

Focusing Teacher's Practices, Learners' Attitudes and Study Skills Through Action Research

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Abstract

Teaching English to first year students at university is quite challenging. After nearly a decade of the adoption of the LMD (Licence/Master/Doctorat) in Algeria, teachers have been putting focus on classroom practices and designing appropriate curricula. In this action research, the author focused on the learners' attitudes towards their teachers and towards their teachers' practices. To achieve these aims, classroom observations, collaboration with teachers teaching first year students and a set of interviews to cover the various teaching practices teachers adopt during the academic year 2013-2014 were used. The paper relied also on the analysis of the students' journals, questionnaires and interviews while learning study skills in their Methodology of the University Work's Subject. Results showed that first year students had positive attitudes towards their teachers and their teachers' practices. In addition, the majority of learners could develop their study skills' abilities, but still face difficulties in speaking, writing and vocabulary. Teachers, on their hand, argued that their students face problems in the productive skills although they have very good interpersonal relationships with first year students. The paper suggests at the end that teachers should use new methods to develop learners' competences and involve learners in the decision-making process.

Key words: action research, attitudes, methodology of university work, study skills, teacher's practices.

Introduction

During at least the last six decades, there was a proliferation of teaching methods in the field of foreign languages. Their vital aim and elementary objective has been to ensure a methodical and efficient learning of the target language they are exposed to. These methods focus mainly on the materials to be used, on the aspects of the language to be learned and the skills that foreign language learners are expected to learn. In the Algerian context, there is tendency to encourage openness towards EFL. In addition, the LMD reform encourages the development of foreign language teaching methodologies in order to fit globalisation needs. In this paper, we try to shed light on how ELT practices influence learners' practices focusing first year university students of English while dealing with study skills. The researcher at hand was among the staff that launched the LMD system and was engaged in all the changes, the challenges and the developments of its functioning in a decade time. Additionally, the suggested syllabus of the Methodology of the University Work (Idri, 2013) put focus on study skills and this started right from 2004/2005 when the LMD system started in Bejaia University. This paper takes three groups out of six as a sample of the action research (i.e. 50% of the whole population of first year students in the 2014/2015 university year).

I. Context and Problem

I.1. Introducing First Years LMD Programmes

To begin with, it is essential to make comparisons with the programme launched when the LMD system started in Algeria and the new one required by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in 2013. The programme was sent by the Ministry and neither teachers nor administrators were prepared to get started with a new programme.

Within the programme, there were many changes regarding the subjects to teach, the number of hours to teach each subject, the type of sessions to teach. From 2004 until 2013, teachers used to cover a diversity of subjects. These were: *writing, speaking, morpho-syntax, origin and evolution of language, linguistic trends and concepts, phonetics, initiation to cultures of language, initiation to literature, ESP (English for Specific Purposes), methodology of the university work, German or Spanish (student's choice), ICT (Information and Communication Technology) (optional), and human and Social sciences (optional)*.

However, the 2013 programme came to change the overall content and form of studies as a whole. It is a common programme that comes to fix teaching contents in foreign languages in the two first years of the LMD system in all Algerian universities (MESRS, 2013, article 1). The objective behind is to create homogeneous learning and equal opportunities for learners. The first semester of the year is made up of eight lectures (*writing, Speaking, Grammar, initiation to Culture/civilization, initiation to linguistics, initiation to literary texts, human and social sciences, and finally methodology of the university work*). Additionally, six group sessions are also available that are: *phonetics, speaking, French, grammar, writing, and finally methodology of the university work*. During this academic year, this programmed was covered by 13 full-time teachers (who cover mainly lectures), 10 part-time teachers (who cover mainly group sessions and tutored by full-time teachers) and two associate teachers. The 2013/2014's section encompasses six groups. This paper is concerned with groups 4, 5 and 6 that makes 86 students.

Comparing these two programmes remains important since many subjects disappeared, mainly *ESP* and *ICT* that constitute a pillar of the LMD system whereas less importance is given to *phonetics* (Mammeri, 2014) whose weekly teaching hours diminished and its coefficient shifted from 3 in the first programme to 1 in the new one.

