

**Relationships Between Class Activities
and the Use and Retention of
Occupational Terminology**

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Abstract

The ethnographic investigation herein examines relationships between learners' having partaken in class-time portrayals that are modeled on realistic and actual industry occurrences, and these learners' acquisition of occupational terminology. Its subjects are enrollees at a Middle Eastern four-year private establishment of higher learning which specializes in preparation for a lone profession. Contemplating the looming career demands of introductory-level, non-native students of English sparked the question of how participation in activities that are ungraded (which is key for want of shifting learner attentions from marks to skills-acquisition)—such as projects, simulations, and role-plays—affects their use and long-term retention of field terminology. Despite arguably few and minor divergences from results that have been documented throughout those literature review cases surveyed, the outcomes of the present research peak curiosity, stir the imagination, and impel action given the subjects' qualitative demonstrations of long-term retention of content.

Keywords: terminology, terms, terminological, vocabulary, technical, occupational, professional, vocational, education, training, learning, project-based, simulation, role-play, games, gaming, group work, cooperative learning, collaborative learning, content, reten-

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tion, long-term retention, Middle East, MENA, four-year institution, higher education, specialized, college, university, adult education, continuing education, professional training, executive training, competency-based

Relationships between class activities and the use and retention of occupational terminology

For many, commencing higher education represents the winding down of a life programmed by and patterned with school days. The fresh expectations of fast-approaching adult life and labor make it a profoundly pivotal time. Finding out what works and directly applying it must happen as the time for learners and their educators to get things right is at hand. Theories being the constant throughout much of academic life reorient the schooling task of higher education professionals toward graduating fully-educated beings, ones who shall be as ready as possible to enter a phase of maturity that is clearly marked by the capacity to perform various responsibilities with full accountability. The universal need is for people who possess the right knowledge (theories), skills (actions), and attitudes (behaviors) to start working life and be earnestly productive in it. One way to go about preparing such beings may be to, as maximally possible, incorporate faithful reproductions—imitations—of adult work-life into class lessons. Doing so can directly impact every educator who is a local resident, for, someday, he or she just may need to rely upon one or more graduates to directly assist with matters requiring a competent field specialist who is equally active and effective in his or her field. The search for workable pathways to learners' professional competency conjures the research question of how the participation of higher education students in ungraded activities (such as vocational group projects, occupational simulations, and professional role-plays) could affect their use and long-term retention of field-specific terminology.

Literature Review

Occupational fields comprise jargon. A phrase such as legalese, “The specialized language of the legal profession” (Legalese, n.d.), exemplifies this truth. Even impressively educated natives of a language retain one or more authorities belonging to a particular field to assist them should they begin entertaining embarking upon serious dealings in that field, which alludes to the exclusivity of certain communicative categories that, nonetheless, pertain to one’s mother tongue. Oral utterances, writing, even the human body all transmit expression. Apprentices operating outside their first language, then, stand to gain from using the lexis of their prospective employment in practical dry runs (Alqahtani, 2011) if instructors carefully customize frameworks that boast high relevance to real life while ensuring positive transfers of learning: those improving rather than inhibiting or interfering with learning or performance in subsequent environments (AlSagheer, 2011). Similarly wise would be arranging a deliberate marriage between learners’ instrumental motivation—which underscores the practical value and the bonuses of language-learning—and their integrative motivation, which emphasizes authentic personal interest in others (in this case, interest in the coworkers and the clients that someday will exist) and their cultures (Gardner & Lambert [1972] as cited in Jahin&Idrees, 2012).

Wonder turns to whether successfully internalizing trade lingo could stem from incorporating discipline-unique terms into work-reminiscent enactments that are devised for instruction (in the form of facilitation) during learning time, for the thought is that safe immersions in situations which learners fancy mastering just might be able to fortify the credibility of instructors, their instruction, and institutions of higher learning in learners’ eyes;

amplify instructors' personalized attention to and/or treatment of learners; bolster learner confidence; and activate transformational leadership inside the classroom (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2009). Such immersions also have the potential to diminish levels of chronic disengagement that learners might experience for perceiving their lessons to be irrelevant or for feeling overwhelmed and/or personally powerless in their studies, all conditions that are witnessed very often in schooling (Crotty, 2013; Stupnisky, Renaud, Daniels, Haynes, & Perry, 2008). It is hoped, too, that these kinds of learner production would augment the acquisition of challenging content and foster the ability to think critically (Walton, 2010), a mainstay of the higher-education mind that is heavily linked to the ambitions of learners majoring in specialized themes since "terminological accuracy underpins professional fitness and trustworthiness, and it aids in avoiding logical fallacies" (A. A. Marvdashti, personal communication, September 8, 2013).

