

EVALUATION OF THE COURSE-BOOK “STEPS TO CONDUCT YOUR RESEARCH” DESIGNED AND EMPLOYED AT THE FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES OF HO CHI MINH CITY OPEN UNIVERSITY

Pham Vu Phi Ho

Ho Chi Minh City Open University

Nguyen Thi Hoai Minh

Ho Chi Minh City Open University

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ABSTRACT

Course-book plays a very important role in many language training classrooms, especially at Faculty of Foreign Languages at HCMC Open University. However, few studies have been conducted to investigate whether the current course-books, either imported or local materials, have had suitability for the students' needs and interests. This study was an attempt to evaluate the course-book “Steps to conduct your research” written by Pham Vu Phi Ho who was also the lecturer training the students in the course “Research Methodology” in the Academic year of 2011 – 2012 at HCMC Open University. The course-book was designed based on the Cognitive learning theory, Social-cultural learning theory, and the Project-based approach. Data collection was from unstructured interviews and questionnaire based on 10 criteria of SLA principles at the end of the course to evaluate the course-book. The study shed lights over the researchers to modify and improve the quality of the course-book to meet the students' needs and interests for the training.

Introduction

In teaching and learning activities, Richards and Rodgers (2003: 26) state that “the objectives of a method whether defined primarily in terms of product or process, are attained through the instructional process, through the organized and directed interaction of teachers, learners, and materials in the classroom.” Learning is more effective if methodology and course-book designs are prior to students' preference. That is, they meet the students' needs and interests (Tudor, 1993). Richards (1990) asserts that learners' needs are theoretically of great importance in the student-centred approaches in language teaching. Hence, needs analysis is very fundamental to

the planning of an effective language education programme.

Richards and Rodgers (2003) present three roles of instructional course-books within a communicative methodology as followings:

1. Materials will focus on the communicative abilities of interpretation, expression, and negotiation.
2. Materials will focus on understandable, relevant, and interesting exchanges of information, rather than on the presentation of grammatical form.
3. Materials will involve different kinds of texts and different

media, which the learners can use to develop their competence through a variety of different activities and tasks.

There are several advantages of using course-book in the classroom. First, the course-book can facilitate teaching and learning process or impose constraining effect on the teacher's decision-making (Maley, 1998). Second, course-books are psychologically essential for students since their progress and achievement can be measured concretely when we use them (Haycroft, 1998). Third, course-books are generally sensitive to students' needs, even if they are not designed specifically for them, they are efficient in terms of time and money, and they can and should allow for adaptation and improvisation (O'Neill, 1982). Fourth, course-books yield a respectable return on investment, are relatively inexpensive and involve low lesson preparation time. Whereas teacher-generated materials can be time, cost and quality defective, course-books can reduce potential occupational overload and allow teachers the opportunity to spend their time undertaking more worthwhile pursuits (Sheldon, 1988; O'Neill, 1982). Finally, Cunningsworth (1995) states that course-books are an effective resource for self-directed learning, an effective resource for presentation material, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source for students, a syllabus where they reflect pre-determined learning objectives, and support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence.

In Vietnam, since 2004, the course of *Research Methodology* has been a required two-credit (30-period) subject determined in MOET's curriculum framework (Curriculum Framework of Tertiary Education – Decision No. 36/2004/QĐ-BGD & ĐT, October 25, 2004). This course used to be taught in Vietnamese

with a course-book compiled by a group of Faculty lecturers of HCMC Open University (HCMC OU). This subject focused on instilling research skills that tertiary students need to know. Besides, as English-majors, students learned research skills in English in another course called *Writing Research Papers* within three credits or 45 periods. The required outcome of the latter subject counted on student-written library research in English.

