The Islamic University of Gaza
Deanery of Graduate Studies
Faculty of Education
Curriculum & English Teaching Methods Department

A Suggested Program For Tackling Low English Achievement Level Among Sixth Graders in Gaza City UNRWA Schools

Submitted by
Kholoud Ismail Husein Sorour

Supervised by
Dr. Awad Sulaiman Keshta

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Dedication

To my beloved father who devoted his life for science

To my sweet mother for her love and support

To my dear husband" Asem" who took care of me

To my dear sons" Fayez" and" Ismail

To my brothers and sisters, who have been encouraging me

To English language teachers who constantly wrestle with the unknown.

I dedicate this work

Kholoud Ismail Srour

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This study would not have been possible without Allah suphanah wa taala for his conciliation.

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Abstract

This study aims at investigating the reasons for the English low achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza City and north Gaza UNRWA schools, and suggesting a program for tackling this weakness.

The questions of the research are:

-What are the reasons for English low achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools**?**

- Are there statistically significant differences among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to personal variables (gender, age, years of experience, and district)**?**

- What is the suggested program for tackling low English achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools**?**

In order to fulfill the objectives of this study, the researcher followed descriptive analytical and constructive methods. She prepared a 60 item questionnaire in addition to one open question which aims at identifying the reasons for the low English achievement level among the sixth graders. The questionnaire included five domains; English language textbook, English language teacher, English Teaching Strategies, Learning Environment, and unified English achievement tests.

The results of the questionnaire showed that :

- These reasons are mainly related to the English textbook and reasons related to the English teacher and teaching strategies.

- There is no statistically significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to gender and age

- There is a significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the years of experience and district.

The researcher suggests an instructional program for tackling this weakness and gives relevant recommendations. The most significant are:

- English language teachers should have training courses before entering the class for the first time.
- It is strongly recommended that the low achievers should attend the classes away from the others with different content material.
- Schools should be fixed to suit the curriculum demands and the age challenges.
- It is necessary to add two English periods to the weekly English periods

ملخص للرسالة باللغة العربية

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على أسباب ضعف التحصيل في مادة اللغة الانجليزية لدى طلاب الصف السادس الابتدائي في مدارس الاونروا في غزة. كما تقدم برنامج مقترح للتغلب على ضعف التحصيل.

أسئلة الدراسة:

- ما هي أسباب ضعف التحصيل في اللغة الانجليزية لدى طلاب الصف السادس الابتدائي في مدارس الاونروا في غزة؟
- هل توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في تقديرات عينة الدراسة تعزى إلى متغيرات الجنس، العمر، سنوات الخبرة و المنطقة السكنية؟
- ما هو البرنامج المقترح للتغلب على ضعف التحصيل لدى طلاب الصف السادس في مدارس الاونروا في غزة؟

استخدمت الباحثة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي و المنهج البنائي للإجابة على أسئلة الدراسة حيث قامت بتحضير استبانه مكونة من 60 فقرة بالإضافة إلى سؤال مفتوح واحد وهدفت الاستبانة إلى التعرف على أهم الأسباب المتعلقة بالمدرسة المؤدية إلى ضعف التحصيل من وجهة نظر عينة الدراسة. وتضمنت الاستبانة خمسة مجالات وهي؛ الكتاب المدرسي، معلم اللغة الانجليزية، طرق تدريس اللغة الانجليزية، البيئة المدرسية و الامتحان الموحد في اللغة الانجليزية للصف السادس الابتدائي.

نتائج الدراسة:- أكدت نتائج الدراسة على ما يلي:

- أن الأسباب المؤدية إلى ضعف التحصيل في اللغة الانجليزية تتعلق بالكتاب المدرسي و معلم اللغة الانجليزية و طرق التدريس المتبعة من قبلهم.
- لا توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في تقديرات عينة الدراسة تعزى إلى الجنس والعمر.
- توجد فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية في تقديرات عينة الدراسة تعزى إلى سنوات الخبرة و المنطقة السكنية.

كما قامت الباحثة باقتراح برنامج للتغلب على ضعف التحصيل و كذلك التوصية بما يلي:

- يجب على معلمي اللغة الانجليزية الحصول على دورات تدريبية قبل دخول الفصل للمرة الأولى.
- من المفضل أن يتم فصل الطلاب ضعيفي التحصيل في فصول بعيدا عن الآخرين.
- يجب إصلاح المدارس بما يتناسب مع متطلبات المنهاج و تحديات العصر.
- من الضروري زيادة الحصص الأسبوعية لمادة اللغة الانجليزية

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Chapter I

Introduction

Introduction

In the 21st century, English is recognized worldwide as the major international language, with over 300 million native speakers and 1.5 billion second or fluent foreign languages speakers. Its preeminence in the affairs of the global community, its role as the most common international medium of communication (most importantly in the higher education research), and its value in accessing the economic machinery of a large number of regions and countries are also recognized. In particular, one can argue that a functional knowledge of English will help school graduates take full advantage of economic and occupational opportunities in Palestine and many other regions of the world. Moreover. by learning English, students will be empowered with the language skills and literacy necessary to become productive workers and will allow Palestine to capilitize on the experience and linguistic diversity of its graduates in a growing, competitive global market and in the world of global communication (ELC,1999:8).

Teaching a foreign language is a complex process. EFL faces serious changes and challenges in the 21st century. The modification of educational policies, the expectations of the society, and the demands of the information era, all require schools to provide students with effective instruction in EFL as well as in other subject areas so that students can be fully prepared for future educational possibilities and be able to survive in the economically competitive world (Al-Mutawa,1997:42)..

Students can not achieve the desirable literacy standards in the English language till schools are provided with efficient and competent teachers. In this context, Andrews (2007: 31) points out that English foreign language teachers should have knowledge of learners, subject-matter cognition, language competence and strategic competence.

All elementary and secondary school students currently in Palestine and the Middle East will be living in and contributing to an increasingly interdependent community of nations in the

21st century. To realize their personal, social, and long term career goals, individuals will need to be able to communicate with others skillfully, appropriately, and effectively (ELC,1999:7).

Accordingly, it is appealingly necessary to learn English as it is essential for communication and development. One way to do this is by the educational system that aims to acquaint people with the most recent innovations and developments in the area of teaching and learning English.

The educational system is responsible for integrating English language in the people's everyday life through stepping from the elementary stages at schools to advanced levels at universities and institutes in an organized and systematic process.

The challenges of contemporary education is to contribute to students abilities to live in an increasingly diverse local communities and an ever shrinking world community. Effective education for the 21st century must provide firsthand opportunities for students to learn about the cultural diversity around them and to learn world languages(ELC,1999:7).

Palestine has its special case in its all aspects of life. It has its special conditions as it comes into a critical stage. The changes in the Palestinian political, economic, social and societal circumstances affect directly the teaching-learning process.

No doubt that developing Palestinian students competence in English language and equipping them with the ability to use it both accurately and appropriately serves Palestinian national interests by increasing the language resources available as Palestine competes in global economy.

The last achievement test conducted in Gaza UNRWA schools showed a very low English achievement level among all the students in general and particularly the sixth graders.

The success average in English language in the first semester was as documented by the administration of education in the UNRWA schools:

- In the North Gaza governorate; the average of success in English language for the sixth graders was 25.50%
- In Gaza City governorate; the average of success in English language for the sixth graders was 30.74%.

In the second semester the UNRWA education department tried to solve this problem in varied ways and the results were improved in the second semester. The researcher appreciates this departments' efforts to raise the students achievement level but there is still problem with the students' achievement level. The reasons for this low English achievement diverse.

Although some improvement has been made, students' English learning continues to be far below the level that is acceptable by institution of higher education, teachers, researchers, and parents.

In order to identify these reasons the researcher reviewed literature related to factors in which affects English language achievement. The researcher found that school variables bring an important influence on the students achievement. Accordingly, the teacher has the biggest part of this influence on the students achievement.

In fact the researcher is concerned with school variables such as English textbook, teachers qualifications, teaching strategies adopted by the teachers, learning environment and assessment. The researcher investigates these factors that are independent of students background and general social context.

This study attempts to explore the reasons for the apparent low achievement level in English language among sixth grade students in the UNRWA schools in Gaza strip. In fact the English achievement level is very low, the thing which leads the researcher to conduct this study in order to investigate the weaknesses and how to overcome them and develop the results.

The Need For the Study

The low English achievement level is apparently dominant among primary school pupils in Gaza strip. The last final exam conducted by the UNRWA in Gaza schools showed that there is a serious problem in education in general in Gaza strip and the students are at risk. The results of this exam were shocking that only 30% of the pupils in the primary schools pass the English exam. This study attempts to explore the reasons behind these terrible results of low English achievement level in order to enlighten administrators, teachers educators, and parents . In addition the Palestinian community is in bad need for overcoming this weaknesses and developing education.

Statement of the Problem

There is a serious problem among students in primary schools in Gaza. Many complaints raised warning that the achievement of English language is very low and needs to be improved. In a response for these claims and with the sense of responsibility, the researcher conducted this study to explore the reasons for this problem in an attempt to find resolutions for it. Moreover, the researcher will propose a suggested program for tackling these weaknesses.

Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following questions:

1- What are the reasons for English low achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools?

This main question can be divided into the following six questions:

1.1- Are there statistically significant differences of the extent to which the sixth grade English textbook match the standards of the good English textbook from the respondents to the current study tool estimate?

1.2- Are there statistically significant differences in the respondents' to the current study tool practices in the sixth grade English classes?

1.3- Are there statistically significant differences in the extent to which the respondents to the current study tool use the teaching strategies for teaching English for the sixth graders?

1.4- Are there statistically significant differences in the respondents' to the current study tool estimates of the learning environment in Gaza UNRWA schools?

1.5- Are there statistically significant differences in the respondents' to the current study tool evaluation of the unified achievement test of the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools?

1.6- What are the reasons for English low achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools from the respondents to the current study tool estimate?

2- Are there statistically significant differences among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to personal variables (gender, age, years of experience, and district)?

This main question can be divided into the following four questions:

2.1- Are there statistically significant differences among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the gender?

2.2- Are there statistically significant differences among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the age?

2.3- Are there statistically significant differences among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the years of experience?

2.4- Are there statistically significant differences among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the district?

3- What is the suggested program for tackling low English achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools?

Research Hypotheses

1-There is no statistically significant difference of the respondents' to the current study tool evaluation of English for Palestine "6".

2-There is no statistically significant difference in the respondents to the current study tool practices in the sixth grade English classes.

3- There is statistically significant difference in the teaching strategies the respondents to the current study tool use for teaching English for the sixth graders.

4-There is no statistically significant difference in the respondents to the current study tool evaluation of the learning environment in Gaza UNRWA schools.

5-There is no statistically significant difference in the respondents to the current study tool evaluation of the unified achievement test of the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools.

6 - There is statistically significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to personal variables (gender, age, years of experience, district).

This hypothesis can be divided into the following sub-hypotheses:

1- There is statistically significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to gender?

2- There is statistically significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to age?

3- There is statistically significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the years of experience?

Purpose of the Study

This study aims at achieving the following objectives:

- To investigate the reasons behind the weaknesses and the low achievement of English language level among the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools in an attempt to overcome them.

- To develop a suggested program for tackling low English achievement level among sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools.

Significance of the Study

The implications of this study can be exploited by:

- English teachers,
- Administrators,
- Institutional managers and even
- Parents.

This study is assumed to contribute to positive educational and organizational change**.**

Limitation of the Study

The limitations of the study are confined to the following points:

- **The Academic Limit** This study aims at investigating the reasons for English low achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools. In addition the current study will set up a suggested program in order to overcome the English achievement low level.
- **The Human Limit** The study will be concerned with English language teachers of the sixth grade at the UNRWA primary schools in Gaza City and North Gaza Governorates. These teachers are distributed in the
- **-North Gaza:** represented in Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahia, and Jabalia Camp
- **-Gaza City:** represented in West Gaza and East Gaza and Gaza City
- **The Time Limit** The study has been conducted within the academic year 2008- 2009 in Gaza district and North Gaza district.

The Research Procedures

In order to attempt to answer the study's questions, the following steps have been followed:

- Reviewing literature in terms of reasons for the low English achievement level.

- Specifying the necessary variables to overcome the low English achievement level.
- Reviewing the recommendations of the previous studies to assist in specifying the research approach, sample, means and verifying its validity and reliability, following the right and correct approaches in conducting the study, specifying the statistical survey applied besides summarizing, analyzing and discussing the study results.
- Consulting 20 of the sixth grade teachers of the reasons for low English achievement level.
- Formulating a list of variables which affect the sixth grade students English achievement level.
- Consulting a number of specialists to check the validity and reliability of the list.
- Finalizing the list in the light of specialists remarks.
- Applying the pilot study on the sixth grade English teachers.
- Applying the questionnaire on the sixth grade English teachers in the two districts9 Gaza City and North Gaza).
- Recording, analyzing the collected data and giving interpretations.
- Presenting the recommendations and suggested program in the light of the study findings.
- Consulting a number of specialists to check the suggested program.

Definitions

The researcher adopted the following definitions:

A Program is a group of concepts, activities, and various experiences which is presented by an institution for learners in order to interact with it that leads to modifying their behaviors(Good.1998:323).

Instructional program: A group of well planned and constructed learning activities that aim to develop the knowledge, attitudes, skills and thinking of the learners through selective content, instructional aids and constant process of evaluation.

English achievement: it is information, experience, and skills of English language introduced in the curriculum and acquired by the learner during a certain period. Achievement is measured by the marks the learner gets in the examination (Harb,2007).

Lower English achievers: Students whose total score in English achievement test lies among the lowest 25% of other students score.

Assessment: The process of analyzing and measuring knowledge and ability, in this case, the learners knowledge of language and ability to communicate.

English for Palestine - grade six textbook: It is designated for the final year in the basic elementary stage in Gaza Strip and the West Bank governorates. The textbook consists of four main components: student's book, workbook, audio cassette and teacher's book.

English for Palestine - grade six textbook (Students' book): It includes 104 pages. It is divided into 24 units; each is divided into 4 lessons. Each lesson has its own different activities.

Teacher Competency: According to (Al Mutawa, 1997) Teacher competency is defined as the study of specific knowledge or ability, which is believed to be important to succeed as a teacher. This applies to the competencies of personal qualities, language interpersonal relationship, planning and implementation.

Abbreviations

MEHE: The Ministry of Education and Higher Education.

UNRWA: United Nations Relief and Works Agency.

ELT: English Language Teaching.

CLA: Communicative Learning Approach

TLA: Teacher Language Awareness

ELC: English language Curriculum

PNA: Palestinian National Authority

CLT: Communicative Language Teaching

PPP: Presentation, Practice, Production model.

TEFL: Teaching English as Foreign Language

Summary

This chapter viewed the background of the study, the researcher provided a relevant introduction, statement of the problem of the study, purpose of the study, questions of the study, significance of the study, limitations of the study and definitions of terms and abbreviations.

Chapter II

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

Section A: Theoretical Framework

Summary

Introduction

English has, lately, established itself as the most popular language in the world. It may be considered the first world language. "Although English is not the language with the largest number of native language speakers, (communicators) it has become a lingua franca.

In this section the researcher reviews the theoretical framework of the current study. She tries to review the literature related to many issues concerning the adopted factors which affect the students low English achievement level. Although there are more areas of concern than the five domains discussed here, these are believed to be the most critical factors affecting students' English achievement level.

English language in the Palestinian education system

Background information

Teaching English in Palestinian schools began only in the middle of the last century. After the 1967 war and the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza strip, the existing curricula, which were Jordanian in the West Bank and Egyptian in Gaza, were maintained by the Israeli government. The public education system is divided into two types: basic and secondary education. The general education consists of two levels: the low basic from the first to the sixth grade level (elementary) and the high basic from the seventh to the tenth grade level (preparatory). The voluntary education starts at the eleventh level and ends at the twelfth level which constitutes the secondary education.

English language has been taught from the first grade since 2000. In 2008 the complete English for Palestine series was implemented. The PNA run all the governmental schools and has the supervision over the united Nations Relief World Agency (UNRWA), which runs the elementary and preparatory schools for refugees (Barzaq:2007, 19).

The teaching of English language has been the main target for the Palestinian ministry of education. During the Israeli occupation for the Gaza strip – which has lasted for about 39 years – students start to study the English language from the fifth grade when they are eleven years old. Since 1996, the Palestinian ministry of education started to teach English language from the first grade when the pupils are seven years old. They then continue to study English as a compulsory school subject until the final year of the secondary stage.

Abu Qulbein (2004: 1) indicated that English is considered as one of the major subjects at schools of Palestine. Furthermore, it is used as a second official Language next to the mother Language which is Arabic , this gives the English Language its importance in the Arab world in general and in Palestine in particular . So the main purpose of Learning English as a foreign language is not so much to be able to communicate with the outside world as to be able to play a useful part in the life of the country itself.

Breem (1999: 1) indicated that English is considered as one of the major subjects at schools of Palestine. Furthermore, it is used as a second official Language next to the mother Language which is Arabic, and this gives the English Language its importance in the Arab world in general and in Palestine in particular.

It is a known fact that English is the only foreign language taught in the Palestinian territories as a foreign language. UNRWA (2007) affirms that the Palestinian refugees have traditionally placed great emphasis on education as the key to a better future. UNRWA (2007) adds that despite difficult circumstances, Palestinians are one of the most highly educated groups in the Middle East. El Fagawi (2000 cited in Mourtaja 2004:15) stated that "Palestinians regarded English as the language of international negotiation through which they could tell the world about their problem."

Accordingly, Palestinian English textbooks should include variety of life skills to engage Palestinian students into society and make them active members in real life situations.

Moreover, there is a serious need to take into consideration the life skills factors when designing syllabus. In fact, Palestinian learners as all learners of the modern world need to understand life and their role in the society.

Palestinian leaders, syllabus designers, supervisors and teachers should have their responsibility toward providing learners with needed skills for their life. The introduction of foreign language in the primary schools has added a new factor to the preceding considerations. The process has involved recourse to large-sized classes, which hampers the process of teaching. Previously, a class consisted of 45-50 young learners and may be more. Nowadays UNRWA schools decreases this number to be around 30-35 young learner in the class. But they are still considered as large-sized classes.

Rationale for Teaching English as Foreign Language in Palestine

Educational psychologists, linguists, and educators cite several reasons for the study of a second/foreign language namely to improve employment opportunities, to learn to value other cultures, and to enhance mental capacity (MEHE,1999:7).

Future employment options will be increasingly governed by an international marketplace, and ones ability to communicate with people in other countries will prepare him/her to compete for jobs created by a global economy. Experts and specialists suggest that those with a "basic" level of understanding are those who possess skills that enable them to exchange information and ideas with people of different cultures. While studying foreign languages has its place in academia, the most critical attribute for tomorrows workers is certainly the ability to communicate.

As for cultural connections, one can argue that effective cross-cultural communication is possible only with a good understanding of the other cultures. Acting on this belief, educators should establish goals that emphasize cultural awareness. It is argued that students who don't understand the cultural context in which languages are used will never truly master the

languages they study. Furthermore, studying other cultures has benefits beyond improved global citizens who embrace diversity. Examining other cultures also helps students better understand their own culture.

In addition to the social and economic benefits, experts indicate that those who study foreign cultures and the languages of those cultures are more active thinkers. Cognitive flexibility comes when students are able to separate words from the objects they represent. A language reflects societal agreement about which words will identify which objects, and when students understand this, it's the first step they take in becoming open to other's ideas (MEHE, 1999:7)

The Palestinian Ministry of Education (1999:13) sets a list of guidelines that stress the integral role of foreign language education in developing the Palestinian students in all domains-- psychomotor, social, moral and cognitive -- and taking into consideration the current trends of multiculturalism and globalization.

English language teaching and learning

Teaching English as a Foreign Language

Learning and teaching English are very important in Arab and Muslim countries in general and in Palestine in particular , as our need for English is important to better understand the world people and best address them about our country and cause.

English as a foreign language is of a great interest among the international curriculum designers and particularly the Palestinian ones. Accordingly, it is necessary to learn it because of its importance for communication and development. It enables students to cope with the modern life and to be part of the modern world. Richards (2001:13) mentioned that whenever you teach a language, you also teach a complex system of cultural customs, values, and ways of thinking, feeling and acting.

The language system is complex so it is important for the language teacher to know the language they are teaching. Learners will often come across language for the first time which they will need to incorporate into their own language system. In order to do this, they need to understand what it means, how to form it, and how to use it to communicate, either in spoken or written form and to understand it when it is used by other people. To assess their learning, teachers should choose the most appropriate texts and activities and give the learners the chance to input language, use it, and modify their understanding of that language until they are able to recall and use it automatically.

Language activities in the classroom can be divided into two categories- introducing language and using language that has already been encountered. As learners progress, they will constantly meet language for the first time, sometimes inside the classroom, sometimes outside.

Effective teaching

Good (1979:52) has tried to operationally define the term "effective teaching" by describing it as teaching that produces higher-than-predicted gains on standardized achievement tests.