Among contributing players within specialized higher education settings and within workplaces, knowledge, skills, and attitudes prove entirely piecemeal as each bit is owned by a single individual. This creates what is tantamount to an endless site-wide information-gap exercise. Cooperation and collaboration are thus each significant to this inquiry given that academic endeavors and adult livelihoods, alike, depend on both rather than on isolated labor or solitary brainstorming (perhaps a tad ironic owing to the fact that autonomy is a learning outcome unquestionably sought equally for and by learners). Therefore, the present review surveys articles on imparting and organizing the use of specialized language during cooperative learning episodes (DelliCarpini, 2009) group project work (Borda, Kriz, Popejoy, Dickinson, & Olson, 2009), workplace simulations (Hawkins, Todd,

&Manz, 2008), and occupational role-play (Williams, 2012). A concise but enlightening piece outlining what does and does not constitute useful group work (Quinn, 2012) is likewise reviewed.

Considerable incentive to proceed with this brand of exploration hails from the wealth of compelling and convincing biological information that Eric Jensen proffers in his book titled *Teaching with the brain in mind* (2005). Relational in every respect to those approaches defining this study are tidbits from Jensen's extensive corpus of research, data, and explanations about the brains of late-teens to twenty-something-year-olds. The brain is highly receptive to new information and makes increased numbers of connections due to massive reorganization of synapses that are thickening and thinning out during a process that can begin as early as the age of eleven and end as late as the age of thirty according to the 2001 study of Durston, et al. (as cited in Jensen, 2005). Frances Leslie's 2004 findings that students frequently choose activities with immediate rather than delayed rewards (as cited in Jensen, 2005) may explain to some extent why the learners of the present study never once challenged the proviso that no grades or ranking system would be designated for their mandatory in-class activities, a stipulation intending to cultivate learners' preference for bona fide achievement over, say, officially documented letter grades, numeric scores, or other customary types of marks. Jensen's (2005) summary of practical implications that are sprung from brain-based studies advises using concrete and realistic modeling (the root of this research), being a coach who facilitates brainstorming (a word that is interpretable as cooperation or collaboration), and instructing straightforwardly and succinctly since brains about eighteen years old and older realistically digest between solely fifteen and eighteen

minutes' direct instruction at a time. Interestingly, language acquisition is known to be the only exception to this time-limit rule (Jensen, 2005).

Jensen (2005) hones in on the fact that “biologically relevant school stimuli include opportunities to make friends” (p. 34), a statement uncannily confirmed time after time by the young men who underwent the researchers' study, and he cautions that “all the while, the student's brain is concerned with avoiding the dangers of embarrassment, failure, or harm” (p. 35), an obvious and powerful motive for instructors to thoroughly preplan and then orchestrate supportive think-tank-like classrooms or training rooms and exercises. Jensen (2005) importantly differentiates explicit learning (by way of textbooks, lectures, and still and moving images) and implicit learning (through life experiences, habits, games, and hands-on activities), highlighting that what is referred to as “learning” calls upon those involved in the effort to be able to identify or predict patterns, then predict apropos steps or actions, and, lastly, master desired outcomes repeatedly in what for all intents and purposes is memory, another focal point of this investigation. Jensen (2005) warns that the process of building this type of memory (known as consolidation) takes time, and that “given what the research shows, . . . presenting more content per minute, or moving from one piece of learning to the next too rapidly, virtually guarantees that little will be learned or retained” (p. 43). Consolidation happens during downtime, which can be individually accessed both at will and as needed throughout group work. Finally, Jensen (2005) navigates instructor thinking toward permitting students to work out their own ways to review learning; creating competitive activities or those with “small learning risks, artificial urgency, or excitement” (p. 38); staving off possible

boredom by varying activity approaches or timing; and allowing for reconstruction (which can be thought of as updates on what was learned in the past) rather than cookie-cutter reviews, for it is certainly true that “most retrieving of old information is a revision, not a duplicate of the original” (p. 41). Jensen’s guidance just may touch upon the potency that simulations conceivably have.

Pate and Mateja (1979) penned a fascinating paper on simulations and gaming (as gaming was defined in the pre-technology period of the 1960s and 1970s) and their relationship to what the authors call the retention phenomenon. Their work looked at assorted primary school, junior high school, high school, college, and university students. One of the studies oversaw work with learners who were defined as slow. In all cases, traditional teaching was compared against class lessons that were founded on simulations and games, some active and some passive, and some of which were commercially manufactured products. The simulations and games were being used to study both topics and terminology related to geography, economics, history, science, arithmetic, map reading, teaching, career and occupational studies, and vocabulary. Studies utilized not only pre-tests and post-tests, but also delayed post-tests, which were administered between a few weeks and multiple months after the post-tests. Post-test scores revealed that simulations, active games, and passive games (although less so than active games) “were significantly more effective than the traditional approaches” (Pate & Mateja, 1979, p. 197) and, as a rule, boosted retention. Moreover, even in the relatively few instances when post-testing had been done shortly after simulation or game-playing treatments and told of learner improvement that was statistically insignificant, delayed post-tests later on verified the same test subjects’

either lack of learning attrition or solid advancement beyond previous (pre-test and post-test) outcomes. Several study results strongly indicate that the passage of time and inductions into extracurricular practice or work scenarios cause rehearsed knowledge, skills, actions, and behaviors to emerge from temporary inactivity and apparently intensify in learners who have been primed to perform. Pate and Mateja (1979) agree with the 1975 findings of Lucas, Postma, and Thompson (as cited in Pate & Mateja, 1979) that delayed intervals are not periods of mental stagnancy; they are inhabited by continued individual and collective learning. They feel that the opportunities to actively take on one or more roles, the levels of responsibility being acted out, the decision-making experience (which does not always afford enough time for careful forethought), the requisite acceptance of consequences reaped of decisions made, the jolt (whether of exhilaration or of nervousness) that risk-taking injects, the overall deepened subjective involvement and investment—all notions echoing those of Jensen (2005)—join together and prove so memorable as to make learning durable.

