

The Center of Intensive Language Teaching (CILT) of Biskra University provides a technical support during learning, training and retraining in foreign languages. The spoken language is one of the skills required to succeed, whatever the specialty. All categories of the population actually have the means to acquire knowledge in foreign languages and the ability to use these languages as it allows them to meet their communication needs and more particularly:

- to deal with situations of daily life in multilingual environments,
- to exchange information and ideas with people who speak another language and to communicate their thoughts and feelings,
- to understand well the way of life and mentality of other people and their cultural heritage.

For better acquisition, the center offers a computer platform ICT' (digital laboratory rooms, TVs, Datashow ... etc.)

The CILT provides specialized training in order to pass the following tests:
- TCF: Knowledge Test of French.
- DALF: Advanced Diploma in French Language.

Also, CEIL offers FOS training: French for Specific Purposes
- ESP: English for specific Purposes.
- TOEFL: Test of English as a Foreign Language.

These courses are designed for academic or professional purposes. As it provides training, “à la carte” and “face to face “training that are interested, in particular, businessmen.

The languages offered by CILT Biskra are French, English, Spanish, Italian, German and Turkish.

The CILT uses the methods of teaching of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). It is based on the four competences: oral comprehension, oral production,
written comprehension and written production, and this according to the levels going from A1 to C1.

Results and Analysis
As mentioned above, we will use 06 questions from a questionnaire that contains 35 and which has been distributed to 150 learners of private schools and the language center, the letter L reference to the learner. It seems important to outline a brief description of the learners of the sample of our investigation, to know their language profile, to try to determine their socio-cultural affiliation, as well as their competence and their familiarity with the French language.

The peculiarity of these learners is that they are heterogeneous at more than one level, especially at the linguistic and sociocultural levels, and is worth noting the presence of several elements already graduated in other disciplines, various fields such as medicine and architecture, civil servants and university students in various branches including French. They belong to an age group between 18 and 50 years old. The level of French practised by these learners differs from one group to another. There are several levels (CEFR), level A1.1 (Initial level), A1, A2 and B1. Also noteworthy is a strong female presence. These learners opted for private schools as a last resort to improve their level in French.

Q1. Why did you decide to take private lessons?

Figure 1. The reasons behind private lessons
Seventy-one percent of learners say that they have decided to take these courses to improve their level and to communicate better in French, in fact, they have a real problem in spoken. L53: "to improve my language and to speak well", L150: "I like the French language and I want to improve my level to speak and communicate easily", 29% follow these courses because they use French in their studies and their work. L19: because this language is important for my work in the administration, L115: "because I need in my field as a researcher".
Q2. Why you did not learn this language in schools?

Figure 2. The difficulties of learning French at school

Sixty three percent of learners explain in their answers the reasons that prevented them from learning French at school. The first cause chosen by the majority of learners is the learning conditions considered unfavorable by the respondents. These conditions include, first and foremost, the courses taught, that is, the programs which, according to the learners, do not adapt to their actual needs or their level. Then the teacher is implicated, either because he does not speak French and mainly uses Arabic in his class, or because he ignores the teaching method. L31: "the teacher is not able to receive the information to the students", L108: "since the methods are false and stupid they explain in Arabic in the science of French more many things that I cannot explain now" 17% insisted that they did not show an interest in French when they were in school. L24: "I am not interested". 10% blamed this linguistic failure on the environment in which they lived at that time. This is first of all, the fault of the society, one like the other did not encourage the respondents to learn French. L12: "There is no encouragement and the environment uses only Arabic (...)". The rest of the responses were unworkable, as is the case with the L44 learner whose answer to this question was "maybe the academic status is not appropriate" and L45: "if I learned". Nevertheless, there is one that has caught our attention: L93, who explained that the cause of her failure in learning French, is the fact that she studied English as a first foreign language in primary school, and not French. She said she was a victim of the education system. 5% did not give an answer.
Q3. Do you think you can learn it more easily in this school?

![Pie chart showing responses to Q3]

Figure. 3 The ease of learning French at private school
Learners attending private foreign language schools are all looking to improve their language level. 88% think they can improve it in these private schools. 3% think no - an answer that contradicts the enrollment process in a private language school. 7% are not sure and hesitate between yes and no.

Q4. Why?

![Pie chart showing reasons for Q4]

Figure. 4 The reasons
74% of learners, who thought they could learn better in these private schools, argue with a focus on the teaching methods used. These include language labs, CEFR methods, qualified teachers, and developed spaces. L16: "because the methods used are simple and precise", A23: "the teacher..."
hears", L58: "fewer students per class"). 18% think that they will achieve this through their personal efforts. L70: "I am aware of my faults, I can correct them".

**Q5. What did French represent for you before attending this school?**

![Figure. 5 Representations of French language before private school](image)

73% of learners conveyed negative representations. The terms used to express this negativity are numerous, L19: "hard", L31: "bad", L54: "my only point of weakness", L128: "a language I hate". 61 learners used the difficult term to show how far they could not learn this language and were inevitably in a situation of linguistic insecurity. 9% of learners gave other representations that we were unable to place in either the first or the second category. For example, L100: "a spoils of war", this joins the category of colonial representations that we have already mentioned in our analysis.

**Q6. What does French represent for you today?**

![Figure. 6 Representations of French language today](image)

77% of learners conveyed positive representations. 10% gave other representations. 8% expressed negative representations.
After deciding to enroll in private foreign language schools to learn French, the perception of these learners towards this language has changed from negative to positive. In fact, 77% admit that they now have a positive outlook as they begin to master this language. This fact decreases the degree of insecurity that invaded them each time they were preparing to use French. L19: "good", L54: "I like it a lot I improve my level little by little". 8% of learners have negative representations, even after attending private schools to learn French. L42: "difficult complex". 10% of the responses did not meet any of the criteria in our analysis.

**Synthesis**

In the above section, we undertook a quantitative analysis, corroborated by a qualitative and interpretative analysis. We believe that the statistics presented inform, for many, the relationship of the use of ICT and the improvement of the level of learners in French. According to the results of Q1, the goal is, for 71% of learners, to improve their level in French and to succeed in communicating. On the same theme, 63% of learners attributed their low level of French to the unfavorable teaching conditions they experienced (Q2). These conditions represented a de-motivating factor for these learners. In this regard, Dörnyei (2001) presents the results of a survey on foreign language learning conducted in Budapest with a group of unmotivated students. The purpose of this study was to identify the most obvious demotivating factors. Dörnyei proposed nine in order of importance - from the most important to the least: the teacher, inadequate educational infrastructure, lack of confidence, negative attitude towards the L2, the compulsory nature of the study of the L2, interference from another foreign language, negative attitude towards the L2 community, group attitudes and the manual. (Lasagabaster, 2006). If we quoted this study, it is because our learners gave the same reasons as those proposed by Dörnyei, to justify the linguistic failure of which they are the object.

To remedy this level of language, our learners decided to take classes in private schools. We believe that this stage marks the point of change in their linguistic background. As a result, 88% of learners think they can learn French more easily in these private schools (Q3). They justify this choice by the more appropriate means used in these schools (Q4).

Learners were asked about the nature of representations they had of the French language before and after enrollment in private schools, and after this registration. 73% had negative representations. They saw French as a difficult, harsh and detestable language, and it was even a question of colonial representations that linked French to the colonial period (Q5), and which are anchored in the value system of learners. We believe that the nature of these representations prevented these learners from learning the French language in the past. This explains their level, which hardly improved before their enrollment in private schools. By taking French lessons, the perception of this same slice of learners’ changes. This confirms a part of our hypotheses where we supposed, that the nature of the representations could affect the process of learning foreign languages. Facts confirmed by 77% of learners who, after taking French lessons, now have for this language, positive representations that help them better understand the learning process (Q6).

**Conclusion**

We have tried to demonstrate, through this article, that the use of ICT in our universities can lead to improvement and therefore quality in teaching in a general way and in the teaching of foreign
languages, French in a particular way. We gave an overview on ICT and the concept of quality. We have also presented the center of intensive language teaching at the University of Biskra in Algeria. The goal is to introduce the experimentation through which we have planned to answer our initial problematic: what are the implications of using ICT in the process of teaching/learning foreign languages? Does digital age provide more independence for the learner? And which deals with the relationship of ICT to the notion of quality. Through the results obtained, we were able to confirm our hypotheses. Indeed, the ICT sharpens the learners' willingness and desires to learn while facilitating their access to language and culture. It installs him in a report of independence thus favoring the acquisition of the skills.

However, it must be emphasized that the use of ICT is not the only guarantee of quality or even the first. According to other field research, we have noticed that the first guarantor of quality in any teaching / learning process is the teacher. It is therefore necessary to train teachers well and provide them with tools that guarantee quality education.

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**References**
Investigating the Effect of Social Media on EFL Students’ Written Production: Case of Third-Year EFL Students at Tlemcen University, Algeria

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Abstract
The combination between technology and education has given birth to a new form of assessment called: e-assessment. The latter assesses learners using different digital means one of which are social media. The present study investigated the impact of social media, as being one aspect of e-assessment tools, on EFL students’ written production. It tried to highlight the nature of this impact, enquired about the reasons behind their writing difficulties, and explored whether these errors were caused by social media or not. This research work relied on a case study that consisted of 31 third-year undergraduates and 22 English teachers at the department of English at Tlemcen University, Algeria. The data were gathered through the use of two questionnaires administered to both learners and instructors plus two writing tasks, one assigned on social media and the other in the classroom. Data were analysed quantitatively and qualitatively through error analysis. After identifying the different errors produced by the students, the findings revealed that a relationship existed between learners’ use of social media and their writing issues. Their intensive use of social media led to a significant decrease in the writing level of the learners who have developed a new form of writing that includes linguistic habits which reflect the informalities often found on a social media environment, and do not necessarily follow the norms and rigours of the English language. They have become unable to distinguish between the formal and informal context to the point that certain linguistic aspects have become fossilized.

Keywords: Error analysis, fossilization, linguistic deficiencies, social media, writing

Introduction

Today’s connected world has witnessed a radical change that has gathered people around the globe closer regardless of distance. Moreover, the tremendous development made in the field of ICT’s, that resulted from globalization, has brought a digital age that keeps surging and advancing. This digital age led to the development of new concepts such as digital literacy which urges individuals to have background knowledge about computers and smart phones; a knowledge that has become necessary in order to cope with the needs of the contemporary society.

Mobile phones and computers have not only impacted the way people interact with each other, but also the society as a whole. This effect is what is known as social media. The latter have become introduced in the EFL classroom and have allowed instructors to digitally assess their learners through using them as an innovative teaching tool. Their integration has radically changed not only the way students learn, but also the way they are assessed.

Despite their advantages, these social networking sites have created a sort of addiction that resulted in a decline of the students’ writing abilities. Research about this phenomenon has raised some concerns in the last few years, and has attracted the attention of many researchers who have long investigated the impact of social media on learners’ writing, and attempted to find the most suitable solutions to this issue.

Literature Review

Knight (2009) defines e-assessment as the latest form of assessment that relies on technology for the sake of elaborating, storing, recording and grading learners’ assignments and answers by means of digital devices which can be computers, mobile phones or tablets. Crisp (2011) mentions the several means employed to assess students including: wikis, blogs, self or peer review and social media. The latter refer to those 2.0 websites and applications that result in what is called a web-based technology i.e., a communication through the use of the internet. They enable the internet user to create his own content and share it with his friends or followers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Trottier & Fuchs (2014) consider social media as being the unification of several types of media and ICT’s in what is referred to as a platform of communication. Wigmore (2015) describes them as being a group of connected media of communication utilized by the population for various reasons such as discussions, exchanges and cooperation.

Social media are traced back to the late 2000’s and since then their popularity has kept growing. They are a popular means of interaction employed by a number of companies and various institutions as well as millions of people all over the world who consider them as an essential part of their everyday life. They allow individuals, who share the same interests, to discuss online with each other; to comment, and exchange data, thoughts, news, pictures and videos, to find friends and relatives, or to take part in online communities. These operations occur by creating a profile, either private or public, and a personal account with one’s information (Ellison, 2007; Brown & Vaughn, 2011).

Crystal (2004) mentions the variety of names that are found in the literature to refer to the new type of language that emerged from the internet such as digitalk, textism, netspeak, textspeak or techspeak. According to Riley (2013), the rapid growth of ICT’s has led to a new way of
interaction on the internet: a digital communication which is represented in the reliance on emoticon, informal writing as well as nonstandard punctuation and capitalization when updating a status on Facebook, for instance.

In fact, a change in the learners’ writing has been witnessed by lecturers who assume that social media are responsible for their writing difficulties, and confirm the drop of the students’ writing abilities. There are different types of errors; some of them are due to social media and have led to the elaboration of a variety of models of error analysis like the one put forward by Crystal (2001). He claims that there is a variety of new non-standard English spellings which are witnessed in chat groups or virtual world games. They are mainly influenced by speech and represent the youth’s language in virtual words.

Based on Crystal’s (2001) model, other researchers like Varnhagen et al. (2010) advocate the creation of a new type of the English language on instant messaging, and have developed a model of error analysis. Their model includes: shortcuts which, on their own, imply insider words that are highly informal and inappropriate, phonetic transcriptions that resemble speech, contractions that combine nouns with other nouns or with verbs, lower case that comprises writing proper nouns in small letters, abbreviations, word combinations, acronyms, alphabet or letters in writing, pragmatic devices which embrace emotion words, contractions, acronyms, upper case i.e., writing all the word items into capital letters, misspelling of some words and typographical errors that occur when typing on the keyboard.

Methodology
In order to assess the impact of social media, as being one instance of e-assessment tools, on EFL students’ written production, a case study was relied on. It was geared by the following research question:

1-How do social media affect EFL students’ written production?
2-What are the reasons behind the ill-formed sentences produced by the students?

The mentioned research questions led to the formulation of the following research hypotheses:

1-Social media affect students negatively, so that they use an informal lexicon and make grammar and spelling mistakes.
2-The long exposure to social media leads to the process of fossilisation which can be harmful to their acquisition of the structure of the foreign language.

To answer these research questions, the researcher administered two questionnaires for both lecturers and students at the department of English at Tlemcen University, Algeria.

Participants
The participants, who were selected for this case study, were thirty-one third-year EFL learners at the department of English at Tlemcen University. They were undergraduate students who were studying English for three years, so that they could get their Licence degree by the end of the year. The other informants consisted of 22 English teachers at the department English at Tlemcen University. They held either a Doctorate or a Magister degree, and were teaching various modules.
Their selection was due to the fact that they were all concerned with students’ writing issues as they corrected essays in the exams or tests.

**Data Collection**

To better investigate and identify the informants’ opinions about the impact of social media on EFL learners’ written production, two questionnaires were delivered for both students and educators at the department of English at Tlemcen University along with two writing tasks. One was provided to the learners on Facebook, and the other one in the classroom. The researcher analysed their pieces of writing later on by means of error analysis by following Varnhagen et al. (2010) model which was explained previously. The choice of the topics for the two writing tasks was deliberate since they were easy, general and at the reach of the students’ level to enable both weak and good students to write.

**Teacher’s Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was designed for the sake of investigating instructors’ views about the effect of social media on EFL learners’ written production as well as the reasons behind their errors. It was administered to 22 professors, and contained eleven questions involving both close-ended and open-ended questions (See Appendix A).

**Students’ Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was designed in order to assess the effect of social media on EFL learners’ written production. It was administered to third year Licence students. It contained eleven questions moving from close ended ones, which comprise yes/no and multiple choice questions, to open ended ones (See Appendix B). The questionnaire was administered by the researcher who explained the questions and was present for further insights along with the responsible teacher.

**Writing Task on Facebook**

In order to have a concrete example of the students’ writing, directly from social media, the researcher created a group page on Facebook, named: ‘Writing Activity’. It implied thirteen third-year learners who were asked to write paragraphs about four different topics: something that interests them or they are fond of, their experiences at the university, the Algerians’ desire to flee their country, and their problems in making research. The researcher selected Facebook instead of the other social media because of its popularity among learners and its large availability. The duration of the task was three weeks. It was conducted in the form of debates, for the same of allowing the researchers notice instantly the variety of errors produced by the students. In order to compare the students’ writing on social media and in the classroom, the researcher relied on an in-class writing task.

**In-Class Writing Task**

This research tool consisted of writing a formal essay on the difficulties that they encountered in learning English. The task was explained by the researcher, with the presence of the responsible teacher; it lasted one hour and was held in the classroom. It was not scored because the purpose was not to quantify the types of errors made by the students but rather qualify them through the use of error analysis. The aim of the in-class writing task was to see whether the students would have recourse to the same writing style in the classroom and on Facebook or not.
Results
After gathering the necessary data, the researchers shift to the obtained results from each research instrument.

Results of Teachers’ Questionnaire
All the informants claimed that their learners faced difficulties in writing. 68% considered their learners’ writing level as being weak, and the remaining 32% believed that it was average. The respondents provided several answers for the question about the causes of the students’ writing problems. Some pointed out that the low English proficiency, which is represented in the lack of reading, vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, as one of the reasons behind their issues. They maintained that this deficiency in the mastery of grammatical rules resulted in their ignorance of the sentence structure and paragraph writing. It was also due to the fact that they did not have writing strategies, lacked practice, and were influenced by social media and the excessive texting. Others proposed a variety of factors like laziness, lack of motivation, interest and concentration. These elements pushed them to make silly mistakes of inattention. A minority believed that teachers did not provide an adequate feedback to students with the correction of their errors so as to help them to be aware of their mistakes.

Regarding the causes of the errors made by students in writing, the results demonstrated that the majority of lecturers agreed that fossilization was the major cause of students’ errors. The rest of them were divided between the mother tongue interference and overgeneralization, while the remaining supported hypercorrection as shown in figure 1:

![Figure 1. Causes of students’ errors](image)

64% of the tutors mentioned the non-use of social media with their students; whereas, 36% claimed that they employed them mainly for educational purposes in order to answer their questions; exchange reading materials such as documents, books and useful links, videos or for supervision sessions of Master and Doctorate students. The other reasons were for communicative purposes or for being updated. Regarding the effect of social media on EFL students’ writing production, some considered that they negatively affected it, and encouraged learners to use abbreviations, acronyms, slang words, spelling mistakes, symbols, slips, contracted forms and punctuation mistakes, and to neglect grammatical rules and miss-conjugate tenses. They argued that students acquired these bad writing habits from the overuse of social media which has led to the fossilisation of their mistakes. Others considered them to be a beneficial way to improve students’ writing, and
instead of using them for entertainment ends, they suggested to have an educational social media based platform that boils down to activities related to the planning and operations of writing in order to improve learners’ level. This will help them to rely on themselves and develop their own learning autonomy.

**Results of Students’ Questionnaire**

The results of the questionnaire demonstrated that Facebook was the most employed social media website by learners as it exemplified in figure 2:

![Figure 2. Types of social media used by the students](image)

Seventy seven percent of the informants always adopted social media, 19% of them asserted their occasional use, and only 4% advocated the rare use. As far as their daily time spent on social media is concerned, 61% claimed that they devoted more time than the given propositions, 13% declared two hours, 10% mentioned one hour, 6% said that they spent thirty minutes on social media, and 10% only fifteen minutes. The results are demonstrated in figure 3:

![Figure 3. Daily time spent on social media](image)

Ninety percent of the learners reported a difference between their writing in the classroom and on social media where they confessed writing informally. Whereas, 10% advocated to rely on a formal style in both contexts as illustrated in figures 4 and 5:
In addition to these results, 90% highlighted their use of slang words and abbreviations on social media, while the remaining 10% maintained their non-use as it is represented in figure 6:

When asked about the reasons of their informality in writing, a variety of causes were mentioned. They considered that the informal writing was fast and a gain of time, easy to use and helpful to express themselves. They believed that it was more suitable when chatting with close friends or relatives. They also argued that it gave them more freedom in writing in contrast to the formal one that obliged them to follow the strict rules.

Concerning the effects of social media on their writing, divergent views were provided. Some respondents believed that they had a positive influence rather than a negative one, and helped them improve their writing abilities. They claimed that social media created an interactive way of learning in which they were immersed in an environment they are already accustomed to in their daily life. Others, on the other hand, were against this idea. They put forward their negative effect, and asserted that they got accustomed to an informal writing on social media that affected their writing abilities.

**Results of the Writing Tasks**
The researcher designed two writing tasks, one on Facebook and the other in the classroom. The aim behind doing so was to compare the writing in the two contexts. The researcher then analysed
students’ pieces of writing through errors analysis following Varnhagen et al. (2010) model of error analysis. The errors were classified according to each category as shown in tables 1 and 2 (See Appendix C).

Table 1 exposes pieces of students’ writing that were taken from the writing task on Facebook. One can notice that students overused abbreviations, acronyms, emotion punctuation and emotion words that reflected the social media environment. They respected neither punctuation nor spelling, and relied heavily on the alphabet or letter as well as the phonetic spelling.

Table 2 deals with the in-class writing task. It demonstrates that most of the learners made an increasing number of syntactic and spelling mistakes, in addition to the lack of punctuation. Despite the fact that they relied on the dictionary during the task, and the researcher emphasized on writing a formal essay, their pieces of writing were full of informal expressions, contractions, abbreviations as well as alphabets or letters.

Other elements were classified in table 3 which illustrates some mistakes that were noticed by the researcher in the in-class writing task, and were not highlighted in the model that was adopted previously.

Table 3. Other mistakes in the in-class writing task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Absence of Article</th>
<th><em>I am english student, when I was child</em>, and be teacher, learning english is not easy task)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Errorneous and ill-structured sentences</td>
<td>couldn’t find words to express somethings even My self - the most one is phonetics - the major ones faced me - whenever I heard or read a word that I don’t know searched for it - must read lot book - I can’t speak with it - for eg someone or me - the most of my time in the campus - if you want to learn something you will if you are meet you will meet - first time that us as students - to be honest I still have now - each one which its phonetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The interference of the mother tongue</td>
<td>skip from these problems, when it comes to my tongue</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The errors highlighted in table 3 further confirmed the learners’ difficulties in writing. They had the tendency to write the same way they spoke in their mother tongue, and to rely on erroneous and ill structured sentences. Another issue was the interference of the French language. This interference was so deeply rooted that they were unable to differentiate between the two spellings. Furthermore, other elements like repetition as well as the lack of cohesion and coherence were also witnessed.

Discussion
The collected data from the questionnaires revealed that the totality of students had access to social media creating a sort of addiction, mainly to Facebook, which was reflected in the fact that they spend a long period of time using it. This dependence was harmful and affected their writing abilities; an assumption confirmed by the professors who were aware of their writing issues when correcting their exam papers, and pointed out the students' weak level in writing. In fact, the
The extensive usage of social media divulged the students' lack of mastery of the systemic language, insufficient reading and effortless work that were behind their low linguistic proficiency and the non-respect of the English language norms. This supposition was noticed in the online writing task as well as the essays which were full of syntactic and spelling errors. While the majority mentioned the negative effect of social media, a minority of educators and learners; however, put forward their positive effect, and believed that they acted as a means to enhance their writing abilities. This assumption partially confirms the first hypothesis which stated that social media affected students negatively, pushed them to use an informal lexicon, and to make grammatical and spelling mistakes.

The friendly and relaxing environment of social media encouraged students to write through abbreviations, symbols, acronyms and slang words, for facilitative purposes, thus leading to an informal language that best characterized the social media context. The influence of social media rendered them unable to differentiate between a formal setting and an informal one. They completely lost the notion of the register of the written language, and wrote in a text message type. In other words, the effect of speech on writing led them to write in the classroom the same way they would write or speak with their friends. Some informal words and expressions, that were written in the writing task on Facebook, were also found in the essays. These informalities in writing could be accepted in a Facebook context, but are inappropriate from an academic perspective. Throughout time, some spellings, expressions or grammatical structures become a habit in the learners’ writing style and therefore fossilized.