Dunkan and Biddle(1974:) and Swaffar et al.(1982: 26) claim that teaching is a dynamic interactional process in which the teacher's method results from the process of interaction between the teacher, the learners, and the instructional tasks and activities overtime. Such an interaction reveals itself as a quite different approach to teaching , one in which

teachers are involved in observing and reflecting upon their teaching as well as the learning behaviors of their students .

English Teaching challenges in Palestine

Palestinian teachers of English face many challenges in their work. These challenges are stated by Yamchi. Nasima (2006).

- First, institutional constraints, particularly with regard to textbooks, are a major challenge. The new English for Palestine curriculum, though a breakthrough, is still the sole source of teaching material. According to teachers, supervisors are very concerned that all the pages and all the exercises in the book are covered. Teachers, therefore, tend to fall back on traditional ways of treating the textbooks, namely, using them as sources of exercises and not materials to promote more communication in the classroom. Teachers in Palestine are further constrained in using a variety of texts because they have limited access to other resources, such as the Internet, books, articles, and photocopying facilities.
- The second contributing factor is the unified exam for Grade 12 students (and as of 2005, Grade 10). All high school students have to pass a unified final exam called Tawjihi, the grades of which decide their choice of university and major. This exam is prepared by the Ministry of Education. An examination of previous Tawjihi tests for English suggests that they mainly test students' knowledge of grammar, writing, and structure. Students are not tested on their aural/oral or critical thinking abilities. Teachers, therefore, face pressure from students, parents, and schools to emphasize curricular dimensions that are useful for the final exams, namely grammar, rather than communicative abilities. Furthermore, school principals encourage teachers to prepare students for the exam to improve the statistics of their schools.

- Third the attitude of the students toward the English language constitutes a third challenge for teachers. Palestine is a postcolonial country that has been engaged in wars since the end of the Second World War and under permanent occupation since 1967. The most important allies of the occupying forces are the United States and the United Kingdom, both English-speaking countries. The one-sidedness of the dominant English-speaking media in favor of the occupying forces, and the negative image of Moslems in general and Arabs in particular, have helped in creating a resistance culture toward the English language.
- Added to this resistance is the limited opportunity to use English in real life, for example, through contact with foreigners. The number of tourists visiting Palestine has drastically decreased since the start of the second Intifada, and those who do want to travel to religious sites are very often prevented (by the Israeli forces) from entering Palestinian territories. Furthermore, most of the students are not able to travel inside the country. Likewise, virtual contact, that is, access to computers, which could be a good source of outside contact, is still extremely limited.
- Palestine relies on Israel for power, and frequent power outages sometimes lasting for hours (almost daily) add to the difficulties of using computers as a means of contact with the outside world.
- The mixed ability classes. It is common practice that teachers can flunk weak students only twice during the 12 years of education. This decision, in effect since the beginning of the second Intifada in 1995, allows students to attend higher classes even if, under regular circumstances, they would have to repeat the same grade. The aim of this policy is to prevent youngsters from dropping

out of their education without any training and entering a job market that has little to offer. However, this policy has resulted in extremely mixed ability classes in higher levels. This disparity confronts the teachers with a difficult task. Planning each lesson in a way that includes and benefits most of the students, considering the time limitations among other issues, is a great challenge.

Learning English as a foreign language

Within the field of education over the last few decades a gradual but significant shift has taken place, resulting in less emphasis on teachers and teaching and greater stress on learners and learning (Clouston, 1997).

Learning can take place both inside and outside the classroom. It can be an informal process-of picking up words from the TV, magazines, books, or friends; or it can be a formal process-of attending lessons and taking part in classroom activities where language and skills are introduced and practiced. Moreover, learning can happen without the learner being aware of it.

Hamdan (1991:1) assured that it is now commonplace that the effectiveness of foreign language instruction is not only measured by the quality of textbooks and other instructions or by the type of method used for teaching but also by the learners' ability to internalize and use the target language in natural situations and the abilities for adaptive behavior that enable them to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.

It is widely recognized that there is both a qualitative and a quantitative mismatch between the language output produced by L2 learners and the language input they are exposed to. Kumaravadivelu (2006:25). Corder (1967:167) highlighted this mismatch and made an

important distinction between input and what he called as intake. English learners in Palestine face the same challenges in learning a foreign language. These challenges affect the four English language skills.

Active learners

Since learner centeredness is the focus in Education nowadays, learners are expected to take a more active role in their education. It is expected that students be aware of their learning styles and adapt their language learning strategies to fit with their styles. Researchers in the field of learning strategies such as Oxford (1990); Cohen (1987); and O'Malley and Chamot (1990) have emphasized that successful language performance depends heavily on the appropriate use of strategies which match the personal preference to the learning style.

Learners can be active or passive. Active learners develop positive habits that allow them to learn more quickly and efficiently. The following are the characteristics of the active learners as stated by Cora Lindsay (2006:2)

- Give themselves as much opportunity as possible to encounter new language.
- Actively notice and analyze new language and incorporate it into the language they use.
- Use the new language as much as possible inside and outside the classroom
- Take every opportunity to practice the four skills.
- Use study techniques, such as making vocabulary lists, to help their learning.
- Are prepared to experiment, make guesses, and take risks, even if this involves making mistakes.
- Have confidence of themselves and their ability to learn.

- Are aware of their weak areas and gaps in their learning.
- Monitor their own language use and self correct where necessary.

Factors affecting English language learning

The relationship between teaching and learning is a key factor in whether learning takes place effectively. There are also some factors which mean that some people learn more easily and more quickly than others. Learning a foreign language is not an easy task. It could be related to different factors.

Innate ability, Everyone has the potential to learn a first and second language. A significant proportion of the world's population is at least bilingual- many people can speak three languages or more.

Aptitude, Some people can learn more easily than others. However, there is no scientific evidence that there is a biological difference in people's aptitude for learning. This matter is debatable among the psychologists Chomisky, for instance, claims that knowledge is innate i.e. the child is born with innate idea and the mental faculties are activated through experience. However, the empiricists like Piaget believes that the child is born with blank mind and she/he acquires language through experience and intelligence.It is more likely to be a combination of some or all of the following factors.

Motivation, Motivation provides " the driving force to sustain the long and often tedious learning process"(Routledge Encyclopedia, 2000.425). Motivation is the key to all learning. Lack of motivation is perhaps the biggest obstacle faced by teachers, counselors, school administrators, and parents. Behavioral problems in the classroom often, or always, seem to be linked to the lack of motivation. Ruth Peters states that, "academic achievement is more a product of appropriate placement of priorities and responsible behavior than it is of

intelligence." (Peters,2000) Intelligent students are often out-performed by less bright students with high motivation. If a child is motivated enough he/she can accomplish learning of any scale.

Motivation is considered as one of the most important factors of how learners are to learn English. It can be analyzed in terms of whether it is intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to the individual learners wish to learn or enjoyment in learning. The main idea of Intrinsic motivation is to capture the child's attention and curiosity and channel their energy towards learning. Intrinsic motivation is motivation from within the student (Lumsden,1992). An intrinsically motivated learner studies because he/she wants to study. The material is interesting, challenging and rewarding, and the student receives some kind of satisfaction from learning

On the other hand extrinsic motivation to the learners need to learn because of external factors. An extrinsically motivated student studies and learns for other reasons. Such a student performs in order to receive a reward, like graduating or passing a test or getting a new shirt from mom, or to avoid a penalty like a failing grade (Lumsden,1992). Here is a description of one of my extrinsically motivated students.

In a word, Motivation is the backbone of any classroom. When the students are motivated, the teacher can perform his/her job the best. A teacher can do a lot to arouse the students' motivation, and the effort involved is an essential part of the teaching profession.

Age, The age at which learners begin to learn a second language influences their ultimate attainment in language. In 1967, Lenneberg proposed a critical period hypothesis arguing that languages are best learned before puberty, after which everyone faces certain constraints in language development. It is widely believed that young children learn a second language

more easily than older children or adults. But recent research has shown that teenagers are often the most successful language learners, and the adults can be very successful learners of language too.

Proximity of L1 to English, The global variety of languages means that some have a lot in common with English while others are different in many important ways. Here are some of the key features:

- alphabet
- sound system
- written form
- script and layout
- grammar
- social and cultural factors. (Lindsay,2006:8)

Learning strategies

Students learn in many ways—by seeing and hearing; reflecting and acting; reasoning logically and intuitively; memorizing and visualizing.

How much a given student learns in a class is governed in part by that student's native ability and prior preparation but also by the compatibility of his or her characteristic approach to learning and the instructor's characteristic approach to teaching. The ways in which an individual characteristically acquires, retains, and retrieves information are collectively termed the individual's learning style.

There are different ways that the learners can speed up and improve the way they learn.

Lindsay (2006:8) states that different learners learn more effectively depending on how they are able to learn, for example:

- visual learners prefer to see words and pictures
- auditory learners like listening and talking with other people
- tactile learners like touching and manipulating objects
- kinesthetic learners like movement
- field-independent learners like to concentrate on the details and rules
- field-dependent learners are more interested in getting across the general meaning than learning rules
- reflective learners like to focus on accuracy and need time to get things right

Relationship to learning, In fact, the way a teacher teaches is an important factor that relates to learners type, for example, "some learners may prefer a teachers who gives them lots of rules about the language. Other learners may prefer a teacher who encourages them to communicate freely and experiment using English" . (Lindsay: 2006:9)

Relationship to the teacher, Personal relationships with the teacher play a big part in classroom learning. A good rapport between teacher and learner is beneficial to the learning process.

Relationship with other learners, The relationships among the peers inside the classroom can affect language learning. Of course, it is best if learners feel comfortable with each other and are prepared to co-operate in learning.

Embarrassment and anxiety, Learners often feel anxious and embarrassed when they try to speak or read aloud in English. But unless they try to use English to communicate, they will not learn quickly.

Self-confidence, It is often easier for people who are confident in themselves to learn a language than it is for those who have low self confidence. This is linked to "fear of embarrassment" because learners who are confident will be more prepared to take risks using the new language than learners with a low level of confidence. (Lindsay, 2006:10)

Attitude towards language learning, In some countries, learning another language is considered a normal and easy thing to do, while in others it is considered an unusual and demanding task. This is the case in the Arab countries in general and Palestine in particular. The learners in Palestine consider English language learning a very hard task.

Attitudes towards English and English-speaking countries, Some people connect learning English with learning about the culture and values of English speaking countries. For some learners, this can be highly de-motivating as they reject the culture and values of the English countries. On the whole, the learning process can be affected by learners attitude towards English and towards L1 speakers of English and their culture.

The relationship between English language teaching and learning

The relationship between learning and teaching is complicated and often not direct. Learners often don't learn what they are taught and equally often learn what they haven't been taught." As learners progress, they will constantly meet language for the first time, sometimes inside the classroom, sometimes outside. At this point they need to know what this language means or refers to. They also need to know how to form it-how to spell it, pronounce it, its relationship to other words, the word endings, and so on. Finally they need to be able to use it to communicate, either in spoken or written forms, and to understand it when it is used by other people." (Lindsay:2006)

Serious mismatches may occur between the learning styles of students in a class and the teaching style of the instructor with unfortunate potential consequences. The students tend to be bored and inattentive in class, do poorly on tests, get discouraged about the course, and may conclude that they are no good at the subject of the course and give up (Felder & Silverman,1988: 674-681). Instructors, confronted by low test grades, unresponsive or hostile classes, poor attendance, and dropouts, may become overly critical of their students (making things even worse) or begin to question their own competence as teachers.

The following is a review of the most effective points concerning teaching and learning:

- Teaching should be interesting and varied and offer pupils a degree of choice
- Account should be taken of pupils' preferred learning styles
- Pupils should feel involved in the learning and teaching process
- Well organized, purposeful cooperative learning activities can improve behavior
- Expectations should be regularly reinforced and should be realistic but challenging
- Teaching should encourage an accurate match between aspirations and ability
- Celebration of success of all kinds should be a part of classroom and school life
- When pupils feel that they are succeeding they are less likely to be disaffected
- Effective use of ICT can contribute to good behavior

Studies show that matching teaching styles to learning styles can significantly enhance academic achievement, student attitudes, and student behavior at the primary and secondary school level (Griggs & Dunn 1984:117) This is not to say that the best thing one can do for one's students is to use their preferred modes of instruction exclusively. Students will inevitably be called upon to deal with problems and challenges that require the use of their less preferred modes, and so should regularly be given practice in the use of those modes

(Hunt,1971) instructors who wish to address a wide variety of learning styles need not make drastic changes in their instructional approach. The way they normally teach addresses the needs of at least five of the specified learning style categories: regular use of at least some of the instructional techniques given below should suffice to cover the remaining styles.

English Language Teacher

Teachers in UNRWA schools are hired by the UNRWA education department, They tend to have bachelor in TEFL or diploma in TEFL. The candidates have to pass the abilities test which measures their abilities in English linguistics, methodology, grammar, vocabulary, writing, reading comprehension, and phonetics. Then they have to pass an interview in English. The new teachers, however, are not exposed to pre-service training prior to beginning their jobs. The in-service training is made available during their first year of work. This training usually consists of teaching methods and is conducted in English. After this initial training, teachers have to attend workshops and seminars during their summer holidays and during the academic year. These workshops and seminars are mostly for teachers of all subjects and cover educational issues in general. English teachers, additionally, attend some phonology workshops to improve pronunciation.

The teacher's job is to help learners learn. This relates both to the formal classroom process and learning outside the classroom. Teachers are responsible for a large amount of what happens in the classroom- what is taught, the resources used, the type and order of activities, classroom management, assessment, feedback, correction, and so on. It is also part of teacher's job to encourage learners to take responsibility for their own learning and become active learners. **An effective English language teacher:**

- Understands learners language needs and respond to them positively

- Designs lessons which reflect the learners needs and develop their communicative skills
- Monitors and corrects sensitively
- Provides feedback and encouragement when appropriate
- Tells learners not to worry about making mistakes- this is part of the learning process
- Encourages good learning habits inside and outside the classroom
- Keeps track of progress, gaps in learners ability, and repeated errors
- Creates an 'input-rich environment' in the classroom, for example, by putting lots of pictures with English texts on the walls
- Encourages learners to read English texts or listen to the radio in English, for example the BBC World Service Online, CDs, and audio cassettes. Television programs**,** both terrestrial and digital, can also be an excellent source of input.

(Lindsay,2006: 3)

It should be noted that unfortunate outcome of the educational system in most third- world countries –including Palestine- is that usually teachers do not urge to go beyond the response mode of knowledge. Students in these countries are usually held responsible for simply memorizing the subject matter of their courses. This results in the students lack of critical thinking.

Obviously, students may not reach the desirable literacy standards in English and in other subject areas unless schools are provided with competent teachers. Researchers such as Morian(1990), Schrier(1994: 69-74) and Butler(2004:245-1778) among others point out that EFL prospective teachers need to be proficient in the target language and its culture, well

qualified in pedagogy, curriculum design and curriculum implementation, and excellent in using modern technologies.

Qualities of effective English Language teacher

Traditionally, language teachers have defined themselves in terms of what they do. Recently, however, language teaching professionals have become very interested in trying to understand how to deal with the many dimensions of what they do. It is essential to look back on the history of the problematic situation in teacher education, which can be characterized by a gap between theory and practice (Al-Mutawa .1997:42).

Prerequisites of teaching

Effective teaching is a continual learning process, and each school year brings changes to which competent teachers must adapt. These changes can happen in terms of students, curriculum, building issues, colleagues, administrators, finance, health and safety concerns, families, communities and a host of other influences on the daily life of the teachers.

The foundation upon which teachers base their ability to adapt to changes and successfully navigate the complexities of the classroom comes largely from their personal abilities and experiences. These can often be classified as Prerequisites to teaching and they reflect the competencies and experiences that any teacher bring to the classroom.

Prerequisites to teaching contain the following which are linked to effective teachers;

Verbal ability, Teachers make connections with their students through words and actions. Effective teachers know their students and how to communicate with them both individually and collectively. They consider their students when delivering a message and try to observe reaction and decide how to get their point across to different individuals.

The connection between teacher effectiveness and verbal skills is not new. In fact this finding verifies what people already know; the ability of teachers to effectively communicate influences the relationships they establish with others, the clarity of explanation to students

and, as a result, students understanding and achievement. Verbal ability is an indicator of teacher effectiveness because it relates to how well a teacher conveys concepts and skills to students (Darling,2000:148)

Studies dealing with the relationship between verbal ability and teacher effectiveness have produced varied results. In general, the findings indicate that high test scores on verbal ability are associated with effective teaching.

The students of verbally adept teachers learn more than peers taught by teachers with lower verbal skills. That because when students understand what teachers are communicating and when teachers understand the signals from their students, a two ways communication process is created that enhances the learning of the students. In a word, effective communicators are likely to be more effective teachers.

Teacher as a person

Teaching is a vocation for which some people have a natural talent while others may have the inclination but still need to develop some of the necessary skills, and others simply may not be suited to the demands of the role. It is known that the most effective teachers are passionate about their chosen profession. Also, the effective teachers are good with all students in their particular subject or grade level, assuming that the teachers have the necessary training for the given teaching assignment.

There are five indicators associated with this quality of teacher as a person.

These indicators are:

- **Caring**

Campbell states that "caring means teacher understand and value students as unique individuals" (Campbell, 1996:147). It can be demonstrated in many ways by teachers.

- **Fairness and respect**

They involve treating students in a balanced and open-minded manner that is considerate of their circumstances. This quality has been called the foundation of effective teaching (Collinson, Killeavy& Stephenson,1999).

Obviously, everyone wants to be treated in a fair and respectful manner. Every action taken by a teacher in the classroom, especially involving discipline, can be perceived as fair or unfair. Effective teachers demonstrate respect in varied ways, from their treatment of students to how they work with students families. Respectful teachers know their students by name early in the school year, value individual talents and abilities, are aware of students moods, and respond to changes they observe (Burden& Byrd, 1994).

- **Attitude toward the teaching profession**

The more positive and enthusiastic teachers about learning, the more likely their students will be enthusiastic about learning(Edmonton, 1993).

Teaching is a demanding profession, and teachers attitude toward this profession most directly affects the school climate. Some teachers are collegial in their demeanor, while others are disengaged (Hoy, 2003). To clarify, a collegial approach enhances the school climate and the learning environment for students, but a disengaged one does little to enhance student achievement. When teachers interact with one another, they build a sense of community through the interactions. Positive outlooks create a healthy community that affects personal commitment, motivation, efficacy, and performance in the classroom (NWREL, 2001)

- **Social interaction with students**

This can take place within the classroom but also beyond it . When teachers demonstrate interest in students lives outside of the classroom, students are encouraged to perform their best in the classroom(Kohn,1996:54). Peart argues that humor, caring, respect, and fairness

all are involved in building relationships with students(Peart& Campbell, 1991). When teachers interact with students in a warm, personal manner, students feel affirmed as people and learners, thereby enhancing achievement (Thomas, 1998: 374). In this context Wolk (2002) confirms " teachers need to allow students to see them as a complete people with emotions, opinions, and lives outside the school. Social interaction between teachers and students play an important role in creating a positive learning environment, both within the classroom and in the school". (Wolk,2002).

Effective teachers convey a sense that students are valued and that they enjoy working with students. In turn, students work harder for teachers who they perceive as being honest with them and who believe in their abilities (Haberman,1995). As noted by Sizer " we can not teach students well if we do not know them well" (Sizer, Ted,1999)

- **Promotion of Enthusiasm and motivation for learning**

Teachers fulfill multiple roles in their classrooms. They provide support to students in a variety of ways that result in increased students achievement and confidence (NWREL,2001). Effective teachers use their enthusiasm for the subject teaching as a tool to motivate students. If the teachers are enthusiastic about the content they are teaching, they will convey this feeling to their students through the activities they select, the energy they project, and their competence in the subject area. Effective teachers recognize that motivation is critical to fostering and enhancing learning (NWREL,2001).

Teacher Language Awareness

Teacher Language Awareness is " the knowledge that teachers have of the underlying system of the language that enables them to teach effectively" (Thornbury,1997). TLA is essentially concerned with subject matter knowledge and its impact upon teaching. It relates to the L2 teachers need to be able to function effectively as an analyst of the language, with the ability to " talk about the language itself, to analyze it, to understand how it works and to

make judgments about acceptability in doubtful cases" (Edge, 1994:10). Knowledge of subject matter is identified as the core of TLA. Given the increased recognition in education that subject-matter knowledge is a key element of teacher professionalism, it is argued that TLA should be seen as equally important for the teacher of language subjects.

(Routledge, 2000).

In conclusion, Darling-Hammond (1998: 7-8) has reviewed the kinds of knowledge teachers need to prepare students for standards-based instruction:

• Teachers need to understand the subject matter deeply and flexibly.

• Teachers need to know about learning (teaching strategies, decision-making strategies about the content to cover and the best way to do so, assessment strategies, language acquisition theory).

• Teachers need to know about curriculum resources and technologies.

• Teachers need to know about collaboration—their collaboration with other teachers, students collaborating together, and collaboration with parents.

• Teachers need to be able to analyze and reflect on their practice, to assess the effects of their teaching, and to refine and improve their instruction.

Teachers' behavior

- The teacher’s every word and action should be based on the assumption that all pupils can achieve whatever is to be learned**.**

- When pupils arrive in the classroom, initial contacts should be positive.