Universal theories' having their place and their incontrovertible value, certain cultural aspects are important to the current research. Explained in the literature and in supplementary material are the general history of education in a number of Arabic countries of the Middle East and North Africa (known as MENA) region (Bahgat, 1999; *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2013b; *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2013e; *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2013g; *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 2013k; see also CNN International & Lakhani, 2010) and what ensues when, say, national governmental controls and parameters are placed on the curricula of not only public, but also private institutions

(Davis, 2010) and impact the somewhat noninterventionist needs of private educational workforces and their work. Reviewed, too, are the state of Arab universities and how studies are executed within them (Abdullah Alfadhala, 2013; Abouchedid, 2006; Bilboe, 2011; Jamjoom, 2013; "Unemployment in GCC," 2013; see also Guttenplan, 2011), particular circumstances said to surround teaching learners of Arabic heritages (Ansari, 2012; Mansour & Al-Abdulrazzaq, 2012), and various conditions that in one way or another tend to bear on educational systems, givers of education, and consumers of education; for instance, when welfare-state status grants lifelong provisions including free schooling through higher education (Alamri, 2011; BBC News Middle East, 2013; Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index [BTI] 2012, 2012; Bollag, 1994; Brown, 2007; Education Encyclopedia - StateUniversity.com, 2013; Karolak, 2012; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], n.d., World; Redden, 2013). The relative availability and affordability of schooling at times wind up influencing the personal drive to learn, as can any virtual guarantee of public sector employment or of being financially looked after should no education or work pan out (Bahgat, 1999). In light of these actualities, reports perused were on disconnects between the customary learning backgrounds and traditions of regional folk and the teaching styles that expatriates have introduced into this geographical area (Mansour & Al-Abdulrazzaq, 2012), gaps between learners' recognition of what essential proficiencies are and effectively attaining them through classroom activities (Alqahtani, 2011), student views on higher education classroom management (Al-Hamdan, 2007), learning strategies, gender, and language level (El-Dib, 2004; see also AlSagheer, 2011), and heartening upgrades in learner skills and attitudes after attending high-participation university courses (Al-

Kandari, 2012). All articles reviewed are up-to-date (McMillan, 2012), having been published in the 2000s, and their authors consulted preeminent primary sources from as far back as 1910, philosophers such as John Dewey (Walton, 2010), and theorists such as Vygotsky (DelliCarpini, 2009) and Piaget (Walton, 2010).

Ethnography

Articles read furnish descriptions of “shared patterns of beliefs, normative expectations and behaviors, and meanings” (McMillan, 2012, p. 278) that are characteristic of regional national and educational cultures. Abouchedid (2006) notes that “clanocratic approaches to academic administration . . . arrest . . . transition toward modernization” (p. 1), and further challenges arise as learners and some educators now and again place on-paper certification above acquiring skills and knowledge (Abouchedid, 2006; Ansari, 2012). What is more, educators are sometimes expected to bear the brunt of the education task (Abouchedid, 2006; Ansari, 2012; Al-Hamdan, 2007): learner aptitude aside, teaching should result in learning. This view is partially how and why cheating, plagiarism, collusion—all soberly protested but rampant and, at the end of the day, accepted in so very many countries of our world (Hilliard, Crudele, Matulich, &McMurrian, 2009; see also IPPHEAE, 2013; Michalska, 2011; Michalska, 2012)—rise from the two sides of the education fence as learners ask for the “help” of unearned grades and/or receive it from some of their classroom educators or school administrators (see Brown, 2012; Redden, 2013). In a large number of cultures the world over, acts interpreted as cheating to some are, in fact, seen only as collaborative learning to others (Markova, 2011; see also Hundley, 1998). Over time, learning both for the self and by the self can unintentionally transform into a thing that seems out of

place, inconvenient stumbling blocks to learners' aspirations, for personally acquiring knowledge requires intense investments of time and energy and, hence, is not generally as aggressively pursued or as welcomed as simple passing grades, which more promptly secure much-yearned-for aftermaths. No matter, it is felt by increasing numbers of learners and their educators world-wide, that a student who was promoted cannot cope with next-level studies if s/he nevertheless indeed occupies that next level. The cycle repeats and disadvantages learners, teachers, parents (who eventually might need to pay for re-do courses), and many societies at large, which receive underprepared members who have [been] graduated into them. El-Dib's 2004 article hints at the desire to reduce such risks in its call to consider learning strategies in relationship to culture: using version 7.0 of the well-known SILL 50-item questionnaire research tool (developed by Oxford) translated to Arabic, she had 750 local college students identify personal language-learning strategies. No debriefing followed to usefully reorient them away from teacher and toward self, unfortunately, but El-Dib did concede the clear need for descriptive rather than interventionist research (as was her own) to explore several offshoot questions that were born from her study and that merit scrutiny, for example: how can the learning milieu be manipulated by language educators to coax learners into using a broader variety of strategies and into unveiling new ones?