These findings confirmed the second hypothesis that stipulated that the long exposure to social media leads to the process of fossilization, and damages the acquisition of the structure of the foreign language. The results also highlighted the interference of both the mother tongue as well as French language on the foreign one. This led to a mixture of the three languages at the same time, and the occurrence of a sociolinguistic phenomenon called: code switching.

**Recommendations**

As recommendations to improve learners’ writing abilities and reduce the negative effects of social media, the teacher can integrate a reading session within his course. Learners choose an interesting book about their favourite author, summarize it, and make a discussion or a debate with their classmates later on. This extensive reading session will create a joy of reading that will help them develop their writing skill, reduce their spelling and syntactic mistakes, learn new lexicon and cultures, expend their knowledge, and see how the language is formed and how the different words are combined together to make meaning (Day, 2008).

Another alternative would be the reliance on video games. In this vein, Reinders (2009) suggests the introduction of free virtual games like “the Sims” or “Second Life” in the EFL classroom. Since the latter imply the creation of characters, learners can write paragraphs in which they describe their look, their roles, and explain the selection of gender, race or dressing. They have also the possibility to write to their classmates, within the game, by means of chats. He also suggests that they could write stories in which they imagine ideas of games with their own vision, creativity and imagination.
Since the findings revealed the learners’ wants to have recourse to social media for educational purposes, Aydin (2014) speaks about the f-portfolio which is an online portfolio delivered by the teacher via Facebook. He highlights its benefits in improving the learners’ linguistic competence, content knowledge as well as reading and writing skills. It is a time saving method that enables instructors to collect writing samples and brainstorm their ideas on Facebook. It leads to the rapid access, storage and reception of materials, and exchange of feedback between teachers and peers so as to enhance the students’ learning outcomes.

Conclusion
The research findings revealed that social media harmed negatively the students who, in consequence, faced many linguistic deficiencies and great difficulties in writing. In addition, they encountered an inability to distinguish between the classroom and the social media context. This situation pushed them to use informal expressions and abbreviations in their writing task which turned to be a habit that was observed in students’ pieces of writing. Moreover, it was noticed that students’ writing was influenced by their native language as they relied on expressions that were part of their daily life speech in the writing tasks. The results also demonstrated a positive aspect of social media that cannot be denied. The study appears to support the argument for a change in the way writing is taught. Thus, the most appropriate solutions would be the introduction of ICT’s for teaching writing, and the reliance on social media for educational purposes. This method of teaching would likely meet students’ needs and interest in nowadays globalized world.

The study addressed only some areas of the writing skill with focus on certain linguistic aspects like the grammatical structure, punctuation, cohesion and coherence and spelling mistakes. Further investigations on the topic should be held by future researchers to provide wider perspectives on the subject area. Moreover, due to the significant influence of speaking on the students’ written production that was witnessed in the writing tasks, the researcher opens the door for future research in which the area of interest shifts to the speaking skills in order to assess the effect of social media on the students’ speech. The solutions should not be restricted to Tlemcen University only, but could be generalized to the rest of the Algerian universities in order to improve the existing situation, and harmonize working methods. The present work dealt only with one aspect of e-assessment which was social media; however, other digital tools such as platforms will be used in the near future to evaluate their impact on EFL students’ written production.

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References


Appendix A

Teachers’ Questionnaire

The present questionnaire seeks to investigate the teachers’ views about the effect of social media on EFL students’ written production. You are kindly invited to answer the following questions.

1- Do your students face difficulties in writing?
   Yes ☐ No ☐

2- What are the types of errors produced by your students?

3- What are the causes of your students’ errors?
   The mother tongue interference ☐ Overgeneralization ☐ Hypercorrection ☐ Fossilization ☐
   Others........................................................................................................................................

4- How do you evaluate your students’ overall level in written production?
   Weak ☐ Average ☐ Good ☐ Excellent ☐

5- Do you use social media? Yes ☐ No ☐

6- Do you use them with your students? Yes ☐ No ☐
   If yes, for which purpose?

7- Do you believe that social media can be implemented in EFL classrooms to improve your students’ writing skills? Yes ☐ No ☐
   If yes, how?

8- Have social media affected your EFL students’ written production?
   Yes ☐ No ☐
   If yes, how?

9- Could you provide some instances of the mistakes caused by social media that you have encountered when correcting your students’ exam papers?

10-11-What do you suggest as solutions to improve your students’ written production?

Thank you very much indeed
Appendix B
Students’ Questionnaire

This questionnaire aims at gathering data about the impact of social media on EFL learners’ writing production. You are kindly invited to answer the following questions.

1- Do you use social media? Yes □ No □
2- If yes, how often do you use them?
   Always □ Sometimes □ Rarely □ Never □
3- How much time do you spend using social media daily?
   15mn □ 30mn □ 1h □ 2h □ More □
4- What social media do you use?
   Facebook □ Twitter □ Snapchat □ Instagram □
   Others........................................................................................................................................
5- What type of writing do you employ when using social media?
   Formal □ Informal □
   If you use an informal writing, explain why?
   ....................................................................................................................................................
6- Do you use slang words and abbreviations when writing? Yes □ No □
7- Is the writing that you use in social media similar to the one used in classroom? Yes □ No □
8- What are the types of errors that you make when writing?
   Grammar □ Vocabulary □ Spelling □
   Others........................................................................................................................................
9- Do you use English when writing on Facebook or Messenger? Yes □ No □
   If yes, provide some examples of the sentences that you employ when writing.
   ....................................................................................................................................................
10- Do you think that the use of social media has influenced your writing?
    Yes □ No □
    If yes, how?
    ....................................................................................................................................................
11- What do you suggest as solutions to improve your written production?
    ....................................................................................................................................................

Thank you.
### Table 1. Analysis of students’ errors in Facebook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Contraction</th>
<th>Lower Case</th>
<th>Upper Case</th>
<th>Emotion Words</th>
<th>Emotion Punctuation</th>
<th>Emotion Acronym</th>
<th>Typographical</th>
<th>Misspelling</th>
<th>Alphabet/Letters</th>
<th>Phonetic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hmm, the hardest thing abt writin</td>
<td>abt</td>
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<td>im still not sure abt my own questions :p</td>
<td>abt</td>
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<td>im</td>
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<td>this is just the beginning :q</td>
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<td>:q</td>
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<td>emm, well!</td>
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<td></td>
<td>emm</td>
<td>!</td>
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<td>the pblm that i have faced in my R.W (research writing) is what i should</td>
<td>pblm</td>
<td>R.W</td>
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<td>i</td>
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<td>we have to pay for'em.</td>
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<td>Yes this is it :-(</td>
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<td>Hhhhh yes exactly 😊</td>
<td>hhh</td>
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<td>it a difficult pblm</td>
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<td>how should we list qs</td>
<td>qs</td>
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<td>hmm i think majority of youngsters dream abt</td>
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<td>get lots of money w/o (doin anything)</td>
<td>w/o</td>
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<tr>
<td>coz they r dumb, uneducated and they don’t think in realistic way ;-)</td>
<td>don’t</td>
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<td>Algerians dream to conquer Fr CA or even USA</td>
<td>Fr CA USA</td>
<td>/z</td>
<td>conquerre</td>
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<td>at their 1st step on the fgh country,</td>
<td>fgh</td>
<td>1st</td>
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<td>its easy t make money n’ tha ll directly fall in luv with em</td>
<td>t n em</td>
<td>its ll</td>
<td>tha luv</td>
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<td>all abt DZ except carrying with em everywhere thé go</td>
<td>abt em</td>
<td>DZ</td>
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<td>They ll nver com tru</td>
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<td>tru</td>
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<td>they ll be obligd t wrk hrd</td>
<td>ll</td>
<td>tru</td>
<td>Wrk obligd</td>
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<td>Hhhh lol it A very intresting topic to speak abt</td>
<td>A hhh lol</td>
<td>intresting</td>
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<td>cause of some prmls mainly related 2 money</td>
<td>prmls 2</td>
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<td>yes a lot my dear. throw reading u will improve your writing skills</td>
<td>throw u</td>
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<td>Aaah okay I appreciate all the modules I have an energitic mood</td>
<td>ahh okay</td>
<td>appreci ate energitic</td>
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<td>Oh great am sûre you will love it</td>
<td>am oh sûre</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2. Analysis of errors made in the in-class writing task

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Errors</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Misspelling</td>
<td>-English today became -every skills had method of learn to follow -the styles of write like when put -they afraid -some of people is very shy to speak -is the most problem of students -listening need to practice -the student they not at all ready -teacher don’t -in order to can manage -everyone have material -English help -students are faced great problems -I didn’t get it meaning -in it place -because Reading and writing is important -in order to living the progress to be able to learning English -of Some words is pronounce -everything now is work with -teachers don’t gave us -all those makes english -which means is not spoken -native speakers makes -English as a whole help people -there is no good conditions -I have always being -I still struggle with the oral where I had -I find some difficulties -while learn it -I want to learnt it -I was watch -a part of my Dreams is go -students are faced great problem -these is the most important difficulties -as a necessity to knowing English -so we still weak in speaking and getting a good accent -it still remain always my passion -it’s was -that why -it’s help -I choosen -students considered a learning English -we must found solutions and solves this problem -we have facing problems -he have -had to learn by hard -this problems -we have focusing -what are this difficulties -what ever come to my mind -I did used -teacher don’t focus -how it pronounced -teacher don’t follow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammatical Mistakes</td>
<td>-and Finally -in Contrast -to the Classroom -in Compus -I found Some stuggles in Grammar -Sometimes of the Internet and Globalization -many people have -concerning Algerian students -first of All -a part of my Dreams -as a latin origine -learning a Foreign Language -But when -in The passed -even in arabic -than french and arabic -along with the History -because we Can use it -and Most of articles -speak and Communicate -as University student -I had found Especially In the scientific module -the rules of Grammar -; It is a diffucts -I was speaking chinese -I came to the University -learning english Excuz mi, but i don’t agree with u</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitalization</td>
<td>I swear that I feel that I am weak-honestly -to be washed away -for me -as we know -a lot of problems -I am shining -believe me -we must never ever give up -it is not that easy -did not care at all -I am in love with that language -this is what I am doing right now -I am bad in it -such easier -I can say -it was not really big deal -personally speaking -as easy as abc -I know it seems funny, but surprise surprise, -I have fallen and got up uncountable times -a discussion with a pen and a paper -I said to myself what I am doing here -yes, my parent pushed me See ya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal Expressions</td>
<td>for eg lge specially TV gonna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>I didn’t ‘t that’s ‘s/ I’m/ it didn’t ‘t it wasn’t ‘t I’ve fallen/I’m doing / it’s / don’t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contraction</td>
<td>1st L3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alphabet/letter</td>
<td>Gonna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronyms</td>
<td>TV&amp; - 4skills ) IIRC, IDN, 2u2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Academic Advising as a Pre-Step for the Introduction of the Human Capital Approach to Solve the Issue of Quality in the Algerian University

Amal Boukhedenna
Department of English
University of Tassoust, Jijel, Algeria

Abstract
This paper looks at higher education problems in Algeria and the necessity of introducing ‘academic advising’ as a pre-step of the human-capital approach to solve the issue of quality. In the aftermaths of ‘the bloody decade’, Algeria lost the pillars of its tertiary education. To compensate, the government relied on mass access to universities which has in its turn resulted in low quality. This work seeks to check the usability of the human capital approach in solving the quality problem in Algerian universities. Because education could offer both monetary and non-monetary profits, it is considered lucrative to invest in developing human skills and competences which constitute the capital that guarantees earning a living. This research, thus, proposes ‘academic advising’ as a first step on the short term. The current paper presents a descriptive analysis of 50 questionnaires answered by middle and high school teachers and headmasters, university students and professors and guidance counselors. The results of this qualitative study show how ‘academic advising’ when extended up to the university level can harness the learner’s capital.

Keywords: Academic advising, Algerian higher education, quality, the human capital approach

Introduction

Tertiary education has the supreme mission of promoting and producing international intellectual individuals capable of making contributions in their societies. Higher education institutions must remain consistent in offering the best teaching and training, as well as remarkable academic and research performance (The Role, 1991). Universities ought, therefore, to produce and maintain a balance in their services and the quality. According to the Second UNISCO- Non- Governmental Organizations Collective Consultation on Higher Education, these institutions must:

support teaching and training programmes designed to reply directly to the identified needs of specific contexts [...] promote innovation in content and methods which can assure enhanced access to higher education while still preserving the quality of education and its relevance to social requirements [and] continue to encourage research in higher education as a means of strengthening the social function of this domain. (The Role, 1991, p. 16)

In this respect, higher education must contribute to the entire educational system. It should also keep up with this globalized world and produce international citizens fit for the globalized pool of work. Higher education, thus, functions on both the social and the economic levels. In this vein, UNISCO (1991) argues that “logically if we can recognize the major trends and challenges of higher education, then, it is high time to develop innovative approaches” (The Role, 1991, p. 20). Said otherwise, if the social role of higher education and its intellectual and educational missions are recognized and balanced, higher education can truly fulfill and play its role. To do so, it is essential to reflect on the current situations before taking any further action.

Quality in Higher Education

Quality in higher education has been a hot topic for several decades. It is so because universities are constantly under pressure to exhibit and conform to a set of criteria that determine quality. It is this quality that drives universities into competition and set some apart, and above, the others. In her paper entitled “Quality in Higher Education: Developing a Virtue of Professional Practice”, Ming Cheng (2016) claims that quality refers to the efficiency of the teaching and the learning practices and to the academic individual endeavors (p. 10). Professor Eduardo Portella (1991), in the Second UNISCO- Non- Governmental Organizations Collective Consultation on Higher Education, states that quality in higher education refers to “the intellectual and the educational missions of higher education” (The Role, 1991, p. 22). In other words, quality refers to the “excellence in knowledge and training that they [tertiary education institutions] impart” (The Role, 1991, p. 22). With these views into consideration, quality, therefore, resides in teachers and students alike in the sense that teachers are the communicators of knowledge whereas students are the activators of this knowledge. It refers also to the teacher-student exchange of knowledge and the activation of it outside the academic circle. Measuring quality, thus, could be difficult as the exchange and the activation of knowledge are abstract. Unless specific criteria are predetermined and the achievements of universities are assessed against these criteria, no clear approach to quality assessment could be reached (Tsinidou, Gerogiannis & Fitsilis, 2010, p. 228).
Setting specific criteria for measuring the quality of higher education is a challenge being inconsistent and variant from one institution to another. Broadly speaking, an institution could be recognized as having quality when students themselves acknowledge the quality of the institution in question; when the academic goals underlined are achieved; and when the courses presented are socially useful to the learners. Tsinidou et al. (2010) advance a well known approach to quality evaluation called the Quality Evaluation Deployment (QED). The latter “can be applied for process and design improvement [whose purpose] is to visualize cause-and-effect relationships starting from the customer needs all the way down to the production process” (p. 229). The authors also propose Parasuraman et al. “five-dimension (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy) model” (Tsinidou, Gerogiannis & Fitsilis, 2010, p. 229).

The authors explain that the Tangibles represent physical infrastructure, equipments and the staff. The Reliability refers to the accuracy of the knowledge and the skills taught. Responsiveness represents the efficiency and the satisfaction of the learners’ needs. Assurance refers to the trust contract between the institution and the customer. Lastly, Empathy is the care that the institution shows towards its customers (Tsinidou, Gerogiannis & Fitsilis, 2010, p. 229). It is in taking these criteria into account that quality can be assessed. This model assures that what is taught in universities is both accurate and efficient to the learners. It assures that trust exists between the institution and the receivers of services.

Higher Education in Algeria
The last decade of the twentieth century is recorded in the Algerian history as ‘the bloody decade’. During this period, bloody massacres took place in most of the parts of Algeria. Many celebrities were victims of atrocious murder. People feared for their lives and leaving home to one’s work was a great risk. In the course of these events, the Algerian University suffered great losses as a number of professors and students were killed. There was a high rate of brain drain as people opted to leave their country in order to keep their lives and to pursue their careers. During this period, Algerian universities became almost deserted. A report issued by the ministry of higher education in Algeria shows that, in the first three years following ‘the bloody decade’, less than seven thousand BA holders accessed universities all over Algeria (MERS-DGEFS, 2016, p. 7). As many intellectuals run abroad, specialists were lacking in several fields. This was accompanied with a shortage in scientific papers and publications.

With The National Reconciliation Programme finalized on February 27th, 2006, efforts were made by the government to resurrect and revive tertiary education in Algeria. To overcome the dreadful aftermaths of ‘the bloody decade’, the government passed several laws. Among them, law N- 98/11 of August 2nd, 1998, insists on the importance of providing the necessary tools and resources to promote higher education and scientific and technological research in Algeria (as cited in Kabbar, 2014, p. 303). Access to universities was, therefore, facilitated to recapitulate the shortage. Also, a great deal of financial resources was spent on promoting tertiary institutions in Algeria.

University access facilitations led to mass education in Algerian universities. The number of BA holders joining universities was on continuous rise every year. In 2015, MERS’s report shows that around a million and half students enrolled in universities (MERS-DGEFS,
2016, p. 6). Mass education, as opposed to elite education, led to the absence of quality. Despite the efforts and the policies issued to elevate higher education in Algeria, universities are still underrated. Ranking Web of Universities issued a report in January, 2nd, 2019 indicating that the best Algerian university (University of Constantine/ Mentouri Brothers) only ranked 1932 on a list containing about twenty-eight thousand university (Ranking Web of Universities, 2019, p. 19).

In his book published in 2000, Dr. Oueld Khalifa insists on the idea that Algeria is in possession of human and financial resources that still need to be activated not through imitation but through investing in people who are able to make contributions to their society (as cited in Boufalaga, 2016). In the light of this idea, an approach to refining and reshaping human resources must be incorporated in order to create competent learners capable of producing scientific or technological research papers and to direct their creativity to generate new knowledge and products.

A trend known as Education For All (EFA) came to light in the last years in several countries all over the world. The EFA is based on the premise of offering a basic education to all and which, in its turn, consists of a package of skills, knowledge and attitudes meant to build a flexible human capital that is ready to fit in the global economy (Coraggio, 1994, p. 1). Out of this trend, the idea that investment in education means investment in people grew up and started to crystallize in order to move with economy forwards by preparing people to obtain jobs in the global economy. This theory puts human beings at the center of any economic or social development. It supports the idea that increased poverty could only be solved via increased education. Investing not only in infrastructure but also in education leads to higher, long-term and sustained productivity ratios. To reach this, “educational policies must be [then] integral to social and economic policies, if they are to be instrumental to the betterment of everyday life” (Corragio, 1994, p. 3).

The Human Capital Approach
In the light of EFA and the integration of educational policies with the social and the economic ones, the government’s role is primordial (Coraggio, 1994, p. 3). Policy makers must, then, work on improving textbooks and fostering the growth of individual and collective motivation of how to acquire and produce knowledge. Focus must be on teachers since they are vehicles of change and bearers of historical memory. Teachers also administrate social programs and conduct researches. The government must also “nurture the political will necessary to prioritize education as an investment capable of multiplying development opportunities” (Corragio, 1994, p. 4).

The human capital approach, then, grows out of the idea of linking economic development to education. People with developed education and skills would contribute to the economic growth. Higher education must receive greater attention under this approach because members of tertiary education have more awareness of the importance of education in the pool of work.

After ‘the bloody decade’, Algeria has become a more stable nation that fosters democratic principles. Therefore, it should foster and support the growth of both education and work
opportunities. The idea of bridging the gap between educational and economic policies is at the heart of the human capital approach and is the key to promote higher education in Algeria.

Increased outlays for education along with sustained policies would lead to increased returns (Schiller, 2008, p. 16). Within the same idea, greater education capital investment leads to greater monetary and non-monetary profits (Taubman & Wales, 1974, p. 25). The greater the education capital is, the greater the returns are going to be. Investment in education as an initial step would bring a stream of future incomes. Taubman & Wales (1974) state that greater investment in higher education is fruitful because:

Higher education is capable of teaching a person general facts, the use of specific tools, and general problem-solving techniques. In addition, it can influence a person's behavior by making him more tolerant of diversity, better able to stand stress, a better leader, and more disciplined mentally. All these aspects of cognitive and affective behavior could make a person a more productive and effective worker. (p. 26)

Todaro & Smith (2003) introduce the relation existing between education and health as an example. They believe that investment in developing better health study programmes at the university would produce individuals in possession of the necessary skills to contribute to the field of health both with doctors and extra research papers (Todaro & Smith, 2003, p. 4).

If put simply, the human capital approach can refer to any investment in people which contributes and amplifies their productivity. In order to achieve higher ratios of productivity, the human capital approach must be taken into consideration when preparing learning programmes and when advising students to make choices for their academic paths. Capital, being defined roughly as resources, “refers to any characteristic of a worker (skills, special knowledge, health, or mobility) that helps make that worker productive” (Leigh, 1997, p. 6). In the academic field, “human capital theory offers a valuable, unifying perspective in which to judge the value of students’ choices made during the advising process and to insure the quality of the investment they are making in their educations” (Leigh, 1997, p. 6)

Because of the changing attitude towards work and profit making, universities and colleges must work on preparing students for entry in the work pool. Focus must, then, shift from the value of the degree itself to the value of the students’ acquisitions and the readability to put them into practice. On this idea, Leigh states that “college students can pursue and obtain a formal credential, and yet not develop their human capital to its fullest potential” (Leigh, 1997, p. 6). In the Algerian context, the human capital theory can be used as a “teaching tool to challenge the assumptions of a credentialist orientation, as a framework for student decision making in choosing a major programme of study” (Leigh, 1997, p. 6). In Algeria, focus on the diploma acquisition orients higher education. Focus should not be on the completion of studies but rather on what is being taught and how much of it has been grasped by the learners.

Leigh advances the five categories of investment in human capital that were identified by Schultz (1961): formal education, adult education, on-the-job training, health and geographic mobility. Out of these categories, the second and the third one are related to tertiary education.
(Leigh, 1997, p. 6). Leigh (1997) again quotes Harrington & Levinson (1992) who believe that human capital, which is the product of formal education, “is created when people acquire transferable skills that can be applied in many settings and that can inform many different occupations” (as cited in Leigh, 1997, p. 6).

**Difficulties Facing Higher Education in Algeria**

In the last few years, there have been a lot of changes that affected different institutions, be they educational, economic or political. In the process, interest in human resources as the key for development has increased. This interest arose due to the indispensability of humans in any institution. In tertiary education institutions, focus is on teachers and learners as they are the promoters of this field. Yet, Algerian teachers and learners are faced with a set of insurmountable handicaps: the lack of financial support and the absence of clear administration of the field. The field is not equipped with well trained teachers who complain from the lack of sufficient training opportunities. Teachers receive some formal training that does not take their needs into account. No needs analysis is conducted prior to the training and no assessment is performed post the training. The training that novice teachers receive is limited in the amount of time as well the content. The latter is standardized for all teachers and does not address the different specialties and the teachers’ lacks.

On the other hand, graduates from universities find themselves with mere diplomas that do not meet the needs of the work pool, if there any job positions at all. Learners are graduating with the stereotype that no job awaits for them which in its turn resulted into a massive disinterest. Algerian universities are, then, saturated with underprepared, unmotivated learners whose graduation does not matter anymore as their outlook seems defeatist. In an issue by the ministry of higher education in Algeria, there were more than a million and half university students in 2015 with only fifty-four thousand university teachers (MERS-DGEFS, 2016, p. 6).

