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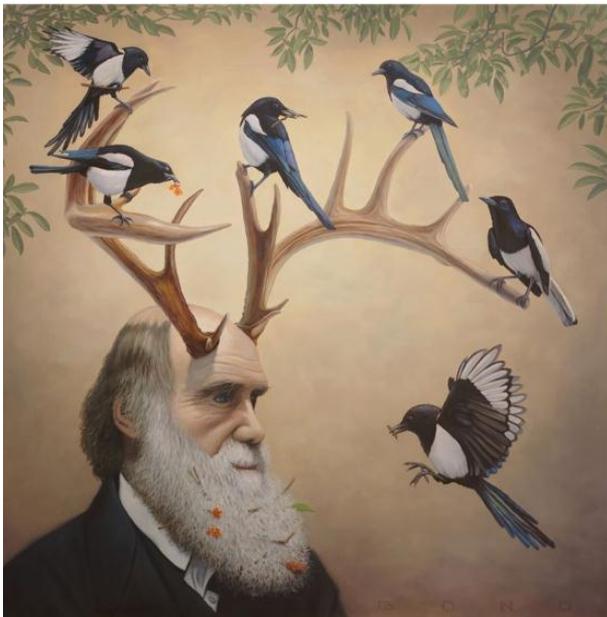
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The interrelatedness between the content-based approach and EFL University students' emotional intelligence

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Abstract

This study aims at examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and the variable of academic achievement on the one hand, and the role of the content-based approach in achieving this relation on the other hand. To bring about such kind of interrelation, a design of a pre-post-test has been used. The main findings of the study show that there is a positive relationship between participants' emotional intelligence skills. In conclusion, the use of the content-based approach in teaching students enhances the effect of emotional intelligence on their academic achievement.

Keywords: Emotional intelligence, content-based, academic.

La interrelación entre el enfoque basado en el contenido y la inteligencia emocional de los estudiantes universitarios de EFL

Resumen

Este estudio tiene como objetivo examinar la relación entre la inteligencia emocional y la variable de rendimiento académico, por un lado, y el papel del enfoque basado en el contenido para lograr esta relación, por otro lado. Para lograr este tipo de interrelación, se ha utilizado un diseño de una prueba previa y posterior. Los principales

hallazgos del estudio muestran que existe una relación positiva entre las habilidades de inteligencia emocional de los participantes. En conclusión, el uso del enfoque basado en el contenido en la enseñanza de los estudiantes mejora el efecto de la inteligencia emocional en su rendimiento académico.

Palabras clave: Inteligencia emocional, basada en contenidos, académicas.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to GOLEMAN (1995), the concept of emotional intelligence (henceforth EI) refers to a set of capabilities that are separated from intelligence quotient (IQ) but necessary for success in life, in the workplace, in intimate personal relations, and in social interactions. The same author further states that the emotional state affects the mental state especially of teachers and students who have high degrees of anxiety, anger, and depression. For this reason, they become victims of such state that makes them unable to learn, assimilate, and make use of information proficiently. Although students' academic success depends on the educational, social, and psychological factors, emotions are considered the most salient among them.

Moreover, there are some studies that assert the fact that general intelligence alone does not guarantee students' success and excellence since EI is required as it is a pivotal predictor of success in the scientific as well as the practical domains. MAYER & SALOVEY (1990), GARDENER (1993), & GOLEMAN (1995) remark that

cognitive intelligence contributes by 20% to students' success, while EI plays a role of 80% percentage in this respect (MELO, R., BEZERRA, DANTAS, MATOS, DE MELO FILHO, OLIVEIRA & MACIEL, 2017: MOHAMADTAGHI, HEJAZIDINAN, SHAMSIPOURDEHKORDI & SAEMI, 2018: SADEGHPOUR, FAR, KHAH & AKBARDOKHT AMIRI, 2017: UREY, 2018). Turning to the other key concept in the current study, namely content-based approach (henceforth CBA), ESKEY (1997) views it as a strong form of communicative language teaching which involves relatively intensive exposure to a highly contextualized new language of particular relevance to the learners. He also states that learners need to be pushed toward the delivery of a message that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately.