In 2009, the MOET's determination on cutting down the amount of credits for national tertiary curriculum gave way to the re-structure of subjects at Faculty of Foreign Languages. Following this mainstream, Ho Chi Minh City Open University issued Decision No. 811 (21 September, 2009) about English-major curriculum, in which *Research Methodology* and *Writing Research Paper* courses were combined to meet the determination of the MOET's. However, the combination was not done until the first semester of the school year 2011 when one of the researchers was assigned to do it. The course has been delivered in English within two credits or 35 class periods.

This sharp change obviously necessitates using new teaching and learning materials, which entails the process of evaluating materials-in-use involving learners' opinions as well as their learning results. Apart from the reduction in formal class instructional time, the challenge is doubled as the new *Research Methodology* course-book is designed in English to match with curriculum requirement. According to Low (1987), during the teaching/learning process, teachers should screen materials in order to test the suitability of those course-books for particular classes. Cunningsworth (1995) suggests that course-book evaluation helps teachers move beyond impressionistic assessments and it helps them to

acquire useful, accurate, systematic, and contextual insights into the overall nature of the course-book. In addition, course-book evaluation can also be a valuable component of training programs because it serves the purpose of making students and teachers aware of important features to look for in the materials. Therefore, evaluating the content of the course-book and the process of class instruction will provide teachers and learners with information for adapting, modifying, and improving the course-book.

Literature review

According to Bao Dat (2008), English materials currently in use in the ASEAN member countries are fallen into three categories: imported course-books, in-country course-books, and regional course-books. First, imported course-books or foreign course-books refer to “global course-books”. These course-books have been introduced and distributed to in Southeast Asia even if they are not designed for this particular market. The Asian English teachers prefer the imported course-books to local materials for the reasons related to trust in the accuracy of English use. Second, in-country course-books or domestic course-books refer to the “local course-books”. These local course-books have been designed for educational objectives of certain schools or they follow the national curriculum. The Ministry of Education and Training lists the content to be covered; then the local publishers or instructors create the books in accordance with the guidelines. Finally, regional course-books refer to the materials which are written by non-native speakers in one country, but are exported and accepted by other countries. For example, many course-books for training TOEIC have been published in Korea and popularized in many Centers of English in Vietnam.

In the current pedagogical context, the majority of materials in the Faculty of Foreign Languages of HCMC OU is imported textbooks. Specifically, among 63 types of textbooks for all the English-major subjects, self-designed course-books have a humble stand with only 15 course-books-in-use (Curriculum Framework for English majors – Decision No 811, HCMC Open University, 2009.) These in-faculty course-books are in English, generally student-oriented, designed for specific aims of each subject in a given time allocation. However, none of these course-books has been under evaluation for quality purpose. Other 48 course-books were imported from foreign countries to serve the training programs. Bao Dat (2008) clarifies that imported course-books are known as “global course-books” and thus not designed for any particular market. The teachers and learners have to cope with some difficulties concerning the complexity of instructions, unfamiliarity of cultural information, and lack of meaningful opportunities for learners to express themselves. Thus, designing course-books for a particular purpose to fit the contexts seems to be a solution.

So far, few studies have been conducted to evaluate the materials used for training English majored students at HCMC OU. Nguyen (2011) in an attempt to measure the fitness of imported course-books to reading and writing courses for first and second year students at HCMC OU, conducted research evaluating the chosen course-books from two perspectives: (1) the major features and teaching implication of these course-books, and (2) how teachers and learners perceived these features and applied implicated methodology in the real context. By using three-level Littlejohn’s framework (1998), the study found that (1) although the course-books

provide a systematic language and skill background for learners, the starting levels of the two packets of Reading and Writing course-books was rather low compared to students' assumed level; (2) there is a scare connection in content of the two skills. Investigating the course-book-in-use from teachers' perspective, this research pointed out that while writing courses aimed at implementing the whole idea of course-books' writers, the reading courses limited the use of form-focused exercises and extended reading tasks. On the contrary, the Reading teachers shared agreement about their perception and use of the course-books and materials, whereas the Writing teachers' ideas were split. Finally, although students thought they benefited from the course-books, they did not reveal reading and writing motivation outside classroom.

