

THE EFFECT OF CONSTRUCTIVIST APPROACH IN TEACHING SHORT STORIES AND POEMS TO THE ENGLISH PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of the Constructivist approach in the teaching of short stories and poems. It involved the experimental group and the control group which were carefully selected through randomization procedures. Both groups were given pretest at the beginning of the term (midterm) and posttest at the end of the term (midterm). But the control group was isolated from all experimental influences. A total of 35 equated second year A and B Information Technology students of the Cagayan State University who were enrolled in Philippine Literature during the second semester, school year 2011-2012 were the subjects of the study.

Employing the pretest-posttest experimental design with weighted mean, t-test, frequency count and percentage distribution as statistical tools, it established that the level of performance of the students in their pretest was satisfactory. There was no significant difference between the level of performance of the control and experimental groups in their pretest. The level of performance of the control group in their posttest was satisfactory while the experimental group was very satisfactory. There was a significant difference between the levels of performance of the subjects in their posttests. The gain score of the control group was 5.26 or low while the experimental group was 10.32 or average; therefore, there was a significant difference in their gain scores. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the constructivist approach was better than the traditional approach in the teaching of short stories and poems.

Keywords: Constructivist Approach, English Performance, Experimental group, Control group.

INTRODUCTION:

“Education is at the heart of human life”, therefore peoples from all walks of life aim for a quality education. One has to equip himself or herself with the right skills to face the adversities of life. However, according to Lasaten (2008) most teachers are not willing to try out new approaches in teaching because they are already confined to traditional approaches. As a result, many learners find difficulty in understanding important concepts because most schools do not adequately provide the requisite experiences for learners to fully develop their skills and potentials (Lasaten, 2008).

Jonassen, Peck, and Wilson (1999) stated in their study on constructivism that many teachers have a strong desire for students to be active participants in their own learning. These teachers do not want students to listen passively as they are told what they need to learn. Students who are actively engaged in learning become more involved as they discover and make sense of their world.

Interestingly, literature is the source for the students to learn worthwhile values and skills necessary for their existence. Hence, teaching literature needs a careful plan for instruction to fully develop the potentials of the students (Lasaten, 2008).

Specifically, short stories and poems, being a literary genre, can make its readers see life in a wider perspective. Their realistic presentation of life’s situations and characters can hurl learners into another world or another period; it can create an emotional situation, a mood or tone, a feeling that can make them experience the SHE-Significant Human Experience (Baraceros, 2005). The appreciation of a short story and poems will greatly increase as one understands the tools, which an author uses in telling one. These tools include the elements of a story namely: setting, characters, plot, point of view and theme respectively and the elements of poetry such as: rhythm, rhyme, figures of speech, stanza form, symbols, subject matter, theme, persona and mood. Short stories and poems therefore, are means of communicating creative experiences (Villanueva, 2012).

Considering these, teachers of literature who are teaching short stories and poems, are confined to the traditional method and approaches of teaching, resembling a one-person show with a captive but comatose audience (Lasaten, 2008).

In a research conducted by Bolosan, Bumanglag, Norono, Pascua and Villanueva (2010) about classroom interaction in the teaching of short stories, they found out, that in a traditional classroom setting, the teachers seem to be the only fountain of knowledge in the class, making the students passive and seldom engage in group activities and decision making. Moreover, only few students respond to questions raised by their teachers and classmates. Some others do not even share their understanding of the short stories and poems they read.

The Constructivist Approach advocates social or classroom interaction, wherein students are given the opportunity to interact with their teacher, other students and the material they read. According to Bruner (1986), students construct their own knowledge, relating their previous knowledge through social interaction. Moreover, Lasaten (2008) contends that meaningful learning takes place through social interaction that is, knowledge is constructed as more knowledgeable when one interact with others and share their expertise. Thus, to learn is to experience, that is to interact with one’s environment; to do, to feel, to sense, to handle and to perceive the opportunities. Certainly, students benefit from social interaction by (1) sharing ideas, (2) appropriating understanding, and (3) articulating thinking.