Other issues burden the system as well. Significant barbs are being communicated with regard to the incompetency of novice teachers, the nature of the content being taught and the undefined blurry assumptions of higher education. Does the mission of the Algerian university lie in preparing graduates for the jobs they would hold? Do all the majors guarantee a job upon graduation? There are some major options that are considered by the students as ‘dead losses’ since there are no actual jobs for these majors upon graduation. These barbs are overarched with the hot debate of how much money is being paid to university teachers. All these issues come to the spotlights at a time where serious emergency measures should be taken to remediate the ailing Algerian university.

In the same issue by the ministry, missions of higher education and the reforms undertaken to elevate it were identified as: to respond effectively to the needs of the society in terms of quality, to respond to the employability concerns of the graduates, and to create an osmosis between the university and the socio-economic environment (MERS-DGEFS, 2016 p. 15-16).

**Questionnaire Design and Methodology**

This section is devoted to the descriptive analysis of 50 questionnaires. The participants in this questionnaire were middle and high school teachers, middle and high school headmasters, middle and high school guidance counselors, university freshman and university professors in the city of
Jijel, Algeria. There were 10 middle and high school teachers, 7 middle and high school headmasters, 5 middle and high school guidance counselors, 20 freshmen and 8 university professors. 64% of the participants were female and the other 36% were male.

**Descriptive Statistics**

The questionnaire was divided into three sections; the first dealing with personal information regarding gender, age, degree and the current job of the participants; the second presenting a set of yes or no questions about the importance of academic advising; and the third offering a set of open-ended questions on the opinions of the participants with regard to when academic advising should be introduced.

The results of the questionnaire were analysed to find out whether ‘academic advising’ is given enough attention in middle and high education cycles and whether it should be extended further to higher education.

**Table 1. Frequencies of the participants’ replies regarding the importance of ‘academic advising’ and when the learner realizes his potential (N=50)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic advising and the learner’s potential</th>
<th>A lot</th>
<th>Relative</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(N) %</td>
<td></td>
<td>(N) %</td>
<td>(N) %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not much attention is paid to the advising/counseling process in Algeria</td>
<td>(36) 72%</td>
<td>(1) 2%</td>
<td>(13) 26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The role of academic advisors is important to help learners make choices</td>
<td>(48) 96%</td>
<td>(2) 4%</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The importance of academic advising being a continuous process</td>
<td>(37) 74%</td>
<td>(3) 6%</td>
<td>(10) 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Importance for the learner to realize his/her potential and qualifications</td>
<td>(31) 62%</td>
<td>(4) 8%</td>
<td>(15) 30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 introduces how much important is the counseling process; the role of academic advisors/guidance counselors to help learners make choices about education and career paths; whether academic advising should be a continuous process and how important it is for learners to realize their qualifications and capacities.

Analysis of the Questionnaire
When closely examining each section of the data collected from the questionnaires, it is noticed that the participants’ answers meet up at four points. Firstly, the Algerian educational system with its different cycles does not pay much attention to the counseling process that is only present in middle and high schools. Even at the level of middle and high education, the counseling process focuses on the stream choice with a session only devoted to the details. Secondly, teachers, headmasters, psycho pedagogy consultants and guidance counselors should all play an active role in helping the learners make their choice. The third point is that academic advising and counseling is a continuous process that is not limited to middle and high schools only. Academic advising should be extended to post formal education into universities and colleges. The fourth point agreed upon by the questionnaire participants is how much important it is when the learners become aware of their potential. When the learners realize their strengths, weakness and potential and they receive enough guidance about the proper choices they need to make about their education and career path; the learners’ capital is, therefore, recognized and will be well invested in.

Conclusions and Recommendations
With regard to what has already been introduced on education and the necessity to put people at the centre of any reform and the importance of integrating economic reforms to the social ones, the Algerian government must rely on an approach that emphasizes investment in humans. The latter are the key to sustained economic development and productive educational programmes.

With regard to the usefulness of the human capital approach in the Algerian context, the first step to be taken in the short-term towards reform is to introduce “academic advising”. The latter must be a pre-step and pre-requisite to university admission. With regard to this idea, Leigh (1997) advances Coleman’ (1988) and Davis’ (1993) ideas which claim that students on the verge of entering college or university must be made aware of the fact that they are in possession of set of marketable skills in which they must invest in to develop so that they can fit in this modern world. All the knowledge, theoretical skills, and attitudes learnt in the university will not be a waste. This general knowledge has its own usefulness in shaping the students’ mind and attitude towards work life (Leigh, 1997, p. 8).

Academic advising could help learners find better suited ways to upgrade their theoretical knowledge and how to put it into practice. Because academic advising can help learners recognize their capital (skills and knowledge), Leigh claims that “students need to realize that [this] human capital makes it possible for them to be more productive than other employees […] offering them opportunities for advancement” (Leigh, 1997, p. 9).

In the Algerian context, the government can include supplementary courses for the students (apart from their major requirements) to upgrade their capital. Leigh mentions a philosophy used in several universities and colleges known as ‘writing across the curriculum’ whose aim is to
“supplement traditional composition courses” that “can help increase the student’s skills, and therefore, their human capital” (Leigh, 1997, p. 8). As for oral skills, “Dyadic Communication, Small Group Communication, and so forth, have the potential to develop a student’s oral skills in ways that promote the growth of human capital” (Leigh, 1997, p. 8). These methods could be used gradually in the Algerian universities as a means of raising students’ awareness of their existing potential and of the ways to promote it. Along with the written and the oral skills, students can venture in computational courses as ICTs have become a necessity in this technological age.

The role of an academic advisor in the Algerian context can help students realize that taking supplementary courses (even if not funded by the government) can harness their capital and redirect it to fit in the global economy. If a student seeks to specialize in the field of, for instance, human development, an academic advisor would help this student make options that would concretize his vision for future career. Leigh (1997) states that:

It will increasingly fall to academic advisors to clarify for college students the value of human capital, the limits of credentials even the college degree-as a basis for economic success, and the strategies they can employ to maximize their human capital. (p. 10)

The role of the Algerian government is, therefore, to equip not only middle and secondary schools but also universities with academic advisors who are ready to teach students about the concept of human capital and the best way to invest in it. This step must be done prior to making major choice. Even if universities do not offer all the courses that necessarily promote a student’s capital, students need to be convinced of the need of promoting their own capital and to make investments of their own for the sake of preparing themselves for the globalized economy.

In her article entitled “Professional Advisers in Engineering and Technology Undergraduate Programs: Opportunities and Challenges”, Mosher (2017) quotes Beggs, Bantham & Taylor (2008) who claim that “high quality advising has also been shown to play a critical role in student academic, career, and professional development” (Mosher, 2017, p. 26). In a system where academic advising should be equal to good quality instruction, neither middle nor high schools in Algeria give this issue great importance. Most Algerian institutions are not equipped with professional advisors and responsibility of aiding learners in their choice making falls on the shoulders of teachers. It is of no doubt that teachers play an essential role in helping students choose their future educational and career path, but a professional advisor equipped with knowledge about the country’s resources, financial state and job availability should contribute to a task of such importance.

Academic advisors can, then, help students realize their potential and the pools where to put it into practice. With regard to this idea, Cox & Orehovec (2007) state that interaction of the students with advisors makes them “feel valued and important [and those who engage in such interactions] clearly recognized the ‘humanizing’ and ‘personalizing’ effects” (Cox & Orehovec, 2007, p. 20).
The following step to be undertaken in the process of bringing about change to the Algerian education system and the introduction of the human capital approach is ‘mentoring’. Mentoring as introduced by Cox & Orehovec (2007) can be defined:

Not in terms of programmes, but in terms of relationships. Specifically, we considered mentoring to be the “highest end on a continuum of helping relationships” (Jacobi, 1991, p 511). To be labeled as a mentoring relationship in our study, the relationship must have met all three criteria set forth by Anderson et al. (1995), who summarized Jacobi’s work: (a) direct assistance with career and professional development, (b) emotional and psychosocial support, and (c) role modeling. (p. 21)

Cox & Orehovec (2007) add that “mentoring minimally required an extended relationship built on both functional and personal interactions” (p. 21).

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References


Algerian University Teachers’ Disposition and Experiences in Using MOOCs for their Continuous Professional Development

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Abstract
The professional development (PD) programmes initiated by the Algerian ministry of higher education for newly recruited teachers: “ICT and Pedagogical Practices” and “Pedagogical Accompaniment” cannot prepare the novice teachers for all the challenges they may face along their career. Accordingly, teachers need to look out for additional training opportunities. One of these opportunities is found in Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). Nevertheless, research on applying MOOCs for continuous professional development (CPD) with regard to Algeria is overlooked. Hence, this study aims at filling in this gap by exploring Algerian university teachers’ familiarity, disposition, and experiences of using MOOCs for CPD. To reach this end, an online questionnaire is administered and a semi-structured interview is conducted with university teachers. The results of the study evinced that: 1) Teachers have low familiarity and weak interaction with MOOCs in general and, 2) teachers acknowledge the importance of CPD and are aware that the initial training and the teaching experience are not sufficient to maintain career advancement. Yet, 3) they do not have the disposition to engage in a CPD, 4) teachers consider this study as an eye opener on MOOCs and show a positive attitude for leveraging MOOCs for their CPD in the future. In the light of these findings, urgent plans to implement and value the culture of informal CPD are recommended, in addition to creating centres at the level of the universities devoted exclusively to CPD and related research. Most importantly, MOOCs that address the Algerian teachers’ CPD needs should be developed.

Keywords: Andragogy, constructivism, life-long learning, Massive Open Online Courses, teacher continuous professional development

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Introduction
Teachers are central actors and “reflective change-agents” (Calderhead & Shorrock, 2005, p. 2) at the teaching learning process. Powell & Bodur (2018) maintained that it is widely acknowledged by researchers practitioners and policymakers that any educational reform that aims at improving the quality of education, hence learners’ performance, should take TPD into consideration. A logical stance since learners are, to a far extent, a product of an educational system wherein the teacher is prepared to reflect the quality of education (Connelly, Clandinin, & He, 1997). In highlighting the importance of TPD and its direct positive impact on the learners’ outcomes, Donaldson (2011) argued that improvements in learners’ performance:

… will be better achieved through determined efforts to build the capacity of teachers themselves to take responsibility for their own professional development, building their pedagogical expertise, engaging with the need for change, undertaking well-thought through development and always evaluating impact in relation to improvement in the quality of [students’] learning. (p. 84)

TPD is of utmost importance and permanent requirement for teachers, novice and expert alike. Novice teachers need scaffolding regarding classroom management, content knowledge, and teaching skills. Expert teachers need to review their teaching practices and upgrade their knowledge and cope with the ever-changing technological developments (Gajdos, 2016). Evidently, the world is changing dramatically and this change has its subsequent effects on higher education (Khan et al., 2017). The driving forces for this change are summarized in two main points. The first is the orientation of education to meet the needs of economic workforce which has an increasing demand on competent individuals armed with new skills (e.g.: Creativity, originality and initiative, analytical thinking, complex problem solving…etc). The second driving force is the radical transformation brought by digitalization, as it were, of lifestyle which is altering education and brought with it the rapid and free access to information. This inflation in information is best described by Fuller, when he created the “Knowledge Doubling Curve”, drawing attention to the dramatic fact that:

Until 1900 human knowledge doubled approximately every century. By the end of World War II knowledge was doubling every 25 years. Today things are not as simple as different types of knowledge have different rates of growth. For example, nanotechnology knowledge is doubling every two years and clinical knowledge every 18 months. But on average human knowledge is doubling every 13 months. According to IBM, the build out of the “Internet of Things” will lead to the doubling of knowledge every 12 hours (Contact North, p. 11).

Given such ground breaking changes occurring in the landscape of higher education, teachers cannot cope with the accelerating rate of information growing by relying only on the training they received when they were novice namely, “ICT and Pedagogical Practices” and “Pedagogical Accompaniment for Newly Recruited Teachers”. In echoing this stance, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2009) reported:
No matter how good pre-service training for teachers is, it cannot be expected to prepare teachers for all the challenges they will face throughout their careers. Education systems therefore seek to provide teachers with opportunities for in-service professional development in order to maintain a high standard of teaching and to retain a high-quality teacher workforce. (p. 49)

Rightfully, the study argues for systemizing TPD and making it a continuous process throughout the teacher’s professional life.

Another argument spawning discussion in the sphere of TPD is the fact that the PD programmes designed by the ministry is the kind of “one size fits all” initiatives wherein “hundreds of teachers are pulled together to listen to an expert pontificate on a given subject” (Sweeney, 2003, p. 3). In the sense that teachers are mandatorily required to enroll in PD programmes they either encompass units irrelevant to their needs or are not aligned with their needs. This fact generates negative attitudes and dissatisfaction towards the formal PD programmes. More often than not, teachers have their distinguished individual needs regarding the aspects of their profession. Correspondingly, the study argues for individualizing CTPD, and making it individual-centred rather than group centred. In doing so, the teacher is incumbent to identify his needs and has control over the different phases of his development.

Nevertheless, designing, implementing, and evaluating TPD initiatives are challenging tasks, let alone an individualized continuous PD because of the multi-facet factors that should be taken into consideration. Odden, Archibald, Fermanich & Gallagher (2002) listed six cost elements that are central to any TPD programme: “1) Teacher time, 2) training and coaching, 3) administration, 4) materials, equipment, and facilities, 5) travel and transportation, and 6) university tuition and conference fees” (Cited in Misra, 2018, p. 68). These elements could be the main reason of the dearth of formal PD programmes. As such, teachers cannot rely only on the PD programmes initiated by the ministry and they need to pursue out effective PD opportunities that are convenient to their practices.

One of these available and recognized opportunities is MOOCs. MOOCs are the alternative viable strategic option available to teachers to educate themselves and maintain long term sustainable career development. Therefore, this study calls for the necessity of leveraging MOOCs as a vocational educational and training resource to upskill teachers and raise the quality of higher education.

Noticably, research on MOOCs and its impact on learning in the developing countries is lacking (Spector, 2017). Following the same line of argument, Patru & Balaji (2016) wrote: “With very few exceptions, many of the reports on MOOCs already published do not refer to the interests and experiences of developing countries, although we are witnessing important initiatives in more and more countries around the world” (p. 11). This is to be coupled with “the dearth of empirical research into online teacher professional development and by the lack of teacher voice in its design” (Ketelhut, McCloskey, Dede, Breit, & Whitehouse, 2006, as cited in Powell & Bodur, 2018, p. 20). This holds true when the state of affairs under investigation is not well-documented and about which no ample research has been accomplished.
The present enquiry, therefore, derives its significance from filling in this gap and contributing to this area of research by offering some important insights on the Algerian teacher’s practices regarding MOOCs and CPD namely: 1) Exploring university teachers’ familiarity and experiences with MOOCs in general. 2) Soliciting general information about teachers’ attitudes towards PD. 3) Unveiling teachers’ disposition and experiences of using MOOCs for their CPD.

Literature Review

Teacher Professional Development Defined

TPD is a growing area of research that attracts attention (Calderhead & Shorrock, 2005). Its definition is one of the issues that do not win the theorists’ and practitioners’ consensus (Tan, Chang, & Teng, 2015). Schlager & Fusco (2003), for example, defined TPD as:

A career-long, context-specific, continuous endeavor that is guided by standards, grounded in the teacher’s own work, focused on student learning, and tailored to the teacher’s stage of career development. It is a collaborative effort, in which teachers receive support from peer networks, local administration, teacher educators, and outside experts. (p. 5)

Taking from this perspective, TPD is conceived as a long-term process of ongoing learning for in-service teachers. It aims at enhancing the teacher’s understanding of his professional competences in: Pedagogical knowledge, classroom management, coordinating with the teaching team, skills and attitudes (Gajdos, 2016). Richards & Farrell (2005) stressed the critical aspect of TPD which is the fact that “this process can be supported both at the institutional level and through teachers’ own individual efforts” (p. 3). In the meantime, Craft (2000) emphasized that this teacher learning that is labeled CPD should be undertaken after the induction phase (estimated two years) beyond the point of initial training.

Online Teacher Professional Development (OTPD) is one of the forms of TPD. Powell & Bodur (2018) defined OTPD as: “Courses, workshops, or learning modules that are delivered in an online format for teacher PD” (p. 21). These activities address changing a set of skills, behaviours and thoughts, to consolidate the teachers’ knowledge and enrich their experience. In these TPD forms, there is a plethora of Open Educational Resources (OER) use including wikis, videos, podcasts, and discussion forums. MOOCs designed for PD is a well-run example of OTPD which is the main concern of the research at hands.

The National Research Council (NRC) (2007) summarized the importance of the OTPD in five major points. First, OTPD alters the instructional practices of the teacher which affects students’ learning outcomes. Second, OTPD programmes are so versatile and scalable designed for an unlimited number of teachers which they can take as long as the programme is pertinent to their needs and have access to. Third, OTPD can, also, provide the teacher with the opportunity to construct a community of professionals across disciplines worldwide. They can asynchronously or synchronously interact and reflect on their views and practices regarding classroom practices and exchange on their experiences. Forth, OTPD is highly reflective and involving because teachers, with the opportunity of assuming the responsibility of their development, are cognitively and socially present and involved throughout the programme stages.
MOOCs

MOOC is another innovation to be added to the evolutionary history of distance education. MOOCs is an acronym that stands for Massive Open Online Courses. MOOCs are learning experiences designed by academics for a scalable indefinite number of participants. They do not require prior participatory conditions or qualifications. The components of the courses including study material, quizzes, and exams are offered 100 percent online and can be accessed by anyone anywhere anytime with the availability of internet bandwidth (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2016). These characteristic components (massiveness, openness, online) contribute to the very uniqueness of MOOCs.

According to Spector (2017), “the term MOOC was coined in 2008 by David Cormier from the University of Prince Edward Island in Canada to label twelve-week online course Connectivism and Connective Knowledge” (p. 3). This idea is considered as an event inaugurating a very rapidly growing field (Patru & Balaji, 2016). Despite its relative short lifelong, MOOCs has expanded dramatically and spawned debate and confusion amongst the academic community. Following this lead, thousands of MOOCs are delivered by MOOC providers and in most of the cases, higher education institutions outsource MOOC platforms like Coursera, Udacity, Udemy, EdX, Lynda, and Iversity …etc.

The first wave of MOOCs aimed at grouping people around a shared area of interest in a virtual setting. This type of MOOCs that aims at creating subject matter networks of people are called cMOOCs or the connectivist MOOCs (Spector, 2017; Baturay, 2015). Later on, another type of MOOCs emerged. It is the MOOC that is designed in the form of tutorial wherein an expert in the subject matter is lecturing. This type is called xMOOCs or content-based MOOCs (Spector, 2017; Baturay, 2015). The distinction between the two is in that “cMOOCs focus on knowledge creation and generation whereas xMOOCs focus on knowledge duplication” (Siemens, 2013, as cited in Ulrich & Nedelcu, 2015, p. 1542). Such classification is becoming much less recognized as each type starts incorporating the element of the second. xMOOCs are incorporating the connectivist elements in their design. Likewise, cMOOCs are moving towards directing their participants to extra resources (Spector, 2017).

Though MOOCs are still in the developing stage and open for experience (Khan et al., 2017), they are regarded as a quantum leap that affects almost all aspects of education due to its rapid growth. MOOCs inaugurated the globalization and democratization of education by making quality education worldwide open to whoever wants to learn from different generations (Spector, 2017). In a context wherein constrains of time and place are vanished, MOOCs provide self-directed and self-paced learning experiences rich with learning resources and discussion forums for collaborative communities. (Alario et al, 2014; Wu & Chen, 2016, as cited in Khan, et al., 2017).

Theoretical Framework

Contrary to the field of research on students’ learning, the theoretical framework that can be used to look at TPD is not well established. There is a dearth of theories on teacher education that causes lacking a solid background for the PD programmes (Kennedy, 2016). Nevertheless, the study tries to approach the topic under investigation by combining adult learning and constructivism as a
Theoretical framework. TPD is perceived as “teachers’ learning” (Postholm, 2012, p. 405). This learning process is deeply rooted in adult learning theory that implies long life learning (Andragogy) wherein the teacher constructs meaning by himself (Constructivism).

Adult learning theory, known also as andragogy, advocated originally by Alexander Kapp in 1833 (Kapur, 2015) and popularized in the mid 1960’s when it was extensively used by the American educator Malcolm Knowles. Hence, the theory was associated with his name. Andragogy is created to describe continuous education. Contrasted to the Greek meaning of pedagogy, child learning wherein the lead of the learning process is in the hands of the teacher, andragogy is defined as the art and science that studies the educational process of adults (Kapur, 2015). From the andragogical perspective, the adult learners are intrinsically motivated by the need to know. They are autonomous and have full self-control to direct their own learning to meet their individual needs. They engage in active learning processes that are based on their life experiences as learning resources and, in the meantime, the learning outcome is relevant and applicable to their life (Knowles, 1990).

Constructivism, on the other hand, is the process of constructing or building meaning through interaction with societal elements. The concept of meaning is central to the theory of constructivism. The latter is defined by Mezirow (2000) as: “The process of using a prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience as a guide to future action” (p. 5). The combination of the general principles of andragogy and constructivism can well explain CTPD. Adopting this theoretical framework for PD provides clear lens to approach the problem under investigation. It argues that CTPD is an ongoing process of learning wherein the teacher is engaged in an active enquiry, structured process, self-directed, and most importantly he is intrinsically motivated “to be a life-long learner in a conscious way it means to manage one’s own Continuous Professional Development” (Gajdos, 2016, p. 18).

Methodology
To bring things into perspective, this study calls for an individualized CTPD. In the meantime, it advocates MOOCs as a means to rich this end. This orientation is not new (Misra, 2018). Yet, it is not comprehensibly investigated (Powell & Bodur, 2018). Accordingly, this study reasoned that exploring Algerian university teachers’ disposition and their experiences, if there are any, of using MOOCs for their CPD constitutes a valuable addition to the literature of these intersectional topics. This small scale pilot study is weighed on by this task via probing teachers to measure their familiarity with MOOCs in general and their inclination towards CPD. Then, it moves to capture their reaction and readiness when MOOCs are used to enhance their CPD.

Due to the nature of the study, the choice of the descriptive exploratory methodology is the most fitting to answer the following questions:

- Are Algerian university teachers familiar with the idea of using MOOCs for their continuous professional development?
- To what extent their experiences, if there are any, are beneficial?
Data Collection Instruments
To enquire in the topic, the data collection methods implemented are: An online structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview. The content of the questionnaire and the interview is driven from the related review of literature about MOOCs and TPD. Whilst the questionnaire is created and administered via Google forms services to reach a wide number of university teachers from different Algerian universities, interviews are conducted with 30 teachers from three universities: Oum El-Boughi, M’sila, and Constantine1. The interview is used as an additional data collection instrument because it is strongly believed that the information gleaned from the interview can adequately and optimally supplement the analysis and discussion of the data generated by the questionnaire survey.

Participants
180 teachers from different Algerian universities respond to the questionnaire. The respondents are 65% females and 35% males. As for their academic qualifications, 67.6% are Magister degree holders, while 32.4% are doctorates. Teaching experience of the respondents ranges from six to more than 20 years, 30% are experienced teachers for 10 years and the rest from 10 to 20 years and more.