The present study attempted to evaluate the in-country course-books, "Step to conduct your research" which was designed to train undergraduate students in the course of research methodology. The current in-country course-book was designed because of following advantages. First, the course-book can cover local cultural elements and raise the voice of national identities. It brings the students into the real context where they are living and learning. The students are provided examples which are familiar to their general knowledge. Second, the situations provided in the course-book are close to the students' pedagogical setting in order to get them involved in the learning process. They can use their own problems in their studies to discuss with their partners. Third, when the course-book is published by local publisher, the price of the book is appropriate to the majority of students who come from low-income family. Most of the local students can afford it. Finally, different from other materials of Research

Methodology which are often designed for graduate students whose levels are rather high compared to undergraduate students, this course-book is designed to simplify and serve the undergraduate students.

While most research studies conducted to evaluate materials were collecting comments from experts, teachers or researchers, this course-book evaluation is conducted based on the students who experienced the training and understood what they need and interest in the learning process. The students were somehow the costumers and consumers of the course-book and they had the right to express what they felt and experienced when they were trained. Hutchinson and Waters (1987) stated that evaluation is basically a matching process, which means matching learners' needs and interests to available solutions. The present study applied post-use evaluation which refers to an assessment of a text book's fitness over a period of continual use which helps teachers to decide whether to use the same text book in future or not (Cunningsworth, 1995). Our course-book evaluation was based on 10 criteria of SLA principles (Tomlinson, 2011) and one additional item to test the "effects of the training" as followings:

1. To what extent do the materials provide exposure to English in authentic use?
2. To what extent is the exposure to English in use likely to be meaningful to the target learners?
3. To what extent are the texts likely to interest the learners?
4. To what extent are the activities likely to provide achievable challenges to the learners?
5. To what extent are the activities likely to engage the learners affectively?

6. To what extent are the activities likely to engage the learners cognitively?
7. To what extent do the activities provide opportunities to make discoveries about how English is used?
8. To what extent do the activities provide opportunities for meaningful use of English?
9. To what extent do the activities provide opportunities to gain feedback on effective use of English?
10. To what extent are the materials likely to sustain positive impact?
11. To what extent is the training effective?

Methodology

Pedagogical Setting & Participants

The course-book was designed and written in English by Pham Vu Phi Ho in order to train students, mostly third year students at HCMC Open University, to learn how to conduct research. Prior to this course, the previous students took two courses which were similar to this course. One was conducted in Vietnamese course-book to train students how to conduct their research in Vietnamese, the other was in English training students how to do library research or report paper which helped students deal with reading only. Due to the shift from traditional trainings to credit trainings of the university under the decision of the Ministry of Education, the Faculty of Foreign Languages combined those two courses into one, and the course-book and the research studies should be conducted in English language. That was the reason why the present study needs to conduct in order to evaluate the designed course-book to meet the requirement of the university.

One hundred and forty-four (144) students who registered to take the course of Research methodology participated in the study (the whole population) in which about 120 were third year and 24 were fourth year students. They all attended from 80 to 100% class meetings (35 periods, 1period = 45 mins.).

Design of the Course-book

Due to the limitations of the time constraint for the training, 35 periods/course, the course-book was designed with 12 chapters, namely,

Chapter 1: Introduction to Research

Chapter 2: Types of Research

Chapter 3: Research Designs

Chapter 4: Topic Selection and References

Chapter 5: Writing the Introduction

Chapter 6: Writing Review of Literature

Chapter 7: Methodology of the Study

Chapter 8: Findings, Discussion, and Conclusion

Each chapter starts with a discussion part which includes three or four questions for warming up. The aims of the questions for discussion were to help students review what they have learned and known prior to the lesson. It helps students gain some pre-knowledge from the class members in order to consolidate their knowledge before learning the new knowledge. This kind of questions for discussion is based on Cognitive learning theory in which learners apply previous knowledge to new information, new language learning tasks and withdraw some rules by themselves in the learning process (Leki, 2002; Brown, 2000). This helps the learners acquire new knowledge by relating new information to other concepts in their memories and consciously construct a larger language

sequence in a new way (Brown, 2000). Followed the discussion session is the content of the course-book. The content is presenting in a compact way; that is, it just presents the essential and sufficient knowledge for the students to know how to conduct a small-scale research study.