1.2. Research Methodology: Teaching Context

In the Algerian university, the debate about teaching curricula is still on about what to teach in the research methodology classes (Hamada, 2014; Idri, 2013); a subject that appears at all levels in the BA (Bachelor of Arts, the L of the LMD system) and at the two years level of Master degree as well. Some of the most common and challenging problems that teachers encounter with learners is how to develop learners' academic skills, how to use research skills and make efficient bibliographic research; how to reach positive and satisfactory academic achievement via writing research reports, dissertations and theses. In this work, focus is put on the first year of the LMD system. The syllabus highlights teaching study skills. The aim behind is trying to minimize the problem of inappropriate research methods' use, help the learner cope with long and numerous texts for reading, avoid poor note taking, and help the learner achieve good academic written results.

In Bejaia context, although theoretically the subject has been allotted much time and weight in the programmes, but still learners find difficulties to write academically when asked to do so. One can in no way discuss all the years of study that is why the paper takes one sample; that is, teaching study skills to first year university students of EFL. Given that EFL is based on language skills and that new teaching methods require more from the learner, we estimate that the university learner should first develop his study skills or research methods' skills at the first stage. This implies developing the students' learning strategies and then being more autonomous when they advance in the training. For this, Hamada (2014) suggested that teachers need to:

- improve language proficiency through the four skills,
- use autonomous, strategic learning,
- vary access routes to information and data collection, analysis and interpretation of results.

In a study day held in Bejaia on May, 13th, 2014 about evaluating the LMD system in Algeria after a decade period, presenters could make comparisons between the two universities that piloted the system: Bejaia University and Constantine University. Focus was put on English mainly. Prof. Hamada (2014) emphasized the programmes teachers agreed upon in Constantine for all the levels. The first year syllabus was presented as follows:

• **Objective.** Raise students' awareness about language learning strategies and study skills make them act as active learners, using different intelligences for various reading purposes.

• **Content.** Prof. Hamada presented the following content:

- Learning principles and strategies; using affective and meta-cognitive strategies
- Discovering and using multiple intelligences
- Developing critical thinking
- Setting reading purposes, and;

- Note taking, skimming, scanning, paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting

As one might notice, focusing study skills and learning strategies is shared by both universities (Bejaia; **c.f. appendix 01** and Constantine as presented by Prof. Hamada). However, the difference is that in Constantine, there is an explicit teaching of learning strategies. Learners are also taught such strategies and, then, will be accustomed to the technical terms related to the competences they are supposed to develop. In Bejaia, however, study skills are taught explicitly but learning strategies are meant to be developed implicitly without offering the technical terms related to what learners should develop.

II. Literature Review

In this paper, the author based the analysis on four main concepts; learners' attitudes and beliefs mainly towards teachers, teachers' practices, study skills and action research.

To begin with, interest in learners' beliefs and attitudes has increased since the 1980s. Learners' attitudes can be related to the learner himself, the class or the teacher. In language learning, the learner is the central of this process. Hence, all what happens in the foreign language classroom and all what the teacher does or should do in his practices should respond to this learner's needs. First, learners' perceptions refer to perceptions of themselves. These have often been defined as how students understand and make sense of themselves and their own learning (Liskin-Gasparo, 1998). Learners' perceptions of the learning situation have included how students experience and understand aspects of the classroom. In the present action research, focus is put on how learners perceive their level in terms of language skills and towards their teachers of study skills. When dealing with language skills, speaking comes at the top of the learners' difficulties; either really or as perceived by the students themselves. In general, and as Horwitz (1988) found in her study, foreign language learners were found to believe that they should be able to speak with accuracy and with an excellent accent. With such beliefs, they certainly think that they should be fluent and speak the foreign language without committing mistakes. In addition, mistaken or uninformed beliefs about language learning may lead to dependence on less effective strategies, resulting in indifference toward learning, poor cognitive performance, classroom anxiety and a negative attitude to autonomy (Victori and Lockhart, 1995). In addition to language skills, study skills are concerned with developing strategies as well as academic skills in EFL learners. If learners hold negative beliefs about these skills or about their ability to develop them, they are more likely to fail in doing so. For this, the author assumes that the teacher's role is paramount in this case.