Data Analysis and Discussion
Data generated by the questionnaire and the interview were ample. As such, the analysis and discussion are limited to the essential and major data and are organized in accordance to the study objectives: 1) teachers’ familiarity and experiences with MOOCs, 2) teachers’ attitudes towards PD. 3) teachers’ disposition and experiences of using MOOCs for their CPD. In the meantime, the data gleaned from the interview are embedded within the analysis and discussion of the questionnaire.

Teachers Familiarity and Experiences with MOOCs
Data obtained from the second part of the questionnaire, which intends to track teachers’ familiarity about MOOCs are displayed in Figure 1:

Figure 1. University teachers’ level of familiarity with MOOCs
Displayed data reveal that almost half of the respondents (48.6%) do not know what MOOCs are and a quarter (24.3%) have limited familiarity with MOOCs. If the two portions are combined, the result can be explained in that 72.9% of the sample have low, if not to say, no familiarity with MOOCs. This fact is reflected in the interviewees’ answers. Most of them did not know what MOOCs stand for and they asked for clarifications to be able to answer the questions.
Moreover, 26% of the sample revealed their moderate familiarity with MOOCs. This “moderate familiarity” is relative in meaning because it also reflects that the respondents may have known about them but have no clear vision about what they can be or what they can serve them for. This was apparent in the interview data from which it is found that some respondents showed confusion between MOOCs, e-learning. One interviewee voiced: “Sounds interesting, Yet, I don’t seem to really understand what MOOCs is! Does it have to do with e-learning?!”

In the subsequent question, participants who indicated that they participate in MOOCs (N=23) are asked about the amount of time they spend on MOOCs platforms. Details of the participants’ responses are demonstrated in Figure 2:

![Figure 2. Time of interaction with MOOCs per week](image)

The results demonstrate that 66.7% interact with MOOCs for less than one hour per week. 16.7% of the respondents are interacting with MOOCs for one and two hours per week. And, no one interacts with MOOCs for two hours or more. As can be read from the data, the interaction with MOOCs in the range of less than one hour to two hours per week is relatively limited; a fact that reflects teachers’ weak experience with MOOCs. Interestingly, one interviewee explained that she cannot give exact time estimation for her participation because she is not interacting with MOOCs on a regular basis. She justified: “I participate in MOOCs on a random basis. It occurs that I spend many hours learning on Coursera or CanvaNet per day. And it happens where I do not log-in for these platforms for days.”

The Professional Development of Teachers

With the exception of the training programmes participants received in the induction phase, they are asked if they have ever participated in any other formal PD programmes. In answering this question, it is found that 89.9% never participated in any other programmes. To gain deeper insights into the answers generated by this question, three statements are designed on a Likert scale to measure the strength of their responses.
Table 1. University teachers’ attitudes and awareness about PD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The formal professional development I received in my first year of teaching is sufficient to prepare me for the challenges I may face throughout my career.</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers develop in their career through their actual classroom practices, and professional development programmes have no or little impact.</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not participate in professional programmes unless if they are compulsory.</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=180

The given responses reveal that 56% of the respondents acknowledged the fact that though in-service training they had in the initial phase of their career is important, yet it is not sufficient to make them competent and ready to face all the arising challenges throughout their academic life. This finding correlates with the major assumption made by the OECD (2009).

With regard to the responses to the second item, nearly all participants (57% strongly disagree, and 36% disagree) think that classroom practices and their experiences are not sufficient to help them advance in their profession and they are in need of PD programmes indicating their awareness of the importance of PD for professional success. Yet, this finding contradicts with the third item where 37% of the respondents showed a lack of interest in enrolling in future PD programmes. This finding reveals a weak teachers’ disposition for taking action to assume responsibility for their own development.

**MOOCs for Professional Development**

When asking participants about their purposes behind the use of MOOCs, only 26.2% (N= 6) indicated the use of MOOCs for their PD. Some of the titles of the MOOCs designed for PD they participated in are; TESOL best practices pro, assessment, Online course creation and administration.

![Figure 3. The impact of MOOCs experience on TPD](image)

Coming to the impact of those training MOOCs on their teaching practices, data yielded are summarized in Figure 3 reveal that almost the majority of teachers who participate in MOOCs for
PD believed that there is a moderate impact of this experience on their development as teachers. Moreover, only 14.3% confirmed that their experience is of a large impact. A similar number of teachers indicate the small impact of MOOCs experience on their teaching practices.

These findings are confirmed by the interviewees’ answers when they were asked about the impact of MOOCs on their classroom practices. For some teachers, MOOCs experience “was an eye opening course on many teaching activities that helped me to set clear vision of my teaching goals”. Other interviewee stated “I can safely say that now my teaching is more inclusive in that I take into consideration all the differences along the students, and I work on them”. On the understanding of learner centeredness, a respondent reported: “I learnt to focus on the learner in the first place. The concept of learner centeredness was just theoretical for me, but now I can apply it with good command”.

The last questionnaire item is meant to examine the respondents’ level of disposition towards the use of MOOCs for their CPD.

Figure 4. Teachers’ disposition towards using MOOCs for their CPD

A strong interest in enrolling in MOOCs designed for PD in the future is marked among 51% of the participants, meanwhile 27% showed moderate interest. This finding may seem contradictory to previous finding displayed in Table 1 in which 56% of the participants indicated no interest in engaging in any CPD practice. This can be explained by the questionnaire positive effect on raising respondents’ awareness about the use of MOOCs to approach PD. This awareness raising was noticed in the interviewees’ responses. Respondents revealed: “It’s the first time I hear about it, but it sounds like a very interesting practice that I would like to learn about”, “it seems to me now that MOOCs is one of the highly important avenues if they really help teachers to get acquainted with new technologies, new ways to develop the university task”. Other responses recognizing the importance of MOOCs are: “Since those programmes are aimed at brushing up teachers' performances, they would be certainly helpful and fruitful for everyone who seeks creativity and variety. We hope that they would provide what teachers need”.

Algerian University Teachers’ Disposition and Experiences          SIA & CHERIET

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Findings
The study finds that few Algerian university teachers are familiar with MOOCs and even fewer are interacting with MOOCs. This interaction is limited in the range of less than one hour to two hours per week; a range that reflects, by no means, poor interactive experiences.

Admittedly, a relative number of Algerian university teachers acknowledge the importance of PD. In the same vein, they are undoubtedly aware that they cannot maintain career advancement by relying only on the PD training they received in the induction phase coupled with their teaching experience. Positive as this stance may sound. Yet, it does not reflect their actions. The teachers are not showing disposition to participate in any other CPD programmes unless if they are formal and mandatory. This stance unveils a contradiction or a gap between teachers’ perception and awareness of the importance CPD from one hand and their disposition towards taking action to develop their profession from the other hand.

Another equally important conclusion reached stresses the fact that very few number of teachers (N=6) are leveraging MOOCs for CPD. They are satisfied with their experiences as MOOCs have positively impacted their teaching practices. This impact spans over the concretizing of teaching goals, addressing learners’ differences, and understanding the theory and the practice of learner centeredness.

After introducing the teachers to MOOCs and their usability for CPD, many showed an interest to engage in such experiences in the near future. They claimed that their understanding to CPD was restricted to a conference room setting, travel, and transportation. It is, then, safe to say that this study acts as raising awareness tool about the usability of MOOCs for CTPD.

Recommendations
In the light of the findings, some tentative deductions are made to hopefully contribute, establish and maintain CPD of teachers. It is ought to be recalled that this pilot study is set to explore teachers’ disposition and experiences of using MOOCs for their CPD on a small scale. It evinced that few Algerian university teachers are familiar with the concept of MOOCs and their experiences are limited. Unfortunately, if this fact points to anything, it points to the reality that the Algerian teachers’ literacy in educational technology and the latest technological advancement related to the teaching learning process is still very low, though MOOCs came to existence a decade ago. As such, this study recommends taking a number of initiatives for the sake of establishing the CPD of teachers starting from raising awareness to cultivating actions, ultimately, students learning.

First, the study recommends valuing the informal PD of teachers. It calls for creating urgent plans to instill the culture of CPD and raise teachers’ awareness to the importance of such programmes for their sustainable professional development. This informal PD needs to be self-directed and continuous throughout their lifelong career which helps them to cope with the rapidly changing landscape of higher education. One possible proposal for such informal continuous PD is MOOCs. Teacher can select MOOCs that respond to their individual profiles, needs, and interests. They can select MOOCs that address the real lack of certain skills and competences.
Along the same line, the study draws attention to the fact that while the initial training of novice teachers is centralized at the ministry level, there is a proposal to create CPD programmes. These PD programmes should be centralized at the university level. At this level, centers of PD of teachers can be created. In addition to establishing a culture of research devoted to the PD of teachers, the PD initiatives of these localized centers need to address both the professional and the research aspects in the teacher’s identity, the latter is an often forgotten aspect in the literature of the PD of teachers. These PD programmes should, also, be designed around the local university culture.

The findings suggest that, the ministry should take steps towards creating MOOCs leveraging Moodle platform. These MOOCs should address the Algerian teachers’ needs respecting the Algerian cultural and academic context.

**Conclusion**

This study evinced that Algerian university teachers’ literacy in educational technology and how it can be leveraged for their CPD is still very low. As mandatory PD programmes faced resistance on the part of teachers, Algerian ministry of higher education needs to value the informal CPD of teachers. In doing so, they would be indirectly implementing a new thinking and cultivating a culture of “self-education” that will prepare teachers to critically review their classroom practices and invoke innovation that maintain progress.

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The Significance of Theoretical Foundations in Enhancing Teaching Practices: Teachers’ Perceptions and Use of Learner-centered Approach in EFL Classrooms

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Abstract
Undeniably, the realm of teaching English as a foreign language still embraces active research that continuously looks for approaches and methods which may contribute to a more efficient instruction of the target language. These theoretical foundations enable the instructor to appropriately implement the outlined approach along its salient features to achieve the desired outcomes. Despite this tight rapport, teachers of English at the University of Mostaganem tend to rely on their common-sense teaching practices that are mainly informed by their experience of teaching EFL. The gap between the two extremes theory and practice, the premise of this paper, may be widened as teachers do not develop accurate and scientific understandings of certain pedagogical concepts, in this case, learner-centeredness as agreed on by professional academics, let alone to apply it along its proper standards. The pedagogical sequel of such misunderstanding mainly relate to random references to both teacher and learner-centered approaches in classroom teaching practices. The study via a detailed teachers’ questionnaire revealed that teachers of English, in addition to the cursory understandings they develop in relation to the very meaning of a learner-centered approach, tend to eschew developing learners’ metacognitive skills in their teaching practices. Most importantly, they are likely to rely on traditional ways of assessment instead of authentic frameworks, a cardinal feature within the current paradigm.

Keywords: Authentic assessment, constructivism, learner-centered approach, metacognition, teacher-centered approach

Introduction
Teaching English as a foreign language has never been a static and rigid practice whereby one approach fits every contextual variable. On the contrary, the history of EFL teaching has known several teaching paradigms nurtured by different schools of thought. The flexibility of the debated practice coped with the changes the world has witnessed, namely the technological boom which altered the very meaning of teaching English in the 21st century. Given that the witnessed metamorphosis required learners’ autonomy, a learner-centered approach has been adopted to refine the nature of learning and as well as the roles of the main pedagogical agents.

The Significance of Theory for Practice
An effective teaching practice necessitates establishing of a tight rapport between theoretical grounds and practical platforms. This is evident in the very nature of theory whose definition goes as follows: “a theory is an organized body of concepts and principles intended to explain a particular phenomenon” (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). This citation lucidly underscores the significance of theory in relation to different life practices be they in scientific laboratories, educational settings, or ordinary life routines. Most importantly, its cardinal role springs from its explanatory mechanisms which are required to understand the subject at hand (Johnson & Christensen, 2007). Following the same line of thought, the universality of theories with regard to different fields of study is another argument to establish its legacy in teaching practices.

Despite the fact that theoretical foundations are needed for heterogeneous research practices, a contract between natural sciences and social sciences is worth an explanation. Thus, while the former displays approximately fixed theoretical frameworks that stem from clear -cut standards, the latter displays an unstable nature that accounts for contextual variables and as such opens room for various options of interpretation processes. By contrast to natural science whose theories are approximately fixed, social sciences comprise competing theories and multiple theoretical perspectives which do not share the same consensus (Anfara & Mertz, 2006). Most importantly, educational research denies the fallacy of a well-established unified theory of education. On the contrary, theories differ since they echo divergent schools of thought, co-exit along oppositions and contradictions. These qualities make theories in social science and educational research context-bound.

Learner-centered Learning
The metamorphosis of the realm of education, witnessed over the past years, did not flip the roles of both teachers and learners only, but it redefined the very mechanisms of teaching practices, touching namely on the construction of knowledge in the classroom, the rapport between the two main agents, metacognition, collaborative learning and assessment. The discussed shift gave birth to a learner-centered learning. Barr & Tagg (1995) elucidate the nature of the new paradigm as they contrast between an instruction paradigm and a learning paradigm. While the former depicts the process of transferring knowledge to the students, the latter alludes to learners’ discovery and construction of their knowledge.

Distinguishing Features of Learner-centered Learning
The new paradigm of learning and teaching which initiated a shift at multiple levels- displays certain features that distinguish it from previous approaches to English language teaching. Johnson
et al. (1991) stress the fact that this metamorphosis has altered cardinal aspects of the whole process of learning such as the very concept of knowledge, aims of learning and pedagogical relationships. These traits mainly relate to knowledge construction, creativity, metacognition, collaborative work, the rapport that brings both the teacher and the learners together, and authentic assessment frameworks, to boot.

To begin with, the new paradigm stressed the significance of knowledge development, but at the same time, redefined the route teachers and learners were accustomed to take when chasing it. The perspective, adapted to knowledge, sanctifies learners’ prior knowledge and its essence in organizing and representing new information (Murphy & Alexander, 2000). Most importantly, the fabric of classroom knowledge is no longer solely owned by the teacher as its provider and controller. On the contrary, learners have become co-creators and discoverers of knowledge in the learning environment As such; the purpose of education, which in its turn embraced a certain metamorphosis, shifted to developing students’ competencies (McCombs & Whistler, 1997).

The constructivist perspective, adopted by a learner-centered approach, emphasises the co-construction of knowledge within a social group (s) and along collaboration mechanisms. In relation to this, classrooms constitute a social environment where every learner may contribute to the fabric of knowledge. Thus, the discussed approach downplays the sole reliance on lecturing, which is believed to disregard the social essence of learning, and as such supports collaboration which provides learners the opportunity to learn from classmates, and most importantly, to acquire certain skills necessary for outside classroom settings, too.

A learner-centered approach underscores learners’ autonomy since it stresses the importance of metacognitive skills along the learning processes. This practice of self-reflection is believed to create a learning setting that fosters learners’ taking responsibility over their learning. By the same token, the afore-mentioned dexterity would allow learners to monitor their learning process (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2008). Within this cognitive vista, the success of a learner may be measured in relation to certain features such as learners’ engagement in their learning activity, the ability to manage thinking processes, interrogating learning practices, and most importantly, to attain a stage of responsible learners (Lambert & McCombs, 2000).

Another salient feature of a learner-centered approach relates to the rapport that brings both the teacher and the learners together in English language classes. Relationship building is highly advantageous since it develops among the involved agents the sense of cooperation, teamwork and many other pedagogical boons. By contrast, within a teacher-centered approach, the two main pedagogical agents used to occupy distinguished roles. The former being the controller of the classroom and the latter being the recipient of knowledge. The distance between the teacher and the learner had been among the criteria of conventional understandings of quality teaching. However, within the current paradigm, the rapport had been redefined. In todays’ settings, the learner is the partner of the teacher. This flexibility would allow the teacher to develop an understanding about learners’ characteristics that enable them to manage an effective instruction. Most importantly, this sociable fluidity would give the learners a say in classroom decision making.
Due to the significance of assessment in any learning process, it has accompanied many approaches to teaching English as a foreign language. Howbeit, within the discussed pedagogical vista, authenticity has been the most distinguishing factor. To shift away from paper and pencil exams, this trait merges along classroom activities to generate learners’ motivation and engagement (National Research Council, 1999). Authenticity is believed to be clearly identified along performance assessment, a practice processed along certain activities, which stress learners’ demonstration of certain performance skills along pre-determined quality standards. The targeted assessment may achieve effectiveness along teachers’ continuous search for ways of designing meaningful assessment frameworks.

**Methodological Framework**
This study had been motivated by the author’s modest experience of teaching English at the University of Mostaganem, an experience that is continuously open to improvement and enhancement. By means of discussing teaching practices with colleagues, certain pedagogical anomalies had been identified. The main one being that teaching practices are most of the time more informed by teachers’ experiences in teaching the language (common sense) than by theoretically solid foundations. The outcome of this-the rationale of the study-being teachers misunderstanding certain pedagogical concepts—in this case a learner-centered approach and, most importantly, random teaching practices along the shadow of a teacher-centered approach.

**The Study Sample**
The participants of this study were twenty teachers of English from the University of Mostaganem (Department of English). The teachers involved both sexes (males and females) and represented varied age categories. These participants had different teaching experiences (7-22 years of service). Their specialties were also varied including civilization, didactics literature, and psychology, among other fields. The table 1 showcases the sample of this study:

**Table 1. The study sample**

| Gender |  
|--------|---|
| 18 females | 2 males |
| Age |  
| 25-30 (years old) | 30-40 (years old) |
| 7 | 13 |
| Teaching experience |  
| 5-10 years | 10-20 years |
| 5 | 15 |
| Specialty |  
| Literature | 3 |
| Civilization | 3 |
| Educational psychology | 6 |
| Phonetics | 2 |
| Linguistics | 3 |
| Didactics | 3 |
Teachers’ Questionnaire
The conducted study referred to a detailed questionnaire administered to the teachers. This methodological instrument had been designed on the basis of extensive readings in relation to the main qualities of a learner-centered approach. It embraced different sections, each one aiming at covering a particular aspect of the educational theory being debated. These sections comprised some open-ended questions whose purpose was to gather qualitative data. They also included statements which can be approved or falsified, a means that allowed the researcher to gauge certain understandings and misconceptions of pedagogical practices.

Section One: Teachers’ Attitudes towards Education Theories and Teaching Practices
The Rapport between Theory and Practice
The first section of the questionnaire aimed at exploring teachers’ attitudes towards theories and their significance in relation to their teaching practices, with the focus being on the theoretical foundations of a learner-centered learning. The first question administered to the interviewed teachers related to the significance of theory for teaching practices. The results are displayed in table 2:

Table 2. Teachers’ attitudes about the significance of theory for teaching practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The superiority of practice over theory</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The importance of theories in teaching practices</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting teaching practices along theoretical frameworks</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The minority of the teachers (10%) argued for the superiority of practice over theory made it clear in the ensuing comment: ‘It (practice) is more effective than learning more about the theory’. Most of the teachers (90%) claimed the cardinal role theories play in the teaching processes. They acknowledged the fact that their teaching practices had been being influenced by theoretical frameworks. The minority of them (20%) suggested that they did not support their teaching practices along theoretical frameworks. ‘How would you describe a teaching practice which is not theoretically founded?’ To this question, they provided the following statements: ‘fruitless and unproductive; not that effective, poor; it is simply intuitive and not sound, impulsive not in the norm’.

Locating Teachers’ Teaching Practices within a Paradigm
The next open ended question aimed at knowing whether or not teachers of English are aware of the paradigm shift that the educational landscape has adopted in recent years. The question was the following: What is the difference between the bygone paradigm of learning/teaching and the actual one? The results are displayed in table 3:
Table 3. Teachers’ awareness about paradigm shift

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge about the past and new paradigm of learning/teaching.</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disregarding the shift of roles of teachers and learners</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close understandings of learner-centered learning</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A good percentage of teachers (40%) claimed they had no idea about the past and new paradigm of learning/teaching. However, some teachers (30%) alluded to the teacher-centered paradigm and sidestepped the shift which altered the roles of both teachers and learners in the classroom and underlined the use of technology and ICTs in today’s teaching practices. This view is echoed in the following statement: ‘Learning process is still the same as that of the preceding years. Teachers and learners follow a standard syllabus; use written texts to evaluate, etc. The only change is the use of technology which makes a shift from a traditional way of teaching/learning to an active one. The minority of teachers (20%) provided answers closely related to the learner-centered learning paradigm. A teacher stated: ‘The teacher was the source of knowledge and learners were receivers. In the actual one teacher should be a facilitator, he orients learners who should be partners in the process.

Teachers’ Understandings of the Theoretical Foundations of Learner-centered Approach

The following question targeted teachers’ understandings and knowledge about the definition and nature of learner-centered learning. The purpose of the researcher was to see whether or not teachers of English were knowledgeable about the main features which distinguish this approach from the bygone paradigm. Before dealing with teachers’ responses, the ensuing characteristics of a learner-centered learning, advanced by The European Student Union, had been taken as the backdrop against which teachers’ answers had been tested.

- It relates to a constructivist paradigm;
- It promotes learning via communicative practices;
- It considers learners as active participants in learning process;
- It develops transferable skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking and reflective thinking. (Time for a New Paradigm in Education, n.d.)

The majority of the interviewed teachers (80%) argued they were familiar with a learner-centered approach. Howbeit, by means of contrasting the above mentioned definition with those of the teachers, it becomes clear that their understandings tend to miss many salient features such as its constructivist perspective, innovation, developing skills, and fostering reflection. A teacher claimed: ‘It improves participation, and provides opportunity to collaborative learning’. Another teacher added: ‘The learner takes an active role in the learning processes.

Teachers’ Knowledge about Constructivism

The very fact that a learner-centered learning is grounded on different social and cultural variables,
makes developing an accurate understanding of constructivism necessary. Since this would allow teachers to fully grasp the different features that accompany the learning process which transcend a mere direct and rigid rapport between the teacher and the learner. The question directed to the teachers was: ‘What do you know about constructivism and its importance for learning? To decipher whether or not teachers of English were aware of the nature of the targeted theory and its significance for learning, the following features of constructivism advanced by Piaget & Vygotsky had been taken into account:

- It designates a learning process that seeks the construction of knowledge along various contexts;
- it argues that personal experiences constructs one’s knowledge;
- it enables the learners to negotiate and the generate hypotheses all along the process of knowledge construction;
- it underscores the significance of past experiences in knowledge construction (cited in Ertmer & Newby, 1993)

The results of generated from the question administered to the teachers are mentioned in the graph below:

**Figure 1. Teachers’ understandings of constructivism**

Most of the interviewed teachers (60%) suggested they had no idea about what constructivism was. As mentioned in the quote, constructivism stresses the active aspect of learning, the significance of context in relation to constructing knowledge, and most importantly personal experiences and the various ways they shape the whole learning process. As opposed to this covering understanding, a considerable percentage of teachers’ (40%) responses identified certain features and sidestepped others. A teacher advanced the following feedback: ‘It is a theory based mostly on observation constructing and co-constructing meaning i.e. learning is to construct knowledge by experience. Another teacher argued: ‘Constructivism is that knowledge must be constructed by the learner. He must be active and construct his own learning within a suitable environment created by the teacher’.

**Section Two: Teachers’ Application of Learner-centered Approach in their Classroom Practices**

The second section aimed at exploring whether or not teachers of English at the University of Mostaganem developed awareness about the main founding factors that scaffold the targeted learner-centered paradigm and the extent to which they had been reflected in their actual teaching practices. These features are briefly reviewed as follows: co-construction of knowledge in the classroom, metacognitive skills, teacher-learners’ relationship, collaborative learning and
authentic and meaningful assessment frameworks.