Owning learning

Owning learning quickly reveals itself to be the heart of the matter. Like MacIntyre (as cited in El-Dib, 2004), El-Dib wonders how students beginning to, "apply their own learning strategies might affect these learners", "anxiety, self-efficacy, and self-confidence" (p. 93). One idea for uncovering and coming to manage

personal strategies is group work. Its structure must be high to avoid wasting time; clearly communicated to lend direction; and genuinely collaborative to effect meaningful listening, goal-establishing, compromise, role/responsibility assignment, accountability, and vital teacher, peer, and self-feedback for assessing progress and definitively furthering it (Quinn, 2012). Such multifaceted work expediently melds required language use, expected actions and behaviors, learning to deal with immediate challenges, and practice dealing with trials yet to come. DelliCarpini's teacher candidates formed four four-expert ESL vocabulary development groups. They all benefitted most from her restructuring of group work into cooperative learning. Claims of enhanced study, understanding, discussions, and transference to real life settings surfaced given that "they were responsible for their own construction of knowledge" (DelliCarpini, 2009, p.49), a payoff that Jensen (2005) staunchly contends will occur, and a learner comment mirrored recurrently in this very study. In an unpublished item of research that is still underway as of the writing of this piece, the author spotlights learners who have been discovered to be underperforming to an unanticipated degree as appearing to benefit most from cooperative learning activities; he preliminarily reports that the majority of these students seemed most likely to complete assignments and come up with correct solutions during work with a group that had been formed through their own choosing, and he added that both student behavior and off-task talking were kept in good check (Nazzario, 2013).

Taking ownership of learning begins the article title of Borda, Kriz, Popejoy, Dickinson, and Olson, whose 100 Chemistry 101 non-science majors did group projects and a mini-conference using the language of chemistry (2009). Every group of four had

clear goals, and each member had a role and worked independently outside class (Borda et al., 2009). Pre- and post-activity SUSSI (Student Understanding of Science and Scientific Inquiry) questionnaire scores demonstrated not large but still promising student learning, and student learning-log data showed increased interest “in specific chemistry content and practical applications of chemistry . . . [as well as] sophistication and specificity [that] reflected a high level of engagement” (Borda et al., 2009, p. 39). Likert satisfaction surveys recorded participants to be enjoying peer education, appreciating the new way to learn, and seeking more goal clarity, in-class work (for continued regular access to teacher), and equity and equality structures in group work. The researchers, encouraging adaptation and working on refining the process as recommended, assure attention to these matters in future (Borda et al., 2009).

Knowledge and skills acquisition met duty of care—a critical professional objective—in Hawkins, Todd, and Manz (2008). Accurate use of jargon and of lay terminology, four-skills communication (reading, writing, speaking, and listening), use of technology, protocol, and empathy all enriched a foundation of critical thinking to which participants assigned notable worth for its realism (Hawkins, Todd, & Manz, 2008). Groups were divided along two paths post-intervention (i.e., after learning about a case) in a simulation for clinical nursing students. One group developed a care scheme then simulated addressing the case. The other group addressed the case directly then later wrote up the experience. In the end, both groups carried out student-centered reflection (Hawkins et al., 2008). This study most closely parallels the needed experiences of neophyte experts, and its researchers cite faculty raves about the plan and consequent student enrich-

ment, yet no student primary sources (e.g., testimonials, ratings) appear. Notwithstanding this shortcoming, the role-play aspect as described is definitely relevant to any student preparing for specialist work-life.

Role-play was Williams's (2012) concentration as she observed and diagnostically interviewed two groups of Year 4 eight-year-olds communicating via the language of math. Video and transcribed audio data chronicle the children working out math concepts, from everyday numeric (12-hour clock time) to specialist (the best time to depart per a high tide/low tide 24-hour-clock nautical chart over which the present author might stumble). Williams's findings show that playing roles and using terms may not be simultaneous—terminology work may come before or after—but encasement in narrative seemed to focus activity, ultimately linking up its parts holistically. Williams wishes to look more deeply into the meaningfulness of role-play in contextual learning.

Synopsis

Given the realities of students who undergo training where studies in the English language are required but the atmosphere of international English belies how truly scant access to the language may be, strategies to embed apprentices in activities that familiarize them with forthcoming work contexts would do quite well to exist. Generally little to no daily English-language practice in the private and, sometimes, the academic lives of learners, and the requirement to absorb substantial vocational terminology make superfluous much of the casual practice in which they would participate socially, anyway. Education's being not for the classroom but, rather, for afterward warrants the use of techniques that instill lasting information of all sorts: terminologi-

cal, communicational, procedural, empathetic, professional, critical thinking, and, as a matter of course, whole-person. To such end, exploring learning types, styles, and modalities; individual intelligences; learning strategies; whole-body and whole-emotion solutions, by every available means, is paramount. The El-Dib (2004), DelliCarpini (2009), Borda et al. (2009), Hawkins et al. (2008), and Williams (2012) studies each offer a puzzle piece that might do well to be reconstructed in class, each in its turn, in order to flesh out the most well-rounded pictures of self, peers, and purpose. Performing activities—group work as cooperative learning, projects, events akin to mini-conferences, meticulously structured simulations, and role-plays that construct a base narrative capable of being revisited—can only generate additional opportunities to learn, particularly if painstakingly designed and later refined based on honest educator and participant feedback and evaluation. The research implemented sought to include facets that were missing from or in short supply within some of the studies appraised. Above all, participant chronicling and debriefing attempted to identify concrete outcomes and juxtapose them with prior assumptions in order to, it is hoped, shed better light on each.