-Teachers should be alert and show that they know what is going on in the classroom.

- Work should be organized in a smooth but brisk way with clear appropriate deadlines.

- Involving pupils in aspects of classroom management can help.

- Using humor has been shown to have a beneficial effect on pupils' attitudes.

- Praise and reinforcement of effort/strategies/success are important, but should be dependent on performance and used with discrimination, so that pupils value them.

- Simple non-verbal encouragement (smile, thumbs-up etc) is effective.

- Teachers should model good behavior patterns and be aware of their own stress control techniques.

- An instruction forbidding something should be phrased positively and constructively.

- It is not necessary to punish for inappropriate behavior immediately.

(Strong,2003).

English Language Textbook

New Palestinian Curriculum

New English curriculum – *English for Palestine* – has been recently prescribed for grade six in the scholastic year 2005-2006 to be used in English language teaching.

The Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) realizes the importance of the textbook as a foundation of the curriculum and an indispensable medium of learning that meets the needs and aspirations of the Palestinian society. The MEHE has implemented the first Palestinian curriculum plan by developing textbooks for both the basic and secondary stages.

The rationale for creating a Palestinian curriculum is to have a model that "is appropriate for Palestinian students and prepares students for the challenges of contemporary education; i.e., for life in this new world" (MEHE, 1999:1).

In contrast to the Egyptian textbooks that have been used thus far, which are mainly reading and structure-based textbooks, the new curriculum is based on the belief that "language is

functional, that language learning is culture learning, and that acquisition occurs through meaningful use"(MEHE, 1999: 2). Moreover, the development of communicative competence is the expressed goal of the new curriculum: "The core objectives of teaching English in Palestine falls under the rubric pragmatic competence" (p. 8). In order to achieve these goals and overcome inefficiency in learning English, especially in the oral skills of students, the new curriculum has placed more emphasis on aural/oral and integrated skills alongside the more traditional grammar-and-reading-based books.

A textbook is a central tool and object of attention of education. Teachers and their students use textbooks and their supplementary materials as resources that provide the main source of information, guidance, and structure. Textbooks provide practice activities, vocabulary, cultural gambits, and reading comprehension.

Textbooks play a pivotal role in language classrooms. It is an important part of the curriculum because it is widely used in schools. The purpose of the textbook should be reflected in its design and its purpose to develop the four skills: Reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It is common that foreign language textbooks reflect the pedagogical approaches or beliefs used in contemporary language teaching. More recent foreign language textbooks include practice exercises or activities in specific contexts, rules for using the language, and communicative goals. It is ironical that those teachers who rely most heavily on the textbooks are the ones least qualified to interpret its intentions or evaluate its content and method (Williams, 1983:251).

No textbook is perfect. Therefore, teachers should have the option of assigning supplementary materials based on their own specific needs in their own specific teaching situation.

- The arguments for using a textbook are:
    - a textbook is a framework which regulates and times the programs

- in the eyes of learners, no textbook means no purpose,
- without a textbook, learners think their learning is not taken seriously
- in many situations, a textbook can serve as a syllabus
- a textbook provides ready-made teaching texts and learning tasks
- a textbook is a cheap way of providing learning materials
- a learner without a textbook is out of focus and teacher-dependent, and perhaps most important of all
- for novice teachers a textbook means security, guidance, and support.

- The counter-arguments are:
  - if every group of students has different needs, no one textbook can be a response to all differing needs
  - topics in a textbook may not be relevant for and interesting to all
  - a textbook is confining, i.e., it inhibits teachers' creativity
  - a textbook of necessity sets prearranged sequence and structure that may not be realistic and situation-friendly
  - textbooks have their own rationale, and as such they cannot by their nature cater for a variety of levels, every type of learning styles, and every category of learning strategies that often exist in the class, and most important of all
  - teachers may find themselves as mediators with no free hand and slave, in fact, to others' judgments about what is good and what is not (cf. Ur, 1996: 183-195).

Teachers, students, and administers are all consumers of textbooks. All these groups, of course, may have conflicting views about what a good/standard textbook is.

The learning environment

Many researches refer to the learning environment as one important factor that affects the students achievement level in schools.

Effective education to every student is a moral imperative for all teachers. Educators are obligated to avoid issues that present a conflict of interest in order to create a healthy learning environment for all students. The creation of a healthy learning environment requires teachers and facilitators who are culturally competent. Faculty members of higher education are obligated to treat each student fairly and expect high standards from them regardless of their diversity makeup(Mujtaba, 2004:).

For education in school to be effective, the environment needs to be conducive to learning, allowing the pupils space and time to interact within the learning and teaching process. Creating and maintaining stimulating learning environments can be achieved through effective classroom organization, interactive and whole school displays and a climate of innovation.

Research has shown that factors such as positive learner and teacher attitudes, which are interrelated to motivation, must be sustained for successful transfer of language learning (Finocchiaro, 1982; Ngeow, 1998). To foster positive attitudes and to motivate learning, in particular, the learning of English as a foreign Language, an environment conducive to learning must be created. Factors that help create such an environment include:

- a learning situation that has a "low affective filter" (Krashen, 1987) whereby the learners learn to use the language in a non-threatening and fun environment. Otherwise, learners will feel uncomfortable and insecure which will further induce a "psychological barrier" to communication and learning (Littlewood, 1995).

- providing various types of input which are auditory, visual, sensory, verbal and non-verbal in nature and input which is comprehensible or a little beyond the level of the learner.
- providing a continuous and consistent exposure to the language being learned.
- an environment where the teachers and the students are supportive and encouraging.
- having access to situations wherein students are able to use the language as a "natural means of communication" (Littlewood, 1995:58).

The following are the main characteristics reviewed from books of the effective learning environment:

- The best learning environment is one of high challenge and low stress.
- Environment should support pupils to become independent and active learners.
- It should be warm and friendly.
- It should suit the physical size of the students.
- It should be neat , orderly in appearance, and clean.
- It is supposed to be encouraging.

An evaluation of Gaza school learning environment is part of this study tool.

English Language Assessment

Assessment is defined as the process of analyzing and measuring knowledge and ability, in this case, the learners knowledge of language and ability to communicate. Assessment can be done either formally and informally. On one hand, the teacher can do some informal assessment in all his lessons- by asking questions the teacher checks whether they have

understood what the teacher is currently teaching them, on the other hand, formal assessment is done using tests and examinations.

Tests are varied in their names and purposes. There are , for example, placement test, diagnostic tests, progress tests, and achievement test. The focus in this study is on achievement tests which "are given to the learner at the end of the course and are based on what they have studied during the course. They aim to show what learners are able to do at the end of the course that they couldn't do at the beginning of the course, for example, understand a wider range of spoken English, read short, simple texts, make simple requests and so on" (Lindsay:2006).

As teachers it is important to think about the effects which testing can have on teaching and learning. It can have an important influence on how teachers work with their learners. Also, it affects how learners learn.

Testing has some bad and good effects. On one hand, some of its good effects can include that tests help teachers identify areas in which their students are having problems and feedback from tests can help learners see what areas they need to focus on. On the other hand, testing has some bad effects, for example, learners only pay attention to what they think they will be tested on. Furthermore, in class, teachers only focus on what will be tested. In addition, tests can make some students very nervous and they may not do as well as they could because of this. Finally, if tests are too difficult, learners will become demotivated.

Tests have their significant characteristics. The following guidelines should be taken into consideration while preparing for an achievement test:

Test what has been taught, Certainly, it is important for achievement tests to test what has been previously taught. In this case all students have an equal opportunity to succeed which will help to build their confidence. This also means that the teacher need to pay attention to

the language used in a test. For example, new vocabulary or new grammatical structures should not appear for the first time in a test.

Test what is useful, For example, if the learners have studied asking for things in shop using " Could I have…….. please" tell them to " Ask for an apple in a shop" rather than tell them to "write request using could".

Test all four English language skills, It may seem easier to prepare grammar and vocabulary tests. But the four skills are all important and they involve more than just a knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. (Lindsay:2006)

The instructions are clear, The teachers should remember that they are testing learners English skills not how good they are at doing tests. The students are supposed to understand what they should do by giving them the opportunity to ask questions before the test starts. This is particularly important with learners who have not done a particular type of test before, or learners who are very young and might not remember the instructions from an earlier test.

The teachers can measure students comprehension in two ways

(1) During the lesson, teachers tried to determine whether students understood the information, tasks, and activities.

And (2) during monthly tests , teachers explored how students' level of comprehension, as reflected in their work, could inform teacher planning.

English Teaching Methods

Teaching has been influenced by a wide variety of methods and trends. New methods have been introduced as part of the ongoing search for the best way to teach. In some ways this has been beneficial that the world now know a lot about teaching and learning than it did 50 years ago, and the learners role has been integrated into the learning and teaching process.

The Grammar Translation Method

It was developed in the 18th century and was introduced as a way of teaching modern languages to school children.

The main features of this method*:*

- Little or no attention is paid to the ability to speak or communicate.
- Sentences and longer texts are translated both to and from learners first language.
- Long lists of words are commonly memorized without being used in a sentence.
- Grammar rules are given a lot of attention.
- The teacher does not have to be able to speak the target language in order to teach.

Comment

Grammar Translation is still used in more traditional schools. The following is some of its disadvantages:

- Learners learn about the language, rather than how to use the language.
- Learners do not get much, if any , opportunity to develop listening and speaking skills.
- Using correct grammar is given more emphasis than being able to communicate with someone.
- Vocabulary is made more difficult to use because it is usually taught in isolated lists.
- The attention given to grammatical accuracy and translation may be demotivating for some learners.

One of the advantages of this method is that the teachers develop an awareness of grammar rules. In addition, it is in general use is the translation of words and phrases from the target language into the learners first language. This can be an efficient way of learning some types of vocabulary and a help in learning some grammatical structures.

Audiolingualism

It was developed in the 1950s and 1960s. Language was described in terms of the way it was structured- individual sounds and letters, words, structures, and sentence types. Learners were expected to learn the grammar of the new language not by learning rules but by producing the language accurately by responding to stimuli. These stimuli were prompts which would lead the learner to produce particular sentences. Speaking and listening were seen as the basis of language learning and reading and writing coming later.

The main features of Audiolingualism

- The emphasis was on the structure of language rather than on content and meaning.

-Drills were the main way to practice new language.

-The teacher made a great effort to prevent errors.

-Grammatical structures were taught in a particular order.

-Correct pronunciation was strongly encouraged from the beginning.

- Vocabulary was severely limited in the early stages.

Comment

Some language teachers find drills useful for practicing sentence pattern. They can be especially valuable in getting elementary learners to build their confidence in speaking. On the other hand, drills do not give the learners an opportunity to interact naturally with other speakers.

Communicative language teaching

CLT started in the late 1960s and continues to evolve. It is based on the view in which "learning a language means learning how to communicate effectively in the world outside the

classroom" (Lindsay,2006:20). It was developed as a reaction to the limitations of the previous methods which ignored the ability to communicate or interact.

The communicative movement has swept along almost everything and everyone in its path. There are excellent opportunities for English language teachers to create lively, attractive, interactive modern language lessons that maximize target-language use and make the culture of the language three dimensional.

The main features of CLT

- the goal is to communicate effectively in the target language.
- learners often interact with each other through pair or group work.
- The four skills are developed simultaneously.
- There is an emphasis on meaning and using the language rather than on the structure and form of the language.
- One role of the teacher is that of a facilitator who helps learners to communicate in English and motivates them to work with the language (Lindsay,2006:20).

PPP Model of teaching

The original PPP model of teaching has been developed and modified since it was first introduced and no longer represents CLT as the only teaching model. Language can be introduced and practiced in a variety of ways.

Many communicative language teaching classrooms use a Presentation-Practice-Production or PPP model of teaching. First, the teacher presents the new language, possibly by playing a record dialogue or getting the learners to read a written text. Second, the learners practice the new language in a controlled way, possibly by

completing written exercises using the new language in controlled pair work practising similar dialogues. Finally, the learners produce the language in a freer activity that allows them to communicate using the language they have just studied.

Comment

Communicative language teaching has shifted the focus in language teaching from learning about the language to learning to communicate in the language. Despite CLT is very widely used in language teaching all over the world, there are problems associated with CLT:

- The emphasis on pair and group work can create problems in some classes.
- The approach can lead to too much emphasis on speaking and listening.
- Learners do not necessarily learn what they are taught, i.e. the discrete language items, in the order that they are taught. (Lindsay,2006:21)

Lindsay (2006:23) adds that the most serious criticism of CLT is that it is not as effective as it claims to be. A lot of learners complete their studies but are still unable to communicate in English. One reaction to this has been to change the learning focus from the content, i.e. the structures, functions, and vocabulary, to the process, that is to use English to learn it rather than to learn to use English.

ESL teachers are often faced with choosing the kind of relationship they wish to establish with their students. Some prefer a strict division between the student-teacher relationship while others prefer a friend-coach relationship. Communicative methodology encourages the latter. Many students misinterpret this as tacit approval to pursue undesirable behavior such as cutting class or turning in late homework. To avoid this, it is important to clearly express not only the course requirements but one's own personal philosophy to assessing learners.

For instance, students need to know from the first class that you will not accept late homework assignments or poor attendance, but that they will be allowed to make up tests and quizzes. By explicitly stressing this kind of seemingly trivial information, the teacher can save a lot of valuable class time and create a more productive atmosphere(Ryan, 2001).

Task-Based Learning

It focuses on the process of communicating by setting learners tasks to complete using the target language. During this process, the learners acquire language as they try to express themselves and understand others. The tasks can range from information gap to problem solving tasks. One advantage of Task-Based Learning is that learners are given the chance to use the full range of skills and language they have at the same time, rather than in discrete units, as they sometimes do with the CLT model.

Teaching English strategies in Gaza

The TEFL methods adopted were traditional. Thus teachers were rather exerting personal efforts according to own beliefs to compensate lack of training or skill. They could compensate in referring to traditional translation grammar or audio-lingual, in view of that, frequently resorted to Arabic. Consequently this lessened the amount of English that the students were exposed to and thus affected their level of competency. As a result, a great inadequacy existed among students in both written and communication, an overwhelming passive attitude among learners of English, a general population resistance toward the TEFL, and it was common to consider the EFL as (failure-subject) because of the large number of the non achievers. (Barzaq,2007:20)**.**

There are, however, many observations that reveal that teachers seldom conform to methods which they are supposed to be following; they refuse to be the slaves of methods. i.e.

teachers in actual practice often fail to reflect the underlying philosophies of methods which they claim to be following

The Suggested Program:

Good (1998) defined the program as "a group of well designed activities that aims to develop the knowledge, attitudes and skills of the trainees ,promote their competencies, guide their thinking and improve their work performance" (Good;1998:613). Al-Qadi defined the program as "A group of well planned and constructed learning activities that aim to develop the knowledge ,attitudes ,skills and thinking of the learners through selective content ,instructional aids and constant process of evaluation(Al-Qadi, 2007).

The suggested program is constructed to enhance the sixth graders abilities in English language. The results of the questionnaire mainly showed that most teachers do not concentrate on the practice stage of the language. This thing reflects many of others issues in English language teaching in Gaza northern governorates. The results also clarified that teachers are not satisfied with the new English syllabus claiming that it is too long and goes beyond students level. Out of the literature reviewed in this study, the researcher tried to review some solutions for those two problems.

The suggested program objective:

The main aim of this suggested program is for tackling English low achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza northern governorates. This suggested program comes in the light of this research results.

Steps of Building Instructional Program

Canale&Swain (1998:33) suggested five steps that would make up a model of a good teaching program .Here is a description of these patterns and explanation of how each step was taken into consideration in building up the suggested program of the present study.

Diagnosis:

It refers to the initial evaluation or assessment of the teaching learning situations .In this step, teachers attempt to define the students' present state of knowledge and their needs as a basis for determining what should be done. In this study, the researcher attempted to specify the exact practices that the English teachers conduct, as well as the learning environment, the English textbook, and achievement test evaluation from the teachers estimates. This was to know exactly the circumstances in which the sixth graders are involved in inside the schools.

Preparation:

In this step, the researcher get ready for the remedial activities. Defining the objective, selected some effective ideas from literature in addition to ideas from her personal experience in teaching English.

Guidance of Learning:

It includes the actual instruction; the application of the instructional program assigned by the researcher.

Evaluation:

Carrying on the different evaluation techniques throughout the instructional process provides a clear picture about the progress of both teacher and learner in performing their roles . The suggested program included constant process of evaluation through the stages considering the program itself by formative and summative tasks of evaluation .

Follow –Up:

Taking into account the previous ideas and referring to the educational literature and the previous researchers that dealt with suggested programs; the researcher came to a conclusion of basic principles for planning such program :

1-Determining the overall goals and the principles supporting objectives .

2- Selecting a suitable content in view of the objectives and this step includes choosing the topics to be studied ,arranging them into an appropriate sequence and deciding how much emphasis to place on each topic .

3-Putting the time plan considering the time needed for each unit .

4-Deciding teaching approach basic, strategies and activities in addition to the project team .

5-Assigning procedures for assessing the students' attainment of the program objectives.

Program Construction

Depending on the bases that have been already mentioned , components of the program were constructed as follows:

Content of the Program:

The content of any educational program is the substance of teaching and it consists of facts, concepts , skills and attitudes. The content of the current suggested program is the "English for Palestine 6" with eliminating 6 unites to include 18 unites instead of 24 units. In addition to enrichment material that is based on the practice of English language rather than the theory.

Techniques and Activities of the Program :

In the light of the aims and content of the program in addition to the previous researches, related literature and the arbitrators' suggestions' the researcher assigned some techniques and activities based on the oral communication approach to be applied in performing the units of suggested program . These techniques includes group work and per work, stimulation and role play if available, employing educational games, and connecting the English subjects to students real lives.

Instructional Aids :

The main aids in the suggested program are worksheets , cards and pictures, real situation from environment , cassette recorder, realia, and colored chalkboard.

Evaluation

It is an integral part of any educational program as it indicates the success or drawbacks of it by telling both teacher and student where they have succeeded and where have not. The suggested program must be appraised in relation to students learning regarding their achievement of the aims of the program. For this purpose , two types of evaluation were used

a- Formative Evaluation :

It was used to evaluate the students' progress in achieving the learning objectives

throughout the unit by immediate feedback , Written and oral questions and observation of their interaction in the lecture activities . Continuous evaluation helps the teacher in deciding whether the learning activities are appropriate or not. .

b- Summative Evaluation :

It was used at the end of each unit to measure the extent of the objectives achieved.

Hence the effectiveness of the program by giving oral or written question is considered as a formative evaluation for the program. It was also used at the end of program by setting diagnostic test .

Fix schools first

To enhance the achievement in English language subject as well as the other school subjects, Bowsher (2003) suggests that fixing schools is the path.

Today's schools face enormous challenges. In response to an increasingly complex society and a rapidly changing technology-based economy, schools are being asked to educate the most diverse student body in our history to higher academic standards than ever before. This task is one that cannot be "teacher-proofed" through management systems, testing mandates, or curriculum packages.

The UNRWA schools need a new paradigm that achieves the goal of making all students successful in English language as well as the other school subjects. This goal will never be achieved using the existing paradigm.

First, teachers need to understand subject matter deeply and flexibly so that they can help students create useful cognitive maps, relate ideas to one another, and address misconceptions. Teachers need to see how ideas connect across fields and to everyday life. (Shulman, 1987.)

Interpreting learners' statements and actions and shaping productive experiences for them require an understanding of child and adolescent development and of how to support growth in various domains -- cognitive, social, physical, and emotional. Teaching in ways that connect with students also requires an understanding of differences that may arise from culture, family experiences, developed intelligences, and approaches to learning. Teachers need to be able to inquire sensitively, listen carefully, and look thoughtfully at student work.

Teachers need to know about curriculum resources and technologies to connect their students with sources of information and knowledge that allow them to explore ideas, acquire and synthesize information, and frame and solve problems. And teachers need to know about collaboration: how to structure interactions among students, how to collaborate with other teachers, and how to work with parents to shape supportive experiences at school and home.

(Darling,1998).

EFL teachers should realize that every technique in language classrooms can be enhanced by an effective strategy, which does not need to be outstanding or inspirational. Everyday classroom practice can be very motivating through teachers' careful design of techniques. A small talk with personal language that inspires students' thinking about personal goals when checking homework, an exercise with feedback, cooperative work, or a game that can stimulate problem solving can increase students' motivation. The integration of technology

into EFL classes had a positive effect on learning outcomes. A comprehensive instructional design is critically important. The success of any instruction depends on a complete, methodical, well planned instructional design.

However, it is very important to keep in mind that technology itself cannot help students learn better without effective instructional design. EFL teachers, as well as courseware designers, must realize that the applicability of technology depends on effective pedagogical strategies to produce an effective language learning environment.

The following are some ideas retrieved from Bowsher, (2001), and Macbeath (2001) with modifications to suit the status of education in Gaza strip.

Single-sex schools

Around two decades ago, the co-educational schools were not existed in Gaza UNRWA schools. Nearly, no research proved that single-sex schools offer any unique academic benefits. The remaining female schools emphasize that girls learn better when they are not distracted with boys.