With the Constructivist Approach, students are transformed from being passive recipients of information to active participants in the learning process. Furthermore, the students construct their knowledge actively rather than just mechanically ingesting ideas from the literary texts, from the teacher or from the textbook. Likewise, the students get amorphous information through their engagement in conversations. They get ill-defined problems and they themselves put together their own personal questions and figure out how to go about answering them with the teacher being the mediator of that meaning-making process.

With this background, the researcher was challenged to use the Constructivist Approach in the teaching of short stories and poems to determine its effect in the English performance of the second year Bachelor of Science in Information Technology students of the Cagayan State University at Sanchez Mira.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS:

Generally, this study determined the effect of the Constructivist Approach in the teaching of short stories and poems to the English performance of the second year BSIT college students of CSU-Sanchez Mira. Specifically, this study sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the level of performance of the subjects in their pre-assessment?
2. What is the level of performance of the subjects in their post-assessment?

3. What is the gain score of the subjects?
4. Is there a significant difference in the level of performance between the control group and the experimental group in their pre-assessment?
5. Is there a significant difference in the level of performance between the control group and the experimental group in their post-assessment?
6. Is there a significant difference in the gain ratio between the control and the experimental groups?

SCOPE AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

This study was delimited in determining the effect of the Constructivist Approach in the teaching of short stories and poems to the English performance of the second year BSIT students. Furthermore, it determined the level of performance of the subjects in their pretests and posttests. The differences on the level of performance of the subjects were also taken into consideration.

This study utilized validated materials taken from the study of Lasaten (2008), particularly on the stories, "Footnote to Youth," "The Visitation of the Gods" and "Dahong Palay."

A performance test was constructed by the researcher based on the content of the enhanced course in Philippine Literature. The test covered the following short stories, "How my Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife," "Footnote to Youth," "The Visitation of the Gods," "Dahong Palay" and the poems, "God said, "I Made a Man," and "Air Castles".

The second year BSIT students of the College of Information Technology of the Cagayan State University at Sanchez Mira during the second semester of the school year 2011-2012 were the respondents of the study. The study was conducted from January 04, 2012 to February 28, 2012.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

The clamor for the improvement of quality education in the country is not just a new predicament. It has always been the obsession of every teacher and administrator to search for its solution. However, it is a paradox that every time there are mishaps and impediments in the educational systems, the teachers receive most of the blame (Cacatian, 2009). Therefore, teacher preparation programs must be designed to be transformational, not just informational. For that reason, the teacher must plan carefully activity-centered lessons in order for the students to gain experience and personal knowledge through active involvement. Participation with understanding will enable them to "live through" a learning episode, thus discovering information by themselves (Salandanan, 2005). Consequently, the theory upon which this study is anchored is the Constructivist learning theories.

The progressive education movement led by Piaget (1916) and Dewey (1969) eventually molded into constructivism theory. Piaget (1916) concluded that people learn through the mental building of logical structures throughout life. Dewey (1969) believed that children learn through engagement and not from listening to instruction. Besides Piaget (1916) and Dewey (1969), others assisted in the emergence of constructivism through concepts based in education, philosophy, sociology and psychology.

Reduced to its most basic elements, constructivism is simply a learning or meaning-making theory. This theory proposes that learning is an active process in which learners construct new ideas or concepts based on their current/past knowledge and experiences.

As teachers, it is; therefore, important to provide experience and motivation for students to learn in a manner that makes sense to them. One way of making literature less vague and more interesting is to apply the constructivist approach in the teaching of short stories and poems that will allow them to do and think of their own and to foster cooperative learning. Through this instruction, the students will be actively involved and be the center of the educative process. As emphasized by (Piaget, 1977; Dewey, 1916; Vygotsky, 1978) and Cacatian, 2009), learners must be given the opportunity to learn on their own to make more concepts relevant and permanent to them.

To encapsulate the framework of the study, the variables are illustrated in the paradigm as shown in Figure 1. The paradigm consists of two frames; the first contains the independent variables which are constructivist approach and traditional approach and one for the dependent variable which is English performance.