Environment, Atmosphere and Demographics

The research site is an approximately five-year-old Middle Eastern private institution of higher learning endowed with every desirable amenity. It specializes in one particular professional field and has about a dozen partnerships with similar international institutions, worldwide. On average, the learner-educator ratio is 21:1, with three and sixty being the rough bookend numbers of classroom learners. All courses are conducted in Arabic—the native tongue of every national studying on site—save Eighteen,

which are run in English, only. Of these Eighteen English-only courses, Three are preparatory (to brush up on English), and the remainder directly address the field of study. The school offers a dozen or so specializations within its general field of focus via the instruction and support of some seventy-five educators, including two-thirds full-time and one-third part-time faculty (professors, assistant professors, associate professors, lecturers, instructors) and teaching assistants. Nine school employees (faculty members) are monolingual-English-speaking, exclusively (no knowledge of Arabic)⁽¹⁾, but native Arabic speakers of the English department speak up to fluency level. About one quarter of the Arabic-speaking faculty know minimal English, whereas their Arabic-native colleagues speak English to some degree or other and can hold from minimal to topically unlimited conversations in English with any native. The English-language communication limitations of some faculty members coupled with the likelihood that graduates of the school will work using Arabic language primarily make the campus atmosphere heavily (and quite naturally) Arabized in all personal, visual, and communicative aspects.

Every faculty member belongs to at least one of about a dozen site-support committees (the student affairs committee, for example), which hold meetings in Arabic (monolingual English faculty receive the simultaneous interpretations of willing colleagues during meetings), and both external (i.e., for clients) and internal (for faculty) types of training are offered. The usual Middle Eastern college and university employees populate the rest of the campus: administrators (a president, deans, associate deans, and heads of departments), admissions staff, information technology specialists, departmental secretaries, registration per-

(1) Ed: Due to the diversity of Faculty members at KILAW, it would be normal to have some faculty who are English Language speakers only.

sonnel, heads of testing and attendance, security officers, social counselors, school medical personnel, restaurant workers, librarians, buildings and grounds workers and landscapers, campus maintenance workers (such as electricians), servers known locally as “tea boys,” and so on.

The fewer than 1,500 learners comprise undergraduate candidates, graduate candidates, and industry professionals (for instance, specialized government employees); all are between the ages of approximately seventeen and sixty. Learners are about fifty two percent male and forty eight percent female. The campus is divided by gender, with each amenity having male and female areas, including all on-campus restaurants and resource-rich libraries. Available to learners are clubs (sports, those for assorted field specialties, etc.), male and female recreation areas, and student government (only males have held office although females may run and actively campaign among the female campus population)⁽¹⁾.

Target Group and Research Team

Directly involved in this action research project were to be two groups (totaling about eighty) of approximately eighteen- to twenty-six-year-old males who, during their freshman fall (September through December 2012), were learners in the lowest-level language course at the specialized higher education school in question. The reasoning behind routinely incorporating work-related group projects, simulations, and role-plays into September through December 2012 lessons was two-pronged: to supplement the general-English nature of language textbook units with pointedly related field content and concepts, and to prepare

(1) Ed: Although that was correct as per the first student election, in all subsequent student elections there have always been females elected to office-holder positions.

the men for professional life by having them personally practice working through situations in which they might find themselves at their first jobs in the field of study. Of prime importance was emphasizing that all such class work would be ungraded in order to wean learners from focusing on marks and start them thinking about the essential nature of acquiring authentic work skills. A matter of great importance for these men (and of great interest to their instructor) was and is the installation of a transference mindset of sorts: from reliance on instructor ratings to reliance on self-rating in order to breed new beliefs, thinking, behaviors, and outlooks regarding accountability for learning. Despite the described brand of immersion into field content's being more challenging for the lowest-level learners (e.g., those who might have been erroneously accepted into the program of study given their routine demonstrations of possessing below the minimum levels of knowledge and skills to survive it), the approach showed real promise for those with linguistic aptitude and interest, and even for those with notably less aptitude but given to great bouts of effort and perseverance. Staff members directly carrying out the action research on these men were their former monolingual-English-speaking lecturer; the Arabic/English-bilingual research advisor and mentor, who is the departmental head of testing; and an Arabic/English bilingual departmental secretary.