Scheduled adjustment

The scheduled system of the English periods in Gaza UNRWA schools is 45 or 40 minutes for each. According to Bowsher (2003), the research proved that if this period extended to be 90 minutes for each English period, the English achievement will be improved. This because English is a language in the first place, and the language should be practiced to reach the desirable mastery level. The 90 period minutes enables students to learn and practice English in a greater depth. The research proved also that this trend in teaching English results in less students movement in the schools. Also, it reduces discipline problems and improves teachers morale. The researcher knows that it is difficult to change the scheduled adjustment for all school. She suggests to combine each two English periods together. This may contribute to a better results in English achievement.

Standardized lesson plans

English language teaching has its special case as it is a foreign language teaching. No doubt, new and inexperienced English teacher find difficulty in planning their lessons.

As previously mentioned, it may take years to master these tasks. One program being tried by other educational systems around the world is the standardized lesson plans.

The fact that the most English teachers are new or inexperienced may consider this new program as possible option to improve English achievement level.

More male teachers in elementary schools

The thing which was noted during the administration of the study tool is that most the elementary English teachers are female, even in the male schools. Some educators believe that good male role models can motivate young boys to have a positive attitude towards learning. It was also noted that the female teachers who teach the sixth grade found many difficulties in controlling their behavior (as stated by some teachers) the thing which may causes weakness in the English language achievement.

Numbers of the students in the class

A lot of research results which had a positive learning achievement level changes when the numbers of the students dropped from 30 to 20 students in the class. Despite this may add additional financial load on the education department, but its results as documented in the previous studies dealt with this issue, worth. In fact, many teachers complained that the students' numbers in the classes are too big that they are supposed to deal with all of them in the periods equally.

Summary

This section reviewed the literature related to five factors affecting English language low achievement level. At first, a background of ELT in Palestine was presented. Second, it was essential to mention the importance of the English textbook in the EFL classroom. Third, the teaching and learning English process were not neglected. Fourth, the researcher reviewed literature related to English teacher and teaching English strategies. Finally, learning environment and assessment were discussed.

Chapter II

Section B

Previous Studies

Introduction

An Overview of Related Previous Studies

Comment on the previous studies

Summary

Introduction

This section aims at reviewing previous studies related to the current study.

For many years, educators and researchers have debated which school variables influence student achievement. As policymakers become more involved in school reform, this question takes on new importance since their many initiatives rely on presumed relationships between various education-related factors and learning outcomes. Some research has suggested that "schools bring little influence to bear upon a child's achievement that is independent of his background and general social context" .Other evidence suggests that factors like class size , teacher qualifications, school size, and other school variables may play an important role in what students learn. (Darling-Hammond, 1999:33). The researcher has chosen five of the school variables to examine their effect as reasons for the English low achievement level.

Factors affecting students achievement:

El-Tarteer (2003) in his study entitled" The reasons for the low achievement among the low basic elementary stage in West Bank northern governorates" aimed to investigate the reasons behind the low achievement from the teachers estimates. The study was conducted using a questionnaire as a tool to collect information about the problem. The study findings were as follows:

The main reasons for the low achievement were anxiety83,8%, the automatic promotion 81.3%, the lack of practice in learning 79.6%, the children's hating for the learning environment 76%, and separating the curriculum from the local environment 70.8%. in the light of previous results the researcher recommended rehabilitating the teachers and reconsidering the automatic promotion, as well as, encouraging the parents to be involved in their children's learning and remedial planning.

Factors influencing English majors achievement at AL-Najah university as perceived by students. Al-Hassan, Waleed.(2000).

Another research was carried out by Al-Hassan in which he attempted to investigate the relative socio-economic status, anxiety test, study habits and gender on students' achievement of English language at AL-Najah university. Data analysis showed insignificant correlation between the achievement and the four variables. The only significant difference was shown between mother education and students achievement. Out of these findings, the researcher recommended that students should be trained on the effective study habits.

Teacher's qualification & student's achievement

Teacher is the key element in the teaching process. He is the most significant factor affecting student learning and development. The researcher focuses on teacher qualifications here also because clearly it is considered more important to increasing student achievement. Some evidence suggests that better qualified teachers may make a difference for student learning at the classroom.

William L. Sanders and June C. Rivers (1996) in their study entitled "cumulative and Residual Effects of Teachers on Future Student Academic Achievement aimed to present the preliminary results of estimates of cumulative teacher effects in mathematics from grades 3 to 5 using the data from two of Tennessee's larger metropolitan systems. The findings of this study shows that the effects of teachers on student achievement are both additive and cumulative with little evidence of compensatory effects and As teacher effectiveness increases, lower achieving students are the first to benefit. The top quintile of teachers facilitate appropriate to excellent gains for students of all achievement levels.

Steven G. Rivikin (2005) in a study of "Teachers, Schools and Academic achievement" aims to investigate the impact of schools and teachers in influencing the achievement. The results confirm that teachers have a powerful effect on students reading achievement. Also the results suggests that the effects of costly ten students reduction in class size are smaller than the benefit of moving one standard deviation up the teacher quality distribution.

These results come along with Darling suggestion that the teacher has the biggest impact upon students achievement.

The critical need for rigorous standards for teacher preparation in general, and ELT teachers in particular, leaves no doubt that quality teacher preparation and a systematic means for assessing preparation are priorities at the national and local levels. How we assess teacher quality has a direct and lasting effect upon teacher preparation, licensing, performance, and student achievement(Barzaq,2007:6) The most important educational investment a state can make is in highly qualified teachers. When teachers have too little knowledge of the subjects that they teach, their students are denied the most basic learning resource.

Students who are assigned to several ineffective teachers in a row have significantly lower achievement and gains in achievement than those who are assigned to several highly effective teachers in sequence.

Brian, Cullen (1997)in a study entitled "Techniques for Teaching Culture in the EFL Classroom". suggests that after relevant characteristics of students are controlled, teachers' effects on students' achievement can be attributed to three general classes of variables:

- teaching ability, defined in terms of teachers knowledge of subject matter and teaching strategies.
- teachers motivation usually defined by such constructs as teachers efficacy, locus of control, and outcome expectancies.
- and the school and classroom situations in which teachers work, including such factors as class size, instructional grouping arrangements, time allocations, and the extent to which schools have been restructured to provide teachers with appropriate control over working conditions and/ or support from colleagues.(Brian:1997).

Parents have always known that it matters a lot which teachers their children get. That is why those with the time and skills to do so work very hard to ensure that, by hook or by crook, their children are assigned to the best teachers. (That is also at least part of the reason why the children of less-skilled parents are often left with the worst teachers.) Professional educators typically reject these notions. When parents ask for their children to be assigned to a particular teacher, or to be moved out of the classroom of another, most principals counsel them not to worry: "Your child will learn what he or she needs to from any of our teachers."

However, Recent research proves that parents have been right all along. They may not always know which teachers really are the best, but they are absolutely right in believing that their children will learn a lot from one teacher and only a little from another even though the two teachers may be in adjacent classrooms.

In this issue, Ferguson (1996), in his study "How and why money matters: An analysis of Alabama schools has looked closely at the relationship between student achievement and teacher performance on a basic literacy examination. Ferguson found a significant positive relationship between teacher test scores on the TECAT and student scores on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS), with higher-scoring teachers more likely to produce significant gains in student achievement than their lower scoring counterparts.

Ferguson got similar results in an analysis of the impact of teacher and classroom qualities on student achievement scores in Alabama. As in the Texas studies, he found a strong positive relationship between teacher test scores and student achievement results.

These issues have been the topic of much other research over the last 50 years. Variables presumed to be indicative of teachers' competence which have been examined for their relationship to student learning include measures of academic ability, years of education, years of teaching experience, measures of subject matter and teaching knowledge, certification status, and teaching behaviors in the classroom.

The results of these studies have been mixed; however, some trends have emerged in similar other studies cited earlier.

Hammond (2000) in her valuable research "Teacher quality and student achievement" indicates that the effects of well-prepared teachers on student achievement can be stronger than the influences of student background factors, such as poverty, language background, and minority status.

The relationship between Teachers knowledge and Students' achievement

Teacher's expertise, or what teachers know and can do, affect all the core tasks of teaching. Their skill in assessing their students' progress depends also on how deeply they themselves know the content, and how well they can understand and interpret students talk and written work. Nothing can fully compensate for the weakness of a teacher who lacks the knowledge and skill needed to help students master the curriculum.

Fergusons (1996) found in a recent review of 60 studies that teacher education, ability, and experience, along with small schools and lower teacher pupil rations, are associated with significant increase in student achievement. In their estimate of the achievement gains associated with various uses of funds, additional spending on teacher education outweighed other variables as the most productive investment for schools.

Another body of research confirms that teacher knowledge of subject matter, student learning and development, and teaching methods are all important elements of teachers effectiveness.

On the other hand, Monk and King (1994:51) found both positive and negative, generally insignificant effects of teachers' subject matter preparation on student achievement.

Despite concerns that education majors may be less well prepared in their subject areas than are academic majors (Galambos, 1985), comparisons of teachers with degrees in education vs. Those with degrees in disciplinary fields have found no relationship between degree type

and teacher performance (Murnane, 1985). This may be because certification requirements reduce the variability in course backgrounds found for teachers with different degree types.

Teaching Experience:

Other studies of the effects of teacher experience on student learning have found a relationship between teachers' effectiveness and their years of experience (Murnane & Phillips, 1981:260; Klitgaard & Hall, 1974:101), but not always a significant one or an entirely linear one. While many studies have established that inexperienced teachers (those with less than three years of experience) are typically less effective than more senior teachers, the benefits of experience appear to level off after about five years, (Rosenholtz, 1986). A possible cause of this curvilinear trend in experience effects is that older teachers do not always continue to grow and learn and may grow tired in their jobs. Furthermore, the benefits of experience may interact with educational opportunities. Veteran teachers in settings that emphasize continual learning and collaboration continue to improve their performance (Rosenholtz, 1984). Similarly, very well-prepared beginning teachers can be highly effective. For example, some recent studies of 5-year teacher education programs--programs that include a bachelor's degree in the discipline and master's in education as well as a year-long student teaching placement--have found graduates to be more confident than graduates of 4-year programs and as effective as more senior teachers (Andrew & Schwab, 1995; Denton & Peters, 1988).

Language Learning strategies

Cross-cultural study of the relationship between language learning strategies and socio-educational and cultural factors. Dr. Ruwaida Abu Rass (2007).

This study reports on the relationships between learning strategies and socio-educational and cultural variables in three educational settings: The Academic College for Education in Haifa, The Academic Arab Institute for Teaching and Teacher Education at Beit Berl College and The College of Education in Gaza. The study also compares between the use of the learning strategies among the participants. It also tries to explain the first cultural interference which is likely to happen when the students learn another language. The results showed that the students from Gaza College tend to employ coping strategies such as memorization more than the subjects from Israel. Since the two other colleges follow the Israeli educational system, which is much more Westernized, they tend to deal with the text employing other strategies such as guessing meaning from context. Unlike the students from Gaza, they tend to be more independent using clues in the text.

For the language learning strategies adopted by the Gazan students the researcher adds" The results show that the Palestinian students from Gaza are much more influenced by the first culture because they tend to employ more traditional strategies such as translating the unfamiliar words. In addition, they prefer to use the dictionary more than it is necessary. They look for clues in the text to answer the questions less than the Israeli students. They are also more attached to the text and prefer to summarize it and write notes about it. In contrast, the participants from Israel use prediction and skimming to have an idea about the text. They also like to guess meaning from context rather than overusing the dictionary. While they try to guess from context more, the Gaza students either visualize the word or remember it's in the text indicate that they still prefer memorization. However, their tendency to employ the

traditional strategy of memorization doesn't prevent them from using more effective strategies such as putting the word in a sentence or writing the context and underlining the word. Employing such strategies that would contribute to more successful language learning experiences would be attributed to the exposure of the Palestinian people to the world under the Palestinian authority.

These results are similar to those of Abu Shamais (2003:10) who found that students in Palestine are more concerned with passing exams and answering questions that are directly related to the text. Therefore, their attachment to the text could be attributed to cultural factors. Instead of skimming and guessing meaning from the text, they prefer summarizing the text or writing notes about it.

Abu Rass (2007) states that " There is a need for familiarizing the students with effective strategies for language learning that would guarantee successful experiences in language classes. Students should be exposed to different strategies to deal with texts and learn vocabulary effectively. Strategy training should be embedded with language classes. Exposing the learners to effective strategies should be an integral part of any language program to help the learners become autonomous, self-directed, and independent. It is important to consciously familiarize them with the strategies to be able to assess them and be able to use better strategies for better learning. Strategy training could be done by modeling and reporting. Language instructors should model the use of the most useful strategies for the learners. Then, a text should be given to help the learners exercise the use of these strategies. Later, the learners should be given the chance to report about the strategies that are helpful or not. Reasoning should be part of the exercises. It means that the learners are expected to give reasons why some strategies are better than others for them when they give their reports. ".

Comment:

- This research reveals that the use of language learning strategies is highly influenced by the first culture of the learners.
- It is shown through this study that the Gaza students take fewer risks than the Arab students in the Israeli educational settings who are more influenced by the Israeli system of education. The thing which indicates that there is a relationship between the socio-educational factors and the strategy choice.
- Strategy training should be a must in language programs, especially at the early stage. The aim is to help the language learners be aware of the effective use of the strategies and to help them be independent learners.

Comment on the previous studies

- These studies did not examine the characteristics or practices of more and less effective teachers.
- Most previous research on effects of schooling has concluded that the effect of school or teacher quality on academic achievement is less than that of family background or other characteristics of students that predate entry into school. However, the evidence for that generalization is derived mainly from a few of the world's school systems (mostly in Europe, North America, and Japan). Conversely, in low-income countries, such as Palestine, the effect of school and teacher quality on academic achievement in primary school is comparatively great.
- If education leaders want to accomplish this goal in the near term, they are far more likely to do so if they focus first and foremost on quality—quality in teacher preparation, recruitment, hiring, assignment, and ongoing professional development.

Summary:

This chapter dealt with the previous studies concerning the variables which affect students achievement level. These previous studies enriched the study as they enriched it's educational background concerning the theoretical part of study .

Chapter III

Methodology and procedures

Introduction

This study aims at investigating the reasons for the low English achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools. Also, this study attempts to suggest an instructional program for tackling these weaknesses.

This chapter deals with the methodology, design and procedures of the study. It introduces the type of the research, the population, the instrumentation, the pilot study, validity and reliability of the instrument , and data analysis procedures.

Research Design:

The researcher adopted the descriptive analytical approach to describe and analyze the data. Koul defined the descriptive approach stating that it " is designed to obtain pertinent and precise information concerning the current status of phenomena and, whenever possible, to draw valid general conclusions from facts discovered" (Koul, 1999:432).

The Population of the Study

The population of this study consists of all female and male teachers of the sixth grade in Gaza City and North Gaza UNRWA schools teachers for the second semester of the scholastic year 2008-2009. Their ages ranged from 20-58 years old.

To answer the questionnaire, the researcher has asked 65 of the sixth grade English teachers who were enrolled in the UNRWA schools in Gaza for the second semester of the scholastic year 2008-2009 to fill in this questionnaire.

The distribution of the sample of the study according to the gender variable is shown in table (3.1)

Table: (3.1)

The distribution of the sample of the study

according to the Gender variable

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	23	35.38
Female	42	64.61
Total	65	100.00

Note: The respondents to the study tool were 65.

The above table (3.1) shows the distribution of the study sample according to the gender variable. It can be noted that the female teachers constitutes the majority of the study population as their percentage was 64.61%, while the male teachers constitutes 35.38% of the study population. In fact this thing is predictable that the researcher administered the tool for all the English language teachers of the sixth grade. The researcher noted that there are female teachers teaching English for the male sixth graders. This is due to the reason that most of the graduate from the faculty of education are female. Also, the males in Gaza don't tend to join the faculty of education in the universities

.

The distribution of the sample of the study according to the age variable is shown in table (3.2)

Table: (3.2)

The distribution of the sample of the study

according to the Age variable

Age	count	Percent
20-29	29	52.7
30-39	12	21.8
40 and older	14	25.5
Total	55	100.0

Note: The respondents to the study tool were 65. Only 55 wrote their age.

The above table (3.2) shows the distribution of the study according to the age variable. The respondents' age were varied between 20-58years old. From the table (3.2) it is clear that more than half of these respondents are from 20-29 years old. They constitutes 52.7% of the study population. The mean of the respondents' age equals 32.85 years.

The distribution of the sample of the study according to the years of experience variable is shown in table (3.3)

Table: (3.3)

The distribution of the sample of the study according to the Years of experience variable

Experience	Count	Percent
1-5	25	45.5
6-10	14	25.5
11 and above	16	29.0
Total	55	100.0

Note: The respondents to the study tool were 65. Only 55 wrote their years of experience.

The researcher tends to classify the teachers according to the years of experience they have. Considering the first class years from 1-5 years as novice teachers, 6-10 years as less experienced, and class from 11 and above as experienced. It can be noted from table:(3.3) that the class which have the largest number of teachers is the first that was classified as novice teachers with 45.5% of the study population. The mean of the respondents years of experience equals 9.58 years

The distribution of the sample of the study according to the location variable is shown in table (3.4)

Table: (3.4)

The distribution of the sample of the study according to the Location variable

Governorate	Count	Percent
North Gaza district	27	50.0
Gaza City district	27	50.0
Total	54	100.0

Note: The respondents to the study tool were 65. Only 54 wrote their location.

The table(3.4) shows the distribution of the population according to location. The study tool was administered to the sixth grade English teachers in two districts, North Gaza district and Gaza city district. The percentage of the respondents of each district equals 50% for the both.

The Tool of the Study*:*

The researcher used one tool in order to achieve the aim of the study which is a 60 items and two open questions questionnaire. The researcher constructed the questionnaire depending on different resources. These resources are: books of second language teaching, book of evaluative materials, and previous studies such as Mabrouk (2003) Al Majdalawi (2005) and Al-Gussain (2001). In addition, some of the questionnaire items were generated from the sixth grade English teachers themselves. This questionnaire was conducted to investigate the reasons for the English low achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools. It was consisted of 60 items and two open questions. The 60 items were categorized into five domains: the first included the English sixth grade textbook, the second domain included the sixth grade English teachers, the third domain included the English teaching

strategies, the fourth about the learning environment, and the final included the unified English achievement test..

Data Measurement

In order to be able to select the appropriate method of analysis, the level of measurement must be understood. For each type of measurement, there is/are an appropriate method/s that can be applied and not others. In this research, ordinal scales were used. Ordinal scale is a ranking or a rating data that normally uses integers in ascending or descending order. The numbers assigned to the important (1,2,3,4,5) do not indicate that the interval between scales are equal, nor do they indicate absolute quantities. They are merely numerical labels. Based on Likert scale we have the following:

Table: (3.5)

Data Measurement Scale

Item	Very large extent	Large extent	Small extent	Very small extent	Not present
Scale	5	4	3	2	1

Statistical analysis Tools

The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods. The Data analysis was made utilizing (SPSS 15). The researcher utilized the following statistical tools:

1) Cronbach's Alpha for Reliability Statistics.

2) Pearson coefficient correlation for Validity.

3) Frequency and Descriptive analysis.

4) Nonparametric Tests (Spearman correlation test, Sign Test, Mann-Whitney test, and Kruskal-Wallis test).

Validity of Questionnaire

Validity refers to the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. Validity has a number of different aspects and assessment approaches.

Content Validity:

The questionnaire has been administered in its initial draft to group of university professors specialized in curriculum and teaching methods who worked in the Palestinian universities in the Gaza Strip .The panel of referees were asked to assess the content of each item and as a where they interpreted their views and opinions about domains of concern ,as well as the clarity of linguistic formulations .In the light of those views some items were excluded , others were added ,bringing the number of the whole items of the questionnaire to 60 items. And two open questions.

Statistical Validity of the Questionnaire

Statistical validity is used to evaluate instrument validity, which includes criterion-related validity and construct validity.

To insure the validity of the questionnaire, two statistical tests were applied. The first test was Criterion-related validity test (Spearman test) which measures the correlation coefficient between each item in one field and the whole field. The second test was structure validity test (Spearman test) that used to test the validity of the questionnaire structure by testing the validity of each field and the validity of the whole questionnaire. It measured the correlation coefficient between one filed and all the fields of the questionnaire that have the same level of similar scale.

1- Criterion Related Validity

Internal consistency of the questionnaire was measured by a pilot sample, which was consisted of 30 questionnaires through measuring the correlation coefficients between each item in one field and the whole filed.

Table: (3.6)

The Correlation coefficient of each item

of the first section with the total score of section: one

No.	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	P-Value (Sig.)
1.	0.598	0.000*
2.	0.803	0.000*
3.	0.467	0.005*
4.	0.678	0.000*
5.	0.379	0.020*
6.	0.511	0.002*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table (3.6) clarifies the correlation coefficient for each statement of "The sixth grade English textbook" section and the total of the field. The p-values (Sig.) are less than 0.05, so the correlation coefficients of this section are significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, so it can be said that the items of this section are consistent and valid to measure what it was set for.