Since the paper's aim turns around teachers' practices, instructors need to admit and respect students' attitudes, beliefs, and expectations and help them overcome any damaging perceptions and blocks (Mantle-Bromley, 1995). Moreover, instructors need to enhance students' awareness of their personal weaknesses and strengths and of their task/strategic competence, since beliefs differing from those of the teacher can lead to frustration, dissatisfaction with the course, unwillingness to perform communicative activities, and lack of confidence in the teacher (Mantle-Bromley 1995; Peacock, 1998).

In the Methodology of the University Work's subject at Bejaia University, emphasis is put on teaching study skills to first year university students. The objective behind is to develop in the learners a number of competences they need in their learning in general and research in

particular. The role of study skills is based on research methods skills, library skills, information skills, information handling/retrieval skills and so on. In EFL, teaching accentuates language skills, use of dictionary and online resources, note-taking techniques and many other aspects that can help the learner develop his academic skills. Wray and Lewis (1997b) identified a number of study skills required from the learner namely: identifying known information; identifying needed information; defining a subject and a purpose for the research; locating and selecting possible sources of the information; recognizing text type or types and how to read them to obtain the information; locating information in the text; and interacting with the text in the most effective manner; monitoring the understanding of the text; and using appropriate strategies if there are parts that are not understood; selecting and extracting relevant information; organizing and recording the information either in writing or electronically; evaluating, interpreting, integrating and interrogating the information; using processes for remembering what has been learnt; and finally presenting or communicating findings or points of view. Hence, teachers should be careful about their practices to succeed in developing such competences in their learners. The course at hand aims at developing all these skills to facilitate reading scholarly publications and write academically.

Yet, in order to succeed in making learners' attitudes positive towards the course, the classroom and the teacher, the author applied action research to develop teaching skills. Allright (2005) pointed out that action research is a model for classroom research. When attempting to link action research to teacher research, we just share Dick's (2005, p. 137) definition that 'action research is action and research' on the one hand and that the teacher should also conduct research in order to develop and change. It is simply because teacher research is in itself a systematic inquiry into practice so as to improve the quality of teaching and learning' (Vieira, Barbosa, Paiva & Fernandes, 2008, p. 221). For Dick (2005, p. 140), action research involves both learning and change. Hence, teacher research when employed as action research is more likely to make changes in both learning and teaching practices. As one can notice, efficient and effective teaching cannot be totally separated from research since the instructor needs to be in constant contact with his learners. In this, Allright (2005) commented on action research:

"It simply repeated the demand on them to develop research skills taken from the academic repertoire and to run classroom research projects that would be essentially parasitical on both their normal working lives as teachers and the lives of their learners. the relationship between academic researchers like me and classroom teachers, and that proposed the term exploratory teaching for what I had in mind."(p. 355)

Additionally, when teaching changes from theory consuming to theory building, teachers will then develop new ways of teaching and use different techniques. Thus, teaching can be based on evidence teacher research produces. In this, Biesta (2007, p. 1) pointed out that teaching should be or become an evidence-based profession as it has recently come to prominence in several countries around the world.

III. Participants

III.1. Learners

The target population in the present study was first year EFL students at Bejaia University enrolled in the academic year 2013-2014. They represent 164 students divided into six groups and each group carries 28 students. The present action research takes three classes (84 students) as a sample.

III.2. Teachers

The author worked with instructors teaching first year students the same year. Five teachers were interviewed and four others provided feedback regarding teaching practices. They are all full-time teachers. Their experience varies from four to twelve years of university teaching. They were all females.