Mostly, after each part of a relatively complicated content comes a problem-solving session in which the problem relating to a particular type of content is delivered to students to work together to help find out the solution. Following is an example of a problem-solving session in the course-book. Bao Dat claims that learners prefer flexible materials which leave room for them to discuss issues which are related to their concerns and are compatible with their cultural values. Following is an example of a problem-solving section in the course-book.

Problem-solving

In your class, there are some students who often come to the class late each day of the class meeting. Some students sometimes come late, some students often, and others seem to have a habit of doing so. You recognize that each time they get into the class late, the teacher seems not to be happy as he or she is giving a lecture. Then, you decide to investigate the reasons why the students are late for the classes.

Work in group of three or four, write five to ten questions to search for this issue.

Then share your question items with the rest of the class.

This session is designed based on the social-cultural learning theory in which collaborative learning is emphasized. Learning as well as knowledge is socially constructed (Beaners, 2006; Liu & Hansen, 2005). According to Foley and Thompson (2003), learning a language is essentially a socially oriented process and that a language is learned in the participation of

others. In addition, Hyland and Hyland (2006) state that group activities help students make sense of the world and solve complex problems in authentic situations. Knowledge is best constructed when learners collaborate together, support one another and encourage new ways to form, construct, and reflect on new knowledge. Therefore, social interactions and participation of group members play a key role in developing new knowledge (Beaners, 2006).

The contents from chapters 1 to 4 present the general knowledge about what a research study is, including topic selections, writing references, and in-text citations. From chapters 5 to 8, the course-book is designed to help students step-by-step conduct their own research; how to write each session of a research study. This is designed under the belief of Project-based learning approach. Wikipedia (2011) defines,

Project-based learning is an instructional method that provides students with complex tasks based on challenging questions or problems that involve the students' problem solving, decision making, investigative skills, and reflection that includes teacher facilitation, but not direction. PBL is focused on questions that drive students to encounter the central concepts and principles of a subject hands-on. Students form their own investigation of a guiding question, allowing students to develop valuable research skills as students engage in design, problem solving, decision making, and investigative activities. Through Project-based learning, students learn from these experiences and take them into account and apply them to the world outside their classroom. PBL is a different teaching technique that promotes and practices new learning habits, emphasizing creative thinking skills by allowing students to find that there are many ways to solve a problem.

In project-based learning, during the process, the teacher's role is to guide and advise, rather than to direct and manage students' work. Instead, the students work in groups of four or five to solve challenging problems that are authentic, curriculum-based, and often interdisciplinary. The students themselves decide how to approach a problem and what activities to pursue. They gather information from a variety of sources and synthesize, analyze, and gain knowledge from it. Their learning is inherently valuable because it is connected to something real and involves adult skills such as collaboration and reflection. At the end of the process, students demonstrate their newly acquired knowledge and are judged by how much they have learned and how well they communicate it (Solomo, 2003).

Therefore, project-based learning is really appropriate to the current course-book design in which the students have to conduct their own small-scale research within the context of the university.

Procedure

The class meetings lasted twelve weeks, three periods each. The students were trained from chapter to chapter, including content explanations, group discussions, problem-solving activities and conducted a research project. The students also took a comprehensive test at the end of the course to make sure that they learned and understood some basic terminologies relating to research and their ways of conducting their own research.

During the training, the researchers designed the questionnaire items, and piloted to students to validate the clarity of each item. We applied the criteria which have been applied around the world to evaluate the materials used in a wide range. Our evaluation is based on 10 criteria based on SLA principles (Tomlinson, 2011) and

one additional item to test the "effects of the training."

