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The Effect of Using a Program Based on Beyond Constructivism Paradigm on Developing Prep Students' English Reading and Writing Proficiency

**A thesis
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Abstract

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The present study aimed at developing the second year prep students’ English reading and writing proficiency through the use of a proposed program based on Beyond Constructivism Paradigm. The study adopted the quasi-experimental pre-post test control /experimental group design. The study sample consisted of 50 students at Hassan Abo Bakr Experimental School in Alkanater Alkhairya District and was equally divided into two groups: an experimental group and a control one. Students of the experimental group received training through the proposed program based on Beyond Constructivism Paradigm (Knowledge Navigation), while students in the control group received regular instruction. Tools of the study included reading skills checklist, writing skills checklist, a pre-post- reading and writing skills test, a scoring rubric and a program satisfaction questionnaire. The study results revealed that there were statistically significant differences at 0.01 level between the mean scores of the control and the experimental groups on the post test in favour of the experimental group in overall reading and writing skills as well as in each reading and writing sub-skill. There were also statistically significant differences at 0.01 level between the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-administration and post-administration of the reading and writing skills test in favour of the post-administration in overall reading and writing proficiency as well as in each reading and writing sub-skill.

Key words: Beyond Constructivism Paradigm (Knowledge Navigation), reading and writing proficiency.

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Chapter one

Background and Problem

Chapter one

Background and Problem

1.1. Introduction

English is the most important language all over the world. It is the first international language which is used in all fields such as: politics, technology, economy, international conferences, industry, commerce, tourism, journalism and education. There has been significant increase in the number of people who speak English as a second/foreign language around the world. This requires giving more care for learning foreign languages especially English which is considered the first international language of communication among people. Therefore, the educational system in Egypt should enable the learners to communicate in order to be able to keep pace with the modern developments in all fields of knowledge.

The central aim of present-day education is to prepare learners for the emergent knowledge society through appropriate pedagogical practices. It is not enough to concentrate on content mastery in some subject domains but to provide students with the skills of knowledge creation and problem solving. Pedagogical practices that are regarded to improve these abilities include student ownership, active involvement, collaboration between participants, activities of searching, sharing and elaborating knowledge, working with authentic problems and the teacher's changed role from delivering knowledge to organizing, guiding and assessing students (Kozma, 2003).

One of the main objectives of teaching English as a foreign language in Egypt is to develop the students' skills (listening, speaking, reading and

writing). Reading is one of the most important skills in English and other languages, as all experiences and information can be obtained through reading. Reading is also very important for several reasons. First, it is critical to success in some academic departments in Egyptian universities. Second, it is a useful source for information that might be missed in class lectures. Third, it can accelerate foreign language learning and improve other language skills. Finally, it is a major means of learning both vocabulary and spelling (**Hussein, 2007**).

In Egypt, reading plays an important role for EFL learners to acquire the foreign language. It is the medium of interaction and communication between learners and language, because they do not have the opportunity to interact with native speakers (**Khater, 2002**). **Gaine (2002)** maintained that reading is a dynamic process in which the reader must actively participate. **Ceprano (2002)** noted that reading is the only effective strategy that generates an understanding of what is being communicated when dealing with text.

On the other hand, the act of writing is ingrained in every aspect of our life and will continue to shape human interaction during the 21st century. The ability to write gives one the power and opportunity to share and influence thoughts, ideas, and opinions with others, not only in day-to-day situations, but also across time and space (**Unger, 2004**). The writing process is made up of several different elements: prewriting, organization, writing, revising, and editing. These elements overlap with one another; they are not separate stages (**Dabbour, 2009**). **Peterson (2007)** maintains that success in writing greatly depends on the student's attitude, motivation, and engagement. The writing process takes these elements into

account by allowing students to plan their writing and create a publishable, final draft of their work of which they can be proud.

Langer (2001) sees that writing skills are increasingly important and often not adequately taught. Writing enables students to learn, reflect and respond to concepts introduced in their reading. It provides opportunities for the reader to interact with the text. Utilizing relevant and meaningful material allows students to relate their own experiences to what they are reading (**Mohamed, 2010**). Accordingly, there is a need to integrate both reading and writing skills in EFL classes. Reading and writing tasks often depend on each other: sometimes writing is used to check if students understand what they have read, sometimes reading is used as a preparation for writing tasks (**Allam, 2012**).

Wisconsin State Reading Association (2004) stated the following four fundamental relationships between reading and writing :

1-Interdependent: readers would be at a loss if there were no writers to produce texts. Writers would be equally lost if there were no readers to read their texts.

2-Personal and social activities are driven by a need to communicate : writers need responses to the text they are writing; readers need responses to their interpretations of the text.

3-Reciprocal processes: writers can learn much about writing by reading. Likewise, readers can learn much about reading by writing.

4-Parallel processes: both are purposeful, are dependent on background knowledge and experiences, and are focused on the construction of meaning.

Due mainly to knowledge explosion, educational practice is continually subjected to renewal. Changes in educational environment lead, in turn, to changes in approaches to teaching and learning. These changes also have impact on teaching and learning paradigms. Currently, as over the past few decades, teaching and learning occur in a constructivist learning paradigm. **The most prominent paradigm shifts that we experienced in education during the 20th century are :**

- 1) Reproductive learning vs productive learning
- 2) Behaviourism vs constructivism
- 3) Teacher-centered vs learner-centered
- 4) Teaching-centered vs learning-centered
- 5) Teaching vs learning facilitation
- 6) Content-based vs outcomes-based
- 7) Content-based evaluation vs outcomes-based assessment (**Brown,2006, p.2).**

Terhart (2003) states that constructivism does not present a new didactic paradigm different from traditional educational theories. Although constructivism is successful in some educational areas, it does not introduce a shift from the traditional framework of thinking. Learning paradigms are already starting to shift beyond the changes experienced in the 20th century in terms of the role of teaching and learning. While the role of the teacher first shifted from teaching to learning facilitation , the latest shift is towards “facilitated and supported inquiry” (**Soloway,2003**). A paradigm shift requires a deeper level of correction. The researcher found that it is very important to make use of these developments and