IV. Data Collection

IV.1. Written Journals

This tool was used twice during the academic year. The first written journal was used in the first session in October, 2013. Its aim was to evaluate the learners' entering behaviour. The teacher asked learners to introduce themselves, describe their language proficiency in terms of language skills and write about what they expect to learn from the subject of "Methodology of the University Work" that students attend for the first time. We could receive 60 copies. It should be noted that classes generally contain less during the first sessions because a number of students was not registered due to changing the discipline, changing the university or changing the faculty.

The second journal was used at the end of the year; three sessions before stopping lectures (i.e. journals due on April, 21st, 2014). The number diminished dramatically and we could get only sixteen answers from the students. This period was characterized by students' absenteeism since there was a break due to national events (on April, 17th and 20th). The teacher asked learners to write about what they learned, what was difficult, what would they need to emphasize in the last two remaining sessions. The session was also devoted to question-and-answer since learners faced problems in practice at that stage. The journal required from the learners their general feedback on their first academic year at university.

IV.2. Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used to get more details about the learners' attitudes towards study skills, language skills and their level of proficiency after one academic year according to their own view. The questionnaires were administered on April, 2014.

IV.3. Interviews

Interviews were used during tutoring sessions to accompany learners. The author's tutoring sessions were scheduled on Mondays from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. on a weekly basis. Hence, only learners who felt the need to have a talk with a tutor were involved in this method. The students were 10 in number. They were interviewed individually. It was an unstructured interview for each learner since tutoring is meant to suit the learner's need and should be guided

accordingly. Teacher's role was more listening and guiding the learners. Interviews were separately held and in different periods of the academic year.

IV.4. Online journals

A set of questions was sent to the majority of teachers who were teaching first year students during the academic year 2013/2014. From nine teachers, the author could have five answers.

V. Findings

During the whole academic year, the teacher-researcher tried to adopt diverse teaching tools, materials and diverse means of data collection in this action research. The author was aware that for students, attending university courses for the first time can be challenging. We can illustrate from Student K. H. who wrote in his interview: *"university is something different from other levels. I think that it's hard to adapt. I mean it's heavy for someone new"*. As part of teaching, teachers tend to start the first session with a self-introduction and the introduction of the subject at hand. The subject of the Methodology of the University Work is new for the learner as its name suggests. Hence, preparing the learner for a new subject is quite evident. Although its content might be easy to grasp, but developing the competences needed from the learner is the end. The objective of the subject is to train beginner learners develop their learning strategies and help learners be able to locate information, organize information and reconstruct information. This is simply because all EFL learning has to do with information gathering and practice.

Findings are displayed according to the three main points; learners' attitudes and experiences, students' skills' teaching and teachers' practices.

V.1. Learners' Attitudes and Experiences

A Question-and-Answer method was used during the 21st of April's session. This was done to encourage the learner share his learning experience with the lecturer. Students were overt towards this discussion and many of the students revealed that they need more practice in terms of study skills. Students requested from the lecturer to transform the lecture into a group session and do the activities with her. They also asked from the lecturer to speak less fast. Students revealed their negative attitudes towards the university year and said that they did not learn much new things except for research methodology since it was totally new for them.

As for the journals, we can summarize the findings in terms of attitudes. Some of the learners have positive attitudes towards all teachers and university courses as a whole. We can illustrate through the student who wrote:

St Z.N. (Female): *"with such pleasant, diverse, active and intelligent teachers, all things will be simple"*.

We asked the participants to report in their journals their experience in the Methodology of the University Work's subject which was covered through lectures and group sessions alike.

Here, we noted 8 frequencies (out of 16) about good impression students had towards the lecture compared to 2 views that were negative.

Cases in points are the following quotes (one is positive and the second is negative)

St K.A. (Male): *I much appreciated both the lectures and the workshops. The professors are good. They do their job well. That's why I appreciated to attend and be present".*

St S. I. (Female): *"I see the module of methodology was very difficult. Sometimes I do not understand what the teacher says either in the course or the group session".*

For group sessions, students find them quite positive and 6 students expressed this overtly. Students find them helpful since methodology is a matter of practice. In this, a student said:

St N. O. (Female): *"by basing my opinion on my own experience in methodology, I can conclude that we understand methodology more with research and practice".*

As for the methodology courses, we used the end of the year's journal where only 16 students were present, we could summarize the results in terms of the learners' attitudes towards the methodology subject and content used during this academic year (see **Table 01**).