Baseline Data

Baseline data included the witnessing by the 2012 instructor and by a site colleague (who likewise repeatedly uses group projects, simulations, and role-plays as teaching and content-internalization tools) that a number of their introductory-level learners skipped the next level of study and proceeded to the level after it. Additionally, non-language professors using the

medium of English to teach field-specific courses into which the introductory-level-English-course men eventually enter reported that, on average, fifteen percent—a figure matching 2011 site studies conducted—of the learners in their courses consistently were not indicating the ability to satisfactorily cope with course content for struggling not only with terminological English, but also with those vocabulary words that are peripheral or supplementary to industry terms, that is, phrases which are definable as both potentially industry-specific and general. The selection of the current research's area of focus came in no small part from wanting to explore these reports more closely. The desire was to begin examining what both language experts and industry content experts perceive. The hope is to have, in the nearest possible future, more productive conversations on what all site stakeholders can do about the language-learning that is meant to serve all learners, the venue, and one another.

Research Implementation Plan, Procedures, Measures and Tools

The research advisor and mentor—a local native, a veteran at the education site, and head of testing for the unit—oversaw and coordinated the proposal to discern whether the fall 2012 strategy for entrenching content knowledge had withstood the test of time through to fall 2013. Researcher and advisor/mentor met two weeks for daily check-in sessions, during which a series of steps and research instruments was brainstormed, recommended, designed, developed, reviewed, approved, and ultimately duplicated and implemented.

The study arranged to gauge learner retention of terminology and necessary terminological support (i.e., peripheral) vocabulary by administering a researcher-created contextualized test now, during the men's sophomore fall, on a random sampling

of twenty out of ninety occupation-related terms that they studied during freshman fall, only. Number-coded, dated tests bore no space for name-writing, and the men would be instructed in Arabic before test-taking not to write their names anywhere. An anonymous questionnaire and an anonymous personal interview (not to be executed by their former monolingual-English-speaking instructor, and carried out in Arabic to enable these men to self-express maximally in their native tongue) followed their test, inviting them to share perspectives, opinions, concerns, suggestions, beliefs, and what impact, if any, they believed last year's class-time activities had on their terminological retention to date.

First, the men were contacted and invited to participate as subjects in a research study on their second full day of 2013 semester classes; the research topic was not disclosed in any way (not even to suggest that English would be a medium of the research) so as to make any kind of prepping impossible. Three spaces were booked: one where all the men would sit the terminology test then individually fill out the attached questionnaire, and two rooms, each for the face-to-face interviews to be led in Arabic, only, by the research advisor/mentor and a divisional secretary, a brand new site employee who would not be told any detail of the research until the morning of the testing, survey, and interviewing, just prior to their start; this was to ensure that no information on the event could be leaked even accidentally to any participant since entirely preventing the men from consulting old textbooks, notes, quizzes, or each other to study up was paramount. The researcher would stay inside the testing room to proctor the exam.

A secure drop-box was made so that test-takers/questionnaire respondents could slip their completed no-name, numbered

forms into it, thus remaining anonymous. The day following testing, surveying, and interviewing was to be for researcher grading and score calculation of tests as well as for mentor translation of all interview forms from Arabic to English so that the researcher could type verbatim learner responses directly into waiting spreadsheet tools.

Data would be collected from the men only on the day of testing, survey, and interview. Researcher-created spreadsheet tools would automatically calculate raw test scores, converting them to percentages. The tool was designed to then automatically convert and equate those percentages to the education site's letter-grading system (A, A-, B+, and so on) and its corresponding unique wording categories (High Distinction, Distinction, Above Average, etc.). The researcher would later enter the fall semester 2012 grades of the men into the final column of the spreadsheet noting that although who had earned which of these grades was known, who had earned each of the research-day test grades was not; the 2012 final exam score information was to be used exclusively to compare the total number of As, Bs, Cs, and the like that were earned back then and now.

The summary of items created by the researcher to be used included: a sign-in sheet seeking the men's free agreement to participate in the research and to record their desired spelling of their names for later printing onto a document of appreciation; the reading passage cover page bearing the very words that the welcomer (the research advisor/mentor) would speak in Arabic to orient the men to the day's events; the reading passage contextualizing twenty of the ninety industry and supplementary terms that the men learned September to December 2012; the answer sheet bearing twenty terminological multiple-choice questions

about the reading passage's terms; the grader's answer key; the questionnaire/survey form attached to the answer sheet set (see Appendices A1 and A2); the interviewer form for interviewer note-taking of interviewee responses (see Appendices B1 and B2); the automatic percentage-scoring and lettering/wording spreadsheet calculator and converter for 2013 comparisons against the men's 2012 rankings (see Appendix C); the questionnaire/survey response-collection spreadsheet (see Appendix D); the interview response-collection spreadsheet (see Appendix E); and a certificate of appreciation as well as a personal letter of thanks, both to be administered one calendar week after the research event. There is also a master database that was created and used for lettering and/or numbering forms so that no names needed to appear anywhere, and so that certificates and thank-you letters could be efficiently created.