**Co-construction of Knowledge**

This part comprised a set of diverse statements whose main purpose was to identify certain ambiguities in relation to how teachers perceived the construction of knowledge in EFL classrooms. Being aware of the mechanism of knowledge co-construction necessitated a cognizance of the fallacy that the traditional approach of teaching sanctified. It states that ‘learning is automatic, inevitable outcome of good teaching.’ Most of the interviewed teachers (62.5%) supported the statement arguing that effective teaching relies on how good the teacher was. The graph below elucidates the point:

![Figure 2. Learning and the traditional teaching fallacy](image)

By contrast, the current paradigm highlights the fact that learners are no longer empty vessels and that dealing with them as doers becomes cardinal for the making of knowledge. Table 4 identifies teachers’ attitudes towards co-construction in the classroom:

**Table 4. Teachers’ attitudes about co-construction of knowledge**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learners as active agents</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners as listeners</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners’ prior knowledge</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners as co-creators of knowledge</td>
<td>87.50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In relation to this, a great majority of teachers (75%) underscored the active roles of their learners in the classroom. Only the minority of them (12.50%) claimed learners to be listeners. Taking learners’ prior knowledge is important when it comes to developing a shared knowledge and understanding in the classroom. Most of the teachers (75%) acknowledged the importance of doing so and provided the following feedback: The learners’ prior knowledge can help in the process of teaching and learning. ‘My learners are co-creators (co-construct) in the learning process’ had been the statement which clearly showcased teachers’ awareness of the contribution learners make in the classroom. Most of the teachers (87.50%) agreed they considered the learners as co-creators of knowledge and suggested the ensuing ideas: They come prepared, contribute to the debate, and sometimes raise new issues; when they collaborate or given the opportunity to interact they are so’.
Metacognitive Skills

Developing learners’ metacognition is said to be a distinctive feature of a learner-centered approach. Howbeit, the application of such skill would be ineffective given the fact that teachers are not aware of what its meaning and its scope are. Table 5 displays teachers’ understandings of metacognition:

Table 5. Teachers’ understandings of metacognition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cursory understandings of metacognition</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing its importance to the learners</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing learners’ capacities to control and to monitor their learning practices</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The interviewed teachers had been asked to define the concept of metacognition. While (50%) of them provided cursory understandings of it, the rest of the teachers (50%) claimed they had no idea. The former category provided the following understandings: ‘Thinking about thinking; think (the process of thinking); rethinking the way you think’. An awareness of the significance of metacognition can be boosted along developing learners’ cognizance of it. Most of the teachers (87%) argued they showed their learners the importance of metacognition and taught it to them by means of providing learners with opportunities to reflect on their thoughts, behaviour, and how to think about their own thinking. The teachers suggested the following ideas’. ‘Sometimes, this shows learning is easy and simple while it seems not as such according to them; through thinking they will become masters of their minds and learn how to make sense and choices’. Developing learners’ capacities to control and to monitor their learning practices would undeniably foment the targeted skill. In here also, a great majority of the teachers (75%) claimed they do so due to the following reasons: ‘this leads to creativity to avoid imitation; it allows them to have and independent thinking’. By the same token, controlling their learning would enhance their learning process at different planes. This control over learning, teachers believe ‘... will lead them (learners) to become more active; this develops self-confidence’.

Teacher-learners’ Rapport

The traditional English language classes, it is important to note, had been featured by a rigid relationship between the two main pedagogical agents: teachers and learners. The hierarchical rapport established a visible distance between them in relation to certain duties and rights. The current learner-centered paradigm, however, substituted this for a more flexible rapport whereby teachers and learners have become partners. The features of the rapport between teachers and learners are showcased in table 6:

Table 6. Teacher-learners’ rapport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learners as companions</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involving learners in decision making</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping learners to become responsible for the learning</td>
<td>62,50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first statement investigated the debated issue as it stated: ‘I see my students as companions’.
To this, most of the teachers (62%) agreed they supported, while the minority either disagreed or suggested that teachers should not consider learners as companions in every class. This peaceful rapport can be strengthened as learners are being involved in the process of decision making in the classroom, a view (50%) of the teachers positively reacted to. They provided the following reasons why it was important to do so: ‘This is necessary for the students who should think about how and what they learn; this encourages the learner to participate and show interest; this encourages them to hold control over their learning and learning more. Under the same line of thought, most of the interviewed teachers (62, 50%) claimed they helped their learners to become responsible for their own learning. This, according to them, would allow them to ‘to be autonomous learners by doing research.’

Collaborative Learning
Learning is not a mere pedagogical practice, but it also entails certain social skills that enable the learners to acquire knowledge and to develop their sense of social being. This social dimension can be achieved by means of collaboration between the learners and the teacher. Teachers’ perceptions about collaborative learning are displayed in table 7:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7. Collaborative learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Statements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People are social and the brain grows in a social environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration in the classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging collaborative learning in the classroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first two statements targeted this aspect of language learning. ‘People are social and the brain grows in a social environment’, was the statement that (50%) of the teachers approved while and (50%) of them saw it as one among many aspects of learning. Teachers provided the following feedback: ‘Things whose understanding is not possible through lectures can be clear from friends, Facebook groups, movies; we evolve according the environment we live in; students learn through collaborating and interacting with others’. In fact, collaboration in the classroom tends to develop new meanings along social interaction, the idea that most of the teachers (75%) embraced and made clear along these ideas: ‘acts of communication give new insights, ideas are exchanged mistakes are corrected and learning is likely to get enhanced; new data may be acquired through interaction. This awareness of the significance of collaborative learning made teachers use other strategies of teaching rather than an utter reliance on monotonous lecturing processes. Most of the teachers (87, 50%) encouraged collaborative learning in the classroom since, teachers argued, ‘this encourages teamwork; it pushes students to become competitive and active and learn from each other’.

Authentic Assessment Frameworks
In addition to the before-mentioned factors which characterise a learner-centered approach and which clearly distinguish it from traditional teacher-centered teaching paradigms, authentic assessment plays a cardinal role as to how learners’ performances are being tested. It is important to note that such type of assessment is reinforced along designing activities that generate learners’
authenticity, using performance frameworks to assess learners’ academic achievements, the use of different real world assessment tools, and most importantly, a continuous search for novel ways of authentic and befitting assessment mechanisms. Table 8 identifies teachers’ use of authentic assessment frameworks in classrooms:

**Table 8. Teachers’ use of authentic assessment tools in classrooms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I rely on paper and pencil tests</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to engage students in activities that result in authentic and challenging applications</td>
<td>62, 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As to the use of a combination of real-world assessment tools</td>
<td>37, 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>performance assessment,</td>
<td>62, 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The active search for new ways of assessment,</td>
<td>37, 50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To explore this part, the interviewed teachers had been asked to respond to the following statement peculiar to traditional assessment frameworks. It goes as follows ‘I rely on paper and pencil tests’. The data collection and analysis revealed that most of the teachers (75%) are imprisoned in the shadow of the traditional assessment landscape where paper and pen tests are relied on. Paradoxically, most of the teachers (62, 50%) are likely to engage students in activities that result in authentic and challenging applications. Teachers provided the following incentives: ‘since this set them to real work; this encourages and motivates them, help them think and produce. As to the use of a combination of real-world assessment tools, many teachers (37, 50%) tend to refer to but very often. A teacher commented: ‘I apply it a lot in oral classes, simulation; this depends on the learners’ level. The minority (12, 50%) suggested they did not. In relation to the use of performance assessment, most of the teachers (62, 50%) claimed they used such type of assessment since ‘it supports students to collaborate; the motivation to learn will increase; because performance shows the result of learning. The active search for new ways of assessment, many teachers believe (37, 50%) is important. Despite this fact, some other teachers (25%) claimed they keep to certain assessment frameworks, they believed, they mastered.

**Discussion**

The two sections of the study (theory and practice) had the aim of exploring teachers’ awareness of the theoretical foundations of a learner-centered approach and their undeniable influence as to actual classroom teaching practices. The first section revealed that teachers of English at the University of Mostaganem recognize the significance of theory in relation to their teaching practices. However and paradoxically, they tend to be unfamiliar with a learner-centered approach since the understandings they provided miss certain salient features such as its constructivist perspective, innovation, developing skills, and fostering reflection. Under the same line of thought, most of the teachers were unable to identify the current teaching-learning paradigm and to contrast it with the bygone one. Under the same line of thought, most of the interviewed teachers are likely to misunderstand the very constructivist foundations of a learner-centered approach.

The second sections that shed light on teachers’ actual teaching practices explored whether or not the afore-mentioned misconceptions influenced the very instructive practices. Most of the teachers tend to adhere to the traditional pedagogical fallacy that states that good teaching depends
how good the teaching practice is! By contrast, they supported the co-construction of knowledge in their classes. Among the salient features of the targeted approach and to which most of the teachers tend to develop a cursory understandings, in other cases have no idea about, is metacognition and the cardinal role it plays in developing learners’ autonomy. The rapport teachers develop towards their learners is favorable for engaging learner-centered classes, a rapport that considers learners as companions. Collaborative learning accompanies teachers’ practices due to the boons, most of the teachers acknowledge, it develops. Nevertheless, authentic assessment that distinguishes the current paradigm from the teacher-centered approach seems to be mingled with certain traditional teaching practices whereby paper and pen tests are relied on.

Recommendations
The study has clearly shown that learner-centered approach and its use in higher education (University of Mostaganem) represents a pedagogical case whereby various shortcomings may be identified. These shortcomings mainly relate to the lack of solid theoretical backgrounds and common sense practices of teaching that stem from experience of teaching. Therefore, the study puts the following recommendations forward so as boost an effective use of the targeted approach:

- Teachers need to be aware of the distinctive features of both teacher-centered and learner-centered approaches.
- Theoretical foundations of approaches should occupy a significant locus as to teaching practices.
- Teaching experiences should be supported by theoretical backgrounds.
- Cursory understandings need to be avoided.
- Teachers need to develop background knowledge about past teaching approaches and to be aware of paradigm shifts.
- They need to develop a deep (concise) understanding of learner-centered approach.
- A readiness to embrace change and to challenge beliefs should be generated.
- Teachers should develop their understandings about the constructivist backgrounds of student-centered learning.
- They should develop deep understandings about metacognitive skills and apply them.
- Teachers should adopt authentic assessment frameworks.

Conclusion
An effective application of a learner-centered approach necessitates teachers’ awareness of its theoretical foundations and the main features which distinguish it from a teacher-centered paradigm. The study proved this interplay as it showed certain conceptual confusions teachers of English at the University of Mostaganem develop in relation to the very meaning of the debated approach. A clear understanding would undoubtedly enhance teachers’ teaching practices and their learners’ classroom performances as well. The study underscored the significance of two main features which teachers tend to be unfamiliar with and that would boost the whole learning process. Developing learners’ cognitive skills would generate a sense of autonomous learning whereby learners acquire the skill of self-assessment of the learning processes. Most importantly, authentic assessment requires teachers’ attention and focus since it enables the learners to engage in the real world as opposed to traditional ways of assessment that are limited to a rigid instrumental motivation.
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References
Language Proficiency through Vocabulary Development: A Framework

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Abstract

The global aim of the present research paper is an attempt to reach a threshold level of the learning of a foreign language (English) through the development of vocabulary. Observing the very limited rate of use of English in the Algerian community, English as Foreign Language (EFL) students, actually, need to progress in the mastery of that language by reading and/or listening to texts or messages intensively. To achieve this goal, subsequent procedures should take place by giving the foreign language a rather more appreciable position in the community such as the one held by a second language. To be down-to-earth, a brief survey on the linguistic situation in Algeria is exposed where neat clarification of second-foreign language status in the community is laid out to show that the more a (foreign) language is explicitly exposed in its manifold forms, the more are learners, in that community, likely to acquire it as a second language. However, the assumption of presenting the receptive skills (reading and listening) as the most appropriate means for the growth of foreign language vocabulary is supported by Krashen’s input theory where any input to be understood, should come at EFL learners’ capacity to read/listen and decode easily the meaning. In due course, First year EFL students have been subject to a language proficiency test-‘a pre-test then a post-test’. This typical experimental design is an intervention study which contains two groups: ‘the treatment or experimental’ group which receives the treatment, or which is exposed to some special conditions of intensifying vocabulary learning through a varied, comprehensible input; and a second group of EFL learners- the control group- whose role is to provide a baseline. The findings showed better scores among the experimental group compared to the other group. Actually, the results proved the adequacy of the adopted theory.

Keywords: Comprehensible input, discourse comprehension, language proficiency receptive skills, vocabulary development

Introduction
The importance of vocabulary in language acquisition goes uncontested. It is evident that vocabulary is indispensable for successful communication in any language. However, the encroachment towards recognizing the importance of lexical competence within second and/or foreign language learning has gained sound interest. In this research study, a distinction between second and foreign language acquisition is made and, unmistakably, we will not go into that particular terminology discussion. Therefore, in due occasion, the discrepancy will be displayed to refer to the status of each term according to the target community as shown in (2.3.). Thus, gradually, Foreign Language Acquisition (henceforth, FLA) researchers have come to attest the central, or even, pre-conditional role of the lexical dimension for fluent language use and usage. In the same line of thought, Ellis (1997) has exposed the idea that vocabulary knowledge is indispensable to acquire grammar. That is to say, knowing the words in a text allows learners to understand the discourse, which in turn allows the grammatical patterning to become more transparent. In this sense too, Nation (2001) underlines the critical importance of developing an adequate lexical approach since learners’ skills in using the language are heavily dependent on the number of words they know, particularly in the early stages of learning a foreign language. He states that a systematic, principled approach to vocabulary development results in better language learning. It is de facto that developing lexical competence in the target language is now seen as the crucial factor in language acquisition and there is general agreement that there is a threshold vocabulary level below which learners are likely to struggle to decode the input they receive (Alderson & Banerjee 2002).

Principles of the Research
Many language specialists, such as: Krashen (1993) and Nation (2001) have analyzed, almost exclusively, productive language, where both ends of communication channels are studied as emitters rather than as recipients. Recent research, however, recognize that the mastery of a particular language involves mastery of a receptive as well as a productive repertoire. This trend acknowledges the fact that the two repertoires should, therefore, be established through respectively receptive, then productive adequate methods. Conversely, teachers’ view about learners’ attitudes towards English learning in our (middle and secondary) schools has changed greatly. The teachers’ view was based on the evidence of pupils’ repeated unsatisfactory results in written and spoken form of the English language. Recently, however, EFL learners, themselves, have had positive attitudes towards the learning of English since in their eyes English is an important subject matter in the curriculum accentuated by many facts. Firstly, English has been assigned a coefficient of two (2), three (3) and five (5) respectively for ‘scientific streams’, ‘literature and philosophy stream’ and ‘foreign languages stream’ in the secondary school education. Consequently, some improvements in the ‘Baccalaureate exam’ have been noticed showing in a way the impact of high coefficient assignment. Secondly, the new coefficient assignment created more motivation in the learners who are, now, paying for private courses to improve their level for better grades in the ‘baccalaureate exam’. This new impetus has, naturally, generated more academic interest for English.

For this purpose, the motivated generation of EFL learners needs to be oriented towards developing further sessions of reading and listening as an essential source of input. Therefore, a structured, rich and comprehensible input from the beginning of first-year university level should
be directed to EFL learners so as to help them develop enough rich vocabulary to reach comprehension of both written and oral scripts. Linguistically speaking, it is crystal clear that difficult texts do not encourage students to listen and read and may, even, develop frustration and demotivation. Therefore, in order to develop learners’ motivation and interest, it is essential for the contents (topics), structure (layout) and basic vocabulary (meaning) to be at the reach of listeners and readers. In like manner, vocabulary acquisition constitutes a key component to successfully develop comprehension, communication and literacy skills. Nevertheless, developing vocabulary is a top priority and an on-going challenge. Actually, once at the university setting, students are exposed to a great amount of vocabulary in a myriad of subject areas. Yet, due to the intense focus on content, two (2) types of vocabulary are dealt with in the different modules within the set programme. These are, first, a general vocabulary used mainly for communicative purposes and representing basic language skills, such as: reading and listening comprehension, oral and written production. Second, a special vocabulary representing a linguistic jargon related to the modules of phonetics, linguistics, literature and civilization. The interaction of EFL learners with diverse and huge amounts of vocabulary is rendered difficult if not impossible facing new contents with unfamiliar vocabulary. The difficulty is felt in the lack of receptive vocabulary which hinders comprehension. Consequently, what is needed, in fact, is to develop students’ receptive vocabulary to enable them understand when listening to oral language or when reading texts.

The experimental design of the second tool of research- the proficiency language test- is portrayed through an original methodological idea based on comparing results of two groups of EFL learners. One group will receive a special treatment: ‘the treatment variable’ (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Accordingly, this typical experimental design is an intervention study containing two groups: ‘the treatment or experimental’ group which receives the treatment or which is exposed to some special conditions of intensifying vocabulary learning through a varied, comprehensible input; and a second group of EFL learners- the control group- whose role is to provide a baseline. In due course, the two groups are seemingly comparable to each other before the treatment is applied. The undertaken procedure is as follows:

- First, Krashen’s Input Hypothesis (1993) is put on the check-scale to supply the main attribute of the treatment during the treatment period. Some elements are then depicted to provide evidence for the usefulness and validity of the adopted theory.
- Second, the aim of the study is clearly showing the rationale behind such endeavour to gain proficiency in the foreign language by acquiring sufficient vocabulary for comprehension first. The objective is represented through a set of methodological procedures, and mainly a triangulation use of tools of research procedure.
- Then, language proficiency tests represent the major analytic measurement of comprehension among the two groups of learners.

Aim of the Study
Having presented Krashen’s theory (1993), and, given that the English language enrolls the status of a foreign language, the researcher wants to make clear evidence that the intended goals behind the teaching of English at University level in Algeria may or could reach a threshold level of proficiency only if sufficient, varied and comprehensible input is administered to our EFL learners so as they could keep up with without frustration. In the same vein, Krashen’s Input Hypothesis
stipulates that it is possible to acquire a language and develop its vocabulary learning when there is enough comprehensible and varied input available regardless to the amount of output that may come out lately. The study is designed to achieve this purpose.

The testees (exclusively, the experimental group) received intense, varied and comprehensible input. That special treatment is meant to make a diagnosis about whether that procedure would lead to any progress in the EFL students’ proficiency in the foreign language being acquired.

The established decision about the learners’ progress is set over a period of study approximating six weeks using several criteria for decoding the message of a text, be it written or spoken. These criteria are related to vocabulary learning strategies (VLS) taught to EFL learners in the ‘Meanwhile period’ to overcome the burden of comprehending the lexis contained in those texts supposed to bring a degree of difficulty at the reach of first year EFL learners’ level of comprehension. To get a more plastic picture of the situation, learners are allowed to make use of different sources helping them analyse, decode and understand the difficult and unfamiliar lexical items. Referencing, inferencing, using contextual clues, making use of their linguistic and world knowledge and guessing are all criteria at the hand of learners (readers and listeners) to achieve an overall understanding of the whole text regardless to tiny and small unrelated vocabulary that may hinder their process of understanding. This included a set of tasks they were able to accomplish successfully at the end of the study but that had been somehow problematic issues at the beginning. A major factor was also their perceptions about what they could actually do using the language and their confidence to approach new tasks with unknown lexis. Self-reports were used and established how they understood the texts and if they felt there was any progress in their comprehension of the works. Finally, a more objective tool was employed: comparing the scores EFL learners achieved in the pre-test (preliminary English language Proficiency Test) and the scores obtained, in the course of this study, in the post-test.

**Research Tools (Triangulation)**

A range of methods are used for collecting data in the present study. It is meant to make use of a combination of dissimilar methods to study the same unit. The reason behind this strategy is as follows:

The flaws of one method are often strengths of another, and by combining methods, observers can achieve the best of each, while overcoming their unique deficiencies (Denzin, 1970, as quoted in Merriam 1988, p. 69)

**Interviews**

The first instrument for gathering information was conducted with the teachers in charge of the receptive skills teaching: reading and listening. This is intended to elicit the ways, techniques and procedures undertaken in the process of providing input in the form of written scripts (reading) or oral/verbal messages (listening) be it a text or a dialogue of authentic or sometimes concocted English.

Interviews are one of the most important sources of case study information (Dorney, 2007). Unlike surveys, interviews are guided conversations rather than structured queries (Yin, 2003, p.
89). For the researcher, it is inescapable to both acts: following the line of enquiry and asking the actual questions in a biased manner. What is more crucial for the tool validity is not forcing the interviewees to adopt a particular position and most importantly maintain a friendly and non-threatening environment. The type of questions used was mainly open-ended questions rather than those requiring straight forward yes/no answers. The interviews have had a conversational format and the questions were aimed at reaching both objective facts and teacher’s subjective opinions.

Primarily, the interviews were used to elicit teachers’ views and reactions to the situations of the teaching and learning of the receptive skills. This offered subjective insights as far as their perceptions and practices are concerned. The interviews were recorded with the assent of the interviewees. The recording could help go back to a particular piece of information that emerged in the interview to reconsider it for its relevance to a peculiar analysis. The recording technique could only help to restore any piece of information needed though interviews are known to be verbal and subject to bias and attrition. In fact, this was not a major problem since it was not the only method used and other data were supplemented from other sources as well.

**T-tests or Language Proficiency Tests**

The second tool of investigation was rather more pertinent since it analyzed the teaching situation before and after the provision of the proposed strategy. The latter provided alternatives to the usual and habitual way of exposing input through reading texts and listening to passages. Thus, a Pre-test in language proficiency and vocabulary retrieval was set to evaluate both control and experimental groups. This preliminary language test was administered to 1st year EFL learners which constituted a random sample of learners so as to avoid selection and biased interpretation of the results. The test was set to reveal learners aptitudes to understand input contained in reading and listening passages via a potential control and mastery of lexical items. The method of testing was driven through simple texts where the main instruction versed into vocabulary retrieval to reach comprehension. Equal and similar questions and tasks were directed to both groups in terms of length, degree of difficulty and input diversity. Besides, the second T-test was still a language proficiency test piloted after 6 weeks of interval. During that (interval) period, the experimental group was, in a way, privileged, i.e., learners of that group were exposed to a multiple set of texts representing a variety of contexts and following the proposed framework. The principle of the treatment is stressed by the fact that language is understood only when it is comprehensible and that we may be able to overcome language quandary about certain structures and vocabulary that we have not acquired before only through rich contexts. Logically, contexts should be varied so as to reach proficiency in language which can lead easily learners to move from their current level of competence to more complicated tasks. In other terms, if the input is comprehensible, varied and sufficient, learners will progress automatically and go beyond their initial level of understanding. This could be reached if only they are sufficiently exposed to a variety of contexts representing input a little bit beyond their initial level of understanding where they can use contextual clues, linguistic knowledge, extra-linguistic and world knowledge information. To concretise the proposed hypothesis, the experimental group was instructed, during the 6 week-period, to deal with a great deal of comprehensible input via free voluntary, guided readings and listening. It was purposefully conducted to provide the experimental group of learners with enough input, still in respect to comprehensibility first. Indisputably, according to Krashen (1993), these learners will amplify their literacy and language proficiency. They may, accordingly, reach a level beyond the
level they attained before being sufficiently exposed to such rich, varied and comprehensible input. Then, the Pre-test results should, convincingly, prove the attested ability of the experimental group to deal better with text comprehension if compared to the other control group. For assertion, a questionnaire is administered to those learners receiving more attention in that particular experiment to certify their progress or simply negate.