The present table shows the overall frequencies for learners' attitudes towards the taught subject.

Table 01: Learners' attitudes towards the methodology of the university work's subject

	Difficult	Interesting	Good	Total
Methodology Subject	5	7	6	18
Content	1	8	7	16

According to table 01, one can read that students' attitudes seem positive as a whole. Some learners find that the course is difficult (5 in number) and only 1 student considers the content as difficult. For the others, who form the majority, find the subject either interesting (7 students) or good (6 students) whereas 8 students considered the content interesting and 7 others that it was good. To illustrate, one student wrote:

St M. Y. (female) *"Unlike the other modules, methodology tends to be the most important one because it helps to acquire the method to learn the other modules and even it aids the learner to use his skills to learn. I think that methodology is the essence of learning"*

In the coming lines, results from the questionnaire completed by students in one of the classes where all students were present. We focused on study skills here. When asking learners about whether they faced difficulties in their courses during the academic year, 54 students out of 84 replied positively (i.e. 64.28%) whereas 35.71% said that they did not face difficulties. Our aim is not just to see how many students face difficulties; though the rate is quite important, but

we need to diagnose these difficulties in order to remedy such problems in the future. When asking them to enumerate the difficulties they face, we could get sixty answers summed up into six sources. These difficulties are summarized in **Table 02**:

Table 02: Learners' difficulties in English courses

Options	Number	Percentage
Insufficient information.	16	26.66%
new and 'amotivated' Teachers	13	21.67%
Difficulties to ask questions	11	18.34%
Vocabulary Gaps	09	15%
Note-taking Challenges	07	11.66%
Insufficient allocated time	04	6.67%
Total	60	100%

As one might notice from Table 02, learners' most frequent problems are first related to content and information, and to teachers. In addition, learners face a problem in the target language since they feel unable to ask questions (18.34%) either because of the classroom atmosphere that is not appropriate (teachers problem that makes 21.67%) or due to linguistic difficulties (knowledge that makes 26.66%; or vocabulary gaps that represents 15%). Technical issues are considered here by the learners like inability to take notes for 11.66% or absence/lack of time management strategies for 6.67% of the learners. To comment on these results, learners seem to object on a number of teachers they evaluate as less experienced and less motivated. It is indeed a fact in the Department of English at Bejaia since full-time teachers are few and have extra-load in their work. This is more likely to influence their performance negatively. Although many part time teachers and associate teachers provide help and to the Department, but the problem of lack of teachers working full time remains problematic. What seems quite significant is that after months of training, we have a number of learners who could not develop their note-taking skills and time management strategies. These are few in number but we consider this important since we aimed at developing such skills in the learners to prepare them for academic work.

V.2. Study Skills' Teaching

To pursue discussing the main findings, we asked questions about learners' proficiency in general and about their proficiency in the four language skills particularly. Findings from the journals are reported in Table 03:

Table 03: Learners' perception of their proficiency in the four skills

Difficulty Perception Skill	Difficult/bad	Average	Easy/Good	Total

	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
Listening	7	17.95	1	2.56	31	79.49	39	100
Reading	1	2.44	4	9.76	36	87.80	41	100
Writing	12	28.57	8	19.05	22	52.38	42	100
Speaking	23	48.94	8	17.02	16	34.04	47	100
Total	43	25.44	21	12.43	105	62.13	169	100

If we consider the learners’ overall perception, it is positive since high rates are generally noticed in the easy/good column of the language skills (62.13%). We can notice from the results that the productive skills are the most challenging for learners with 28.57% for writing and 48.94% for speaking. Then, learners claimed to have listening difficulties and they represent 17.95%. In their journals, a number of the respondents commented on the lecturer’s speed in speaking that cause problems in understanding for some and taking notes for others. We can illustrate through student S. N. *“To be honest, I would understand in your lectures more if you were speaking slowly”*. This is an important aspect of teacher’s talk. The teacher is more likely to consider his talk’s pace to fit different levels of learners and guarantee more understanding.