THE RESEARCH PARADIGM

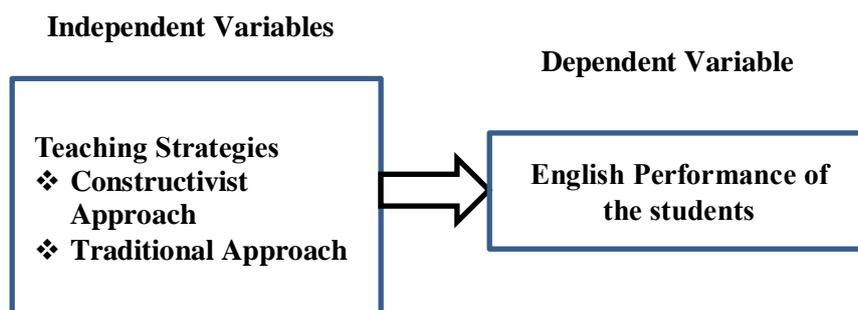


Figure 1.The research paradigm showing the difference between the independent variables and the dependent variable

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This study made use of the pretest-posttest experimental design in assessing the effectiveness of the constructivist approach in the teaching of short stories and poems. The Cagayan State University, Sanchez Mira Campus specifically the College of Information Technology served as the locus of the study.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS:

A total of 35 equated BSIT second year A and B students of the College of Information Technology of the Cagayan State University at Sanchez Mira who were enrolled in Philippine Literature during the second semester, school year 2011-2012 were the subjects of the study. The classes of both groups were scheduled on the same day, that is, one class is scheduled 7:00-8:00 and the other class is scheduled 10:00-11:00 TTTHS. The equated students were matched based on their general weighted average in all their English subjects namely: Functional English A, Grammar and Composition I, Study and Thinking Skills, Functional English B, Grammar and Composition II, Writing in the Discipline, and Speech and Oral Communication. In this study, random sampling was used.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the subjects.

Table 1: Distribution of the subjects

Year/Section	Male	Female	Total
BSIT II-A	15	20	35
BSIT II-B	15	20	35
Total	30	40	70

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT:

This study used a performance test which was constructed by the researcher. The test was composed of a 40-question multiple choice taken from the lessons in the enhanced syllabus in Philippine Literature used by all the campuses of the Cagayan State University. Nine (9) questions were taken from the story “How my Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife,” seven (7) were taken from the story, “Footnote to Youth,” seven (7) were taken from the story, “The Visitation of the Gods,” five (5) were taken from the poem, “God said, “I Made a Man,” seven (7) were taken from the poem, “Air Castle,” and five (5) were taken from the story, “Dahong Palay” respectively .

In addition, the study used some materials taken from the study of Lasaten (2008) titled “Constructivist Resource Materials in Teaching Short Stories”. Those materials focused on “Footnote to Youth,” “The Visitation of the Gods,” and “Dahong Palay”.

Moreover, the researcher enhanced three constructivist resource materials which were employed in the teaching of short stories and poems referring to the book of Catacutan (2006). titled “English of the New Generation” (Philippine Literature).The said materials were patterned to the adapted materials. These are the poems “God

Said, I Made a Man” and “Air Castles” and the story “How My Brother Leon Brought Home a Wife.” The said enhanced materials were checked and evaluated by the research advisor.

Every material has the following parts, namely; a) Preliminaries, b) Interaction, c) Hook-up, and d) Gallery.

DATA GATHERING PROCEDURES:

A performance test requiring the subjects an hour to take the test was personally administered and conducted by the researcher after seeking the permission from the College Dean of the College of Information Technology and the Campus Executive Officer.

The subjects were informed that their cooperation and participation were essential in the success of the study. Written instructions accompanying the instrument were repeated orally upon the performance test was floated.

Test construction with a table of specifications, matching of the control and the experimental groups based on their general weighted average in all their English subjects, conducting the pre-test and interpretation of the results, conducting the post-test and interpretation of the results were also accomplished by the researcher. The said grades of the subjects were also validated by the researcher through the records secured at the registrar’s office of CSU at Sanchez Mira.

In the administration of the pretest and post-test, the subjects were requested to occupy two rooms. The subjects were given one hour to take the test. The usual periodic testing procedures were observed. Proper sitting arrangement, lighting and ventilation of the room as well as classroom discipline were taken into consideration too. The test was given simultaneously to the two groups through special arrangements with the other teachers in the college.