Instruments

We used the questionnaire and unstructured interviews to explore students' attitudes towards to use of the designed course-book. The unstructured interviews were conducted twice. One was in the middle of the training syllabus, and the other was at the end of the training.

Questionnaire

An effective questionnaire is one that enables the transmission of useful and accurate information or data from the respondent to the researcher. This needs to involve clear and unambiguous questions so that the respondent may interpret them, articulate his or her response and transmit it effectively to the researcher (Wilkinson & Birmingham, 2003). The Likert scale questionnaire with the rank order from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) was employed in the present study. The questionnaire was first piloted to 15 students within the same population in order to modify any item if necessary. Four items were modified and two more items were added. The 22-item questionnaires were administrated to the entire population (144 students) after the trainings.

Interviews

The present study employed the unstructured interviews described by Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003). The unstructured interview is a very flexible approach in which areas of interest are established by the researcher, but the discussion of issues is guided by the interviewee. However, it can be very difficult for the researcher to plan, and the discussion may sometimes get away from the key subject matter. Oppenheim (1999) describes it as exploratory interview, which is also known as depth interviews

or free-style interviews. The purpose of exploratory interviews is essentially heuristics: to develop ideas and research hypotheses rather than to gather facts and statistics. It is concerned with trying to understand how ordinary people think and feel about the topics of concern to the research. Twenty students out of those who fully attended the class meetings from the two training-classes (ten each) were randomly selected to participate in the interviews. The interviewer used group interviews because the settings of the interviews were in the classrooms where the training took place. The interviewers were in turn answering the questions. The interviewer had no pre-set-up questions in mind. He tried to explore the students'

attitudes towards the course-book. The follow-up questions were asked to obtain in-depth data. The personal cell phone was used to record the data for transcripts.

Findings

The results of the questionnaire were input in the SPSS vs. 19 to analyze the mean scores. The reliability of the questionnaire items was high. The Cronbach's Alpha reaches at .858. The criteria for the likert-type scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree) was set as following:

- Low evaluation: 1 – 2.66;
- Medium evaluation: 2.67–4.33; and
- High evaluation: 4.34 - 6

Criteria	No.	Questions	Mean	S.D.
Authentic use?	1	The course-book of Research Methodology that you have learned provides you with authentic situations in life.	4.33	.952
	2	The problems for solving that the course-book exposes relatively close to those of your daily life.	4.25	.949
Meaningful to target learners?	3	The level of English in this course-book is appropriate to your current English proficiency.	4.13	1.081
	4	The activities designed in this course-book help you understand more about what research methodology is.	4.71	.964
Interest the learners?	5	The discussions, content, and problem-solving in each chapter of the course-book make you participate in the learning process.	4.72	.910
	6	The problems provided in the course-book motivated you to participate in the discussion of the situations.	4.67	.920
Achievable challenges	7	The vocabulary in this course-book is too hard for you to understand.	3.68	1.274
	8	The content of the course-book is hard; you need explanations from the lecturer in the classroom to understand most of the content.	4.15	1.003
Affective engagement	9	The problem-solving in the course-book help you understand more the content of the course.	4.61	.921
	10	The problem-solving bring you to specific situations and help you and your group step-by-step conduct your research project.	4.42	.947