**Questionnaire /Self-reports**
A Third tool of investigation was set at the end of the investigation to confirm or infirm the utility of adopting Krashen’s Input Hypothesis (1993) with our EFL learners. Knowing that English embodies the status of a foreign language in Algeria, the rationale behind implementing the proposed hypothesis is to generate instances of exposure to the target language through a rich input which is comprehensible or at least a little bit beyond our learners’ capacity of understanding; and properly advised, it should be varied so as different occasions of meeting lexical items are repeatedly given to the learners. According to Dorney (2007), a period of six weeks was acclaimed to fulfill and adopt the proposed programme of language exposure. The questionnaire stipulated from the experimental group of EFL learners to report their own experience with the new injected programme they went through and to reveal possible changes in their language proficiency compared to a 6 week period before. The types of questions were semi-guided ones where sometimes just a yes/no answer could suffice. Other times, respondents were given an MCQ alternative to choose between different proposed answers. In sum, the objective behind is methodologically significant. It serves as a measurement tool to diagnose the efficiency of the approach carried out during the period of treatment.

The subjects were pedagogically observed on a number of occasions to be able to judge their level of proficiency in English before and after the experiment. These self-reports were especially important for revealing information about EFL learners’ past experience with English, and at the end, they were asked to self-evaluate the progress they made in comprehending English texts afterwards.

The subjects’ self-reports were friendly conducted to retrieve some retrospective accounts of what kind of experience they had with English prior to the beginning of this study. Finally, the achieved results in language tests were analyzed to get objective, comparable data on the progress they made.

As for motivation to learn English, it seems that the instrumental motivation played a prominent part as they wanted to improve their English mainly in order to be able to read academic books related to the areas of their interest and be able to communicate orally in English once confronted to such situations.

It is also important to include information about the subjects ‘experience with English before they arrived to University, as it provides useful insights into their level of proficiency prior to the study. The formal English instruction that they received as part of their education within the state system (Middle and Secondary school education) constitute the main attribute influencing their proficiency in English. Adding to that, contact with English outside the formal classes, though very limited, also helps increasing interest, motivation and learning engagement through different
means of communication as TV shows, documentaries, movies, Radio Broadcast (BBC and the like) and the ICT’s diverse uses, such as: facebook, twitter, YouTube and others.

Concerning formal instruction, the majority of 1st year EFL learners stated the fact of learning English at the age of 12 years old as part of compulsory language classes in the first grade of Middle school education. Generally, the English language classes were held three times a week in the form of one-hour session. What was really missing, however, is training in the listening skill beyond and within the official exams. Moreover, there was not enough variety of comprehensible input, in the form of graded reading materials or simple listening passages. At university level, the new students, for the first time, were exposed to a rather consistent programme, along with a focus on more advanced aspects of grammar, linguistics, phonetics and additional elements of the language related to literature and civilization.

Respondents’ feedback is a strategy where learners themselves are involved in commenting on the conclusion of the study. Here, they can express their views in what is called a ‘validation interview’ (Holliday, 2004). Therefore, if there is agreement between the researcher and the participants, the study’s validity is indeed reinforced. Also, respondents’ validation can also enhance generalizability.

The task of applying such a framework is not easy doing. However, time and efforts should be deployed by teachers collaboratively to initiate their learners into an ongoing process of readership and interest in the language in all its manifestations.

Conclusion
A battery of objective tests has been administered to first-year EFL learners so as to reach the desired results of progress in vocabulary acquisition and understanding. Though a large number of students have quite a limited proficiency in English, they enclose a considerable control of the main grammatical structures of English and they know more or less a great deal of vocabulary. But as they embark on courses and texts designed for native speakers (original input), they are bound to come across many words that are new to them; both the specialized terms of particular academic fields and the enormous number of non-specialized words that characterize English academic prose.

The results of the tests can be used to help diagnose areas of weakness, set learning goals and plan vocabulary programme, measure vocabulary growth and assign graded reading and listening.

The tests have tried to answer this question: Is the learners’ poor performance in reading and listening a result of insufficient vocabulary knowledge?

Some learners have more difficulty understanding spoken English. This could be because they do not know enough vocabulary or simply because they have, by large, learned English mainly through reading. Likely, they have not had enough contact with the spoken language in former stages of education, unless their teachers’ talk in the classroom. Given that the written test itself was a real tool of measurement, it was right interesting to give the first form of the test
through reading. If confidence is set, then the oral type of testing can be set for further comprehension degree.

Similarly, learners who had a lot of contact with various input of the target language in and out the language classroom, revealed to be making progress in vocabulary knowledge. Subsequently, English word-knowledge is essential for all learners who wish to gain proficiency in the language. It is, thus, important that teachers know what vocabulary knowledge their learners have and aware of how they can systematically help them to increase this proficiency. Ways of doing so include substantial graded reading, indirect vocabulary teaching and providing a vocabulary focus in different language activities. Actually, the post-test has allowed checking how much learners’ vocabulary has developed over the six-week treatment period.

Indeed, careful attention should be paid in the run of developing vocabulary through the two receptive skills since the environment does not provide spontaneous input delivery in the target language. However, the context of getting along with the input is carried out voluntarily by teachers and learners in direct teaching (teacher inquiry and peer-teaching), active learning (self-engagement and peer-learning), through natural, incidental learning contexts (exposure and involvement in the language); and within planned encounters (graded reading, use of audio-video sources and complete involvement).

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References
Enhancing Students’ Effectiveness through Motivational Strategies

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Abstract
The present qualitative study aims to explore teachers’ and students’ perceptions of some teaching motivational strategies impact on university students’ effectiveness based on Dörnyei & Csizér (1998) landmark study. The research has involved individual in-depth semi-structured interviews with six English Foreign Language (EFL) teachers and six students to further explore key issues from their viewpoints. The main findings have unveiled that both teachers and students recognise the motivating potential of all the examined scales. Many similarities and some dissimilarities related to specific motivational themes have emerged. In terms of dissimilarity, students accorded importance to group work scale, however teachers minimised its role by justifying that it needed certain conditions. Another area of mismatch can be noticed in the way students and teachers regarded tasks in motivating students. Teachers stressed on providing clear instruction and explanation while students pointed to the content of tasks. Furthermore, another instance of difference in participants’ views towards the same scale in terms of the motivational strategies to be used was in teacher behaviour scale. Both participants agreed to place value on it, but students appeared to emphasise on the social aspects as feeling relaxed and enjoying the class in order to participate fully, while teachers stressed on academic achievement.

Keywords: Academic achievement, EFL teachers, group work, motivational strategies, perceptions, students, tasks, teacher behavior

Enhancing Students’ Effectiveness through Motivational Strategies

BOURAS

Introduction
Motivation plays a crucial role in enhancing students’ motivation in English Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. It is considered as a prominent factor in language learning (Dörnyei, 2001a; Oxford, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). More importantly, research on motivation in second (L2) or foreign language (FL) learning has widened its scope and shifted emphasis from describing the composition of students’ motivation to a detailed list of practical strategies to assisting teachers to boost their students’ motivation (e.g., Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Dörnyei, 2001a; Williams & Burden, 1997).

Literature Review
There is a growing agreement among teachers and researchers that motivation plays a key role in the success of the L2/FL learning process (Dörnyei, 1998). FL/L2 motivation is needed to help learners expend and persist in their effort in a FL/L2 learning process which might extend over a long study period of time. It is highlighted as well that “without motivation even the brightest students who possess remarkable abilities cannot resist in the face of difficulties and attain any really useful language” (Dörnyei, 2010, p.74).

As it is assumed in the present study, EFL teachers are more interested in finding ways of increasing students’ involvement and engagement in learning activities in the FL classroom. A FL classroom influenced by the teacher as a prime source of the new language has a major impact on students’ motivation and attitude towards learning. Thus, teachers should be aware of motivational strategies and how they are central to students’ motivation and interest in learning the English language.

A look at the published literature unearthed that the previous research findings and even the proposed motivational teaching strategies may not be adequate or valid for all EFL teaching contexts and learning situations. In this context, it has been cited that “very little research has been done to answer a crucial question: Are the proposed techniques actually effective in language classrooms?” (Guilloteaux & Dörnyei, 2008, p.56). Yet, the study at hand endeavours to address students’ motivation as a central issue so as to provide some insights into how university students and teachers perceive the most important teacher motivational strategies that are derived from Western educational contexts and evaluate their relevance to the Algerian EFL classroom context.

Aim of the Study
EFL teachers have always attempted to find new approaches or strategies that introduce practical uses of English as a Foreign Language in the classroom. With this in mind, the primary concern of the undertaken study is to foster more effective implementation of a set of motivational strategies through a better understanding of their perceived importance of use in the FL classroom from teachers’ and students’ perspectives and ultimately make students learn the English language.

Research Questions
The current study has addressed the following interrelated research questions:

a. Which motivational strategies do students and teachers identify as most important?
b. How do students’ and teachers’ beliefs compare?
Methodology

Participants
The participants were six EFL university teachers and six students from Souk-Ahras University, Algeria. The students were enrolled in the first year Human Sciences. The technique used for sampling was ‘convenience sampling’. That is our sample was conveniently selected. It is a non-random sampling method and is defined as “the selection of individuals who happen to be available for study” (Mackey & Gass, 2005, p. 122).

Instruments
To collect qualitative data, semi-structured interviews were used to explore teachers’ and students’ experiences, perceptions, and views. Interviews may be conducted in various modes: face-to-face, by telephone, videophone but face-to face is probably the best one. In our case, interviews were conducted individually in the university; they were face-to-face, they were conducted in English and recorded. Additionally, the interviewees were provided with a short summary about motivational strategies that could also be used in the language classroom to make them voice out their opinions around this specific area.

Data Analysis
Dörnyei & Csizér (1998) conceptualisation of motivational strategies was used as a framework when analysing the motivational strategies which were discussed during the interviews. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data. In order to describe these ideas, codes are generated from the data which are then classified into relevant themes. Dörnyei (2007b) suggests several stages to be taken in order to interpret qualitative data. Generally, these stages include transcribing the data, initial coding, grouping initial coding, searching for themes, defining and naming themes, and writing the report. As a matter of fact, all the interviews were transcribed then coded. Besides, the data were thematically analysed, and the themes related to the motivational strategies used in the language classroom were grouped and then classified.

Results and Discussion
The main findings uncover that both teachers and students recognise the motivating potential of all the examined scales. Many similarities and some dissimilarities in terms of their perceptions related to specific motivational themes have emerged. In terms of dissimilarity, students accord importance to group work scale; however, teachers minimise its role by justifying that it needs certain conditions. Hereafter are some teachers’ and students’ quotations.

Teacher C said:

*Group work needs more than a mere application, how are they [the students] going to work? You [the teacher] have to set rules during group work activities. Then, she added: I do not want to have chaos and disagreements that make the group work goes wrong.* (Teacher C)

Teacher B said:

*A group is made up of different members who cannot get profit from one another simply because we [the teachers] will have a kind of monopoly within the group. He added: Different members form a small learner community, we [the teachers] do not have the conditions or the means to make the members profit from one another...always someone somehow is dominating.* (Teacher B)
From the above quotes, we can clearly notice that the deficiency is not in the group work per se but in the way how it is organised and according to which conditions. This leads us to think as well that teachers themselves need to have a clear idea about setting group work norms in order to make it successful and make learners get profit from one another. Teacher B’s perception conveys the idea that group work does not have a positive effect and is not promoting cooperation among learners during group work activities.

Teacher A stated clearly:

*I do not include group work in my classes since they [the students] do not realise the meaning of learning a foreign language ...they do not realise the responsibility of learning a foreign language in a group.* (Teacher A)

Form her quotation, teacher A, is stressing two elements which are related to the students. According to her, the students themselves ignore the positive and effective side of group work and need to be responsible learners so as to promote their learning within a group.

Teacher D appears to agree with teacher A. She said:

*Group work is not really important to me for the outcome is not interesting, group learners are not always manageable and over years it proved to be not efficient enough... at least for me!* (Teacher D)

In fact, teacher (D) is playing down the role of group work because it is not that easy to be managed and at the same time she makes a personal judgement about its inefficiency. It seems obvious, form her quote that she attempted to operate with group work but it did not yield her the desired outcome. But it is still useful to say that the problem is not in the group work but in how to set it. Teacher E seemed to agree with all of them in minimising group work role and introduced a new element which is associated with the use of the mother tongue among students to deviate from the task assigned to them and start a discussion.

Teacher E placed too much emphasis on the teacher in organising group work to promote learning. He stated:

*In group work, most students are passive and only one or two students are speaking. Sometimes students avoid the task assigned to them and start a discussion, using the mother tongue, about their daily actions.* (Teacher E)

Teacher (E) further added:

*So, group work is not actually useful, it needs a lot of effort from teachers and students seem to ignore its advantages.* (Teacher E)

Teacher F did not give more details on group work. In her own words, she stated:

*When programming group work, teachers help less advanced learners, encourage their interests, and engage them.* (Teacher F)

Teacher F spoke about teachers’ help and encouragement for less advanced learners’ interests and engagement, but she did not include any information on how to afford this help to learners, or how to encourage their interests, or engage them. In fact, her quote portrays the idea that organising group work and managing it constitutes a difficult task for teachers.
As we have seen, all the teachers talked about group work from different perspectives but all of them agreed to downplay its role in increasing learners’ effectiveness. Yet, the teachers appear to hold group work in low regard, as they believe that it does not contribute to increasing students’ effectiveness, but rather leads to the opposite impact causing disagreements and clashes among the group members themselves.

Additionally, we have to recognize the fact they stated about its implementation which requires more effort from the teacher and its organisation needs certain conditions to make it achieve positive impacts in the students’ lives.

The attitudes of students towards creating group work were quite common. Most of them seem to stress on the social aspect of getting to know each other. Students stated that working in a group help them knit relationships and share the information. Exceptionally, only one student (L) expressed her dissatisfaction. In her own words, she said:

> Not a very good idea if we see the noise that students make. Students are always in disagreement and even when we work in group, there is always one who is working more than the others. (Student L)

Conversely, the other interviewed students talked about group work positively. For instance, student G said:

> …To have a good relationship between the learners because if there is no good relationship between them they will face problems also to share the ideas. (Student G)

Student K said:

> …To share the information and the knowledge. Discover the other… Make the students closer and strong relation between the students. …Creates a climate of confidence and more than that solidarity. (Student K)

From her quotation, it seems that she is adding other benefits as a consequence of setting group work. She stated that when students work within a group, there will be a climate of confidence and solidarity. Students help each other and feel confident to express themselves. Indeed, some students feel confident to express themselves in front of a limited number of their classmates.

In addition to sharing information and competition, other students are in favour of group work and see it as an occasion to discuss and seek support from their fellow students and learn from them something new in terms of ideas and information. These students appear to highlight the social aspect of learning together and by ways of interaction.

Student I said:

> It [Group work] is a good strategy, we share ideas to avoid the miss lead. A dynamic member will push the other members. Group work creates more competition. (Student I)

Student L said:

> Group work helps to make a discussion in the group. (Student L)

Student H said:
Group work will give students the opportunity to share their information and learn from the others and get new information. (Student H)

Another area of mismatch can be noticed in the way students and teachers regard tasks in motivating students. Teachers stress on providing clear instruction and explanation while students pointed to the content of tasks. They stated tasks should be interesting and varied. The teachers and the students believe that strategies related to tasks have a key role in motivating students and increasing their effectiveness. One student amongst the others appears to stress the importance of breaking up the routine to prevent boredom and maintain student interest.

The result of this scale may also suggest an area of mismatch in the views of teachers and students about the motivating factors of using tasks in enhancing students’ effectiveness. Students go into more detail about how the tasks and their content can be motivating. In their views, tasks should involve relevant topics to interaction and participation. It can reveal that students give much more importance to the social aspects surrounding language learning. However, teachers accord more importance to presenting tasks properly, providing clear instruction and including more explanation. Teacher C said:

Tasks are in the heart of our job. If you [the teacher] do not explain to students, they will not understand. So, they will not be motivated to do the task. (Teacher C)

Teacher B said:

Teachers must prepare before hand, you [the teacher] can’t ad-lib, make instruction clear, make all students learn. (Teacher B)

Teacher A is raising another point about tasks. She said:

I [the teacher] hate assigning too much tasks to students, you [the teacher] psychologically block them [the students]. They have to feel free. Too much tasks make them [the students] bored and fed up. (Teacher A)

Her quotation portrays the idea that students’ effectiveness decreases because of the quantity of tasks in the class. According to her, students feel rather bored and psychologically blocked and consequently it would be preferable to assign them few tasks instead.

As for teacher F, presenting tasks properly is required with more emphasis on the oral ones. Teacher F seems to give priority to oral tasks over the written ones without providing any justification whatsoever.

She said:

Students like the teacher who presents tasks properly and who is fluent, who has deep knowledge of the subject.

She added:

Teachers should give and present tasks in a motivating way.

Later, she came up with another precision saying:

They [the teachers] should give more oral tasks than written ones (Teacher F)
Teacher E agrees with teacher A in terms of presenting tasks properly without supplying any further details.

He cited:

*Presenting tasks properly is highly important and recommended to assure a better response from your learners. (Teacher E)*

Teacher A once again expressed:

*I [the teacher] always stress on the responsibility to learn. There is something missing in their [students] motivation there is a kind of lack! I [the teacher] stress on intrinsic motivation. Even though you [the teacher] explain a task properly and you expect them [the students] to work it they do not do it in a good way. There will be always some kind of shortage! (Teacher A)*

Albeit the teacher cited a very crucial element namely ‘Intrinsic Motivation’, she did not make any linkages with the task. In fact, it is not only the way a task is presented that matters. Many factors that none of the interviewed teachers hinted at as: variety, diversity, personal challenge, sense of control over the process or the product, and students’ interest should be embedded in the structure and design of the learning task itself in order to create an intrinsic motivation or purpose to increase students’ effectiveness and yet their learning.

As for students, they appear to believe in the motivational effects of using strategies related to tasks used in the FL class. They mainly spoke about three teaching practices: presenting tasks in different ways to shackle off the classroom routine, including tasks and topics relating to competition and involving students in the class to encourage participation.

Student I evoked the idea that teachers should vary the ways they deliver lessons and create competition in order to avoid boredom. She also highlighted a central element that relates to the practice of changing roles that differs from the old ‘show-and-tell’ practices where students sit as bunch bound listeners and the teacher is lecturing as the main source of knowledge.

She said:

*...Using a variety of ways to present lessons... create competition between students. Get out of the classroom routine, change roles teacher and student. (Student I)*

Student L appears to agree with student I on the element of using tasks that encourage students to compete with one another and raise their curiosity to make them discover and learn by themselves.

She said:

*...Tasks which encourage competition and challenge between students. Develop the desire to study. Encourage students to discover, to know more. (Student L)*

Student L seems to agree with student I in terms of variety and diversity of tasks and more importantly she exemplified with task contents. She also valued interactive practices and lessons in which students express themselves. She voiced:

*The diversity of exercises is very important... phonetics, comprehension and written expression. Asking students and hearing their opinions as a very good practice. The lesson is more interesting when the lesson is about personal opinions. (Student L)*
To the mind of student H, teachers are required to design tasks that rather facilitate the learning and encourage students to participate in a stress free atmosphere. This may suggest that when students find tasks difficult to do, they cannot participate and learn and yet they feel a sort of stressful study atmosphere imposing itself on them and hinder their learning.

Student H said:

*We need tasks to make the learning easy. Make all students participate in relaxed atmosphere.* (Student G)

Student G and K are no exception, they responded respectively:

*To make the students understand the point and better understand the lesson and push them to participate in the classroom and get the information from their inside.* (Student G)

Student K said:

*Make students participate and create an atmosphere of competition.* (Student K)

As has been mentioned previously, when addressing tasks, the students value a varied presentation style suggesting that their classes are ordinary and could be boring. The task content was also an important aspect for the students who state that the inclusion of useful and interesting topics is important to maintain their interest and encourage participation. Participation also featured highly in the views of the students who appear to view the motivation factors of presenting a task as the process of learning.

This process of learning should allow students to be effective through interaction, speaking and participating in the class, regardless of the task structure. In short, we can see that the students will not feel motivated and effective by breaking up the routine only, but also need to be inspired by relevant topics and fully involved in the class.

Additionally, another instance of difference in participants’ views towards the same scale in terms of the motivational strategies to be used is in teacher behaviour scale. Both participants agree to place value on it, but students appear to emphasise on the social aspects as feeling relaxed and enjoying the class in order to participate fully, while teachers stress on academic achievement.

Teacher C said:

*When you [the teacher] are fair! You communicate and behave the same way with all of them [the students] according to the situation. This gives them [the students] relaxation and safety! This [being fair] makes them [the students] motivated and have the courage to work and get involved.* (Teacher C)

Teacher B simply said:

*You [the teacher] have to consider them [the students] all the same. He further added: We [the teachers] try to provide them [the students] with the possibility to learn especially shy learners and stir up latent knowledge embedded inside them.* (Teacher B)

Teacher C emphasised on the way the teacher behaves in the class and said:

*They [the students] learn something other than information. They [the students] like the way you [the teacher] work with them, they will be motivated. When you
Students on their part voiced out the quotations that follow underneath.

Student I said:
*The behaviour of the teacher reflects the personality of the teacher. For example, when the teacher is strict, the students will respect him and become afraid of his reactions so they will be strict but if the teacher is not strict the students also will not be strict and he will lose the control on them.* (Student I)

Her quote conveys the idea that ultimately students mirror their teacher in terms of behaviour. Student L seems to slightly agree with student I when she indicates that the teacher’s behaviour as being serious impacts the students’ lives in the classroom. However, student L stresses that the impact can be either positive as making students love the language and yet accord it importance or negative and result in making them hate to study it.

Student L said:
*The behaviour of the teacher can make the student love or hate the language, to give it importance. If teacher is good for example ...serious, the students give importance to the language.* (Student L)

Student J as well recognises the importance of the teacher’s behaviour and considers the norms of teacher tolerance and gentleness as motivational characteristics but within the limits and in the right time. She underlines the fact that students may get advantage of the situation in the wrong direction and yet they may end up with bothering the teacher.

Student J said:
*The teacher behaviour is very important. The teacher must be gentle and tolerant but not too much and all the time because there are always gentle students and others not.* (Student J)

Student K is of the opinion that students love the language owing to the teacher’s good treatment, though she did not include any details on what or how could be this treatment in addition to varying topics and encouraging student competition. In her opinion:

*The teacher makes us love English by good treatment, doing activities to encourage competition between students. Studying topics related to education, others to social to make students free and not limited.* (Student K)

The strategies mentioned by the students in relation to teacher behaviour involve the teacher responding and caring about them as individuals and creating a good mood in the classroom, which appears to contribute to the social aspect of the process of FL learning. They mention the teachers’ role in terms of enjoyment, tolerance, seriousness, and mood. It seems that the students are aware of how the teacher is feeling and this affects them directly.
Recommendations for Future Research

The undertaken study as it seems does not cover all possible researchable features regarding the issue of motivational strategies since one of its limitations was its limited context. Yet, further research could investigate the use of motivational strategies in a significant number of contexts with participants from different educational contexts, for example primary, intermediate and secondary, in order to obtain valid data which could contribute to our understanding of FL/L2 motivation. Future research could include additional institutions and larger numbers of students and teachers. By expanding the number of participants, analyses could also take into consideration variables such as language of instruction and language level.