Test directions were made clear before the test was started. The students were asked to answer the pretest as honestly as possible and they were told that the results were used for diagnostic purposes only. One point was given for each item that was answered correctly.

The test papers were checked and recorded by the researcher. The numbers of correct responses for each item was tabulated and mean percentages were computed. Furthermore, the interpretation of the results of the pretest was done using the frequency counts and percentage distribution. Then the performance test of the respondents in the pretest was evaluated and compared using the t-test: for dependent samples to test whether there was a significant difference between their levels of performance prior to the employment of the constructivist approach.

THE EXPERIMENTAL TREATMENT:

The control group was taught using the traditional approach. The students were taught through pure discussions, question and answer technique, recitations, lectures, storytelling, writing critical reviews, reporting, independent or silent reading and reading aloud which are considered traditional approaches. After discussing every story and poem, the subjects in the control group were given seat works and quizzes in order to assess their knowledge and understanding about the literary pieces that were discussed.

Meanwhile, the experimental group was taught with the use of different constructivist strategies such as: language games, collaborative/cooperative activities, think-pair-share, concept maps, diagrams, flowcharts, round robin brainstorming, slogan making, poem writing, letter writing, reflective writing and role play.

DATA ANALYSIS:

As soon as pertinent data were gathered by the researcher, they were tallied, encoded, summarized, and tabulated. To have an in depth analysis, and interpretation of data in the light of the problem and objectives of the study, the following statistical tools were used.

Weighted mean, frequency count and percentage distribution were used to determine the level of performance of the subjects in their pre and posttests and gain scores. The data that were elicited were interpreted with the use of the following scales:

Pre and Post-test Scales

Range	Descriptive Value
33-40	Outstanding
25-32	Very satisfactory
17-24	Satisfactory
9-16	Fair
1-8	Poor

Gain Scores Scales

Range	Descriptive Value
17-20	Very high
13-16	High
9-12	Average
5-8	Low
1-4	Very low

Moreover, the t-test: for dependent samples was used to analyze the difference in the level of performance of the subjects in their pretests as well as in their post-tests and the gain scores of both the control and the experimental group.

**INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS AND FINDINGS:
THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE OF THE SUBJECTS IN THEIR PRE-ASSESSMENT
THE CONTROL GROUP:**

Table 2.A unveils the results of the pre-test scores of the 35 students in the control group. Using the frequency counts and percentage distribution, it is obviously seen in the Table that the mean score of the control group is 16.74. This means that the level of performance of the control group is “Satisfactory.” This level of performance may be due to the unfamiliarity of the students to the literary genres present in the questions.

Table 2.A. The Level of Performance of the Control Group in their Pre-assessment

Range	Frequency	Percentage	Descriptive Value
33-40	0	0.00	Outstanding
25-32	1	2.86	Very Satisfactory
17-24	18	51.43	Satisfactory
9-16	16	45.71	Fair
1-8	0	0.00	Poor
Total	35	100	
Mean = 16.74 (Satisfactory)			

THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP:

Using the frequency counts and percentage distribution, the mean performance of the experimental group in their pre-assessment is 16.91 which means that the students have a “Satisfactory” performance in English. This level of performance may likely be attributed to the fact that, the students are not yet acquainted with the stories and poems like the control group.

Table 2.B. The Level of Performance of the Experimental Group in their Pre-assessment

Range	Frequency	Percentage	Descriptive Value
33-40	0	0.00	Outstanding
25-32	1	2.86	Very Satisfactory
17-24	16	45.71	Satisfactory
9-16	16	45.71	Fair
1-8	2	5.72	Poor
Total	35	100	
Mean = 16.91 (Satisfactory)			

**THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE OF THE SUBJECTS IN THEIR POST-ASSESSMENT:
THE CONTROL GROUP:**

Results in Table 3.A shows that the control group got a mean score of 22. It can also be deduced in the following scales that the mean score of the control group attributed them to their level of performance which is “Satisfactory”.

It can be gratifying to note however, that the mean score of the control group in their pre-assessment is 16.74 which shows that there was an improvement of 5.26 in their mean score in their post-assessment. An acceptable reason for this is that, the extent of retention of the lessons learned by them is because of their becoming familiar to the short stories and poems and to the instructions of the teacher during the treatment period. However, this did not qualify them to have a higher level of performance.