Criteria	No.	Questions	Mean	S.D.
Cognitive engagement?	11	The problem-solving make your brain work a lot and look for the solutions to solve the given problems.	4.69	.916
	12	The problem-solving require you, when you look for the solutions, to make a step-by-step plan to solve the problem of each situation.	4.53	.881
Discovering English in use?	13	When you take this course-book, you feel that you have to read it at home, look up the dictionary for new words before coming to the class.	4.75	1.204
	14	The discussion part of each chapter helps you get used to the content of the lesson, and help you understand more the new lesson.	4.49	.897
Meaningful activities?	15	The given situations in the course-book help you link to the specific problems that you are facing in life.	4.13	1.024
	16	After you completed this course, you are able to do research for your daily life problems.	4.18	1.125
Feedback opportunities?	17	You have learned a lot of experiences from your classmates or from the lecturer in the discussions in the classroom.	4.53	.970
	18	After finishing discussing in the groups, the whole-class discussions help you to find out the answers for all the difficult problems that you feel hard to understand by yourself.	4.29	.972
Positive impact?	19	After learning this course-book, you are provided with sufficient knowledge to conduct a research study.	4.13	1.047
	20	After learning this course-book, you gain more knowledge and experience to work out the problems that you have in life.	4.25	1.005
Effects of training	21	In each step of conducting a research project, the lecturer usually conducts a particular example to help you understand apparently about the methods of doing scientific research.	4.47	1.063
	22	During the lecturing in the classroom, the lecturer usually provides specific examples to help you easily understand the lesson.	4.82	.888

To respond to the question, “to what extent do the materials provide exposure to English in authentic use?” Two questionnaire items were administrated and gained average evaluations. In other words, on average, students agreed that the course-book of Research Methodology that they have learned provides them with authentic situations in life (Mean = 4.33; SD = .95); the problems for solving that the course-book exposes relatively close

to those of those of students’ daily life (Mean = 4.25; SD = .95).

Data from the interviews reveal that the students agreed the course-book was authentic in their daily life, “Of course it is! It involves many things in our daily life as well as our major in university. For example, the issues involved in writing [example and problem-solving] are very close to us.” However, they suggested expanding the topics beyond

the educational context to make it more interesting, “I think it is but we should expand the content a little more. Since the topics in the book are just around studying matters, we should expand it to feel more interested.”

In response to the question, “to what extent is the exposure to English in use likely to be meaningful to the target learners?” student, on average, stated that the level of English in the course-book is appropriate to their current English proficiency (Mean = 4.13; SD = 1.1), but most of them highly agreed that the activities designed in the course-book help them understand more about what research methodology is (Mean = 4.71; SD = .96).

In terms of ‘interest the learners’, the two questionnaire items were highly evaluated by the students. In other words, most students agreed that the discussion parts, the content, and the problem-solving in each chapter of the course-book interests them to participate in the learning process (Mean = 4.72; SD = .91); In addition, they also stated that the problems provided in the course-book motivated them to participate in the discussion of the situations (Mean = 4.67; SD = .92).

Data from the interviews reveal that due to getting involved in the discussion of each chapter, the students felt more interested in learning and understand more the content of the lessons.

“I think it’s more difficult because we can’t get the main idea of the lesson. By answering questions in the Discussion, we feel more interested in our study.”

“I think the Discussion is necessary since it helps us orient things we going to learn and therefore, be more prepared.”

“I think the Discussion is very important. There sure is a reason

when you included this activity in our curriculum. Before reading the lesson we have to think why you gave those questions, the point is to picture the new information we are going to study, to predict things we’re going to learn. This activity helps us brainstorming and visualizing the content. I think this part is necessary.”

In response to the question, “to what extent are the activities likely to provide achievable challenges to the learners?” the questionnaire item “the vocabulary in the course-book is too hard for them to understand” was on average evaluation (Mean = 3.68; SD = 1.27), it indicated that the challenges of the course-book in terms of vocabulary is acceptable. That is, the vocabulary used in the course-book is neither too hard nor too easy for the students to learn. It has some extent to challenges to learners in the learning process. In terms of achievable challenges in contents of the course-book, the students on average agreed that the content of the course-book is hard; they need explanations from the lecturer in the classroom to understand most of the content (Mean = 4.15; SD = 1.00).