Other details appeared along the journals where four students mentioned their problems in vocabulary and two others in pronunciation.

In order to get more evidence about language skills, Table 4 summarizes the participants’ perception of difficulty for each skill as reported from the short questionnaire used in the classroom:

Table 04: Students’ perception of skills’ difficulty

	Number	Percentage
Speaking	48	57.14%
Writing	20	23.81%
Listening	11	13.10%
Reading	05	5.95%
Total	84	100%

As one can notice, results from the questionnaire confirm the journals’ results and skills are ordered the same way in terms of difficulty. Speaking is the most challenging skill (57.14%) and writing follows with 23.95%, then listening with 13.10%. Reading seems the less challenging skill for the learners who participated in the action research. Hence, efforts should be made to develop speaking and writing through practice; a task that should be made by both teachers and learners alike.

V.3. Teachers’ Practices

For teachers, online journals were used through five items (Appendix 02). In addition, and face to face discussions were used to get more details about teachers’ practices. As a summary of the teachers’ answers and views, **Table 05** is presented:

Table 05: Teachers’ Attitudes towards Learners, Programme and Their Classroom Practices

Variable Teacher	Taught Subject	Attitudes towards the Learner	Attitudes towards the New Programme	Teaching Practices	Interaction Patterns
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T1*	Cultures/ Civilization	Good level	Cultures/ Civilization, media education and ICT are important in the LMD system but removed	Discussion about cultural issues.	Communication: I motivate them to speak, to discuss and to ask questions
T2	linguistics	Good and acceptable level	quite acceptable	explaining, demonstrating, asking questions, evaluation	it is a lecture, the kind of interaction is question/answer
T3	Literature	No change	/	Studying and analyzing texts.	more motivated than the previous students of last year.
T4	Written Expression	Good	Based more on speaking and writing and less on phonetics and literature	* Giving assignments to the learners and identifying the skills they need to complete their tasks. *Guiding them through their writing activities. *Encouraging pair collaboration and group work.	It is a high, effective student- instructor classroom interaction
T5	introduction to human sciences	I really enjoyed working with them; they are highly motivated and disciplined.	Rich but ESP should be back	Lecturing, concept elicitation,	good relationship and the interaction was always possible, were really confident, very kind atmosphere

* T refers to Teacher

When dealing with teachers' online guided journals, results showed positive attitudes toward the 2013/2014 year's group and toward their level as well. Teachers claimed that they had very good interpersonal relations with their learners and interaction with them was so frequent. When teachers interact with their learners even in a lecture either by discussion or question-and-answer, this implies good and positive teaching practices that make the learning-teaching process easier.

When asking the participants in the interview about their learners, they agreed on an average level and that students face problems in the productive skills: writing and speaking. This result is also compatible with what was found in the action research through journals and questionnaire. Hence, teachers diagnosed the problem of productive skills and students were conscious of this difficulty. In this, teachers related the problem in language production to the students' limited vocabulary and their low motivation. We can illustrate from one teacher who said:

Teacher: Insufficient vocabulary knowledge imposes limitations on students' abilities to use English both orally and in writing. These results are largely due to the students' low motivation.

VI. Reflections

First of all, the positive feedback, that a teacher provides, affects students' learning. In that, a teacher who provides an encouraging feedback and values students' responses is more likely to get students motivated to learn and to participate in the classroom conversation and will help them to create a warm, social climate in the classroom. The aspect of interaction and good relations was also evoked by both teachers and learners as to be successful.

The problem of productive skills mainly speaking was an important challenge for both teachers and learners. The problem may be in the appropriate decision teachers should make. That is, when teachers try to find teaching methodologies to diminish this problem, they are less likely involving learners in this important decision-making process.