Table: (3.7)

The Correlation coefficient of each item

of the first sub section with the total score of the first sub section: one

No.	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	P-Value (Sig.)
7	0.451	0.006*
8	0.844	0.000*
9	0.866	0.000*
10	0.559	0.001*
11	0.766	0.000*
12	0.603	0.000*
13	0.571	0.000*
14	0.676	0.000*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table (3.7) clarifies the correlation coefficient for each statement of "The English teacher as a person **"** section and the total of the field. The p-values (Sig.) are less than 0.05, so the correlation coefficients of this field are significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, so it can be concluded that the items of this sub section are consistent and valid to measure what it was set for.

Table: (3.8)

The Correlation coefficient of each item

of the second sub section with the total score of the first sub section: two

No.	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	P-Value (Sig.)
15	0.751	0.000*
16	0.872	0.000*
17	0.757	0.000*
18	0.706	0.000*
19	0.648	0.000*
20	0.636	0.000*
21	0.675	0.000*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table (3.8) clarifies the correlation coefficient for each item of "English Teacher Prerequisites" sub section and the total of the sub section. The p-values (Sig.) are less than 0.05, so the correlation coefficients of this section are significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, so it can be said that the items of this section are consistent and valid to measure what it was set for.

Table: (3.9)

The Correlation coefficient of each item of the

third sub section of section two with the total score of the sub section: three

No.	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	P-Value (Sig.)
22	0.709	0.000*
23	0.712	0.000*
24	0.455	0.006*
25	0.573	0.000*
26	0.684	0.000*
27	0.680	0.000*
28	0.782	0.000*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table (3.9) clarifies the correlation coefficient for each statement of "Classroom Management" sub section and the total of the sub section. The p-values (Sig.) are less than 0.05, so the correlation coefficients of this section are significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, so it can be said that the items of this section are consistent and valid to measure what it was set for.

Table: (3.10)

The Correlation coefficient of each item of the first sub section of section three with the total score of the sub section: one

No.	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	P-Value (Sig.)
29	0.662	0.000*
30	0.790	0.000*
30	0.541	0.001*
32	0.617	0.000*
33	0.763	0.000*
34	0.463	0.005*
35	0.448	0.007*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table (3.10) clarifies the correlation coefficient for each statement of" the presentation stage" sub section and the total of the sub section. The p-values (Sig.) are less than 0.05, so the correlation coefficients of this field are significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, so it can be said that the items of this section are consistent and valid to measure what it was set for.

Table: (3.11)

The Correlation coefficient of each item of the second sub section of section three with the total score of the sub section: two

No.	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	P-Value (Sig.)
36	0.855	0.000*
37	0.731	0.000*
38	0.896	0.000*
39	0.868	0.000*
40	0.811	0.000*
41	0.722	0.000*
42	0.750	0.000*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table (3.11) clarifies the correlation coefficient for each statement of "the practice stage" sub section and the total of the sub section. The p-values (Sig.) are less than 0.05, so the correlation coefficients of this section are significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, so it can be said that the items of this section are consistent and valid to measure what it was set for.

Table: (3.12)

The Correlation coefficient of each item of the third sub section of section three with the total score of the sub section: three

No.	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	P-Value (Sig.)
43	0.829	0.000*
44	0.750	0.000*
45	0.852	0.000*
46	0.792	0.000*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table (3.12) clarifies the correlation coefficient for each statement of "the production stage" sub section and the total of the sub section. The p-values (Sig.) are less than 0.05, so the correlation coefficients of this section are significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, so it can be said that the items of this section are consistent and valid to measure what it was set for.

Table: (3.13)

The Correlation coefficient of each item

of the fourth section with the total score of section: four

No.	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	P-Value (Sig.)
47	0.687	0.000*
48	0.810	0.000*
49	0.860	0.000*
50	0.813	0.000*
51	0.759	0.000*
52	0.885	0.000*
53	0.738	0.000*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table (3.13) clarifies the correlation coefficient for each statement of "the Learning Environment" section and the total of the section. The p-values (Sig.) are less than 0.05, so the correlation coefficients of this section are significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, so it can be said that the items of this section are consistent and valid to be measure what it was set for.

Table: (3.14)

The Correlation coefficient of each item

of the fifth section with the total score of section: five

No.	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	P-Value (Sig.)
54	0.528	0.001*
55	0.873	0.000*
56	0.555	0.001*
57	0.629	0.000*
58	0.759	0.000*
59	0.750	0.000*
60	0.729	0.000*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table (3.14) clarifies the correlation coefficient for each statement of "the unified English achievement test" section and the total of the section. The p-values (Sig.) are less than 0.05, so the correlation coefficients of this section are significant at $\alpha = 0.05$, so it can be said that the items of this section are consistent and valid to be measure what it was set for.

2- Structure Validity of the Questionnaire

Structure validity is the second statistical test that used to test the validity of the questionnaire structure by testing the validity of each field and the validity of the whole questionnaire. It measures the correlation coefficient between one filed and all the fields of the questionnaire that have the same level of liker scale.

The researcher assessed the fields structure validity by calculating the correlation coefficients of each field of the questionnaire and the whole of questionnaire.

Table: (3.15)

The correlation coefficient of each section and

with the total score of the questionnaire

Section	Spearman Correlation Coefficient	P-Value (Sig.)
1.	0.341	0.033*
2.1	0.905	0.000*
2.2	0.868	0.000*
2.3	0.710	0.000*
Total 2	0.926	0.000*
3.1	0.754	0.000*
3.2	0.813	0.000*
3.3	0.657	0.000*
Total 3	0.845	0.000*
4	0.700	0.000*
5	0.685	0.000*

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

It is clearly concluded from the table (3.15) that all the domains are inter correlated consistently, as well as , with the total score of the questionnaire in statistical significant correlation at the significance level (0.05).Thus it can be concluded that the questionnaire is highly valid and of high degree of reliability and internal consistency.

Note:

According to the pilot study, two statements were eliminated:

1- The statement “The exercises are varied” from section one because the value of Spearman correlation coefficient equals 0.174 with P-value (sig.) =0.184 which is greater than the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$.

2- The statement “Focus on memorization” from section five because the value of Spearman correlation coefficient equals 0.251 with P-value (sig.) =0.090 which is greater than the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$.

Reliability of the instrument

The reliability of an instrument can be defined as the degree of consistency which measures the attribute; it is supposed to be measuring (Polit & Hungler,1985). The less variation an instrument produces in repeated measurements of an attribute, the higher its reliability. Reliability can be equated with the stability, consistency, or dependability of a measuring tool. The test is repeated to the same sample of people on two occasions and then compares the scores obtained by computing a reliability coefficient (Polit & Hungler, 1985:15)..

Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha

This method was used to measure the reliability of the questionnaire between each field and the mean of the whole fields of the questionnaire. The normal range of Cronbach’s coefficient alpha value between 0.0 and + 1.0, and the higher values reflects a higher degree of internal consistency. The Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was calculated for each field of the questionnaire.

Table: (3.16)

The Cronbach's Alpha for each filed of the questionnaire

and all the questionnaire

No.	Field	Cronbach's Alpha
1	**The sixth grade English textbook**	**0.623**
2.1	The English teacher as a person	0.843
2.2	English Teacher Prerequisites	0.855
2.3	Classroom Management	0.819
2	**The sixth grade teacher**	**0.932**
3.1	The presentation stage	0.742
3.2	The practice stage	0.921
3.3	The production stage	0.872
3	**English Teaching Strategies**	**0.941**
4	**The Learning Environment**	**0.905**
5	**The unified English achievement test**	**0.860**
Total		**0.965**

Table (3.16) shows that the values of Cronbach's Alpha for each section of the questionnaire and the entire questionnaire. For the sections, values of Cronbach's Alpha were in the range from 0.623 and 0.941. This range is considered high; the result ensures the reliability of each section of the questionnaire. Cronbach's Alpha equals 0.965 for the entire questionnaire which indicates an excellent reliability of the entire questionnaire. Thereby, it can be said that the researcher proved that the questionnaire was valid, reliable, and ready for distribution for the population sample.

Summary

This chapter dealt with methodology and design of the study. It described how the research was conducted, the instrumentation used, how the data were collected, recorded and analyzed and how validity and reliability of the data were assured. At first, the researcher presented the population distribution. Then, the researcher presented the sample of the study in accordance with the study variables. In addition, the researcher tested validity and reliability of the tools used. Finally, the researcher detailed the procedures in performing the study.

Chapter IV

Results :Analysis of Data

Introduction

The previous chapter presented the methodology and design of this study. In this chapter, the researcher presents the findings of the study. The purpose of this study was to investigate the reasons for the English low achievement level among the sixth graders in the UNRWA schools in Gaza. Furthermore, the researcher attempted to design a program for tackling this low English achievement level. To achieve this aim ,the researcher attempted to answer the questions of the study; through using a questionnaire. This chapter introduces the results of the study tool as statistically treated and the discussion of the results in the light of the questions of the study.

Statistical Analysis:

Sign test is used to determine if the mean of a paragraph is significantly different from a hypothesized value 3 (Small extent). If the P-value (Sig.) is less than the level of significance, $\alpha = 0.05$, then the mean a paragraph is significantly different from a hypothesized value 3. The sign of the Test value indicates whether the mean is significantly greater or smaller than hypothesized value 3. On the other hand, if the P-value (Sig.) is greater than the level of significance, $\alpha = 0.05$, then the mean a paragraph is insignificantly different from a hypothesized value 3

Statistical hypothesis tests:

1. Mann-Whitnay test was used to examine if there is a statistical significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to gender?
2. The Kruskal-Wallis test was used to check and if there are any significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the age, and the years of experience?

Examination of Research Questions

Question number one:

1- What are the reasons for English low achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools?

Obviously, it was hard to investigate the reasons for the English achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools through observation only. Hence, the researcher conducted a questionnaire consisted of five sections and two open questions. The researcher found that in order to put her hand on the real reasons of this problem, she should be aware of the practices and the teaching strategies the sixth grade English teachers use in English classes. In addition, an exploring to the teachers evaluation of the English textbook was needed in this phase. Also, it was necessary to investigate the teachers' evaluation of the learning environment inside the two districts schools. Furthermore, the researcher specified section in the questionnaire to teachers evaluation of the unified English test conducted by the UNRWA education administration. Finally, the respondents were exposed for two open questions in order to elicit their opinions of the reasons which affect the sixth graders English achievement level in addition to their suggestions for tackling this weakness. After analyzing this data which is divided into qualitative and quantitative, the researcher set the reasons for the problem in the light of the previously mentioned considerations.

Sub-Question Number One

Section one: "The sixth grade English textbook"

1.1- Are there statistically significant differences of the extent to which the sixth grade English textbook match the standards of the good English textbook from the respondents to the current study tool estimate?

Table: (4.1)

Responses to the sixth grade English textbook.

Items from (1-6)

Response	Percent
Not present	**6.0%**
Very small extent	**16.1%**
Small extent	**39.0%**
Large extent	**29.3%**
Very large extent	**9.6%**

Comments:

The above table shows the respondents' responses to section one of the questionnaire**.** This section aims at exploring respondents reactions toward the sixth grade English textbook. Clearly, the responses to the "small extent' are the highest. In contrast, the response "very large extent" scored the lowest among the responses. It can be conclude that the respondents were not so encouraged to rate the book highly. This indicates that the textbook has some negative points from the respondents estimates. This comes along with their opinions stated in question number 1.6.

Table: (4.2)

The Mean, the Ratio Weight, Test value, Sign value and Ranking of each item of section "The sixth grade English textbook"

No.	Item	Mean	%	Test value	P-value (Sig.)	Ranking
1	The textbook topics address the learner	3.59	71.75	4.59	0.000*	1
2	The number of the periods per week is enough to cover the selected material	3.31	66.15	1.65	0.050*	3
3	The topics in the textbook motivate English learning	3.32	66.46	3.13	0.001*	2
4	The quality and the covered material are adequate for learners	3.11	62.22	0.88	0.188	4
5	The texts are relevant to students culture	2.95	59.08	0.00	0.500	6
6	The exercises are suitable for students language level	2.95	59.08	0.16	0.437	5
	The sixth grade English textbook	3.20	64.06	2.71	0.003*	

* The mean is significantly different from 3

The mean of "The sixth grade English textbook" section equals 3.2 (64.06%), test value=2.71, and P-value =0.000 which is smaller than the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$. Then the mean of "The sixth grade English textbook" is significantly greater than the hypothesized value 3.

The ratio weight of this section equals 64.06% which is significant but it is low in comparison with the other sections mean. This is reasonable whereas the teachers have many complains toward the sixth grade English textbook the thing which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The table (4.2) shows that:

1- The item "The textbook topics address the learner" had the first rank of this section with ratio weight 71.75%.

On the other hand,

2- The items "The texts are relevant to students' culture " and " The exercises are suitable for students' language level" had the sixth rank of this section with ratio weight 59.08% for each . This indicates that the respondents to this questionnaire rated these two items lower than the rest.

Sub-Question Number Two

Section two: The sixth grade English language teacher

1.2- Are there statistically significant differences in the respondents' to the current study tool practices in the sixth grade English classes?

The first domain of section two: "The English teacher as a person"

Table: (4.3)

Responses to "The English teacher as a person"

Items from (7-14)

Response	Percent
Not present	**0.2%**
Very small extent	
Small extent	**16.9%**
Large extent	**36.9%**
Very large extent	**40.8%**

Comments

The table (4.3) shows that the highest response percent with 40.8%was "very large extent" and " large extent" the thing which indicates high rating of this domain.

Table: (4.4)

The Mean, the Ratio Weight, Test value, Sign value and Ranking of each item of domain "The English teacher as a person"

No.	Item	Mean	%	Test value	P-value (Sig.)	Ranking
7	He is responsible for his students success	3.69	73.75	3.95	0.000*	7
8	Enjoys teaching English	4.25	85.00	7.08	0.000*	4
9	Listens attentively to his students questions and comments	4.38	87.50	7.29	0.000*	2
10	Knows all his/her students as individuals	4.19	83.75	6.62	0.000*	6
11	Feels that she/he an important part of the school community	4.39	87.81	7.01	0.000*	1
12	Communicate with students families frequently	3.55	71.08	3.58	0.000*	8
13	Learns from her/his past experience in the classroom	4.37	87.38	7.01	0.000*	3
14	Is patient with the students	4.22	84.31	6.66	0.000*	5
	The English teacher as a person	4.12	82.47	7.56	0.000*	

The mean of "the English teacher as a person" equals 4.12 (82.47%), test value=7.56, and P-value =0.000 which is smaller than the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$. Then the mean of the English teacher as a person is significantly greater than the hypothesized value 3.

According to the previous table, it can be concluded that:

1- Item number 11 had the first rank of this domain with ratio weight 87.81%.

On the other hand,

2- Item number 12 had the eighth rank of this domain with ratio weight 71.08%

The teacher as a person domain was rated high in this questionnaire in comparison with the previous section..

Section two: English Language Teacher

The second domain of section two: English Language Teacher Prerequisites

Table: (4.5)

Responses to "English language Teacher Prerequisites"

Items from (15-22)

Response	Percent
Very small extent	**2.0%**
Small extent	**14.5%**
Large extent	**38.0%**
Very large extent	**45.5%**

Comments

Similar to the previous domain, the responses " Very large extent " and " Large extent " had the highest number of responses. This indicates that the respondents rated teacher prerequisites which they have with high rating.

Table: (4.6)

The Mean, the Ratio Weight, Test value, Sign value and Ranking of each item of domain "English Teacher Prerequisites"

No.	Item	Mean	%	Test value	P-value (Sig.)	Ranking
15	Has had English teaching preparation	4.45	88.92	7.22	0.000*	2
16	Has a knowledge of English teaching strategies	4.45	88.92	7.36	0.000*	1
17	Speaks English fluently	4.26	85.23	7.08	0.000*	4
18	Communicates well with his/her students	4.37	87.38	7.17	0.000*	3
19	Connects real life with the English topics	4.25	84.92	7.08	0.000*	5
20	Demonstrate ability to use visual and electronic aids	3.89	77.85	5.93	0.000*	7
21	Has a subject matter knowledge	4.23	84.62	6.89	0.000*	6
	English Teacher Perquisites	4.27	85.41	7.81	0.000*	

* The mean is significantly different from 3

Comment:

Table (4.6) shows that the mean of English Teacher Prerequisites equals 4.27 (85.41%), test value=7.81, and P-value =0.000 which is smaller than the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$. Then the mean of English Teacher Prerequisites is significantly greater than the hypothesized value 3.

According to table (4.6), it can be concluded that:

1- Item number 16 had the first rank with ratio weight 88.92%.

On the other hand,

2- Item number 20 had the seventh ratio weight 77.85%.

Section two: English Language Teacher

The third domain of section two: Classroom Management

Table: (4.7)

Responses to "Classroom Management"

Items from (22-28)

Response	Percent
Not present	**0.4%**
Very small extent	**2.4%**
Small extent	**19.7%**
Large extent	**40.9%**
Very large extent	**36.5%**

Comments

Table (4.7) shows the responses to the third domain in the second section**.** The rating in this domain seems to have a high rating since the highest percent of rating was given to the "large extent" and " very large extent" with 40.9% and 36.5% in a frequent.

Table: (4.8)

The Mean, the Ratio Weight, Test value, Sign value and Ranking of each item of domain "Classroom Management"

No.	Item	Mean	%	Test value	P-value (Sig.)	Ranking
22	Sets rules at the beginning of the year	4.43	88.62	7.42	0.000*	1
23	Encourages his/her students to follow classroom routine for daily tasks	4.18	83.69	6.94	0.000*	3
24	Uses non-verbal cues to prevent misbehavior	3.98	79.69	6.50	0.000*	6
25	Decorates the classroom with students work	3.64	72.81	4.27	0.000*	7
26	Manages students behavior	4.11	82.19	6.72	0.000*	5
27	Keeps consistent discipline inside the classroom	4.16	83.13	6.55	0.000*	4
28	Invests the time and effort to develop instructional plans.	4.23	84.62	7.21	0.000*	2
	Classroom Management	4.11	82.15	7.38	0.000*	

* The mean is significantly different from 3

The mean of classroom management equals 4.11 (82.15%), test value=7.38, and P-value =0.000 which is smaller than the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$. Then the mean of classroom management is significantly greater than the hypothesized value 3.

According to table (4.8), it is noted that:

1- Item number 22 had the first rank with ratio weight of 88.62%.

On the other hand,

2- Item number 25 had the seventh rank in this domain with ratio weight of 72.81**%.**

Sub-Question Number 3

1.3- Are there statistically significant differences in the extent to which the respondents to the current study tool use the teaching strategies for teaching English for the sixth graders?

Section three: English Teaching Strategies

This section is divided into three domains related to English language teaching strategies.

The first domain in section three: During the presentation stage

Table: (4.9)

Responses to "During the presentation stage "

Items from (29-35)

Response	Percent
Not present	**2%**
Very small extent	**2.7%**
Small extent	**15.7%**
Large extent	**36.9%**
Very large extent	**44.5%**

Comments

The responses to the first domain of the "English teaching strategies" which related to "During the presentation stage" were high. It can be noted that the responses " Very large extent " and

" Large extent " responses had got the highest ratings.

Table: (4.10)

The Mean, the Ratio Weight, Test value, Sign value and Ranking of each item of domain "During the presentation stage"

No.	Item	Mean	%	Test value	P-value(Sig).	Ranking
29	Uses warming up activities	4.68	93.54	7.81	0.000*	1
30	Elicits students ideas related to the subject	4.38	87.69	7.36	0.000*	3
31	Gives examples to help students understand the new words and	4.54	90.77	7.81	0.000*	2
32	Employs educational games in teaching English language	4.05	80.92	6.21	0.000*	6
33	Employs audio-visual aids such as the course cassette and pictures	4.17	83.38	6.36	0.000*	5
34	Uses L1 excessively in the English class	3.48	69.69	3.75	0.000*	7
35	Uses appropriate classroom language in English	4.29	85.71	7.35	0.000*	4
	During the presentation stage	4.23	84.56	7.88	0.000*	

* The mean is significantly different from 3

The mean of during the presentation stage the teacher equals 4.23 (84.56%), test value=7.88, and P-value =0.000 which is smaller than the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$. Then the mean of during the presentation stage the teacher is significantly greater than the hypothesized value 3.

Comment

According to table (4.10), the following can be noted:

1- Item number 1 had the first rank with ratio weight 93.54%. this percent is the highest in the questionnaire, the thing which is considered positive because using warming up activities is a necessity of the effective teaching strategies. On the other hand,

2- Item number 34 had the seventh rank with ratio weight 69.69%. This also a positive sign of effective English teaching because English teachers are not supposed to use L1 in the foreign language classes excessively.

The second domain in section three: During the practice stage the English teacher

Table: (4.11)

Response to "During the practice stage "

Items from (36- 40)

Response	Percent
Very small extent	**3.5%**
Small extent	**15.9%**
Large extent	**44.5%**
Very large extent	**36.1%**

Comments

The responses to the domain entitled "During the practice stage " shows a high rating of the " large extent" response with 44.5%. in contrast, the response " very small extent" had the least number of rating.