This approach is centered on the study of both language acquisition and subject matter. In other words, instead of teaching target language in isolation, it becomes the medium by means of which important information can be learned when students are studying the content of interest. As such, students become more intrinsically inclined to simultaneously learn the content and the language (STOLLER, 2004). By employing the CBA, this study aims to (1) investigate the role played by EI in language acquisition, and (2) examine how EI influences students' academic achievement at the university level. In addition to that, the current study endeavors to provide answers to the following agitating problematic questions:

1. Does the integration of EI with CBA in EFL classes have any effect on students' academic achievement?

2. How is such an integration viewed by learners of EFL at the university level?

2. THE STUDY DESIGN

The current study assumes that EI has some positive role to play in the betterment of students' academic achievement at the university level. It proposes that by teaching students of EFL some facts and issues of EI, using the CBA, and broadening their knowledge in this concern, they might be able to achieve high scores on the emotional competence inventory (ECI) scale used to measure their EI. Getting such high scores will, in turn, be reflected in students' ability to achieve better understanding and comprehending of the foreign language they are studying. As such, the design to be adopted is that of the experimental nature, more specifically, the pre-post- test design.

2.1 Population and Sample

The population of the study consists of (90) 3rd year undergraduate students in the Department of English/ College of the Basic Education/ University of Mosul for the academic year (2013-

2014). A sample of (30) students was randomly selected out of this population. They were all native speakers of Arabic with an average age of (22). (16) Students were female and (14) were male.

2.2 Materials

As for the material used in this experiment, it is of two types, viz. testing and teaching materials. The former type was used in the pre- and post- tests phases of the procedures, while the latter type of material which was taken from the Goleman's (1995) book, viz. Working with EI was used in the teaching phase by using the CBA.

2.3 Instruments

Turning to the study instruments used, they were namely the Emotional Competence Inventory scale (ECI) designed by Boyatzis et al. (2000) (appendix 2), and an achievement test constructed by the researchers themselves (appendix 1). These two instruments were piloted to ascertain their validity and reliability before applying the procedures which were arranged in the form of three phases via the pre-test phase, EI teaching phase, and the post-test phase.

2.4 Procedures

Within the pre-test phase, an achievement test in reading comprehension and EI scale was administered to the sample of the study. The achievement test consisted of four passages taken from the reading comprehension section of the TOEFL test designed by (PHILLIPS, 2003). Each passage was followed by two questions, one of them was a comprehension question comprised of (5) multiple choice questions with (4) alternative answers each, and the other was a production one asking students to summarize the main ideas of the passage they read. The former question was scored out of (5) marks; one mark was assigned to the correct answer and zero mark was assigned to the incorrect answer. As for the second question, it was scored out of (5) marks also where the correct idea unit was given (5) marks; near correct idea unit was given (4) marks and zero mark to incorrect summaries.

As for the EI scale in the form of a questionnaire, it measured the four components of EI with (20) sub-components. Along a six-point scale, participants were asked to read and match the items included within the questionnaire carefully to the items by ticking the blank square of each item they agree with. This phase of the experiment took (90) minutes; (60) minutes for the academic achievement test and (30) minutes for the ECI scale. Moving to the EI teaching phase, subjects were taught the teaching material using the sheltered model of the CBA which focused on both language acquisition and subject matter, viz. EI. By the end of the teaching period, students were post-tested following the same steps and conditions used in the pre-test phase. However, different passages

from those used in the pre-test were used together with the questionnaire.

2.5 Data Analysis

The data collected out of applying the procedures was treated statistically by using the: 1- calculated mean, 2- standard deviation, 3- Pearson correlation factor, 4- T-test for one sample to compare the results of the pre-and post-tests. The results obtained will be presented, in what follows, in the form of tables (1 and 2) below.