Further investigations are needed as well to examine the motivational effects of using strategies related to group work, task, and Learner autonomy from the perspectives of both EFL teachers and students. In terms of group work, future study needs to examine whether group work is considered, as was found in this study, less motivational for teachers and why this may be the case. Future research could examine the discrepancy between teacher and student beliefs towards the motivational power of using strategies related to task and Learner autonomy.

Conclusions

EFL teachers should have a balanced view about what motivates their students. They could adapt the activities to create more interaction and promote participation whilst working towards the learning outcome. Teacher should include a wide range of information on what motivates students to learn, and how students learn languages through interaction.

In this global age, students are clearly focusing on social interaction, travel and the use of English in real life situations of communication. Therefore, teachers should pay attention to how this motivates students more than academic achievement and make them effective learners.

Teachers seem to deliver the course, focusing on their own behaviour and the organisation within the classroom, but giving less thought to the idea of the students as individuals within a social context with needs and preferences relating to learning process, interaction with their teachers and other class members, and social interactions outside the classroom. The findings also suggest that teachers need to be aware that their own views on what is motivating and effective for the students are not necessarily the same as the students’ views.

In terms of ‘Group work’, teachers should be aware that simply grouping students together to work on a given task does not necessarily promote the kind of interaction the students are motivated by. They should first set up the ground rules for the group, give clear guidelines about the roles of group members and train students in how to work together and collaborate. The task itself should also be addressed so that teachers use group work with the outcomes being that of social interaction through language use, as well as the completion of a learning based task.

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Enhancing Students’ Effectiveness through Motivational Strategies

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References


E-Learn Platform to Teach Legal English for Law Professionals

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Abstract
Globalization of trade and economy led to a growing demand all over the world for English for Specific Purposes courses. Conscious of this fact, Algeria has incorporated English for Legal Purposes teaching into tertiary studies. In Algeria, Law students receive ELP course aimed to help them in their studies and future careers. However, at the end of their learning process these students still find linguistic and communication difficulties in situations where English is needed as the course received is no more than teaching specific words and phrases and translating some texts following the traditional Grammar Translation Method. Accordingly, this paper aims to presents the current ELP course situation and to measure students’ and teachers’ attitudes towards the use of Blended ELP course based on Content Language Integrated Learning model. The course has twofold: to provide students with international legal knowledge and to compare them to the Algerian one, and to expose learners to intensive reading activities and overcome lack of teaching time activities. In this quantitative study, seven teachers were interviewed and fifty seven masters’ students were questioned. The results revealed that the students have comprehension difficulties because the time load for reading activities is not sufficient. Concerning informants readiness to use Blended approach, the teachers present negatively the usefulness of such an approach for their students; on the contrary, students show a positive attitude to have additional English reading comprehension activities online, and they demonstrate a high interest to the proposal to support their English course with extra home tasks.

Keywords: Blended Learning, CLIL, ELP, Online Based Education

Introduction
The prevalent use of English as an international language is in constant expansion. This fact is reflected in different fields and various domains where English is considered as a working tool. In order to reach specific objectives, world countries, including Algeria, introduced English courses at all levels of education, and more particularly at the university. At this level, ESP is taught to achieve specific learners’ needs, and meet the social requirement. Furthermore, in ESP specific language skills are focused on in order to help the students to acquire English knowledge. For instance, ELP students learn how to decode and comprehend specific types of texts through reading tasks; while learners are exposed to the targeted terminology, language structures, topics and contexts. However, achieving correctness and accuracy in reading authentic complex texts needs considerable teaching time; for this reason, technology is widely used nowadays by ESP practitioners to overcome these difficulties. With the availability of internet, teachers have adopted the blended-learning approach to intensify students’ exposure to the language. Even if this teaching approach has already started in some developed countries in the beginning of this century, in Algeria it has not been used yet.

Nowadays, in the Algerian Universities and due to the efforts the Department of English, almost all the faculties have integrated English courses in the learning programme as a compulsory module from the first year of graduation. ELP students study English with a timing length of one hour and a half per week during five years. After finishing their studies, they remain at a low or intermediate level of reading comprehension. Today knowledge is transferred either through printed or digital text. Students in general and ELP learners in particular are required to read texts written in English to achieve academic tasks. Concerning their future professional activities, they will face legal documents that need a specific mastery of the terminology used in addition to an appropriate level of comprehension. But almost all the students have technical difficulties to read correctly because of the inappropriate teaching time devoted to English.

The issue led the researcher to ask for what teaching approach and materials would be appropriate to develop the target students’ reading skills through blended learning? and predict that content and language integrated instruction through a blended approach can help ELP students to develop their reading skills by exposing them to intensive reading tasks in their field of study and increasing the teaching time. Thus, the main objective of this paper is to test teachers and students readiness to use the blended approach.

Literature Review
The spread of technological inventions during the 20th century and especially with the information and communication technologies (ICTs) resulted in an unimaginable extent of different kinds of interactions. To ensure the technological, economic, scientific, cultural and diplomatic exchanges, English imposed itself as a medium of communication, and its position as an imperialist language shifted to the status of language of knowledge embraced officially by more than one hundred countries (Crystal, 1997).

World institutions organise training sessions for their staff with the help of ESP specialists in order to update employees’ English proficiency level. Additionally almost all world universities have adopted English as a pedagogical tool for studies or integrated English for Legal Purposes (ELP) in students’ curriculum. This module is methodologically and pedagogically based on ESP
Teaching/Learning Legal Language
Legal English is a complex language, which needs a combination of both good basic skills, and legal background. The lawyers and administrators play important roles in managing different affairs related to regulation. They are responsible for people’s interests and if there is a language barrier which leads to confusion in the interpretation of meaning, it will be highly risked for the results of the files under study. For that reason, acquiring English specific to legal context is not an easy task to be reached because of the various existing situations that are found in real life. Language specialists being aware of these facts adopted the teaching methodologies according to these facts and have designed courses, specific to this range of the society, known as ELP.

In this context, ELP teacher role is, first to produce materials and present the language content and course activities in various ways to help and motivate students to learn the target language needed to update their academic or occupational knowledge. Then to determine the language skills needed to carry out specific jobs or studies (West, 1994). On the basis of this idea, researchers developed Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach to develop students content knowledge and English fluency at the same time.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)
CLIL, mostly implemented in English (Dalton - Puffer, 2011), refers to learning a subject in a language that is not frequently used by the community and it is viewed as a mixture of both language and subject matter learning (Marsh & Wolff, 2007). Therefore, applying CLIL teaching approach in the ELP context can provide the necessary input in terms of content and language needs simultaneously.

If an attractive subject or relevant academic topic area can provide meaningful context in which students can reach language objectives; in this situation, content serves the language. On the other hand, if language can be used to attain content objectives; in this case, language serves the content. Teaching language and content together is an effective way of developing English language proficiency (Brinton et al., 1989). A number of reasons are advocated by Nordmeyer & Barduhn (2010, p.4) for using a content-based language curriculum:

• It builds on the interests and linguistic needs of learners.
• It increases motivation by using content relevant to learners.
• It incorporates the eventual uses that learners will make of the target language.
• It teaches meaningful language embedded within relevant discourse contexts.

In ESP, it is crucial to identify students’ content and language needs in order to design a syllabus that will fulfill their language lacks and content requirements. One of the essential problems for ELP students is to comprehend what they have to read; and it is commonly recommended that “reading exposure is the primary stage of developing language skills” (Krashen, 1989,p. 109). Through reading activities the ELP students will be familiarised with the terminology used in their speciality. Furthermore, reading comprehension tasks must be designed to guide the students to guess the meaning of the text. Here major questions challenge an efficient reading
process: what is the appropriate reading strategy that can be used to ELP students to comprehend legal text?

Teaching Reading Strategies
The commonly suggested reading strategies to be taught are the ones elaborated by the National Capital Language Resource Centre (NCLRC)\(^1\). In its web document entitled *The Essentials of Language Teaching* it is stated that “effective language instructors [...] help students develop a set of reading strategies and match appropriate strategies to each reading situation” (NCLRC, 2007, para. 2). These strategies can help students read more quickly and effectively and include previewing, predicting, skimming and scanning, guessing from context, and paraphrasing. In addition to calling-up his background knowledge in L1, the reader needs to use these strategies when reading because he can gain confidence in his ability to read and comprehend the language. Hence the instructor role, according to the NCLRC, is to help students learn when and how to use reading strategies in several ways.

- By modelling the strategies aloud, talking through the processes of previewing, predicting, skimming and scanning, and paraphrasing. This shows students how the strategies work and how much they can know about a text before they begin to read word by word.
- By allowing time in class for group and individual previewing and predicting activities as preparation for in-class or out-of-class reading. Allocating class time to these activities indicates their importance and value.
- By using cloze (fill in the blank) exercises to review vocabulary items. This helps students learn to guess meaning from context.
- By encouraging students to talk about what strategies they think will help them approach a reading assignment, and then talking after reading about what strategies they actually use. This helps students develop flexibility in their choice of strategies. (NCLRC, 2007, para. 3)

Regarding the context under investigation, it is important for ELP Algerian students, first, to learn and know how to use the appropriate reading strategies; then, to retrieve their knowledge experience. That is to say, a conscious use of cognitive strategies will motivate them to overcome their reading difficulties, and lead to the use of metacognitive strategies. To reach this objective, students need to be exposed intensively to the target language. However, classroom instruction in ELP context cannot provide the required learning time to help students perform their language competencies. Accordingly new trends in education propose online platforms to assist both teachers and learners fulfil their needs.

Online-Based Education
World Wide Web technologies have attracted educational specialists’ attention very early. Internet offers an opportunity to expand the learning environment outside classroom walls and various applications of World Wide Web technologies in academic settings have been studied and tested. The results led to the emergence of different definitions of online-based education (OBE). After a review of literature, it seems that Khan’s (1997, p. 6) definition includes the major elements of OBE, when he states that it is “a hypermedia-based instructional programme that utilizes the resources of the World Wide Web to create a meaningful learning environment where learning is
fostered and supported.”, i.e., OBE is a teaching programme implemented through internet aiming at improving students’ abilities. In many ways teaching in an online environment is much like teaching in any other formal educational context; the difference lies in specific components that are used in online teaching as the use of content development, multimedia component, computers and storage devices, internet tools, authoring programmes, servers, browsers and other applications (Khan, 1997). All these components are indispensable characteristics of the OBE learning environments because a course designer needs both content and technological resources to implement online activities. Components, also serve as tools to the emergence of OBE features. In this vein, Khan (1997) states that “features are characteristics of WBI programme contributed by those components” (p.6).

Literature distinguishes two feature categories in an OBE design relying on the level of technical and pedagogical importance. Khan (1997, p. 8) explains that there are key and additional features. The former one are considered as base characteristics of the OBE system and inherent to the Web such as interactivity, multimedia, open system, online search, electronic publishing, cross cultural interaction, device-distance-time independency, globally accessibility, etc. OBE can provide a flexible teaching and learning environment because the contents can be extended beyond those prepared by instructors and shared to the outside world. Furthermore, in OBE projects course designer can adapt contents to match each individual student according to his or her goals and previous knowledge. Hence, learners have more autonomy in making decisions regarding their learning.

Concerning additional features, their effectiveness depends on the quality of OBE design for instance convenience, easiness of use, online support, authenticity, cost-effectiveness, collaborative learning, online evaluation, virtual cultures etc. It is important to devise appropriately the course according to students’ competencies. Learners in OBE learn collaboratively as well as individually, they share information and seek for clarifications through continuous interaction, that is why, an easy access and use of online support is essential for an effective learning.

To sum up, components can contribute to one or more features, for example emails as a web component can provide interactivity between students and teachers. Features as device, distance and time independency are facilitated by internet (component). Students enrolled in an online course can study by using any computer device, anywhere and in anytime. These learning advantages presented by OBE environment lead researchers to adapt university programmes according to students’ needs and wants.

Though, even if a great development is achieved in order to facilitate the use of technologies for educational purposes, learners are still frustrated with problems in OBE as Technical problems, inadequate feedback, overwhelming messages, lack of navigational skills, conversation domination, and physical tiredness (Driscoll, 2002). Subsequently, the designer has the responsibility to overcome these constraints since OBE learners need both traditional and new skills to be successful. Hence, it is implied that the role of the teacher in blended environment goes beyond the classroom walls. The next part deals with the new tasks that should be performed by the teacher.
In OBE the role of the teacher goes beyond the design of materials and involves active participation because he has to master additional skills in technology to deal with a new teaching environment (time and space separation), and to use new teaching strategies. Nowadays many researchers focus on identifying and defining the role of online instructors; according to Berge (1995), online instructor characteristics are grouped under four categories: pedagogical, social, managerial and technical. These roles are considered as basics for the 21st century teacher; however, the literature agrees that it is not an easy task. Online instructors need more time, as they play many additional roles. Berge (1995) adds that “not all of these roles need to be carried out in their entirety by the same person. In fact, it may be rare that they are” (p.2). The time requisite in the OBE to teach specific language and content is much more than that spent in a traditional educational context.

The Study
This study concerns Master’s students enrolled in the academic year 2016/2017 at the Department of Political Science and International Relations, Faculty of Law and Politics, Tlemcen University. A questionnaire was designed and administered to the students which are specialised in general relations and communication, general politics, and diplomacy and international exchange. A total number of fifty seven (57) students out of one hundred and ninety three (193) students were dealt with.

The teachers are concerned with this study in order to give their points of view, through a structured interview, on students’ English language needs and the use of new technologies in their context. The subject specialist teachers’ number in the Faculty is one hundred and six, seven among them teach English. One informant involved in the study is a full-time teacher in the Faculty with a long teaching experience. He is specialised in international law and political relations and in charge of the legal English terminology course for post graduate students, in the Department of Law and administrative sciences, without receiving any prior specific training. The other informants are part time teachers in the Faculty specialized in ESP, TEFL, and translation.

Data Analysis and Discussion
The teachers’ interview and the students’ questionnaire reveal interesting facts regarding the current ELP course situation.

Students’ comprehension difficulties
According to the results provided by the respondents, more than half of the students (55%) evaluate their level in reading English texts as beginner, i.e., they could just identify words and sentence elements and structures and no more than that. While 43% of students stated that, in addition to vocabulary they could also interpret the general idea of the text, in other words they consider themselves having an intermediate level. An exception is made for one informant who considered himself of an advanced level with the ability to identify, interpret and analyse the linguistic, contextual and discoursal elements of the text.

Regarding the nature of their reading difficulties, data were gathered at three language levels: the phonological, the syntactic, and the lexical levels. Nearly half of the students (50.87%) stated to have difficulties to match words with their sounds/pronunciation. 38, 59% informants reported
that they had a problem at the syntactic level; they added that they did not understand the grammatical relationship between sentences. Concerning lexical difficulties, it should be noted that some students ticked more than one answer. First, 61.42% students reported that when reading they could not understand word meanings. 33.33% of them ticked that they did not know what the text was about in general. Finally, 73.68% students stated to have a difficulty to know the meaning of some sentences. We deduce from informants’ arguments, the existence of difficulties at all language levels.

**English Course Content**

The content of the English course is inappropriate to ELP students’ study needs, because it focuses mainly on general English activities or provides business terminology or translation. The content provided cannot be considered as a source for legal vocabulary acquisition. Furthermore, except for some broad lines no ELP syllabus is provided by the Department.

![Figure 1. English course content](image)

Concerning the extent to which students are satisfied with the reading topics dealt with, it appears from their answers that the percentage of students who seem to be interested in the provided topics represents 53.15%. However, 46.84% are not satisfied because, according to them, the topics are not related to the other modules, or are not motivating, or are difficult to comprehend.

**The Reading Frequency in the Classroom**

In addition, the data obtained from teachers’ answers revealed that the English course in general and the reading activities in particular are not instructed with the same time distribution. Some teachers devote half an hour in each lecture, others an hour and a half or even three hours for each didactic unit, and a teacher emphasizes all his sessions on text comprehension, that is, the time allocated to reading activities is not the same for all the students.

43.83% of students asserted that they read the text with their teachers twice; while, others (33.33%) stated that they read it only once. Regarding self-reading, 52.63% of students responded that their teacher asked them to read the same text twice; whereas, twenty-one informants (36.84%) said that broadly speaking they were ordered to read the text only once. The answers are summarized in the table 1:
Table 1. The reading frequency in the classroom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of reading</th>
<th>Reading Frequency of the same text</th>
<th>Once</th>
<th>Twice</th>
<th>Three Times</th>
<th>More</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AF</td>
<td>RF</td>
<td>AF</td>
<td>RF</td>
<td>AF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With the teacher</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>33,33%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>43,85%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reading</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36,84%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>52,63%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The students’ questionnaire also shows that informants are aware of the inadequacy of the time allocated to the English course with their learning needs. They maintain that the English course time load is not sufficient to deal with more texts, to vary the genres, to increase the frequency of text reading in class, and to augment the number of reading tasks. In addition, they do not receive reading homework assignments to overcome the lack of time, i.e., they are not intensively exposed to English texts.

Finally, even if the students see that the English course can complete the content modules, they maintain that they do not like the English course in general (38%) or that they are not interested by the provided reading topics in particular (36,84%) because they have a problem of comprehension. The results obtained also show an unbalanced use of the reading strategies. All teachers emphasize mainly inferring the meaning from context, skimming, scanning and vocabulary acquisition, and only 2 out of 7 teachers activate students’ background knowledge.

Readiness to Use Blended Approach
Regarding informants’ attitudes towards the use of a blended approach, the gathered information from teachers and students’ answers are not identical. The teachers disapprove the idea, and stated that it is not possible to use this approach; this may show that they are not ready to use it. According to them, various constraints and limitations exist and play a negative role to the feasibility of the blended approach in their context: Absence of conditions, lack of technological materials, students’ internet inaccessibility, reticence from a new teaching/learning environment, and students’ lack of technological skills are the main arguments advocated.

Unlike teachers, students demonstrate an interest to support their English course with online activities. In addition, they stated to have personal computers and to have an easy access to the net as they are daily users leading to assume that the requirements to establish a blended learning environment exist in the present situation. From students’ answers, we can deduce that the technological materials are available to experiment a blended course. This will also allow ELP students to be exposed to intensive reading activities and overcome lack of teaching time.

Blended ELP Course Pre-requisite
This study revealed that the ELP students need to develop their reading skill. It was also noticed that they have to increase their learning time. Thus, this paper recommends a blended approach to overcome these difficulties. Therefore, the role of the teacher should be readadapted to the current
situation, i.e., an ESP practitioner specialised in teaching ELP and instructing his lectures both in the classroom and online. The following pedagogical suggestions can overcome the noticed issues.

**ELP Teacher Role**

Informants declared that neither the lectures nor the activities are programmed and prepared in accordance with a prescribed syllabus. Accordingly, the ELP teacher major role is to design a syllabus and learning activities. However, he needs to be aware of the students’ needs which constitute a major source of information for his course design and for choosing the appropriate teaching methodology. Second, as an ESP teacher, he has to organize his course, to set learning objectives, to establish a positive learning environment in the classroom, and to evaluate students’ progress. Then, when teaching legal English the teacher has to provide a comprehensible content input; therefore, he is required to possess an important corpus of legal terminology and knowledge that helps him to cope with the new teaching situation.

In addition, as already stated, the online teacher has to master additional skills in technology to deal with in this new teaching environment and to use new teaching strategies. Besides, his pedagogical and managerial roles he has to integrate his students into the virtual social environment and to choose and perhaps design an appropriate computing programme that supports the learning goals and helps students to become competent users.

The above mentioned roles are considered as basics for the ELP online teacher; however, it is not an easy task. The time required teaching specific language and content using blended approach is much longer than that spent in a traditional educational context. That is why it is important to train ELP teacher to manage and perform his roles according to students’ necessities, lacks and wants.

**Content Selection**

In education the content is mainly represented in the topic and the text selected for pedagogical purposes. This selection is of central significance in the course design process. Therefore, it is necessary to choose topics that belong to students’ specialty taking into consideration subject specialists’ suggestions and learners’ needs in materials design. These topics can be related to the British and American legal systems, international laws, administrative laws and human rights. Furthermore, when the students have needs to study the language, as such they have a tendency to be less motivated to learn it. However, they will be more interested in learning English as an interesting activity if they deal with topics closely associated to their field of study. Accordingly, the more narrowly and explicitly a topic is related to their area of concern, the more they will be motivated to work on and to deal with the language content presented.

Subsequent to the selection of the suitable topics that will be used for the didactic units, the ELP teacher will have to select the appropriate texts for reading practice, by providing the ones which reflect real life situations. To ensure course efficiency, authentic texts are intensively motivating and helpful. The students should be exposed as widely as possible to legal discourse from the beginning. The selected texts should include a variety of text genres that the students are likely to become familiar with and produce for academic or professional purposes. These resources are available in diverse printed or electronic sources related to the students’ field of speciality such
as specialised journals and articles, academic textbooks, magazines and newspapers written in the target language by native or non-native speakers. By using authentic texts, the students will be able to identify the most and widely used specific vocabulary and grammatical structures applied in English.

To sum up, authentic texts can be implemented or simplified if the teacher feels that this would develop a pedagogic value. However, such materials have to be set up for learners’ needs and requirements purposes, be prominently interesting, able to generate a lot of practical and interesting classroom activities and readable by the target students.

Techniques for Teaching Reading in the ELP Classroom
The aim of the language teacher is to help his learners to communicate effectively in the target situation. In the case of reading, this means helping students to use reading strategies to maximize their comprehension of text and identify relevant information. Different techniques can be suggested to fulfill this goal.

ELP teacher should focus on both the process and the product of reading. It is important to develop students’ awareness of the reading process and reading strategies by asking them to think about how they read in Arabic or in French. Teacher also helps his students to practice the full repertoire of reading strategies by using authentic reading tasks. He has the responsibility to guide his students to learn to read and vice-versa by providing interesting reading materials. Furthermore, students should be conscious of what they are doing while they complete reading assignments in class or at home. Doing so, students can develop their abilities to handle interactive situations they may encounter beyond the classroom.

The effective reader is the student who knows how to use strategies before, during, and after reading, i.e., teaching reading strategies is an integral part of the use of reading activities. Before reading, the tasks are prepared according to the purpose of reading and the needed linguistic or background knowledge. During and after reading, students comprehension should be monitored by examining their predictions and content guesses, by defining what is important to understand, and by rereading to check comprehension. After reading students are assessed; first, their comprehension is evaluated according to a specific task or area, and then the appropriateness of the used strategies is verified.

E-learn Platforms to Teach ELP Reading
Nowadays, the computer is a significant part of the learner's daily life. “It is, by now, inevitable that methods of teaching and learning should include E-learning components that are based on the computer environment and include proper preparation for the 21st century which requires a "new pedagogy"”(Martin & Madigan, 2006,p. 201). The latter requires appropriate tools available and easy to manage for the teacher.

E-learn platforms as Moodle were created to combine online and face to face instructions. They have become very popular among teachers around the world as teaching tools. There are many ways to use Moodle. It can be used to conduct full online courses, or simply to augment face-to-face courses (known as blended learning). Many institutions use it as their platform where we can find all the necessary information such as Tlemcen University web site (www.univ-
Moodle has also features that allow it to be used for large numbers of users. Furthermore, many activities such as forums, databases, and wikis are considered by the students as fashionable. This can help them to build collaborative communities of learning around their subject matter. Moreover, Moodle can be used as a way to deliver content to students and assess learning using assignments or quizzes. All these features, and more specifically the last one, provide strong arguments to use Moodle platform as an open source to deliver blended ELP reading course through Tlemcen University web site. However, what are the main didactic and pedagogical advantages when using Moodle? The next part will try to answer this question. According to Race (2008), Moodle is designed to support a style of learning called Social Constructionism. This style of learning is interactive. “Learning is interactive when learners are actively engaged in a variety of activities, and along with their peers and teacher, they are co-constructors of knowledge.” (Chamberlain & Vrasidas, 2001, p. 79). People learn best when they interact with the learning material and interact with the teacher or other students about the material. Race (2008) maintains that Moodle does not require the teacher to use the social constructionist method for his course. However, it best supports this method. For example, with Moodle platform the teacher can add course material that a student reads, but does not interact with.