Since most of the participants' skills problem occurs in speaking, writing and vocabulary. The author recommends using extensive reading in EFL classes to develop learners' vocabulary, be more accustomed to academic style and adopt it in writing. In this, Hamada (2014) suggested putting focus while teaching research methodology on typical genre types (articles, essays, term papers and dissertations). We also suggest introducing vocabulary teaching for first year students (Hamadi, 2014) since it has never been taught explicitly at university.

In addition, since learners according to the findings find problems in the lack of practice, we find it necessary to devote more time for workshops in the Methodology of the University Work's subject and create space for out-of-class practice through projects. Using the Project-based Approach is more likely help the learner be more creative, more autonomous and more engaged in learning. This will make learning based on learning-by-doing.

We can also suggest the following implications for classroom practice:

- Use of cooperative learning in group sessions to maximize students-student interaction
- Give equal opportunities for students to Present-Practice-Produce (PPP); one of the principles of task-based learning.
- Diminish the number of students (28 in our case per class is huge compared to the time devoted for the session; it is not possible for all students to take part in the classroom tasks).
- Assess students' perceptions towards their sessions, their classes and their teachers regularly to respond to their needs in a continuous manner. In addition, while doing so, teachers can diagnose possible problems and remedy them.
- Use technology in teaching research methods skills.
- Use interactive tasks and activities to help students improve their language production.
- Involve learners in the decision-making process in the classroom.

Conclusion

All along the last subject, we have gone through the four basic skills of a language which are unavoidable in the process of learning a foreign language. Of course, their importance is in no way a matter of discussion though their order is. The Methodology of the University Work provided learners with study skills materials to develop their research methods skills via note-taking, signal words, key words, main ideas, supporting ideas and the like from the materials needed for a learner to be successful, autonomous and professional in the future. However, through years of teaching this subject, the teacher-researcher met difficulties to reach this aim. That is why; we opted for adopting action research continuously to diagnose our learners' problems.

After the results we could reach, our next step is working on reinforcing our syllabus mainly in speaking and writing. We shall, then, for next year prepare more activities based on practice. As Prof Hamada (2014) concluded in his paper, we do not need to teach research methodology but design activities based on research skills to develop critical thinking in our learners.

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Appendices

Appendix 01. Methodology of the University Work Syllabus

UNIVERSITY OF BEJAIA
FIRST YEAR LMD: (Section 02)
IDRI

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
LECTURER: Dr. Nadia AHOUARI-

Teaching Unit: Methodology of the University Work

Part A: Study Skills

- I.** Tips on Studying a Foreign Language
 - II.** Note-taking Tips
 - III.** Note-taking Symbols and Abbreviations
 - IV.** Listen for Signal Words/Sign Posts
 - V.** Dictionary Use, Using the Library and Online Search Engines
 - VI.** Listening
 - VII.** Reading
 - VIII.** Writing
 - IX.** Speaking
 - X.** Introduction to Research
- Needed Vocabulary and Further Readings

Appendix 02. Online Interview Items for First Year Teachers

1. What is the subject you teach for first year LMD students this year? Specify whether you teach a lecture, a group session or both.
2. What is your attitude towards this year's group?
3. What is your attitude towards the new suggested programme for first year students?
4. What are your teaching/classroom practices you use while teaching your subject matter?
5. How do you manage to equilibrate between new first year students and repeaters this year?
6. What is the nature of the interaction and relationship with your first year students this year?

Appendix 03. Things Learners are Required to Do in the Project

- Defining a subject and a purpose for research related to learning EFL.
- Locating and selecting possible sources of the information (Two to Three Resources)
- Recognizing textual clues, and how to read them to obtain the information (Using the taught reading strategies).
- Locating information within the text
- Assessing and selecting relevant information
- Organizing and recording the information.
- Evaluating, interpreting, integrating and interrogating the information and recording the information.
- Presenting or communicating points of view (writing academically, paraphrasing, summarizing strategies are needed)