Table 3.A. The Level of Performance of the Control Group in their Post-assessment

Range	Frequency	Percentage	Descriptive Value
33-40	0	0.00	Outstanding
25-32	12	34.29	Very Satisfactory
17-24	17	48.57	Satisfactory
9-16	6	17.74	Fair
1-8	0	0.00	Poor
Total	35	100	
Mean = 22.00 (Satisfactory)			

THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP:

It is revealed in the following Table that the mean score of the experimental group is 27.23 using the frequency counts and percentage distribution. This may imply further, that the students in the experimental group have a “Very Satisfactory” level of performance in English. This could be due to the fact that they were exposed with a lot of constructivist strategies. Based on the observations of the researcher, students in the experimental group were very active during the treatment period making them engaged into cooperative/collaborative learning which resulted better retention of the subject matter.

This result is in agreement with the finding of Cacatian (2009) in her study, that students who used programmed materials attained significantly higher scores than the students who underwent the usual lecture-demonstration approach (Traditional Approach).

The result can also be notable however, that constructivist strategies when applied in a very organized presentation in teaching short stories and poems can fully elicit and sustain students’ motivation to participate in class activities. This is in consonance to the view of Forcier & Descy (2002) that to truly learn, one must make sense of his or her own experiences, as learning cannot be imparted by another- it must be experienced. The student is able to produce his or her own knowledge based on information from external sources, rather than being the recipient of information from his or her teacher.

Table 3.B.: The Level of Performance of the Experimental Group in their Post-assessment

Range	Frequency	Percentage	Descriptive Value
33-40	4	11.43	Outstanding
25-32	22	62.86	Very Satisfactory
17-24	9	25.71	Satisfactory
9-16	0	0.00	Fair
1-8	0	0.00	Poor
Total	35	100	
Mean = 27.23 (Very Satisfactory)			

THE GAIN SCORES OF THE SUBJECTS:

THE CONTROL GROUP:

The following scales specify the gain scores of the control group. Three gained a score of 13-16 or “High,” three gained a score of 9-12 or “Average,” 11 gained a score of 5-8 or “Low,” and it was noted, that there were 14 who just gained a score of 1-4 or “Very Low.” Also, it is not surprising to note in this study, that there were three among the subjects in the control group who gained nothing and worst is, two of them have a negative 1 and negative 2 scores while the other has the same score from pre-test to post-test.

The unfavorable results of the gain scores of the control group are likely due to their being inactive in class during discussions. This is furthermore in accordance with the answers of some of the students during an informal interview which was done by the researcher, that they don't feel like engaging themselves in class during classes because they are sleepy making them bored and thought of whatever which tend them in losing their concentrations in class. As a result, most of them don't even want to recite when asked by the teacher.

Table 4.A. The Gain Scores of the Control Group

Range	Frequency	Percentage	Descriptive Value
17-20	0	0.00	Outstanding
13-16	3	8.57	Very Satisfactory
9-12	3	8.57	Satisfactory
5-8	11	31.43	Fair
1-4	15	42.86	Poor
Total	32	91.43	
Mean = 5.26 (Low)			

THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP:

It is reflected in Table 4.B, that there was only one who has a "Very Low" score and just gained three; however, 12 gained a score of 5-8 or "Low," 15 gained a score of 9-12 or "Average," six gained a score of 13-16 or "High," and one gained a score of 17 or "Very High". As a whole, the mean gain score of the experimental group is 10.32. This means that the students have an "Average" gain score.

It is further surprisingly notable; that the favorable gain scores of the experimental group over the control group, means that the constructivist activities have been observed to affect the students' construction of knowledge and the extent of their participation in class. Thus, careful selection of activities should be observed. This finding substantiates that the activities are learner-controlled and they can help learners to form multiple perspectives and metacognition, which Vygotsky (1978) asserted as results of collaboration and social interaction. Moreover, it can be deduced from the data that the activities emphasize apprenticeship, which encourage self-analysis-regulation, reflection and awareness among learners. This result also conforms to the claim of Williams and Burden (1997) about the need to empower students to think and construct knowledge for themselves, as the main aim of constructivist teaching. The activities also support knowledge collaboration, facilitate knowledge construction and encourage previous knowledge constructions, adhere to Bruner's theory (1986) and emphasize the importance of previous experiences in the construction of knowledge. Furthermore, the activities included are authentic. All these indicate that the activities evaluated exhibit constructivist perspectives. Thus, they are suitable to the attainment of the objectives of the materials and they promote interaction between and among students, which is necessary in the construction of new concepts.