Constraints and Necessary Adjustments

The original (and desired) number of approximately eighty subjects came from two September 2012 class rosters of students. In the end, used instead were the attendance sheets of the final week of classes in December 2012 in order to fairly invite to participate those who had been exposed to the full course and its complete range of terminological content. After omitting men still taking English (who might, as a result, have an unfair advantage during testing), men who had transferred to different schools either locally or abroad, men who had withdrawn from the school for the current semester, men who had not yet registered for the current semester, men who could not be contacted, men who did not reply to text or voice messages inviting participation in the research, and men who confirmed that they could not participate on the event day or at the time scheduled, thirty-eight men re-

mained. Of those, fifteen confirmed that they would attend. Of those, twelve actually participated in the research (three learners who could not be excused from class arrived immediately afterward, took the test and completed the questionnaire inside the researcher's office, and then went to the research advisor/mentor and to the division secretary's offices to respond to oral interview questions).

The major effect of these changes was an arguably insufficient subject pool that might be unable to supply results that are reliably generalizable.

Results

In December 2012, one man earned A-, two men earned B+, three men earned B, one man earned B-, and five men earned D (which is the minimum passing grade). The research results on the twelve participating men show that, in September 2013, nine months after three months of studying terminology during introductory (the lowest level) English classes, of these same twelve men: one man earned A, one man earned B-, one man earned C+, one man earned C, three men earned D+, two men earned D, two men earned F, and one man did not answer any of the reading test questions. Whereas all twelve men passed in 2012, two failed in 2013, and one's retention status remains unknown for his having left his answer sheet blank. One man's 2013 test score of 100% was higher than that of any English language learner in the school in 2012 or of this 2013 group, hinting at his terminological retention and advancement. It is worth mentioning that in 2012, no man ever completed any exam in less than one hour's time, and in 2013, all twelve men completed a research test that was of equal length to their previous one-hour ones in twenty minutes or less.

Three more notes worth mentioning are that the men informed the head of testing during the research welcome-and-explanation talk that was proceeding in Arabic of their comfort with its continuing in English; they likewise expressed having no problem with completing the questionnaire and the interview process in English rather than in Arabic, and when asked to write their names as they would like to see them appear on their forthcoming documents of appreciation, although encouraged to write in either Arabic or English—as they wished—every man wrote in English and indicated wanting the forthcoming thank-you documents to be entirely in English. They appeared to be conveying some degree of openness to the possibility of struggling a bit through understanding and communicating rather than automatically relying on the crutch of first-language use.

Questionnaire responses document that roughly nine of the twelve subjects (seventy-five percent) thought positively of their engagement in activities, projects, and presentations, believing them to [have] help[ed]; however, only four of the twelve felt that such assignments were needed in courses that are taught in Arabic, while eight of the twelve felt that similar productions might be only somewhat helpful in courses conducted in their native language. All twelve felt that more of such activities would aid their retention, and eleven felt that school would be more enjoyable if such tasks became staple elements of all curricula.

Questionnaire and interview form comments were ninety-two percent positive (eleven of the twelve) at their lowest and 100% positive for most questions. Comments surfaced revealing that learners who had appreciated and enjoyed the linking of textbook general content to industry content did not fully understand

the need to study topics that were unrelated to their field; the value of acquiring general knowledge seemed to feel somewhat unclear to them. Respondents also expressed little understanding of the need for or the usefulness of studying expressions that were only peripheral to industry terminology. Unexpected were the many comments that group work had helped them socially that freshman fall, that it had assuaged fears, emboldened the shy, and made learners into good teachers, comments all reflecting Jensen-like (2005) claims. Nearly every man recounted on his questionnaire or during oral interview at least one specific case study remarkably accurately and identified something specific that he had learned from a peer in his project group and still remembers to this day.

Contact that research subjects made with the researcher one week after the study had ended revealed that these former learners' curiosities and hungers apparently had reawakened. Post research, they heartrendingly shared astonishingly detailed memories—their retention—relating to particular class projects.

Conclusions and Implications for the Future

The present study was worthwhile, not least for its context, which bears elements that are absent from other studies in which extraordinary results were recorded, namely those numerous inspirational experiments touted with good reason by Pate and Mateja (1979). In the study of language, acquisition requires dedicating appreciable time and unrelenting practice; it requires not merely active, but, frankly, assertive relationships to books/studies, to activities, and to other people with whom to practice on a very regular basis. Connecting with potential practice partners solely during the very few minutes per week that are officially allotted for doing so forever will be insufficient for any learner's

personal progress.

ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and EFL (English as a Foreign Language, i.e., English being studied in a country where the native and common environmental language is something other than English) may never fare as well as ESL (English as a Second Language, i.e., English being studied in a country where the native and common environmental language is English). Certainly, those who spend, say, five hours weekly reading, writing, speaking, and listening in English but the remaining 163 weekly hours doing everything in a different, mother tongue are exposed to an immensely greater opportunity to unlearn English than to learn it. Considering the internationally common obstacles to learning (and to retaining) English in all EFL environments similar to the one in question leaves a sense of pride at any achievement harnessed in the face of so very many odds that are against such learners of English language.