In the interviews, the students claimed that when they looked up the dictionary for new words, they could not totally understand the exact meanings of the terms used in the course-book until they obtained the explanations from the instructor in the classroom, “We still need to look up the dictionary; however, we can only understand parts of the meaning. Thank to your explanation in class, we can finally understand.” Or

“When looking up the dictionary at home, we only understand the definition the dictionary has given. However when listening to your lecture, we realize that those definitions we looked up are not

totally the same as yours. They're not accurate and are different from the meanings in your lecture." So "After receiving your explanation, together with the definitions from the dictionary, we can understand a little more."

In contrast, the students just understood some if they only attended the lecturer without reading the course-book and looked up the dictionary,

"If we didn't look up the dictionary but listen to your lecture only, we just understand some parts of it because this subject is Research Methodology, and it has many difficult terminology words. Only when taking part in the Problem Solving activities, we can understand more clearly, it's impossible to understand from reading alone."

This is a normal phenomenon. Anybody who starts learning or doing research needs to get used to the technical terms, like those who study engineering or computer science.

The question, "to what extent are the activities likely to engage the learners affectively?" was highly evaluated by the students. That is, most students agreed that the problem-solving in the course-book help them understand more the content of the course (Mean = 4.61; SD = .92), and the problem-solving bring students to specific situations and help them and their groups step-by-step conduct their research project (Mean = 4.42; SD = .95). The students also agreed that, in the interviews, the problem-solving activities help them apply the knowledge they have just learned.

With regards to affective engagement in learning, the students stated that the problem-solving parts is important for them to understand the content and remember

the content of the lesson. In addition, the students suggested expanding more involved topic in the problem-solving, instead of just something relating to their learning majors.

"I think yes. Because if there were not the Problem Solving part, we would not have opportunities to check our understanding. Even when we seek or do research for some problems, without problem-solving part, it would be hard to understand and remember the contents deeply."

"If you deleted that part, it would be hard for us to pay attention on your lecture as the content is too hard to grasp. Without it, I am afraid that we could understand nothing."

"The contents we learn are quite abstract to us, so it will be easier for us if we have this part as its situations are quite close to our life. However, I think you should broaden this part to attract more our attention. Because it seems boring if we just repeatedly discuss only an issue related to our major (we almost talk about speaking and writing). We actually expect something closer to us such as students' psychology or something in our lives."

Cognitive engagement factors of the course-book were highly evaluated by the students. Most of students contented that the problem-solving make their brain work a lot and look for the solutions to solve the given problems (mean = 4.69; SD = .92). In addition, the students agreed that the problem-solving require them to make a step-by-step plan to solve the problem of each situation when they look for the solutions (Mean = 4.53; SD = .88).

"I think the discussion part is very essential because it helps us orient what is going to be included in the

lesson. Then we have to prepare ourselves for it.”

“I think the Discussion is very important. There sure is a reason when you included this activity in our curriculum. Before reading the lesson we have to think why you gave those questions, the point is to picture out the new information we are going to study, to predict things we’re going to learn. This activity helps us brainstorm and visualize the content. I think this part is necessary.”

In terms of discovering English in use, most students accepted that when they took this course-book, they had a feeling that they had to read the course-book at home, look up the dictionary for new words before coming to the class (Mean = 4.75; SD = 1.20); the discussion part of each chapter helps them get used to the content of the lesson, and help them understand more the new lesson (Mean = 4.49; SD = .89).

In response to the question, “to what extent do the activities provide opportunities for meaningful use of English?” the students on average agreed that the given situations in the course-book helped them link to the specific problems that they faced in life (mean = 4.13; SD = 1.02). Also, they asserted that after they completed the course, they were able to do research for their daily life problems (Mean = 4.18; SD = 1.13).

With regards to feedback opportunities, most students stated that they have learned a lot of experiences from their classmates or from the lecturer during the discussions in the classroom (Mean = 4.53; SD = .97). Yet, after ending the discussions in the groups, the whole-class discussion sessions helped them find out the answers for all the difficult problems that they felt hard to understand

by themselves (mean = 4.29; SD = .97).