Table 1: T-Test Results between the Pre- and Post- test of the Mean Scores on Overall EI Scale

Items	N	Mean			Std. Deviation	t.cal.	t.tab.	Sig.
		Pre	Post	Difference				
Self-Awareness	30	195.6000	240.7000	45.1000	39.16134	6.308	2.045	0.05
Self-Management		339.9333	391.2667	51.3333	117.54774	2.392		
Social-Awareness		121.9333	160.0000	38.0667	41.98106	4.967		
Relationship management		293.7333	395.8667	102.1333	89.33190	6.262		
Total		966.9667	1187.8333	220.8667	173.30315	6.980		

Table 2: Significant Correlation between Students' Scores on EI Scale and Academic Achievement

Items	N	Correlation	t.cal.	t.tab.	Sig.
Self-Awareness	30	0.331	2.081	2.048	0.05
Self-		0.303			
Social-		0.468			
Relationship management		0.437	.571		
Overall EI Scores and		0.446	.637		

4. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The core aim of conducting this study is to investigate the interrelatedness between EI and college students' academic achievement. It is assumed that there are two reasons for predicting such kind of interrelatedness. The first reason has to do with the ambiguity involved with academic achievement, while the second reason is about high levels requirement of self-awareness and self-management because of the nature of most academic work which is self-directed. Building on the analysis of results in the previous section, such kind of interrelatedness is positively viewed by learners of EFL at the university level. Learners have scored high on both the overall EI scale as well as each component of the scale, namely: self-awareness, self-management and relationship management. Moreover, the difference shown, by the analysis of results, between

students' scores on the EI scale and its components in the pre- and post-test is significant and in favor of the post-test.

Following this line of analysis, hypothesis no.1 set in the beginning of the current research is rejected. The correlation between students' scores on EI scale and their academic achievement is positive which leads to the fact that students whose scores on EI are high have also good grades in their academic achievement. This positive relationship is quite the same as the suggestion posed by MAYER & SALOVY (1990), GARDENER (1993), GOLEMAN (1995) and others. They assume that EI, by its nature, form a basic part of general intelligence and has a significant role in students' academic achievement. For this reason, the second null hypothesis set in the beginning of the current research is rejected.

5. CONCLUSIONS, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING

So far, the conclusions arrived at stem from what has been discussed in the previous sections, in addition to the findings of the practical part. As a new psychological concept, EI definition in this study is built upon the abilities an emotional intelligent person possesses. Such definition clearly interrelates between some basic EI components and skills. These components have been classified differently within one of two competencies, viz. the personal and social competencies. Personal competency includes self- awareness

and self- management, while social competency has social awareness and relationship management. Whatever the classification is, EI is viewed as a master aptitude that affects all other abilities and leads to the urgent need for investigating EI and academic achievement among students' by adopting the CBA as a method to teach EI.

As for the investigation of the relationship between the hypotheses set in this study and the results arrived at, it is quite clear that these hypotheses have not been verified. The reason behind such finding is students' scores on the EI scale which were high and in favor of the post-test. The same thing applies to students' scores on the components of the scale which were also high and in favor of the post-test. Moreover, the findings reveal another fact that confirms the positive relationship between students' EI scores and their academic achievement. This positive relationship enhances students' EI skills which are clearly mirrored in the betterment of their academic achievement and success in their field of study. Added to that, the use of the CBA in teaching students enhances the effect of EI on their academic achievement.

In the light of the preceding concluding remarks, the need to look for a broader understanding of EI so as to assist in preparing educational programs to develop students' EI levels is really urgent. Moreover, the need to know how EI help in achieving success in different life domains is also of vital importance. Therefore, the following implications for teaching are highly recommended:

- 1- Developing an effective educational curriculum that helps students to incorporate EI skills with their objectives to enhance both personal and career success in different fields of study and life.
- 2- Conducting more studies that tackles the relationship between EI and other variables that leads to bringing into action different models of teaching EI skills in the classrooms.
- 3- Organizing courses to train teachers on how to teach EI skills and components very effectively.

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