Organizing group projects, simulations, and role-plays is painstaking, genuinely exhausting business. If it is gotten wrong, inordinately much time has been wasted, and a truly important undertaking heartbreakingly falls through. When it is gotten right, however, there is no more rewarding thing to behold or to have been part of. The researcher's most routine comment to learners of all ages and stages is that no one in adult working life ever will ask what score was earned on quiz X or exam Y of one's academic career; people will forever care deeply about the knowledge, the skills, and the attitudes of those whom they hire, work with, or work for. This being true, the researcher in no way regards the numeric scores on the test as owning more importance than the men's demonstrated ability to recount case studies from their core problems through to their memorable resolutions—on

the spot and unsolicited—on their questionnaire forms and during oral interviews. These acts suggest that the men's state of readiness for recall needs only to be ongoing met by suitable environmental conditions to refresh it, and that their desire may be to submit evidence of learning in ways more meaningful to them (and to educators as well as work-life persons) than a simple test score. As these learners themselves very candidly expressed in questionnaires and interviews, student performance most probably can be improved through unrelenting instructor efforts to make the content of all class-time resources as fully occupationally relevant as possible. It is clear that this is not true just at the research site; it is good advice for those managing all types of learning spaces in every country.

The decision that the research-day and the extended (post-research-day) outcomes compel the researcher to make is that of aggressively seeking out and finding ways to underscore far more vividly those most crucial industry terms and their supporting, peripheral phrases so that they might become even more fixed in learners' minds over longer periods of time. There is firm evidence to support forging onward with class time simulations, role-plays, and group projects and, in doing so, continuing to implant memories that can outlast and surpass static test scores that, over time, diminish in importance.

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THE USE AND RETENTION OF OCCUPATIONAL TERMINOLOGY
APPENDIX C:
Automatic Scoring Calculator

Action Research Question: How does participation in ungraded
Researcher Ms. Carla E. Burton
Date Monday 16 September 2013
Testing and Questionnaire/Survey Room M121
Interview Rooms M120, M122
Event Time 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Test and Questionnaire/Survey Duration One (1) hour, maximum
Interview Duration Thirty (30) minutes, maximum
Whole Event Duration One hour and a half (1.5 hours), maximum

Action Research Test

	TEST FORM #	The total no. of correct answers was	Which is	And corresponds to what the site regards as	December 2012 Final Exam Scores NOT Corresponding to Research TEST FORM #s were:
1	1	0.0	100%	Fail / Unsatisfactory: F	
2	2	0.0	0.0%	Fail / Unsatisfactory: F	
3	3	0.0	0.0%	Fail / Unsatisfactory: F	
4	4	0.0	0.0%	Fail / Unsatisfactory: F	
5	5	0.0	0.0%	Fail / Unsatisfactory: F	
6	6	0.0	0.0%	Fail / Unsatisfactory: F	
7	7	0.0	0.0%	Fail / Unsatisfactory: F	
8	8	0.0	0.0%	Fail / Unsatisfactory: F	
9	9	0.0	0.0%	Fail / Unsatisfactory: F	
10	10	0.0	0.0%	Fail / Unsatisfactory: F	
11	11	0.0	0.0%	Fail / Unsatisfactory: F	
12	12	0.0	0.0%	Fail / Unsatisfactory: F	

THE USE AND RETENTION OF OCCUPATIONAL TERMINOLOGY

APPENDIX D:

Questionnaire Survey Response-collection Spreadsheet

Staff Data-collection Instrument: QUESTIONNAIRE / SURVEY

#	Question/Comment	Yes/ All/ True	A little/ Some	No/ None/ False
1	Do you remember the activities/projects that you did with your classmates and the presentations that you did during your September through December 2012 English course?			
2	Do you believe that doing group activities/projects/presentations September through December 2012 helped you learn and remember important words?			
3	Would you like to do more of these kinds of class-time activities during all your years in this school?			
4	I would like to do more of these kinds of class-time activities in _____ of my courses.			
5	I feel that if I did more group projects and presentations, I would remember words and also other things better.			
6	I feel that if I participated in more group projects and presentations, I would enjoy learning at this school more.			

OTHER OPINIONS ABOUT DOING CLASS ACTIVITES/ PROJECTS/ PRESENTATIONS

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	

THE USE AND RETENTION OF OCCUPATIONAL TERMINOLOGY

APPENDIX E:

Interview Response-collection Spreadsheet

Staff Data-collection Instrument: LEARNER INTERVIEWS (Translations by the Research Advisor/Mentor from the original Arabic to English)

KEY: "L" = Learner

No response was provided

	QUESTION #1: Do you remember the projects with your classmates and the presentations that you did during September-December 2012?	QUESTION #2: If yes, what do you remember most about them?	QUESTION #3 Do you believe that doing projects with your classmates and doing presentations helped you learn and remember important words in any way?	QUESTION #4: In what way(s) do you feel that they helped you?	QUESTION #5: Would you like to do more of these kinds of class-time activities in all, in some, or in none of your courses? Please explain why or why not:	QUESTION #6: Do you feel that if you did more projects with your classmates and more presentations that you would remember new words and new ideas better? Please explain why or why not:	QUESTION #7: Do you feel that if you participated in more projects with your classmates and in more presentations that you would enjoy your time in this school more? Please explain why or why not:
"L"							
A							
B							
C							
D							
E							
F							
G							
H							
I							
J							
K							
L							

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