In the interviews, the students asserted that they learned a lot from their classmates when they discussed in groups to work out the solution.

“It is sure that when we discuss in a group, we will know more about our friends’ ideas, and when we listen to other groups presenting their opinions, we can learn a lot from them.”

“In Problem-solving part, each one has their own different ways to solve the problem. Discussing together helps us think and have many ways to solve the problem and especially, we can find out the most effective solution for it. Then when you correct for us, we will know what we should and should not use.”

In response to the question, “to what extent are the materials likely to sustain positive impact?” the students on average stated that during the time of learning this course-book, they were provided with sufficient knowledge to conduct a research study (mean = 4.13; SD = 1.04). Furthermore, the students on average agreed that after learning this course-book, they gained more knowledge and experience to work out the problems that they would have in life (Mean = 4.25; SD = 1.00).

The students agreed that after learning this course, they were provided relatively enough knowledge to conduct their own research. “I think that now I’ve learned more specific the method to conduct my own research.”

“We’ve just administrated the questionnaire to collect the data and we now know how to do it. We believe that we can accomplish our research paper.”

In terms of the effects of the training, most students highly evaluated that in an attempt to explain to the students of how to conduct research project, the lecturer usually conducted a particular example to help them understand apparently about the methods of doing scientific research (Mean = 4.47; SD = 1.06). In addition, during the lecturing in the classroom, the students highly evaluated, the lecturer usually provided specific examples to help them easily understand the lesson (Mean = 4.82; SD = .88).

The qualitative data reveal that the students appreciated the teaching methods that the lecturer employed during the training in terms of lecturing, answering the questions, and providing examples. "I feel satisfied with the lecturer's teaching methods. He helps me know what a research is." "To me, I like most the way he answers the question. He enthusiastically responds every of our questions."

"I found it useful when the lecturer provided us specific examples of the abstract, introduction, and literature review. Then he gave us some questions to check our comprehension. Thank to those questions, our group could apply for our literature review of our project-based group."

The effects of the training somehow contribute some validity of the evaluation of the current course-book when the training got most usefulness of the course-book.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to Cunningsworth and Tomlinson (1984), no course-book is definitely suited to a particular teaching situation. The teacher has to find his own way for using it and adapting it when necessary. We should not look for a perfect course-book which meets all

our requirements, but rather for the best possible fit between what the course-book offers and what we as the teacher and students need. In addition, Masuhara and Tomlinson, (cited in Tomlinson, 2010) state that "no matter how good the materials may be, they could never manage to satisfy different needs and wants that come from the different learning contexts, learning styles, cultural norms and experiences of each individual learner."

Cunningsworth (1995) claims that the course book should correspond to learners' needs, help students use the language effectively for their own purposes, facilitate students' learning process, and have a clear role in mediating the target language and the learner. Though four criteria of the course-book were on average evaluation such as Authentic use, Achievable challenges, Meaningful activities, and Positive impact, six of them was highly evaluated by the students such as Meaningful to target learners, Interest the learners, Affective engagement, Cognitive engagement, Discovering English in use, Feedback opportunities. In addition, the training was also highly rated and considered effective. This contributed somehow to the validity of the course-book evaluation.

An advantage of the material is that it is designed as a course-book for training rather than a book for references, so any instructor who shares similar training course can adapt to their training because it is designed under the lights of cognitive learning and social-cultural learning theories to get students involved in the learning process. Also, Project-based approach is also taken into account of this course-book material. These two theories and the approach included in the course-book will get students work together in the discussions, learn from one another, and collaboratively work out a research

project that the course requires. Gray (2000) suggests that students should not only critically engage their textbooks but also view them as more than mere linguistic objects. That is, students will improve their language skills by using their textbooks as useful instruments for provoking discussion, cultural debate, and a two-way flow of information. However, the students suggested providing some different situations (topics) for the problem-solving which were not just within the TESOL settings.

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