Table: (4.12)

The Mean, the Ratio Weight, Test value, Sign value and Ranking of each item of domain "During the practice stage"

No.	Item	Mean	%	Test value	P-value (Sig.)	Ranking
36	Provide enough wait time for the students to answer questions	4.22	84.31	6.94	0.000*	2
37	Involves most students in the learning activity	4.15	83.08	7.07	0.000*	3
38	Encourages the students to work in groups or pairs	4.31	86.25	6.77	0.000*	1
39	Monitors students work as groups	4.08	81.56	6.40	0.000*	4
40	Copes with individual differences	4.05	80.92	6.16	0.000*	6
41	Encourages the students to speak English in the class	4.03	80.62	6.82	0.000*	7
42	Keeps his students busy all the time	4.08	81.56	6.12	0.000*	5
	During the practice stage	4.13	82.65	7.31	0.000*	

* The mean is significantly different from 3

The mean of during the practice stage the English teacher equals 4.13 (82.65%), test value=7.31, and P-value =0.000 which is smaller than the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$. Then the mean of during the practice stage the English teacher is significantly greater than the hypothesized value 3.

According table (4.12):

1-Item number 38 had the highest rating with ratio weight 86.25%. This was predicted that working in groups in the English classes is a need to overcome the problem of crowded classes. While:

2- Item number 41 had the seventh ranking with ratio weight 80.62 %.This results matches with some students complains which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The third domain in section three: During the production stage

Table: (4.13)

Response to "During the production stage"

Items from (43- 47)

Response	Percent
Very small extent	**1.5%**
Small extent	**10.0%**
Large extent	**41.3%**
Very large extent	**47.1%**

Comments

Table: (4.13) clearly shows a very high rating of " very large extent" with 47%. This is the highest rating this response had in this questionnaire.

Table: (4.14)

The Mean, the Ratio Weight, Test value, Sign value and Ranking of each item of domain "During the production stage"

No.	Item	Mean	%	Test value	P-value (Sig.)	Ranking
43	Gets the class to talk about what they have learned	4.18	83.69	6.89	0.000*	4
44	Uses positive praise	4.43	88.62	7.62	0.000*	1
45	Checks his students notebooks	4.35	87.08	7.08	0.000*	3
46	Provides relevant feedback	4.39	87.81	7.36	0.000*	2
	During the production stage	4.34	86.85	7.38	0.000*	

* The mean is significantly different from 3

The mean of during the production stage the English teacher equals 4.34 (86.85%), test value=7.38, and P-value =0.000 which is smaller than the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$. Then the mean of during the production stage the English teacher is significantly greater than the hypothesized value 3.

According to table (4.14) it is clear that:

1- Item number 44 had the highest rank with ratio weight 88.62%. This item seems to have a positive impact upon English learning that it fosters motivation for learners to learn English.

2- Item 43 had the fourth rank in this domain with ratio weight 83.69%.

We conclude that there are statistically significant differences in the extent to which the respondents to the current study tool use the teaching strategies for teaching English for the sixth graders.

Question Number 4:

Section four: The learning environment

1.4- Are there statistically significant differences in the respondents' to the current study tool estimates of the learning environment in Gaza UNRWA schools?

Table: (4.15)

Response to "The Learning Environment"

Items from (47-53)

Response	Percent
Not present	**0.9%**
Very small extent	**9.9%**
Small extent	**27.4%**
Large extent	**37.1%**
Very large extent	**24.7%**

Comments:

The responses to the section " the learning environment" were shown in table (4.15). It is clear that "large extent" response had the largest number of rating with 37.1%. In contrast, the response "small extent" had 27.4% of the total responses. This indicates that the responses varied between these two.

Table: (4.16)

The Mean, the Ratio Weight, Test value, Sign value and Ranking of each item of domain "The Learning Environment"

No.	Item	Mean	%	Test value	P-value (Sig.)	Ranking
47	The learning environment is free of noises	3.46	69.23	2.13	0.016*	7
48	It is neat and orderly in appearance	3.65	72.92	3.96	0.000*	5
49	It is clean	4.00	80.00	5.85	0.000*	2
50	It is warm and friendly	3.89	77.81	6.18	0.000*	3
51	It suits the physical size of the students	3.68	73.54	4.57	0.000*	4
52	Desks are appropriately arranged	3.55	70.94	3.66	0.000*	6
53	Blackboard is erased and organized	4.02	80.31	6.04	0.000*	1
	Reasons related to the Learning Environment	3.75	74.94	5.12	0.000*	

The mean of reasons related to the Learning Environment equals 3.75 (74.94%), test value=5.12, and P-value =0.000 which is smaller than the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$. Then the mean of reasons related to the Learning Environment is significantly greater than the hypothesized value 3.

According to table (4.16), it can be noted:

1- Item 53 had the first rank with ratio weight 80.31% .

2- Item 47 had the seventh rank with ratio weight 69.23%

We conclude that there are statistically significant differences in the respondents' to the current study tool evaluation of the learning environment in Gaza UNRWA schools**.**

Question Number 5:

1.5- Are there statistically significant differences in the respondents' to the current study tool evaluation of the unified achievement test of the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools?

Section five: The unified English achievement test

Table: (4.17)

Response to "The unified English achievement test "

Items from (54-60)

Response	Percent
Not present	**0.2%**
Very small extent	**4.0%**
Small extent	**16.7%**
Large extent	**34.1%**
Very large extent	**44.9%**

Comment:

Table: (4.17) shows the response to "The unified English achievement test ". This response shows that the most responses were given to "very large extent" as an indicator of a high rating for this section.

Table: (4.18)

The Mean, the Ratio Weight, Test value, Sign value and Ranking of each item of domain" The unified English achievement test "

No.	Item	Mean	%	Test value	P-value (Sig.)	Ranking
54	Focus on high thinking skills	3.55	71.08	3.66	0.000*	7
55	Consider individual differences	4.08	81.54	6.36	0.000*	5
56	Include the four language skills	4.48	89.69	7.29	0.000*	2
57	Test what has been taught	4.35	87.08	7.08	0.000*	4
58	Have clear instructions	4.48	89.54	7.29	0.000*	1
59	Measure the objectives of the content	4.38	87.69	7.22	0.000*	3
60	Is free of mistakes	4.05	80.92	6.04	0.000*	6
	Reasons related to the unified English achievement test	4.20	83.90	7.31	0.000*	

* The mean is significantly different from 3

The mean of reasons related to the Assessment equals 4.20 (83.90%), test value=7.31, and P-value =0.000 which is smaller than the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$. Then the mean of reasons related to the Assessment is significantly greater than the hypothesized value 3.

According to table (4.18), it can be noted:

1- Item number 58 had the first rank with ratio weight 89.54%

2- Item number 54 had the seventh rank with ratio weight 71.08%

Sub- Question Number 6:

1.6- What are the reasons for English low achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools from the respondents to the current study tool estimate?

In an attempt to answer this question, the researcher categorized the respondents answers into domains. The domains and the frequency of each item are stated in the following tables:

Table: (4.19)
Frequency of "Reasons related to the English Textbook"

No.		Frequency
Reasons related to the English Textbook		
1	The syllabus is long and difficult	18
2	The syllabus is not suitable for students level and age	8
3	There are a lot of irrelevant activities which are boring for the students	2
4	Each unit contains large number of new vocabulary	9
5	The number of periods per week isn't enough	12
6	The exercises in the WB are not always based on or related to those in SB	1
7	Some lessons have no relation to our culture	5
8	Teachers need effective enrichment material to facilitate the textbook	4
9	The support material doesn't relate to the exam	3
Total		60

Table(4.19) shows that the frequency of the respondents opinion of the reasons for the English low achievement which are related to the English textbook is 60 from the total number of the respondents which is 65. This indicates that most the teachers set reasons due the English textbook as a direct reason to the low students achievement. This result matches with the results of the first domain of the questionnaire related to the sixth grade English textbook evaluation from respondents estimates. This domain has the lower ratio weight in the whole questionnaire of 64.06%.

Table: (4.20)
Frequency of "Reasons related to the English teachers"

No.		Frequency
Reasons related to the English teachers		
14	**Teachers may not use different techniques in teaching**	**4**
15	**Teachers find difficulty in explaining some lessons**	**2**
16	**Teachers don't let students practice English in the classroom**	**26**
17	**Teachers can not take care of the low achievers during the class**	**14**
18	**Teachers use of the mother tongue in English classes**	**4**
Total		**50**

The above table presents the frequency of the respondents opinion of the reasons for the English low achievement which are related to the English teachers is 50 from the total 65. the

item with the highest frequency is "Teachers don't let students practice English in the classroom". This matches with domain two in section three which showed that the procedures the teacher implement in the English classes during the practice stage had the lower ratio weight among the three stages.

Table: (4.21)

Frequency of "Reasons related to the learner"

No.		Frequency
Reasons related to the learner		
19	**Students have already made idea that English is difficult subject**	**6**
20	**Students are weak in the English language which didn't built correctly from the beginning**	**11**
21	**Students are too naughty and move all the time**	**1**
22	**Parents don't pay an attention to their students achievement in English**	**14**
23	**Parents can not help their students in English HW that they don't know English**	**5**
Total		**37**

Teacher also stated some reasons- from their estimates- related to the learners. These reasons have a relation to learners background as well as their parental involvement. These items and others will be discussed in the due chapter.

Table: (4.22)
Frequency of" Reasons related to the unified English achievement exam"

No.		Frequency
Reasons related to the unified English achievement exam		
10	**The test was too long and has a large number of questions.**	**10**
11	**Students didn't understand the instructions of the questions**	**2**
12	**There is no training for the test for both the teacher and the students**	**3**
13	**There were problems in the format of the test**	**12**
Total		**27**

The previous tables show the frequency of the respondents opinions of the reasons related to the unified English achievement exam. The exam mentioned here is the last English exam conducted in the UNRWA schools on Gaza sixth graders. This exam was conducted last year 2007/2008 second semester. This was the last because this year the UNRWA schools didn't conduct the usual unified exam of the first semester due to the war on Gaza in January 2009.

Table: (4.23)
Frequency of" Reasons related to the Learning Environment"

No.		Frequency
Reasons related to the Learning Environment		
24	**School environment is not organized**	**2**
25	**The desks need to be replaced**	**9**
26	**The classes are not clean**	**3**
27	**The crowded classes**	**5**
Total		**19**

According to table (4.23), it is noted that 19 of the respondents to the research had expressed their opinions related to the schools learning environment as a reasons for students English low achievement level. Some of theses items correlate with the tool results concerning crowded classes and the cleanliness of the classes.

Question Number Two:

2- Are there statistically significant differences among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to personal traits (gender, age, years of experience)?

This main question can be divided into the following three questions:

2.1- Are there statistically significant differences among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the gender?

In order to answer this question the researcher used Mann-Whitnay test to examine if there is a statistically significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the gender.

Table: (4.24)

Mann-Whitney test of the sections and their p-values for Gender

Section	Test value	P-value(Sig.)
The sixth grade English textbook	1.746	0.081
The English teacher as a person	1.681	0.093
English Teacher Prerequisites	0.127	0.899
Classroom Management	0.593	0.553
Total "The sixth grade teacher"	0.907	0.365
During the presentation stage the teacher	0.255	0.798
During the practice stage the English teacher	1.400	0.161
During the production stage the English teacher	1.579	0.114
Total "English Teaching Strategies"	1.106	0.269
The Learning Environment	0.172	0.863
The unified English achievement test	1.784	0.074

Table: (4.24) shows that the p-value (Sig.) is greater than the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$ for each field, then there is no significant statistical difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the gender.

2.2- Are there statistically significant differences among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to age?

In order to answer this question the researcher used the Kruskal-Wallis test is used to check if there is significant differences among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the age.

Table: (4.25)
Kruskal-Wallis test of the sections and their p-values for Age

Field	Test Value	Df*	Sig.
The sixth grade English textbook	**1.532**	**2**	**0.465**
The English teacher as a person	**2.583**	**2**	**0.275**
English Teacher Perquisites	**3.930**	**2**	**0.140**
Classroom Management	**3.611**	**2**	**0.164**
Total "The sixth grade teacher"	**3.049**	**2**	**0.218**
During the presentation stage	**4.879**	**2**	**0.087**
During the practice stage	**6.681**	**2**	**0.035****
During the production stage	**1.023**	**2**	**0.600**
Total English Teaching Strategies	**5.306**	**2**	**0.070**
The Learning Environment	**3.804**	**2**	**0.149**
The unified English achievement test	**3.471**	**2**	**0.176**

* df : Degrees of Freedom
** Mean difference is significant at 0.05 level

Table(4.25) shows that the p-value (Sig.) is smaller than the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$ in "During the practice stage" domain in "The English teacher" section, then there is significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to age.

We conclude that the respondents' age has effect on their implementation of the English practice stage procedures for the older ages.

For the other fields, Table(4.25) shows that the Since the p-value (Sig.) is greater than the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$ for each field, then there is no significant difference among the

estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to age. We conclude that the respondents' age has no effect on these sections.

Table: (4.26)
Mean rank for each Age

Field	Age		
	20-29	30-39	40 and older
The sixth grade English textbook	28.22	23.58	31.32
The English teacher as a person	24.72	31.79	31.54
English Teacher Prerequisites	25.43	25.71	35.29
Classroom Management	24.16	32.71	31.93
Total "The sixth grade teacher"	24.50	30.75	32.89
During the presentation stage the teacher	23.62	31.29	34.25
During the practice stage the English teacher	22.79	32.50	34.93
During the production stage the English teacher	26.55	27.25	31.64
Total "English Teaching Strategies"	23.40	31.50	34.54
"The Learning Environment"	25.76	25.04	35.18
The unified English achievement test	24.21	32.21	32.25

Table(4.26) shows the mean rank for each age. It is clear that the domain " during the practice stage" had a significant difference among the three groups of ages for the group 40 and older. we conclude that respondents' age group 40 and older have the highest mean among the other age groups toward the domain "During the practice stage".

2.3- Are there statistically significant differences among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the years of experience?

In order to answer this question the researcher used the Kruskal-Wallis test to check if there are statistically significant differences among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the years of experience.

Table: (4.27)
Kruskal-Wallis test of the fields and their p-values for Years of experience

Field	Test Value	df*	Sig.
The sixth grade English textbook	1.639	2	0.441
The English teacher as a person	1.215	2	0.545
English Teacher Prerequisites	5.212	2	0.074
Classroom Management	3.152	2	0.207
Total "The English teacher"	2.951	2	0.229
During the presentation stage the teacher	5.584	2	0.061
During the practice stage the English teacher	11.571	2	0.003**
During the production stage the English teacher	2.988	2	0.224
Total "The teaching strategies"	9.298	2	0.010**
Reasons related to the Learning Environment	6.608	2	0.037**
The unified English achievement exam	5.684	2	0.058

* df : Degrees of Freedom

Table (4.27)shows that the p-value (Sig.) is smaller than the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$ for the domains "During the practice stage”,” and the section teaching Strategies” and “Reasons related to the Learning Environment” , then there is significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the years of experience.

We conclude that the respondents' years of experience have an effect on the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool in these sections.

For the other sections Table:(4.27) shows that the since the p-value (Sig.) is greater than the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$ for each field, then there is no significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the years of experience. We conclude that the respondents' years of experience has no effect on these sections.

Table: (4.28)
Mean rank for each years of experience groups

Field	Years of experience		
	1-5 Years	6-10 Years	11 Years and more
The sixth grade English textbook	30.02	23.36	28.91
The English teacher as a person	25.52	29.04	30.97
English Teacher Prerequisites	24.86	24.86	35.66
Classroom Management	24.10	29.32	32.94
Total The sixth grade teacher	24.64	27.79	33.44
During the presentation stage	22.66	30.46	34.19
During the practice stage	20.16	32.32	36.47
During the production stage	24.58	28.07	33.28
Total English Teaching Strategies	20.98	31.68	35.75
The Learning Environment	22.94	27.79	36.09
The unified English achievement exam	22.64	30.25	34.41

Table (4.28) shows the mean rank for each years of experience. From table (4.28), we conclude that respondents years of experience group 11 years and more had the highest mean among the other years of experience groups toward the section" During the practice stage"," English Teaching Strategies" and "The Learning Environment".

Again, " during the practice stage" domain expressed significant difference among the estimates of the respondents due to the years of experience for the group 11 years and more. This confirms the results of table (4.26).

2.4 Are there statistically significant differences among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the district?

In order to answer this question the researcher used Mann-Whitnay test to examine if there are statistically significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the district.

Table: (4.29)
Mann-Whitney test of the fields and their p-values for districts

Field	Test value	P-value(Sig.)
The sixth grade English textbook	**1.773**	**0.038****
The English teacher as a person	**1.198**	**0.116**
English Teacher Prerequisites	**2.010**	**0.022****
Classroom Management	**2.102**	**0.018****
Total The sixth grade teacher	**1.991**	**0.023****
During the presentation stage	**1.202**	**0.115**
During the practice stage	**1.772**	**0.038****
During the production stage	**3.795**	**0.000****
Total English Teaching Strategies	**2.355**	**0.009****
The Learning Environment	**2.904**	**0.002****
The unified English achievement exam	**2.990**	**0.001****

** Mean difference is significant at 0.05 level

Table (4.29) shows that the p-value (Sig.) is smaller than the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$ for the sections "The sixth grade English textbook", "English Teacher Perquisites", "Classroom Management", "The sixth grade teacher", "During the practice stage"," During the production stage ","English Teaching Strategies"," The Learning Environment", and

"Reasons related to the Assessment" , then there is significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the district.

We conclude that the respondents' governorate has effect on estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the district for these sections.

For the other fields, 'The English teacher as a person" and "During the presentation stage ", Table:(4.29) shows that the Since the p-value (Sig.) is greater than the level of significance $\alpha = 0.05$ for each section then there is no significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the district. We conclude that the respondents' district has no effect on these sections.

Table: (4.30)
Mean rank for each governorate

Field	District	
	North Gaza	Gaza
The sixth grade English textbook	31.28	23.72
The English teacher as a person	30.06	24.94
English Teacher Perquisites	31.78	23.22
Classroom Management	31.96	23.04
Total The sixth grade teacher	31.76	23.24
During the presentation stage	30.06	24.94
During the practice stage	31.28	23.72
During the production stage	35.48	19.52
Total English Teaching Strategies	32.54	22.46
The Learning Environment	33.70	21.30
The unified English achievement exam	33.87	21.13

Table (4.30) shows the mean rank for each district (North Gaza, and Gaza). From table:(4.30), we conclude that respondents' in North Gaza district had higher mean than respondents' in Gaza district toward these sections.

Question number 3:

This question's answer will be discussed in the due chapter that this answer is the core of the results of this research. This study aims to investigate the reasons for the English low achievement level and to suggest an instructional program for tackling this weakness. In the tool of this study, the researcher has set a question to the respondents to the current study about their suggestions to improve the students achievement level. Hence these respondents are the English teachers who deals with the curriculum and with the sixth grader frequently, their suggestions will be considered in this study as well as the suggestion from previous studies and the researchers own suggestions.

Summary:

This chapter answered the questions of the study by presenting the results of the tool. The results of each question were clarified statistically by using different tables that indicated them.

Chapter V

Findings, Results, Discussion

& Recommendation

Introduction:

In the light of educational literature reviewed and discussed throughout the study ,in addition to the practical application of the tool of the study ,this chapter aims at discussing the results of the study and giving interpretation for them. This study has been accomplished through five chapters that aimed to suggest a program for tackling English low achievement level among the sixth graders in the UNRWA schools in Gaza.

Discussing the results of Question number one:

What are the reasons for English low achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools?

It was hard to investigate the reasons for the English low achievement level of the sixth graders till the researcher knows what exactly are these students exposed to during their English language learning. In determining the factors which affect students English low achievement, the researcher reviewed the related literature and consulted some of the specialists in TEFL in addition to asking some of the sixth grade English teachers as a pre-pilot procedures. The researcher found that the relative factors which contribute to the students English low achievement are: the English textbook, the English teacher, the teaching strategies, the learning environment, and the unified English exam. The researcher developed a questionnaire of the five previously mentioned factors and administered this questionnaire to 65 English teachers who teach English language for the sixth graders in Gaza.

Section one: "The sixth grade English textbook"

This section had the lowest ratio weight in the whole questionnaire if we compare the sections with each others. When we compared the section items with each other, it is found that from the teachers' estimates, there were problems in the sixth grade English textbook concerning the following points:

- The texts are relevant to students culture . This item had the lowest ratio rate in this section. One of the EFL textbook standards that its texts should relate to the learners culture that the EFL textbooks are supposed to address the society needs. The English teachers deal with these textbooks every day, so the syllabus designers should consider their opinions when building up language materials.
- The exercises are suitable for students language level. this item in section one had similar ratio weight to the previous item. Teachers claim that the exercises don't suit the students level. This claim is questionable from the researcher's point of view that the role of the teacher is to facilitate the learning process. Since the basic skills of learning had been set up in the learners mind, nothing is impossible. The new curriculum came with the assumption that it is impossible to teach the learners every thing, but teach them the principles and they are supposed to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate their own learning. One of the problems accompanied with the new curriculum evaluation is that the syllabus had changed but the old methods accompanied with the old curriculum are still followed.
- The quality and the covered material are adequate for learners. This item also had a low ratio rate in this section. This means that the teachers are not totally satisfied with this item as one of the characteristics of the new English textbook. The new English textbooks proved that they are much better than its previous counterparts. The old English textbook focused on grammar and vocabulary as basics for the learning of the English language. However, the new textbook set the communicative goals as basic for English language learning. These textbooks included not four skills but five; reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking. The researcher agrees with the assumption that the new English textbooks has no serious problems in its content.