Table 4.B. The Gain Scores of the Experimental Group

Range	Frequency	Percentage	Descriptive Value
17-20	1	2.86	Outstanding
13-16	6	17.14	Very Satisfactory
9-12	15	42.86	Satisfactory
5-8	12	34.29	Fair
1-4	1	2.86	Poor
Total	35	100.00	
Mean = 10.32 (Average)			

THE DIFFERENCE IN THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE BETWEEN THE CONTROL AND THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS IN THEIR PRE-ASSESSMENT:

As reflected in Table 5, it is obvious that there is no significant difference in the level of performance between the control and the experimental groups in their pre-assessment. This is shown by the probability value of .841 which is greater than .01 level of significance; hence, the research hypothesis, "There is no significant

difference between the level of performance of the control group and the experimental group in their pre-assessment,” cannot be rejected. This means that the entry knowledge of the two groups is comparable. The researcher attributes this result to the manner by which the students were grouped.

Table 5. The Difference in the Level of Performance between the Control and the Experimental Groups in their Pre-assessment

Group	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t-value	Probability Value	Remark
Control	16.74	4.39	-.202	.841	NS
Experimental	16.91	5.07			

THE DIFFERENCE IN THE LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE BETWEEN THE CONTROL AND THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS IN THEIR POST-ASSESSMENT:

Result of the t-test indicates that the t-value of -4.43 means that the control group obtained a lower score than the experimental group. In addition, the probability value of .000 is much lower than .01 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

What is worth noting is the higher scores of the experimental group over the control group. Their mean score is 27.23 or 55.31 percent which is 10.62 percent higher than the control group with a mean score of 22.00 or 44.69 percent. This means that, the experimental group improved their level of performance which is “Very Satisfactory” after undergoing the constructivist approach.

The improvement in their performance further affirms that constructivist strategies give each student the opportunity to become the center of the educative process where processes of understanding are emphasized. In a discussion of language arts instruction based on constructivist theories of language use and language development, Applebee (1993) suggests that rather than treating the subject of English as subject matter to be memorized, a constructivist approach treats it as a body of knowledge, skills, and strategies that must be constructed by the learner out of experiences and interactions within the social context of the classroom. In such a tradition, understanding a work of literature does not mean memorizing someone else's interpretations, but constructing and elaborating upon one's own within the constraints of the text and the conventions of the classroom discourse community.

This result is indeed in corollary to the manner that a constructivist student-centered approach places more focus on students learning than on teachers teaching. A traditional perspective focuses more on teaching. From a constructivist view, knowing occurs by a process of construction by the knower. Lindfors (1984) advises that how we teach should originate from how students learn.

The favorable mean score of the experimental group substantiates their being very active in class. This further suggests that strategies which involve social interaction and reflection highly motivate students' participation. This is supported by the claim Johnson and Johnson (1989) that group learning (constructivist strategy) is highly valued because it provides harmonious classroom atmosphere, as compared with teacher-centered and individualistic ones. Moreover, this learning promotes higher achievements and greater motivation of students' participation due to a more positive interpersonal relations and more accurate perspective taking.

The activities also support knowledge collaboration, facilitate knowledge construction and encourage previous knowledge constructions, adhere to Bruner's theory (1986) and emphasize the importance of previous experiences in the construction of knowledge.

