

RESEARCH INSIGHTS IN ENGLISH TEACHING AND LEARNING

Editors:

Engku Haliza Engku Ibrahim

Isarji Hj. Sarudin

Ainon Jariah Muhamad

Aishah Abdullah @ Adeline Low Hui Lin

Nurshidah Abdul Wahab

Nuraihan Mat Daud



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ENGKU HALIZA ENGKU IBRAHIM

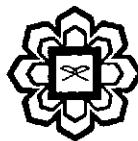
ISARJI HJ. SARUDIN

AINON JARIAH MUHAMAD

AISHAH ABDULLAH @ ADELINE LOW HUI LIN

NURSHIDAH ABDUL WAHAB

NURAIHAN MAT DAUD



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	v
CHAPTER 1:.....	1
Minimising Students' Communication Apprehension: The Application of Groupwork Learning Strategy in English Classrooms	
INTRODUCTION	1
LITERATURE REVIEW	2
PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	5
RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	5
METHODOLOGY	6
FINDINGS.....	8
DISCUSSION	13
CONCLUSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH	14
REFERENCES.....	16
APPENDIX A	19
APPENDIX B	21
CHAPTER 2:.....	23
Communication Anxiety Among Pre-University Students	
INTRODUCTION	24
PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	25
RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.....	25
METHODOLOGY	26
FINDINGS.....	28
DISCUSSION.....	32
CONCLUSION.....	33
REFERENCES.....	34
CHAPTER 3:.....	37
An Analysis of Online English Language Learning Forum	
INTRODUCTION	37
LITERATURE REVIEW	38
METHODOLOGY	41
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	41
DISCUSSION.....	46
CONCLUSION.....	47
REFERENCES.....	48

CHAPTER 4:	.....	49
The Effects of Oral Communication Strategy Training on ESL Learners' Oral Proficiency		
INTRODUCTION .....	.....	49
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE .....	.....	51
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	.....	51
METHODOLOGY .....	.....	54
FINDINGS.....	.....	58
CONCLUSION.....	.....	64
REFERENCES.....	.....	66
CHAPTER 5:	.....	71
Responses to Extensive Reading: A Survey of ESL Learners		
INTRODUCTION .....	.....	71
BACKGROUND .....	.....	73
RESEARCH OBJECTIVES.....	.....	74
METHODOLOGY .....	.....	75
FINDINGS.....	.....	76
DISCUSSION .....	.....	81
CONCLUSION.....	.....	84
REFERENCES.....	.....	85
CHAPTER 6:	.....	89
The Use of Metacognitive Strategies in Listening		
INTRODUCTION .....	.....	89
LITFRATURE REVIEW .....	.....	91
METHODOLOGY .....	.....	94
RESULTS.....	.....	95
DISCUSSION.....	.....	98
CONCLUSION.....	.....	100
REFERENCES.....	.....	102
CHAPTER 7:	.....	105
Managing English for Academic Writing Using Learning Management System		
INTRODUCTION .....	.....	105
LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (LMS) .....	.....	107
BACKGROUND .....	.....	108
PROBLEM STATEMENT .....	.....	109
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE .....	.....	110
METHODOLOGY .....	.....	110
FINDINGS .....	.....	111
DISCUSSION .....	.....	111
CONCLUSION .....	.....	118
REFERENCES.....	.....	119

CHAPTER 8:.....	121
Teaching English in Multicultural Classrooms	
INTRODUCTION	121
PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	122
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE	123
LITERATURE REVIEW	123
METHODOLOGY.....	125
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION	126
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	136
REFERENCES.....	138
CHAPTER 9:.....	141
Task Based Learning: From Theory to Practice	
INTRODUCTION	141
TASK BASED LEARNING	142
PROBLEM STATEMENT.....	145
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE	146
METHODOLOGY.....	147
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	151
CONCLUSION.....	154
REFERENCES.....	156
CHAPTER 10:	159
Incorporating Field Trip Activities in EOP	
INTRODUCTION	159
RESEARCH OBJECTIVE	164
RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	165
METHODOLOGY	165
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	166
CONCLUSION.....	170
REFERENCES	171
CONTRIBUTORS	175
INDEX	179

CHAPTER 8:

Teaching English in Multicultural Classrooms

AINON JARIAH MUHAMAD
ENGKU HALIZA ENGKU IBRAHIM
ZALEHA ESA

Teachers' knowledge and competence in dealing with classes of diverse cultures can either facilitate or impede teaching and learning to a great extent. The aim of the study was to examine teachers' perceptions of multiculturalism in the English teaching and learning context. Data collected were based on interviews conducted on a class of 16 student teachers. Findings of this qualitative study revealed that teachers generally do have a basic understanding of what teaching a multicultural class means. More importantly the study revealed that there is a need to train, especially novice teachers to be multiculturally competent in preparing them to teach in classrooms of diverse cultures, as they play a vital role in helping students understand and appreciate the differences and similarities among the various ethnic, religious and cultural groups.

Keyword: Multicultural classrooms, English language teaching, Teacher education

INTRODUCTION

Our cultural background can affect the way we teach and learn (APA, 2003). Students live in a diverse world and teachers have the responsibility to provide the relevant opportunities to apply this intercultural understanding in their daily lives. It is therefore important for teachers to remain mindful of their values and seek to identify and find ways to engage in culturally competent teaching Davis (1993). For students to understand other cultures and their effects on others, there is a need to infuse multiculturalism in the curriculum. Understanding what multiculturalism