- The number of the periods per week is enough to cover the selected material. Through this sections results and the first open question results, it is noted that the teachers complain that the number of English periods per week is not enough to cover the textbook lessons. In the researcher's estimate, this might be a direct reason for the students low English achievement level. This is why the English teachers do not let their students practice the language as shown in the result of section number three of this questionnaire.
- The topics in the textbook motivate English learning. This item had a low ratio weight in this section. The respondents were not totally agreed that the topics motivate the learners to learn English. Again, the researcher questions this estimate that the effective teachers can deal with any material properly and introduce it in an attractive way that motivates the students learning. Unfortunately, one of the problems connected with EFL learning in Palestine is that the learners do not have the motivation to learn English especially in the elementary schools. This is because they are not aware of its goals and because they do not need it for their daily lives.

Despite the previous reservations from the respondents, the mean of this section was greater than the hypothesized 3. Then It can be concluded that there is a significant difference of the extent to which the sixth grade English textbook match the standards of the good English textbook from the respondents to the current study tool estimate.

Section two: The sixth grade English language teacher

This section was divided into three domains. From the related literature, the researcher found that effective English teachers are supposed to have some qualities in addition to their qualifications. These domains are: "The English teacher as a person", English Language Teacher Prerequisites", and Classroom Management".

According to this domain results, the English teachers scored a high ratio weight for all these sections. In comparing the three domains results, the domain with the highest among them was "English Language Teacher Prerequisites", then " The English teacher as a person", and the last was " Classroom Management".

In these three domains the items which had the lower ratio weight were the following:

- Communicate with students families frequently. This item scored a low ratio weight compared with the items in domain one in section two. This indicates that the respondents did not communicate with students parents very often. The previous studies results indicated that the parents affect their children's achievement level and they should be involved in their children's learning process.
- He is responsible for his students success. The results of the first domain in section two showed that this item had a low ratio weight compared with the whole domain. The old trend in teaching assume that there is no way to measure the teachers effectiveness through his students achievement. In contrast, a new research revealed that one of the indicators of the teachers' effectiveness is his students achievement in the subject he teaches. Also, when the teacher feels responsible for his students success, he does his best to reinforce their learning as well as motivate them to learn English. The enthusiastic teachers tend to motivate learners.
- Demonstrate ability to use visual and electronic aids. This item had the lowest ratio weight in the second domain in section two. Visual and electronic aids are considered as instructional aids which aim to facilitate the material to the learners. When the teachers are not qualified to use such aids, their students lose an important contributor to a good learning.
- Decorates the classroom with students work. This item had the lowest ratio weight in the third domain in section two. This term relates to classroom organization which is

evident in a room even if no one is present. The respondents' responses to this item were lower than the other terms in this domain. In fact this was expected because the researcher expected that our schools lack the personal touch of the students the thing which leads to the lack of students belonging to these schools.

According to this section results, it can be concluded that there is no significant difference in the extent to which the respondents to the current study tool are qualified from their estimates.

Section three: English Teaching Strategies

The new methods in teaching English as a foreign language adopted the communicative approach in which students should learn how to communicate effectively in the world outside the classroom. The CLT model adopted in this questionnaire is the PPP model in which the language can be introduced and practiced in a variety of ways. The results of this section are divided into three domains showing the following:

- In comparing the ratio weight of each domain in section three the researcher found that the domain which had the lower ratio weight among the three was " During the practice stage", then " During the presentation stage" then " During the production stage". This is reasonable because –as mentioned above- teachers do not find time to let students practice English. Also it is noted that the items which deal with whether English teachers let their students speak English in the class scored the lowest ratio weight in the second and the third domains in section two. Unfortunately, some teachers forget that English is language and the language originally is spoken. In fact there is no language learning without practicing it.

According to this section results, it can be concluded that there is significant difference in the extent to which the respondents to the current study tool use the teaching strategies for teaching English for the sixth graders.

Section four: **The learning environment:**

The results of this section showed the second lowest ratio weight after section number one in the whole questionnaire. In comparing the ratio weight of the items of this section, it is found that the items which scored the lowest ratio weight were the following:

- The learning environment is free of noises. This item had the lower ratio weight in this section. Actually, this indicates many things including school management. During the researcher's observation, she entered about fifty of the UNRWA elementary and preparatory schools. These schools varied in the extent of their arrangement and the amount of noise they had. Some schools were shocking because they had unhealthy learning environment at all. Whereas , many schools were well organized, clean and very calm.

Another reason for the noise in the schools that most of them work two shifts; morning shift and evening shift. The students of the evening shift begin to arrive school before their shift begin at the end of the morning shift. This makes extra noise in the schools. This item also indicates that our students are not involved in the learning process well. So they wait any chance to produce noise which means that they are bored.

- Desks are appropriately arranged. For English learning, it is recommended to have certain arrangement of the desks inside the classroom. And since the English language learning is a process in which students learn how to communicate in English, the desks arrangement should foster such assumption. The suitable desks

arrangement lets the students see each other in order to communicate with each other. This thing seem to be lost in our schools, the thing which may create sense of traditional teaching approach. In addition, the lack of arrangement inside the classroom makes the students feels uncomfortable in the classroom.

According to this section's results, it can be concluded that there is significant difference in the respondents' to the current study tool estimates of the learning environment in Gaza UNRWA schools.

Section five: The unified English achievement test

This section had a middle ratio weight in comparing with the other sections in the questionnaire. The UNRWA education administration sets a unified achievement exam for all the subjects taught in the UNRWA schools including English language. In the respondents estimates they rated this exam highly. In comparing the items of the section with each others, it is noted that the item with the lower ratio weight was:

- Focus on high thinking skills. The aim of setting this item is to reveal to what extent the English exam measures the high thinking skills from the respondents estimates. From the results, the respondents tended to rate this item lower than its counterparts. This indicates that, unfortunately, the exams measures only memorizing and may be understanding. But what about the other thinking skills of applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluation?

Neglecting these skills resulted in that most of our students study only for the exam, and the qualities of creativity are missed in the English classes.

According to the results of this section, it can be concluded that there is significant difference in the respondents' to the current study tool evaluation of the unified achievement test of the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools.

Sub-question number 6:

This was an open question in which the researcher asked the respondents about the reasons for the English low achievement level among the sixth graders in the UNRWA schools. The answer of the respondents were categorized into categories, and were organized according to the frequency of each category. These categories were shown in the previous chapter but the results are summarized in the following:

- Reasons related to the English Textbook
- Reasons related to the English teachers
- Reasons related to the learner
- Reasons related to the unified English achievement exam
- Reasons related to the Learning Environment

Comment

It is clear that the teachers accused the English textbook as the main reason for the students low English achievement level. The researcher previously in this chapter considered some of these opinions and didn't consider some of them that they don't make any sense. The reasons set by the teachers according to the English textbook

And the reasons according to the teacher reveal the following:

- lack of efficiency of the English teachers
- The English teachers are not aware of the new curriculum objectives.
- The English teachers lack an effective teaching techniques.
- The English teachers consider the textbook as a target not a mean

For the reasons related to the learners there are some points to be considered:

- The teachers set the learners as one reason for not having a high achievement level in English. One of these reasons was " Students have already made idea that English is difficult subject" . The related literature indicate that the effective teachers can deal with any student from any background.
- Learner miss the attractive teaching styles that motivate them to learn English
- Teachers expressed that parents do not help their children in English because most of them are not qualified to accomplish this. This is a point which deserve consideration due to the vital role the parents can play in the development in their students learning outcomes.

At the end of discussing the six sub-questions of the main first question, the researcher attempted to answer this question in the light of the study tool findings and from the literature reviewed in chapter two of this study.

What are the reasons for English low achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools?

In this study, the researcher is interested in the school factors which affect the learner English achievement level with no respect to the learners background or the other situational factors. The reasons of the low English achievement level can be divided into the following:

- **Reasons related to the English textbook**

The results of the current study tool didn't reveal any serious problems concerning the curriculum, the English teacher, the teaching strategies, the learning environment and the way the students are assessed according to teachers' estimate. With respect to the success percent in the English language in the last year the researcher believes that students learning must be fixed not improved. The overall reason of this study existence is to provide a blueprint that enables UNRWA school students to achieve the English learning standards that have been established by the department of education. In order to set the real reasons for the

low English achievement level, the researcher is convinced that the excuses used by the education community for the low English achievement level, such as weak teachers, inadequate curriculum, poverty, low parental involvement, can be set as minor reasons because they are valid only as a result of the current teaching methods and school management. Palestinians need to know that the low English achievement level among the sixth graders in our schools is not the fault of teachers, parents or students.

Although there are some successful schools, there are many schools in Gaza where most students are not successful learners. Even in the top- performing schools, there are too many failures in the bottom of the class.

Some education personnel set the poverty of the Palestinian students as the direct reasons for the students low English achievement level. In fact, in Gaza strip, most the people are below the poverty line. But the question is, how can poverty affect the ability of a child to learn?

In a view of the Gazan UNRWA schools it is noted that:

First, all the students in the UNRWA schools are entitled to a free breakfast. They are not hungry .Second, in all Gaza cities and camps, they are entitled to free vaccines and medical services. Often, various charitable organizations provide clothing and stationary for the poor children. And, most of the children live within walking distance of their schools. In addition, their books are free and they do not pay any fees. In a word, the opportunity to learn is possible.

These schools with the previously mentioned qualities are supposed to provide the best learning experience for the learners who are supposed to enjoy school life. Unfortunately, 50% of theses schools students are not of the grade level learning outcomes. So, what is the problem with our schools?

The question is simple, but the answer isn't. In comparing our schools with the others, the problems with our schools seem to appear clearly, these can be summarized in the following:

- Schools continue to de-motivate hundreds of students each year who are viewed as slow learners. Students should enjoy their school years, and most children should be successful.
- Teachers and administrators are not measured on the quality of their students performance, the thing which created many unrealistic excuses for students low achievement level.
- Failure seems so be an acceptable outcome in our schools.
- Some educators have become masters at offering excuses for low English achievement level, whereas others have mastered covering up low achievement. The only way low English achievement is corrected is with real facts that clearly show there is a significant problem.
- Our schools lack the instructional system design method which aims to enable the vast majority of the students to be successful learners in all subjects including English language. Bowsher stated that " the systematic design of instruction involves six-phase process as follow:

1- define the learning and performance objectives that are required to achieve the standards.
2- Document the prerequisites for learning
3- Determine what lessons are required
4- Develop the instructional strategy by deciding on what motivational methods of teaching and learning should be utilized
5- Develop and/or select the instructional materials as well as the delivery system
6- Determine how teacher will decide whether students have learned the lessons

(assessment document) (Bowsher, 2001).

- Lack of effective English lesson plans. Most of the teachers of English have ineffective lesson plans that violate all the methods in which they have been taught at universities- if any-. This is often the case with new and inexperienced teachers (who are the majority according to this study results). It takes several years for most of them to develop outstanding lesson plans.
- Lack of class management skills. The thing which I believe the most English teachers suffer from today. This subject should be taught during the student-teacher preparation program. One may think that this course already existed in these programs. The researcher believes that such course should be taught using television modules showing the right way and the wrong way to handle classes. Most teachers learn their classroom management skills "on the job". Unfortunately, classroom management is a common weakness among the new teachers.
- Lack of an adequate assessment system. Developing a test requires specialized knowledge and experience. Most districts administer annual achievement tests, but at the end of the school year. The assessment goal should be to keep students at grade level throughout the year not just at the end. This should be the case particularly in English teaching as it is a mastery subject.
- Lack of time to learn. Students have various learning styles that require different teaching methods. They also require varied length of time to learn. The problem with our educational system is that it specifies amount of time to teach the subject lessons including English language. This imposes a pressure on both the teacher and the students. In English for Palestine 6 the textbook includes 24 units. These English units are usually taught to the learners without the exposure to the English language mastery. This was justified by the teachers that there is no time and the

time allocated for English language teaching can hardly cover the basic material in the textbook.

Minor Reasons related to the school

- Schools were and still are not ready to the new curriculum.
- The lack of resources in the schools.
- Most schools lack libraries, and the libraries that do exist are poorly stocked with irrelevant materials, some of which maybe outdated.
- School principals encourage teachers to prepare students for the exam to improve the statistics of their schools.
- The mixed ability classes which resulted from common practice that teachers can fail weak students only twice during the 12 years of education.

Reasons related to the new curriculum

The problems of the new curriculum do not exist in its content, but with the circumstances which accompany its implementation. The following is a summary reviewed by the researcher about these problems:

- The new English textbook changed according to the new global concepts but our schools remain traditional.
- The new English textbook needs to be supported and enriched by other resources which are not found in the schools.
- The new English textbook is compressed and needs special skills in dealing with it.
- The English periods per week are not enough to cover the material.
- The support material prepared by the UNRWA education department offers extra exercises the thing which adds a load on the teachers duties.

- **Reasons related to the teacher**
- The teachers were not trained to deal with the new English textbooks.
- Most of the teachers are not aware of learners types and strategies.
- The English teachers do not teach English in its cultural discourse.
- The English teachers do not treat their students as individual**.**
- Most of the English teachers can not deal with the instructional aids.
- The previous syllabus was mainly reading and structure-based textbooks, based on the belief that "language is functional, that language learning is culture learning, and that acquisition occurs through meaningful use". But, the English teachers tend to fall back on traditional ways of treating the textbooks.
- Learning, and acquisition occur through meaningful use" but the teachers deal with the new content in the old methods such as Grammar-Translation method.
- Teachers do not encourage their students to practice English.
- The Palestinian English teacher lacks the resources which can contribute to a better teaching.
- The English teachers lack the motivation for teaching English because of the bad socioeconomic conditions, the thing which reflects a lack of motivation of the students.
- The students' poor exposure to English language usage.
- Teachers do not invest efforts to build relationships with parents. No doubt that some parents may be English language illiterate, teachers can tell them how they can help in order to improve their children English achievement level. Of course, there are many things the parents can do with their children's English learning without the necessity of knowing English language.

Comment

The most important factor affecting student learning is the teacher. The immediate and clear implication of this study is that seemingly more can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than by any other single factor. Effective teachers appear to be effective with students of all achievement levels, regardless of the level of heterogeneity in their classrooms. If the teacher is ineffective, students under that teacher's tutelage will achieve inadequate progress academically. If the ultimate goal is to improve the academic growth of student English language, one must conclude that improvement of student learning begins with the improvement of relatively ineffective teachers.

Discussing the results of Question Number Two:

Are there statistically significant differences among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to personal traits (gender, age, didtrict, and years of experience)?

This question was divided into four separate questions.

- **Differences due to the gender:**

The results of this question reveals that there is no statistically significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the gender.

This can be justified that both male and female English teachers are exposed to the same school variables as well as they had the same in-service training courses.

- **Differences due to the age:**

The differences in the estimates of the respondents occurred only in the domain" during the practice stage" for the 40 and older group age. This indicates that the older teachers are aware of the necessities of English language teaching. They seem to have more efficiency than the other groups. Also, this indicates patience when dealing with the students. For the other

domains, the results showed that there is no significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to age.

- Differences due to the years of experience:

The results showed that for the section "teaching Strategies" and "Reasons related to the "Learning Environment" , there is a significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the years of experience. These differences occurred for the 11- and more years group. This matches with the previous studies which confirm that the experienced teachers have better abilities in introducing the language materials than their inexperienced counterparts.

For the learning environment, again the results were for 11- and more group of years of experience. The researcher can justify this that the experienced teachers may have adapted with the existing learning environment considering that it is suitable for the learning process.

For the other sections of this questionnaire, there is a significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the years of experience.

- Differences due to the district:

The study tool was administered to all the sixth grade English teachers in two districts; Gaza district (East Gaza, West Gaza, and Gaza City) , and North Gaza district (Beit Hanoun, Beit Lahia, and Jabalia).

The results of the test on these questionnaire sections reveals that there is significant difference among the estimates of the respondents to the current study tool due to the district.

The respondents from the North Gaza District rated this questionnaire items higher that the respondents from Gaza District.

Question number three:

What is the suggested program for tackling low English achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools?

The Suggested Program:

The famous proverb "Don't give your students fish, but teach them how to fish" is perhaps true in language teaching. But how do we go about teaching them the language skills so that they become more interested in learning the language? Also how do we maintain their interest in language learning when English is not seen as important for their immediate needs other than to pass the examinations?

The suggested program is constructed to enhance the sixth graders abilities in English language. The results of the questionnaire mainly showed that most teachers do not concentrate on the practice stage of the language. This reflects many of others issues in English language teaching in Gaza northern governorates. The results also clarified that teachers are not satisfied with the new English syllabus claiming that it is too long and goes beyond students level. Out of the literature reviewed in this study, the researcher tried to review some solutions for these two problems.

The suggested program objective:

The main aim of this suggested program is tackling English low achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza northern governorates. The suggested program comes in the light of this research results.

Limitations of the program

- The program is expected to be applied in the first semester of the scholastic year 2009/2010.
- The program aims at tackling low English achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza city and north Gaza UNRWA schools.

Teachers Guide:

Based on general observation of language teaching in schools, teachers tended to ignore the importance of factors such as positive self-concept, high self-esteem, positive attitude, clear understanding of the goals for language learning, continuous active participation in the language learning process, and the relevance of a conducive environment that could contribute to the success of language learning. In most cases, teachers are worried about how to drill the students to obtain high scores on the English paper in the final exam. The problem for many English teachers, especially the non-specialists, is how to encourage genuine interest among students to continue to learn and use the English language once the exams are over. The question that needs to be addressed is how do teachers create a healthy balance between preparing students for the standardized examinations and for life-long language skills.

Motivation

Many theorists and researchers have found that it is important to recognize the construct of motivation not as a single entity but as a multi-factorial one. Oxford and Shearin (1994) analyzed a total of 12 motivational theories or models, including those from socio-psychology, cognitive development, and socio-cultural psychology.

It is believed that teachers are able to drive the students to learn the language and to sustain students interest in language learning if they can provide activities that are:

- interrelated between in-class and out-of class language activities
- communicative (game type) integrative (short/small activities form larger activities)
- pleasant, safe and non-threatening
- enthusiastic
- group-based
- meaningful or relevant

- challenging

These activities help promote self-confidence, experiences of success, learning satisfaction and good relationships among learners and between teacher and students.

- Research has shown that factors such as positive learner and teacher attitudes, which are interrelated to motivation, must be sustained for successful transfer of language learning (Finocchiaro, 1982; Ngeow, 1998). To foster positive attitudes and to motivate learning, in particular, the learning of English as a Foreign Language, an environment conducive to learning must be created. Factors that help create such an environment include a learning situation that has a "low affective filter" (Krashen, 1987) whereby the learners learn to use the language in a non-threatening and fun environment.

- Providing various types of input which are auditory, visual, sensory, verbal and non-verbal in nature and input which is comprehensible or a little beyond the level of the learner

- Providing a continuous and consistent exposure to the language being learned

an environment where the teachers and the students are supportive and encouraging

having access to situations wherein students are able to use the language as a "natural means of communication" (Littlewood, p. 58, 1995)

These factors should be present in any language learning program. Language program must encompass these factors which encourage successful transfer and learning of the target language.

Within the suggested program, various activities and tasks are prepared which require active participation of the learners. Some examples of such activities include:

- a reading program with such tasks as writing a synopsis, journal, and compiling vocabulary lists

- language immersion projects such as language camps and visits

- a specific day or week or month or time and space devoted to the use of the language such as an English zone, spelling bee competition, story-telling corner, read-to-me corner, essay and drama competition, poetry reading at the general assembly, etc.
- a network of people who could provide the constant input of the language such as pen pals, teacher mentors, conversation partners and so forth

These activities are supported by classroom or school environments that provide simple strategies to encourage the use of the language such as murals, labels in and around the school, consistent exposure to language competitions (choral speaking, scrabble, etc.) and English notice board (interactive in that learners can pose questions or reply to questions). All these need to be given acknowledgment and recognition in the form of rewards and encouragement (e.g. prizes, public mention, etc.) to motivate and sustain interest in the use of the language.

The teachers had to actually participate in in-class activities and out-of-class activities to help raise their awareness and foster empathy for students. A sample of the activities included:

- jig-saw reading
- interpreting cultural bias (use of cartoon strips and a colloquial variety of English and idioms)
- jig-saw listening
- shared journal writing
- song cloze and punctuation exercises using songs
- the use of English jokes and tasks using the different shades of meanings of words
- vocabulary building tasks
- a chain story activity

- a visual expression of the self (using symbols and analogies to describe teachers and students) activity

- a "create an advertisement" group activity using materials found in the home

It should be pointed out here that the main emphasis of this suggested program is more on the process of learning rather than the performance of learning. It is hoped that a series of language activities, in-class as well as out-of class, will lead the students to a successful language acquisition process.