Race (2008) also adds that as Moodle supports interaction and exploration, students' learning process will often be non-linear. Nevertheless, Moodle has few features for imposing a specific order upon a course. Teachers need to manually enroll the student in each part of the course. If the teacher wants to impose that kind of linear course, he needs to place his students into controlled groups that are authorized to view and perform the target tasks.

It is also important to mention that Moodle offers a variety of different activities from giving information via testing to final evaluation. Dudeney & Hockly (2007) see a big advantage mainly in the fact that in such a form of course everything is done in one place. Using blended courses leads to simplifying lesson preparation and saving time. The online tutor can control students’ activities and see the amount of time they have spent online or what documents and forums they have accessed. In our case, i.e., Algerian ELP students, the LMD system imposes that during an academic year they should perform approximately 80 to 90 hours for personal work (Art 7 of Order No. 137 of 20 June 2009); thus, it is an interesting tool to assess, evaluate and grade our students.

In addition to the above pedagogical solutions that have been suggested to fulfill students’ needs and to stimulate their motivation for learning English, it important to programme at least two sessions of one hour and a half per week to reach a certain degree of course efficiency.

Conclusion
This study investigated ELP teaching situation at Tlemcen University (Algeria) and explored students’ and teachers’ attitudes towards the use of Blended course. The results revealed that the students are not competent in comprehending legal text. In addition, they stated that they are eager to support their English course with extra hours. Accordingly, Blended learning approach can help to overcome lack of teaching time and to expose ELP students to additional reading activities. This recommendation should be the subject for further and in depth investigation in which both
academics and ministry officials would take part in order to generalize the idea across all the Algerian universities.

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References
Towards more Liable Use of Internet Sources among University Students: 
Rethinking Teacher’s Routine Evaluation Methods

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Abstract
Within the flow of information of today’s digital learning environment, university students’ ill-informed use of external electronic sources negatively affects the quality of their academic writing. While sanctions represent but the final disciplinary measure, university teachers’ pre-empting such academic misconduct before the final year project remains a necessity. This paper proposes a reconsideration of the teacher’s routine evaluation methods to promote good study skills, and thus high quality teaching and learning. Drawing on a personal teaching experience (in the department of English of Saida University), the paper suggests simple methods through which students routinely practise sound referencing. Preliminary observational data that triggered the topic of the present paper consist of samples of students’ internet-based assignments and project papers with missing references. Additional notes generated from classroom discussions with post-graduate Master students about (un)intentional plagiarism represent the insider student perspective of its causes. Initial findings reveal that student-submitted non-referenced work was not only due to poor time management, paraphrasing, or note taking skills but also to modelling poor citation habits (illustrated in the academic genres they were exposed to in their formal learning environment, such as PowerPoint presentations, class notes, hand-outs, and so on). The paper concludes with the necessity to raise teachers’ awareness to the importance of providing a good model of well-referenced teaching materials and learning supports as the initial step. Other practical methods consist of constantly checking students’ work for missing references, asking them to resubmit their work with requisite paraphrasing, as well as giving scores for correct referencing.

Keywords: Academic plagiarism, digital/cyber-plagiarism, referencing, teacher assessment, techniques

Introduction
The plethora of information and ideas that the internet offers today makes many university students – when assigned some homework, for instance – easily access website contents and directly copy to their writing without providing any end-of-text references that indicate the sources used. This instance of students’ cyber-plagiarism which is now spread worldwide is a source of worry for many universities (Fialkoff et al., 2002; Köse & Arik, 2011; Suerda, Comas & Urbina, 2005; Park, 2003), and the Algerian university is no exception. This is because such practice is synonymous to academic dishonesty, which negatively affects university aspiration to quality assurance.

Students’ over-dependence on electronic sources not only signals a certain ignorance of sound research skills and a misuse of information and communication technologies (ICTs), but university academic code of ethics consider students who plagiarize as violators of the copyright conventions (Sutherland-Smith, 2005). Worse, from a Second Language Research (ESL) vantage point, this practice is likely to limit the students’ analytical abilities restricting therefore their learning achievement. If not pedagogically remedied for, such effortless habits may be extended to the final graduation project, and, to the worst, extended to the outer professional world.

To downplay the general attitude (or false excuses among students) that the university teaching staff is doing little to reduce plagiarism, the author of this paper attempts to share her experience with student plagiarism in the teaching environment and how she critically and proactively dealt with this phenomenon. By drawing on additional teachers’ and students’ perspective on cheating in the academic environment, as well as on existing research on plagiarism, the paper attempts to reconsider the teacher’s evaluation methods while sharing some practical assessment/teaching techniques already implemented in her classroom to pre-emptively reduce such academic misconduct.

To reach the above-mentioned aim, the paper will first consider the main concepts related to plagiarism. Then, it will stop at the observed academic context from which the author made her first-hand observations as regards students’ instances of plagiarism as well as teacher-student perceptions of its causes. Finally, a discussion of the rough clues obtained from the teaching environment in line with similar studies will pave the way for the proposition of practical techniques that the author already tested onsite alongside additional suggestions deriving from other authors’ teaching experience.

Theoretical Background
To start with, the domain-specific plagiarism that is of interest to the present paper is academic plagiarism that mainly refers to university students’ plagiarizing ideas and information into their writing when preparing any academic work. The literal meaning of the word plagiarism, whose Latin origin (i.e., plagium) is theft, considers the plagiarist as the “one who steals the thoughts or writings of another” (Mallon, 1989, p. 11, cited in Sutherland-Smith, 2005). From an institutional legislative standpoint, plagiarism is described as a ‘wrongful’ act of ‘stealing’, or ‘misappropriating’ the work of another (Sutherland-Smith, 2005). All of the above definitions stress out the connotation of academic misconduct that plagiarism committed by students carries.
The term cyber- or digital plagiarism implicates the students’ use of the internet to plagiarize others’ work (Suerda, Comas & Urbina, 2005; Park, 2003). Granitz & Loewy (2007) employ the term internet plagiarism mentioning in this vein that non-internet plagiarism is still in vogue. That said, while involving -but not limited to- the academic context, cyber- or digital plagiarism entails students’ copying -from external internet sources, such as academic articles or essays-and pasting to their own writing. The forms that (academic) cyber-plagiarism take range from downloading whole essays or articles, to copying parts of texts from different internet sources, to translating a text found in another language before submitting it as their own (Suerda, Comas & Urbina, 2005).

From an ethical concept, intentional plagiarism denotes a deliberate intent to deceive by appropriating to oneself someone else’s work. According to Granitz & Loewy (2007), students, who intentionally plagiarize, are aware of their ‘wrongdoing’. These transgressors do so either for the ‘utilitarian’ outcome of obtaining better grades, or as a ‘rational reaction’ to teacher’s poor effort or boring/irrelevant assignment. According to the same authors (2007), students involved in plagiarism may even justify their misconduct with ‘a situational element’, like a sudden sickness or other family circumstances (pp. 297-298). From the other pole, unintentional plagiarism translates, from a deontological vantage point, the students’ ignorance or unawareness that such an act is morally wrong (Granitz & Loewy, 2007).

From an ESL research stance, unintentional plagiarism signals the writer’s ignorance of the importance of giving credit to someone else’s ideas or work as a scholarly obligation (Howard, 1999). In this vein, Park (2003) further explains that students’ not knowing how to insert reference lists forms part of their ignorance of referencing conventions of academic work. It is worth noting here that students’ academic plagiarism avoidance is an important element of academic writing class and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) support courses (Flowerdew & Li, 2007; Hyland, 2008; Nathan, 2007).

Unintentional plagiarism, henceforth, signals from one part students’ limited knowledge of the different types of plagiarism. Regardless the well-known verbatim or word-for-word plagiarism, copying words or sentences from one source or more, without citing, or reformulating them in one’s own words nor inserting quotes represents mosaic plagiarism, according to Harvard Guide to Using Sources (2015). Even when inserting a citation, solely replacing a few words here and there in the original text without using one’s own language also constitutes plagiarism, that Harvard Guide to Using Sources (2015) terms as Inadequate paraphrase. Moreover, ending up with a piece of writing that is devoid of references, even when having properly paraphrased, is another form of plagiarism, called uncited paraphrase (2015).

Besides the afore-mentioned internal causes or student-provided justifications of plagiarism, other external causes from the existing ESL literature appear in Bartzis (2009, cited in Basturkmen, 2014) who considers -among other things- that rote learning habits, low language proficiency, non-efficient paraphrasing, as well as time constraints caused by work load or other family obligations to be the main reasons behind plagiarism. Particularly relevant to cyber-or digital plagiarism, a supplementary cause is the students’ disregarding or misunderstanding of important concepts like intellectual property and copyright, considering any material found online as ‘a found object’
Not possessing website evaluation skills is an additional factor that leads to the increase of the phenomenon, as truly mentioned in university libraries (Alberta university, 2004, cited in Suerda, Comas & Urbina, 2005) and similarly evidenced in the author’s teaching environment.

As to ways of detecting plagiarism without software, one of them is to rely on the teachers’ experience and professional knowledge. University teachers (including the author of this paper) will unanimously agree with the hints that Suerda, Comas & Urbina, 2005 state, notably that noticing in their students’ essays an incoherence of ideas or paragraphs, a mixture of good and poor writing style within the same text, *interalia*, helps teachers detect plagiarism. However, the author has uncovered other similarly pertinent hints in her students’ essays. This will be elaborated on in the results section. However, the teacher’s professional knowledge and instinct are not enough.

In addition to professional knowledge, search engines or anti-plagiarism software are also used among the academic staff to detect plagiarism. The software provides a report detailing the level of plagiarism from online resources after comparing the submitted text with the previously entered essays or texts to its database (see Köse & Arikan, 2011). In the results section, the author’s experience of the first method will be elaborated on. Prior to this, a sketch of the procedures used to collect initial information about students’ plagiarism in the author’s teaching environment is proposed hereafter.

Methodology
While addressing the issue of student’s plagiarism, the present paper adopted the concept of reflective or critical teaching which involves the teachers’ “critical reflection about their efforts in a language course” (Richards & Lochart, 1994, p. 1). Repeatedly noticing students submitting non-referenced written assignments and plagiarized essays triggered such critical thinking. Considering this issue amplified as a result of a recently proposed module for Master2 students, Ethics and Deontology that the author was the first to be in charge of, during the same academic year 2017-2018. Obviously, the themes tackled in this module revolved around academic ethics.

What is interesting about critical teaching is its action-oriented phase in that constantly reflecting on and learning from one’s teaching experiences enables the teacher to bring further innovations, alternatives, or modifications to his/her routine teaching practices for better learning results (Murphy, 2001, cited in Basturkmen, 2014). This is why, the primary aim was to share the author’s experiences with and attempts to implement remedial actions, namely in terms of bringing some modifications in the routine assessment methods to pre-empting such academic misconduct.

The author adopted a qualitative stance *ab initio* to broadly understand student’s plagiarism. Hence, a rush to quantification was premature. To this end, the author relied on three sources to ponder over the phenomenon of students’ transgression of academic writing requirements. They are proposed in Figure 1.
Initially, subsidiary notes generated from the English department’s teachers discussing the causes of poor academic writing (that were noticeable within master students’ final project mainly) allowed the author to stop at the teacher perspective. However, the main examination of the phenomenon took place with her respective (third year Licence and Master 2 Didactics, 2017-2018 Academic Session) students at the department of English of Dr. Tahar Moulay University- with field notes generated. Furthermore, a record of students’ plagiarism occurrences together with saving some samples of their essays and submitted assignments was also possible. Classroom discussions with Master2 students allowed for an elucidation of the latter insider perspective as to the reasons that made students plagiarize. The author proposed to the students in question some of the internal and external causes of plagiarism identified in the literature about plagiarism. They had to choose which reasons closely reflected theirs. That said, students could propose other reasons than those provided by the author. The results obtained by means of such informal data gatherings will be discussed below.

Results and Discussion
This section presents the students’ as well as teachers’ perceptions of the real causes of plagiarism in the academic context along with the author’s notes generated from her teaching environment, when dealing with students’ plagiarism practices. The rough clues obtained will be discussed in line with existent research to pave the way for a subsequent proposition of practical teaching/assessment methods to be implemented by teachers.

Teachers’ Perceptions of Academic Plagiarism by Students
Starting with the teachers’ perspective as to the reasons that make students plagiarize, the notes recorded from the teachers’ discussion seemed to implicate students’ unawareness of the different types of plagiarism together with poor time management skills (Figure 2). Though not statistically proven, the author’s similar observations seem to be in fine tune with the teachers—proposed poor time management skills. According to the author’s field notes (when dealing with the different types of plagiarism with Master 2 students in the Ethics and Deontology Module), students showed no familiarity with some forms of plagiarism, like mosaic plagiarism, inadequate and uncited paraphrase.
To the author’s knowledge, the only type of plagiarism that students think they should avoid is verbatim plagiarism. To some of them, citing sources is of secondary importance as long as they do not copy verbatim to their work, totally ignoring that other types of plagiarism exist - and are the most widespread. This claim finds echo in previous studies reporting on the ignorance of plagiarism forms as a major cause that were mentioned earlier (Park, 2003; Suerda, Comas & Urbina, 2005).

**Students’ Own Reasons of Plagiarism**

Preliminary insight from classroom discussions with Master2 students revealed that time pressure, modelling others’ inadvertent academic practices, and to a lesser extent, poor paraphrasing skills were the main reasons that made them submit others’ work as their own (see Figure3). Seemingly, these insider views replicate other university libraries’ and studies’ implicating poor paraphrasing and time management skills among students (see Suerda, Comas & Urbina, 2005). Surprisingly, in relation to the reported academic staff’s inadvertent behaviour, some students presumed that they happened to exposed to, or given course materials lacking references, as well. To put it in the words of a students’ delegate, from the moment that some ‘academics do not care about documenting their reading materials, PowerPoint presentations and handouts, then, why should we (care about it in our own writing)?’.
Figure 3: Students’ justification of plagiarism

The afore-mentioned perception resonates with previous studies reporting on similar students’ justification of their intentional plagiarism. These students similarly presumed that university academic staff were seemingly not doing big efforts to reduce the phenomenon (Park, 2003). This reason literally finds resonance in Granitz & Loewy’s (2007) citing an almost same expression employed by a student attempting to justify this malpractice, notably that the ‘teacher doesn’t put much effort into this, so why should I?’ It seems that students here attempt to justify their wrongdoing through a process of ‘fair exchange’, as Granitz & Loewy (2007) termed it, that renders their resorting to - after all, intentional- plagiarism a legitimate reaction to the presumed teachers’ or other academic staff’s little effort (p. 297).

It is believed that the above reason remains but one of the many reasons, thus far discussed in the theoretical section (like time constraints, workload, family obligations, etc.) that students reverted to justify their intentional plagiarism. Nevertheless, it is safe to mention here that academic staff/teachers’ (including the author herself) proactive involvement in the process of reducing plagiarism among students will undoubtedly be helpful. This involvement may range from simply showing a model of good practice and academic integrity to adopting more stringent measures (like giving low grades to students in question).

Authors’ Own Experiences with Plagiarism Detection

Having thus far reported on the students’ reasons for plagiarism, this sub-section reports on the author’s own measures to detect plagiarized content. Before reverting to search engines, the detection of students’ suspicious essays revealed similar hints of plagiarized content already suggested in the literature (Suerda, Comas & Urbina, 2005). However, the author could disclose others, like an almost perfect essay from students whose low level was known to the teacher. This suggested that a whole article was totally plagiarized. Though time and effort consuming, reverting to online search engines was the second measure to definitely discern plagiarized content.

In this second step, doing an Internet search by entering one sentence or two in a search engine often led the author to the original article being copied, a mere instance of academic cyber-plagiarism that other authors like Suerda, Comas & Urbina (2005) and Park (2003) described.
As illustrated in Figure 4, the author simply indicated the plagiarized text with an arrow or square brackets along with providing the electronic address of the original website or article. In the case of the above figure, the original source was Noor-Ul-Amin’s (2013) article, “An effective use of ICT for education and learning by drawing on worldwide knowledge, research and experience: ICT as a change agent for education (A Literature review)”, that one can easily download from the internet. Likewise, this was a way to tell the students in question that ICTs they used to deceive also helped the teacher to assess the quality of their academic writing and detect any forms of cheating. In the following section, the author attempts to share some action-oriented solutions that have been implemented with students to sensitize, then, involve them in the process of avoiding plagiarism.

Recommendations and Conclusion
This section concretizes the main aim of the present paper, namely, by proposing practical teaching and assessment techniques through which teachers may proactively pre-empt plagiarism among students: recommendations mainly drawing on the author’s humble teaching experience with the phenomenon, then, on additional awareness-raising measures suggested by other authors. First and foremost, one of the routine teaching practices that the author adopted with her students was to reference all her teacher-provided materials and documents. This is shown in figure 5.
Teachers’ likewise demonstrating a good model of information provision that abides by academic requirements seems to be a *sine qua non* to ensure students’ exposure to such models of good practice. As regards monitoring students’ work, this took effect through asking the latter to submit *handwritten* instead of typed assignments, while explaining to them that they should paraphrase and insert the references. Instances of handwritten, referenced assignments as illustrated in figure 6.

**Figure 4:** Samples of author's referenced materials (right image, class-notes and left image, a power point presentation)

**Figure 5:** A sample of students’ hand-written referenced assignment
Even though the main objective of the task was content-focused, this technique was a way to have students routinely practise paraphrasing. Besides the above-mentioned teacher-demanded handwritten assignments, another preventive measure that the author implemented with her students aimed to familiarize them with sound research practices. To this end, the teacher emphasized on the importance of acknowledging the electronic sources used by inserting a references list in the student-submitted written homework assignment when using external internet sources. Here, the teacher clearly explained that correct end-of-text references would be scored along with a personal style and relevance of the content.

At times, the teacher pre-selected the research materials/electronic sources by simply providing some links that students had to follow, or else, by sending articles under PDF format via email correspondence. The aim was manifold. This mainly assisted students in their time management efforts, making them spend less time in searching for relevant information. Such author-experienced strategy interestingly finds resonance in ESL research about academic writing (for e.g., Johns, 2006). Additionally, pre-selecting electronic reading materials intended to discourage students from copying-pasting to their document besides having them to be fully engaged with these sources by practising paraphrasing and note taking. Knowing that the teacher’s provision of the research material presupposes familiarity with its content, students will certainly double their efforts to summarize the main points and reformulate what they read in their own style before submitting their work for final assessment.

The module of Deontology and Ethics was an opportunity for the author of this paper to encourage some student-animated presentations on topics like good paraphrasing, citing electronic sources, note-taking from reading materials and so on, all of which promote a plagiarism-free writing (see figure 6). Presentations resembled workshops where animating students distributed visuals and handouts for practice. Actively engaged in the process of avoiding some causes of plagiarism, the students in question even shared with their classmates some practical tips and step-by-step techniques on the above teacher-proposed topics. Similar sessions enhancing good paraphrase could be organized by teachers of Academic writing, for instance.

Besides the above-mentioned classroom-experienced techniques, equipping students with sound website evaluation skills is also believed to help them use trustworthy sources, save time, and avoid to accidentally be involved in plagiarism. Evaluating the accuracy, coverage, and authority of websites is of particular importance here. Students searching online will forcibly encounter information that is not well-documented and sometimes missing references, which tells a lot about the website’s authority. Comparing internet sources also enables students to know more about the accuracy of information and coverage of the topic.

Finally, awareness-raising to the long-term and short-term dangers of plagiarism (through lectures, study days or training workshops to be organized to the benefit of students) is highly recommended. In parallel, actively engaging the latter in the process of reducing academic misconduct is noteworthy. Following Park’s (2003) suggestion, students’ delegates should play the role of informing the other students about the importance of avoiding academic misconduct and the risks they run if they are ever caught. To the author’s knowledge, students-initiated information dissemination (be it face-to-face or social-network-mediated) is more efficient than
teacher’s initiative. Last but not least, students will certainly be more alert when they sign an *honour pledge* in which they engage state that they will not plagiarize or cheat in their final year dissertation, exams, assignments, or in any other academic work (Park, 2003).

Because the present paper was based on rough clues obtained from unsystematic data gatherings, a more rigorous investigation of the phenomenon, with a larger population (including both undergraduate and post-graduating students from the department of English and teachers), and more systematic data collection, is required\(^1\). For instance, quantifying the students’ self-reported instances of plagiarism will be revealing. By assuring that anonymity will be preserved, the potential investigator can even conduct an interview with both students and teachers for more qualitative data on the areas in which students are likely to cheat the most (i.e., assignments and exams...etc.).

To sum up, this paper proposed a bottom-up preliminary insight into student electronic plagiarism through the author’s shared experiences with this phenomenon. Most importantly, it projected the idea that the academic staff, namely teachers, should responsibly and proactively cope with the large incidence of plagiarism among students so as to contribute to the Algerian university quality assurance. Even though students are the first responsible for this apparently worldwide phenomenon, the paper has nevertheless put forth practical ways of reducing such incidence through teachers’ implementing simple, routine assessment measures that make students practise sound referencing and paraphrasing on a regular basis as early as their under-graduation years.

**Notes**

1. Plagiarism is not only confined to the academic setting but also involves music, literature, software, journalism, politics, and so on (Suerda, Comas, & Urbina, 2006).
2. Awareness of academic plagiarism issues is also an EAP skill that not only students are concerned with but even teachers in academia (see for e.g., Mohammed, Sabahand & Nur, 2018).
3. There are several website evaluation checklists on the internet that detail the criteria followed to evaluate websites. They are easily accessible via the simple query “website evaluation checklist” on google.com search engine.
4. Students can also use Anti-plagiarism software as a language-learning tool to assess the adequacy of their paraphrase.
5. Deontology encompasses respecting others’ right and adhering to duties as dictated by morality. Understanding the deontology of plagiarism is to view such act as morally wrong (Granitz & Loewy, 2007).
6. This was due to the prolonged classroom contact with the students in question.
7. See the references below for more details about the URL address of the article.
8. The author of this paper continues to implement this technique of handwritten assignment until the present time to discourage the passive copy-paste practice among students, especially when it comes to doing an internet-based homework. This being said, the author is herself a fervent advocate of the use of ICTs as language learning tools, notably the word processor as early as the first draft- owing to the language learning opportunities the
latter affords to students, like spell check, synonyms, the possibility to edit and save the 
document, among other things.

9. The main focus of the class was not necessarily on the form (like that of an Academic 
writing class) but on the content. However, this did not prevent the teacher from drawing 
her students’ attention to the importance of considering academic writing requirements 
even in their content-focused assignments.

10. Internet-mediated communication is now a habitual practice among the students. The 
students’ delegates are in charge of sharing class-notes, homework assignments, teachers’ 
notes/messages to students (mostly via a common group is a social network).

11. The author of this paper is currently (AY: 2018-2019) supervising a Master student who 
chose to deploy a variety of tools to investigate student plagiarism within the English 
Department of Saida University.

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