Table 6: The Difference in the Level of Performance between the Control and the Experimental Groups in their Post-assessment

Group	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	t-value	Probability Value	Remark
Control	22.00	5.73	-4.43	.000	S
Experimental	27.23	3.97			

THE DIFFERENCE IN THE GAIN SCORES BETWEEN THE CONTROL AND THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUPS:

Table 7 displays the difference in the gain scores between the control and the experimental groups. The mean gain score (10.32 or 66.24 percent) of the experimental group is 50.91 percent higher than the mean gain score (5.26 or 33.76 percent) of the control group. This means therefore, that they exemplified an average performance in their gain score while low performance to the control group. The t-value, which is 5.62 and the probability value of .0000 which is less than .01 level of significance reflects that there exists a significant difference between the mean scores of the experimental and the control groups. The difference favored the experimental group. The result is most likely due to the degree of retention of the lessons learned by the students in the experimental group.

It is rewarding to note, that the favorable performance of the students in the experimental group points to the fact that they were all participating in the activities that were undertaken. This result confirms the notion of Lasaten (2008) that constructivist strategies seem to motivate students’ participation because they are new strategies that are perfectly suitable to the teaching of short stories and poems of the present generation. These imply that the use of modern strategies in teaching short stories and poems greatly motivate students’ participation in class. This is also related to the belief of Barron, et al. (2002), that using innovative strategies would elicit students’ active involvement in class, turning them to become active participants in the learning process rather than passive recipients of information.

On the other hand, it is sad to notify that the lower mean gain score of the control group implies that the use of strategies which do not provide students’ opportunity to express their reactions about the short stories and poems they read, do not appeal to them. This supports Duffy’s and Jonassen’s (1992) proposition that students tend to miss the fun of learning from their peers which is important in order for them to arrive at a shared understanding of a truth.

In general, the finding further denotes that there are some approaches/strategies that are widely used by teachers of literature; yet, these do not necessarily evoke and encourage the participation of students. As such, these may not be used frequently in class to avoid boredom among students. If not, these may be enhanced to make learning interesting. On the contrary, there are also those strategies that are only used by a few; yet, they encourage satisfactory participation, if not full participation of the students, in class. Thus, these strategies may be constantly used, may be shared and may be made known to other teachers so as to make learning more active, interesting, productive and meaningful.

Table 7: The Difference In The Gain Scores Between The Control And The Experimental Groups

Group	Mean Gain Score	Standard Deviation	t-value	Probability Value	Remark
Control	5.26	4.21	5.62	.000	S
Experimental	10.32	3.30			

CONCLUSION:

Based on the results of the study, the following were surfaced: The level of performance of the students in their pre-assessment was satisfactory. There was no significant difference between the level of performance of the control and experimental groups in their pre-assessment. The level of performance of the control group in their post-assessment was satisfactory while the experimental group was very satisfactory. There was a significant difference between the levels of performance of the subjects in their post-assessment. The gain score of the control group was 5.26 or low while the experimental group was 10.32 or average; therefore, there was a significant difference in their gain scores.

In the light of the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the constructivist approach is better than the traditional approach in teaching English at CSU because it gave the experimental students the chance to be the center of the teaching-learning process, instead of the teacher which is a conventional scenario in a traditional approach in the teaching of short stories and poems. The constructivist approach further improved their skills and their experiences are highly valued that lead to the development of their full potentials. Above all, the students’ interaction in class particularly in learning short stories and poems were enhanced.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the results and conclusions, the researcher offers the following recommendations:

1. The constructivist approach should be embraced by teachers of literature to further determine not only its helpfulness but also its effectiveness in teaching short stories and poems in the secondary and tertiary levels.
2. Teachers should use the constructivist approach in order to make learning more meaningful, permanent and effective.
3. Teachers should enrich their syllabi in literature with constructivist strategies. In this way, learning of literature becomes more enjoyable, interesting and thought-provoking
4. Teachers of literature should adapt constructivist approach in teaching other literary genres like essay, drama and novel. The researcher believes that literature teaching would become more meaningful if constructivist methodologies are also employed in the teaching of the different literary genres.
5. Teachers of literature should be equipped with varied materials and strategies which are effective to the development of learning. The researcher believes that the skills of the students will be further enhanced if the materials presented to them are fitting to their interest.
6. The administrators in the elementary and secondary education should encourage teachers to apply the constructivist perspectives. The researcher believes that constructive teaching is not only suitable to college students but also to high school students and elementary pupils.
7. Officials, curriculum planners and policy makers in the educational arena should endorse the constructivist approach not only in the teaching of literature but also in the teaching of languages and/or other subjects.

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