In order to build the instructional program, the following was needed:

1- A model of diagnostic test

The researcher depended on the sixth grade English unified test for the second semester 2008 in order to diagnose the weakness points in which the sixth graders suffer from. As mentioned in chapter one, the success average in that test in English language for the sixth grade was 35% . This result indicates a serious problem in English language teaching-learning process in Gaza and North Gaza districts.

The researcher conducted a work shop in order to ask them about the skills the sixth graders are weak in. According to their answers the skills were the following:

- Writing and grammar
- Spoken language
- Listening
- Reading

This thing indicates that the students are weak in the most skills in English language. This requires an enrichment material and remedial material as following.

2- A model of enrichment material

The researcher co-operated with one of the best English teachers of the sixth grade in order to prepare this model which aims to enhance the students abilities in English language.

- **A model of enrichment material for writing and grammar**

Re-arrange the following:-

1- drink-tea-English-The-people-milk-with.

2- are-seashells-the-sea-in-There.

3- a big-made-The-sandcastle- children.

4- you-ever-flown-a plane-in-Have?

5- are-There-in- the-sea- currents-dangerous.

Choose the right answer:-

1- yesterday, I ..... my friend. (visit- visited-visits)

2- My brother..... the film now. (is watching- watches-watched)

3- Mr. Green ..... to China every year. (travel- travels-traveled)

4- Omar ..... in grade five last year. (is- was-did)

5- last summer, Suhail ..... in the sea.(swim-swam-swum)

- **A model of enrichment material for speaking skill**

1-Finish the dialogue

(happen- life- ripens- season- important- best)

Soha : What good about summer?

Samir : It's sun shines that …… the grapes and figs .

Soha: : What …… in winter?

Samir: It rains and the rain brings happiness and……..

Soha: Which …… do you prefer?

Samir: All the seasons are ……. No season is the ……

- What do you say?

a. The film is boring .	a-I can't do it
	b-Please do it again .
	c -Please turn the TV off .
b. Your friend is in hospital .	A. Get well soon .
	B. I'm afraid .
	C. Happy birth day .
c. The pen doesn't work .	A. Take it away .
	B. Try again .
	C. Please give me another one.
D . The weather is very cold .	a-I'm going to wear a coat.
	b-I'm going to eat ice-cream
	c-I'm going to go to the sea .

- A model of enrichment material for listening skill

Listen and number the pictures :

( ) ( ) ( ) ( )

-Listen and underline the sentence you hear :-

A	Mohamad was reading when he fell a sleep.
	Mohamad was watching TV when he fell a sleep .
B	Ben shouldn't eat burger and fries .
	Ben should eat a balanced diet .

- **A model of enrichment material for reading skill**

Palestine is a land of olive trees. Palestinians have grown olives for thousands of years. The people love their trees and use olives, and olive oil, for many purposes. Olive oil is very healthy. ***It*** is used not only for cooking and eating, but also in some medicines. In Nablus people use olive oil to make soap.

Choose the right answer:-

1- Palestinians ..... olive trees.(like- dislike- don't like)

2- In Nablus, they use olive oil to make ..... .(olive- soup- soap)

3- The pronoun(It) refers to ..... (olive- olive oil- trees)

4-Olive oil is ..... . (healthy- unhealthy- heat)

5- What do we use olive oil for?

3- A model of remedial material

A remedial material is needed for tackling the difficulties in which low achievers face in English language. The researcher prepared a model of enrichment material. This model aims at achieving the following:

By the end of this material Ss are expected to be able to :-

1 **-** use verb to be " is – am – are " .

2- use have / has in context .

3- circle the different words.

4- punctuate correctly.

1) Finish the sentences with :-

[is - am - are]

1- I …….a pupil.
2- We …….. at school.
3- It ……..a cat

2) Write the missing letter :-

[t - r - o - i]

….hree …ne n…ne tw…..

3) Finish the sentences with :-

{ have - has }

a- Amal ……a book.

b- I ……two brothers.

c- Ali ……one sister.

d- They…….a good teacher.

4) Circle the odd one out:-

1- pencil pen ruler kite

2- desk fig apple banana

3- father friend mother brother

4- car cup knife plate

5) Write correctly:-

1- what s your name
……..

2- ali is a good boy

3-- did you travel to egypt

6) Match:

1- Ali is a good boy,	is she?
2- She is from Palestine,	isn't she?
3- She isn't your sister,	aren't you?
4-You are Hassan,	isn't he ?

Evaluation:

a- Formative Evaluation :

It was used to evaluate the students' progress in achieving the learning objectives throughout the lesson by immediate feedback , Written and oral questions and observation of their interaction in the lecture activities . Continuous evaluation helps the teacher in deciding whether the learning activities are appropriate or he needs to provide alternatives .

b- Summative Evaluation :

It was used at the end of each unit to measure the extent of the objectives to be achieved. Hence the effectiveness of the program by giving oral or written question is considered as a formative evaluation for the program. It was also used at the end of program by setting diagnostic test.

Recommendations

- English language teachers should have training courses before entering the class for the first time.

- English language teachers are supposed to cooperate with each others to solve the problem of the low achievers.

- It is strongly recommended that the low achievers should attend the classes away from the others with different content material.

-Education colleges have to cooperate with the ministry of education in order to update their courses to math the real requirements of the Palestinian schools.

- Schools should be fixed to suit the curriculum demands and the age challenges.

- It is useful to combine every two English classes together as the students can practice English language.

- Teachers should encourage their students to use English language in the daily communication with each others.

- It is necessary to add two English periods to the weekly English periods**.**

Recommendations for further research

This study raised questions more than what it attempted to answer. The researcher leaves the door open to investigate other reasons related to factors which are not mentioned in this study such as family and parents education, socio-economic status, the confrontational attitude toward America and Britain and others.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the results of the study tool. During the results, it is found that the reasons for the low English achievement are related to English text book as well as English teacher. Also, this chapter included the practical side of the suggested program for tackling this weaknesses.

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Appendixes

Appendix: (A)

List of Juries

Dr. Awad Keshta	TESOL-IUG
Dr: Nazmi AL- Masri	TESOL-IUG
Dr:Sana Abou Daqa	Doctor of Research and Evaluation
Prof :E'zzo Afana	Doctor of Curriculum studies-IUG
Dr. Hassan Abu Jarad	TESOL-Al Azhar University
Dr. Basil Skaik	TESOL-Al Azhar University
Dr. Muhamed Abu Maluh	El Qattan center
Maha Barzaq	MA TEFL

Appendix: (B)

A consultation form of A Questionnaire

Islamic University of Gaza
Post graduate studies and research
Faculty of Education
Curriculum & English Teaching
Methods Department

Dear Sir/ Madam

The researcher **Kholoud Srour** is carrying out an **M.ED** dissertation entitled

"A Suggested Program For Tackling Low English Achievement Level Among Sixth Graders in Gaza UNRWA Schools "

The following questionnaire is the tool used to collect information for the Research. The purpose of this research is to investigate the reasons for the English low achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza UNRWA schools.

Your response, as well as information from supervisors, will be used for research purposes. The requested information will remain confidential.

Thank you for your co-operation

Researcher,
Kholoud Ismail Srour

Name (Optional):----------
School:----------
Age:----------
Sex: ----------
Years of experience:----------
Qualifications:----------
Other training courses:----------

Please read each item carefully and put a tick under the most alternative choice that points to your response to each item. Use the key below.

(Key:5= very large extent, 4= large extent, 3= small extent, 2= very small extent, 1= not present)

No.	**The statement**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
1-The sixth grade English Textbook						
1	The textbook topics address the learner					
2	The number of the periods per week is enough to cover the selected material					
3	The topics in the textbook motivate English learning					
4	The quality and the covered material are adequate for learners					
5	The texts are relevant to students culture					
6	The exercises are suitable for students language level					
Add more items:						
The sixth grade English teacher **2.1 The English teacher as a person**						
No.	**The statement**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
7	He is responsible for his students success					
8	Enjoys teaching English					
9	Listens attentively to his students questions and comments					
10	Knows all his/her students as individuals					
11	Feels that she/he an important part of the school community					
12	Communicate with students families frequently					
13	Learns from her/his past experience in the classroom					
14	Is patient with the students					

Add more items:

2.2 English Teacher Prerequisites:

The sixth grade English teacher

No.	The statement	5	4	3	2	1
15	Has had English teaching preparation					
16	Has a knowledge of English teaching strategies					
17	Speaks English fluently					
18	Communicates well with his/her students					
19	Connects real life with the English topics					
20	Demonstrates an ability to use visual and electronic aids					
21	Has a subject matter knowledge					

Add more items:

2.3 Classroom Management

The sixth grader English teacher

No.	The statement	5	4	3	2	1
22	Sets rules at the beginning of the year					
23	Encourages his/her students to follow classroom routine for daily tasks					
24	Uses non-verbal cues to prevent misbehavior					
25	Decorates the classroom with students work					
26	Manages students behavior					
27	Keeps consistent discipline inside the classroom					
28	Invests the time and effort to develop instructional plans.					

Add more items:

3- English Teaching Strategies:

3.1During the presentation stage the teacher:

No.	The statement	5	4	3	2	1
29	Uses warming up activities					
30	Elicits students ideas related to the subject					
31	Gives examples to help students understand the new words and structure of English					
32	Employs educational games in teaching English language					
33	Employs audio-visual aids such as the course cassette and pictures					
34	Uses L1 excessively in the English class					
35	Uses appropriate classroom language in English					
Add more items:						
3.2 During the practice stage the English teacher:						
No.	**The statement**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
36	Provides enough wait time for the students to answer questions					
37	Involves most students in the learning activity					
38	Encourages the students to work in groups or pairs					
39	Monitors students work as groups					
40	Copes with individual differences					
41	Encourages the students to speak English in the class					
42	Keeps his students busy all the time					
Add more items:						
3.3 During the production stage the English teacher:						
No.	**The statement**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
43	Gets the class to talk about what they have learned					
44	Uses positive praise					
45	Checks his students notebooks					
46	Provides relevant feedback					
Add more items:						

4- Learning Environment						
No.	**The statement**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
47	The learning environment is free of noises					
48	It is neat and orderly in appearance					
49	It is clean					
50	It is warm and friendly					
51	It suits the physical size of the students					
52	Desks are appropriately arranged					
53	Blackboard is erased and organized					
Add more items:						

5- the sixth grade unified English achievement tests:						
No.	**The statement**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
54	Focus on high thinking skills					
55	Consider individual differences					
56	Include the four language skills					
57	Test what has been taught					
58	Have clear instructions					
59	Measure the objectives of the content					
60	Are free of mistakes					
Add more items:						

6- What are the reasons for English low achievement level among the sixth graders from your point of view?

Appendix: (C)
A consultation form of A Suggested Program

The Islamic University of Gaza
Deanery of Graduate Studies
Faculty of Education
Curriculum & English Teaching Methods Department

Dear Mrs.\ Mr.

The researcher Kholoud Ismail Srour is carrying out MA thesis entitled

" A Suggested Program For Tackling low English Achievement Level Among Sixth Graders in Gaza UNRWA Schools "

You are kindly invited to judge the suggested program which aims at tackling the low English achievement level among the sixth graders. Your comments will be appreciated as well as any other ideas.

Comments

……

……

……

……

……

……

……

Thanks for your co-operation

Kholoud Srour

The Suggested Program:

The famous proverb "Don't give your students fish, but teach them how to fish" is perhaps true in language teaching. But how do we go about teaching them the language skills so that they become more interested in learning the language? Also how do we maintain their interest in language learning when English is not seen as important for their immediate needs other than to pass the examinations?

The suggested program is constructed to enhance the sixth graders abilities in English language. The results of the questionnaire mainly showed that most teachers do not concentrate on the practice stage of the language. This reflects many of others issues in English language teaching in Gaza northern governorates. The results also clarified that teachers are not satisfied with the new English syllabus claiming that it is too long and goes beyond students level. Out of the literature reviewed in this study, the researcher tried to review some solutions for these two problems.

The suggested program objective:

The main aim of this suggested program is tackling English low achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza northern governorates. The suggested program comes in the light of this research results.

Limitations of the program

- The program is expected to be applied in the first semester of the scholastic year 2009/2010.
- The program aims at tackling low English achievement level among the sixth graders in Gaza city and north Gaza UNRWA schools.

Teachers Guide:

Based on general observation of language teaching in schools, teachers tended to ignore the importance of factors such as positive self-concept, high self-esteem, positive attitude, clear

understanding of the goals for language learning, continuous active participation in the language learning process, and the relevance of a conducive environment that could contribute to the success of language learning. In most cases, teachers are worried about how to drill the students to obtain high scores on the English paper in the final exam. The problem for many English teachers, especially the non-specialists, is how to encourage genuine interest among students to continue to learn and use the English language once the exams are over. The question that needs to be addressed is how do teachers create a healthy balance between preparing students for the standardized examinations and for life-long language skills.

Motivation

Many theorists and researchers have found that it is important to recognize the construct of motivation not as a single entity but as a multi-factorial one. Oxford and Shearin (1994) analyzed a total of 12 motivational theories or models, including those from socio-psychology, cognitive development, and socio-cultural psychology.

It is believed that teachers are able to drive the students to learn the language and to sustain students interest in language learning if they can provide activities that are:

- interrelated between in-class and out-of class language activities
- communicative (game type) integrative (short/small activities form larger activities)
- pleasant, safe and non-threatening
- enthusiastic
- group-based
- meaningful or relevant
- challenging

These activities help promote self-confidence, experiences of success, learning satisfaction and good relationships among learners and between teacher and students.

- Research has shown that factors such as positive learner and teacher attitudes, which are interrelated to motivation, must be sustained for successful transfer of language learning (Finocchiaro, 1982; Ngeow, 1998). To foster positive attitudes and to motivate learning, in particular, the learning of English as a Foreign Language, an environment conducive to learning must be created. Factors that help create such an environment include a learning situation that has a "low affective filter" (Krashen, 1987) whereby the learners learn to use the language in a non-threatening and fun environment.

- Providing various types of input which are auditory, visual, sensory, verbal and non-verbal in nature and input which is comprehensible or a little beyond the level of the learner

- Providing a continuous and consistent exposure to the language being learned

an environment where the teachers and the students are supportive and encouraging

having access to situations wherein students are able to use the language as a "natural means of communication" (Littlewood, p. 58, 1995)

These factors should be present in any language learning program. Language program must encompass these factors which encourage successful transfer and learning of the target language.

Within the suggested program, various activities and tasks are prepared which require active participation of the learners. Some examples of such activities include:

- a reading program with such tasks as writing a synopsis, journal, and compiling vocabulary lists

- language immersion projects such as language camps and visits

- a specific day or week or month or time and space devoted to the use of the language such as an English zone, spelling bee competition, story-telling corner, read-to-me corner, essay and drama competition, poetry reading at the general assembly, etc.

- a network of people who could provide the constant input of the language such as pen pals, teacher mentors, conversation partners and so forth

These activities are supported by classroom or school environments that provide simple strategies to encourage the use of the language such as murals, labels in and around the school, consistent exposure to language competitions (choral speaking, scrabble, etc.) and English notice board (interactive in that learners can pose questions or reply to questions). All these need to be given acknowledgment and recognition in the form of rewards and encouragement (e.g. prizes, public mention, etc.) to motivate and sustain interest in the use of the language.

The teachers had to actually participate in in-class activities and out-of-class activities to help raise their awareness and foster empathy for students. A sample of the activities included:

- jig-saw reading
- interpreting cultural bias (use of cartoon strips and a colloquial variety of English and idioms)
- jig-saw listening
- shared journal writing
- song cloze and punctuation exercises using songs
- the use of English jokes and tasks using the different shades of meanings of words
- vocabulary building tasks
- a chain story activity
- a visual expression of the self (using symbols and analogies to describe teachers and students) activity
- a "create an advertisement" group activity using materials found in the home

It should be pointed out here that the main emphasis of this suggested program is more on the process of learning rather than the performance of learning. It is hoped that a series of language activities, in-class as well as out-of class, will lead the students to a successful language acquisition process.

In order to build the instructional program, the following was needed:

4- A model of diagnostic test

The researcher depended on the sixth grade English unified test for the second semester 2008 in order to diagnose the weakness points in which the sixth graders suffer from. As mentioned in chapter one, the success average in that test in English language for the sixth grade was 35% . This result indicates a serious problem in English language teaching-learning process in Gaza and North Gaza districts.

The researcher conducted a work shop in order to ask them about the skills the sixth graders are weak in. According to their answers the skills were the following:

- Writing and grammar
- Spoken language
- Listening
- Reading

This thing indicates that the students are weak in the most skills in English language. This requires an enrichment material and remedial material as following.

5- A model of enrichment material

The researcher co-operated with one of the best English teachers of the sixth grade in order to prepare this model which aims to enhance the students abilities in English language.

- **A model of enrichment material for writing and grammar**

Re-arrange the following:-

1- drink-tea-English-The-people-milk-with.

2- are-seashells-the-sea-in-There.

3- a big-made-The-sandcastle- children.

4- you-ever-flown-a plane-in-Have?

5- are-There-in- the-sea- currents-dangerous.

Choose the right answer:-

1- yesterday, I ..... my friend. (visit- visited-visits)

2- My brother..... the film now. (is watching- watches-watched)

3- Mr. Green ..... to China every year. (travel- travels-traveled)

4- Omar ..... in grade five last year. (is- was-did)

5- last summer, Suhail ..... in the sea.(swim-swam-swum)

- A model of enrichment material for speaking skill

1-Finish the dialogue

(happen- life- ripens- season- important- best)

Soha : What good about summer?

Samir : It's sun shines that …… the grapes and figs .

Soha: : What …… in winter?

Samir: It rains and the rain brings happiness and……..

Soha: Which …… do you prefer?

Samir: All the seasons are ……. No season is the ……

- What do you say?

a. The film is boring .	a-I can't do it
	b-Please do it again .
	c -Please turn the TV off .
b. Your friend is in hospital .	D. Get well soon .
	E. I'm afraid .
	F. Happy birth day .
c. The pen doesn't work .	D. Take it away .
	E. Try again .
	F. Please give me another one.
D . The weather is very cold .	a-I'm going to wear a coat.
	b-I'm going to eat ice-cream
	c-I'm going to go to the sea .

- A model of enrichment material for listening skill

<u>Listen and number the pictures</u> :

( ) **( )** **( )** **( )**

<u>-Listen and underline the sentence you hear</u> :-

A	Mohamad was reading when he fell a sleep.
	Mohamad was watching TV when he fell a sleep .
B	Ben shouldn't eat burger and fries .
	Ben should eat a balanced diet .

- **A model of enrichment material for reading skill**

Palestine is a land of olive trees. Palestinians have grown olives for thousands of years. The people love their trees and use olives, and olive oil, for many purposes. Olive oil is very healthy. *It* is used not only for cooking and eating, but also in some medicines. In Nablus people use olive oil to make soap.

Choose the right answer:-

1- Palestinians ..... olive trees.(like- dislike- don't like)

2- In Nablus, they use olive oil to make ..... .(olive- soup- soap)

3- The pronoun(It) refers to ..... (olive- olive oil- trees)

4-Olive oil is ..... . (healthy- unhealthy- heat)

5- What do we use olive oil for?

6- A model of remedial material

A remedial material is needed for tackling the difficulties in which low achievers face in English language. The researcher prepared a model of enrichment material. This model aims at achieving the following:

By the end of this material Ss are expected to be able to :-

1 - use verb to be " is – am – are " .

2- use have / has in context .

3- circle the different words.

4- punctuate correctly.

1) Finish the sentences with :-

[is - am - are]

1- I …….a pupil.
2- We …….. at school.
3- It ……..a cat.

2) Write the missing letter :-

[t - r - o - i]

….hree …ne n…ne tw…..

---

3) Finish the sentences with :-

{ have - has }

a- Amal ……a book.

b- I ……two brothers.

c- Ali ……one sister.

d- They…….a good teacher.

---

4) Circle the odd one out:-

1- pencil pen ruler kite

2- desk fig apple banana

3- father friend mother brother

4- car cup knife plate

5) Write correctly:-

1- what s your name

……..

2- ali is a good boy

3-- did you travel to egypt

---

6) Match:

1- Ali is a good boy, is she?

2- She is from Palestine, isn't she?

3- She isn't your sister, aren't you?

4-You are Hassan, isn't he ?

Evaluation:

a- Formative Evaluation :

It was used to evaluate the students' progress in achieving the learning objectives throughout the lesson by immediate feedback , Written and oral questions and observation of their interaction in the lecture activities . Continuous evaluation helps the teacher in deciding whether the learning activities are appropriate or he needs to provide alternatives .

b- Summative Evaluation :

It was used at the end of each unit to measure the extent of the objectives to be achieved. Hence the effectiveness of the program by giving oral or written question is considered as a formative evaluation for the program. It was also used at the end of program by setting diagnostic test .

Appendix: (D)

Results of the unified English test for the sixth grade as retrieved from the UNRWA

السادس	متوسطات الدرجات		نسب النجاح	
	الفصل الأول	الفصل الثاني	الفصل الأول	الفصل الثاني
غزة	19.92	31.8	30.74	74.71
شمال غزة	18.31	29.51	25.5	67.7