

COMPARISON OF WHOLE-CLASS DISCUSSION AND TASK-BASED ACTIVITY:
A SMALL-SCALE STUDY

by
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Declaration of Authorship

I declare that this (project/thesis/dissertation) is my own work and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it does not contain material published or written by a third party, except where permission has been obtained and/or appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

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Abstract

This study examined the participation patterns and effectiveness of two different sets of materials applied with two different treatments: Treatment 1 consisted of a Task-based activity; Treatment 2 used a whole-class discussion approach (Question/Answer Paradigm). The research examined the opportunities students had to venture an answer and which instructional treatment was more relevant and effective. The quantity of information students could remember immediately after instruction, one week later, and the information that emerged through the interactional formats were measured. Each procedure was carried out for approximately one hour and then participants were asked to write a summary. After a week, the same procedure was carried out to see how much information they could remember. This thesis aimed to assess the opportunities L2 learners had to express, interpret and negotiate meaning by comparing the two instructional treatments. All the interactions were transcribed. The learners' response towards the task-based activity showed positive results and the task-based activity was considered as a better pedagogical instrument.

Keywords: *Communication, Task-based activity, Whole-class discussion, Interaction.*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This study examined the effectiveness of two different pedagogical treatments administered to two different groups. The first pedagogical treatment consisted of a task-based activity. The second pedagogical treatment involved whole-class discussion based on the so-called 'question/answer paradigm'. In both treatments, the same content was covered. However, the main difference between the two treatments was in the actual type of interaction the two groups were exposed to. In the whole-class discussion, the instructor asked the participants questions to engage them to talk. In the task-based activity, the instructor provided participants with an activity to complete. Each treatment was carried out for approximately one hour. Data were collected to measure verbal participation in the two treatments. All the interactions were transcribed. How much information participants in the two groups gained and retained from the two interactions were also measured.

1.1. The Nature and Role of Communication

Communication is the interpretation, negotiation, and expression of meaning in a given context for a specific purpose (Benati, 2020). Communication involves interaction and information exchange between two or more interlocutors. To understand the nature of information exchange and interactions occurring in a conversation, the nature of communication should be understood. Communication and exchanging information involves two or more speakers. When people communicate, they are involved in (i) interpreting, (ii) negotiating and (iii) expressing meaning. Let's examine these elements of communication one by one.

Interpretation

According to the input processing theory (VanPatten, 2015), when language learners are exposed to language input, they try to interpret language by focusing their attention on words before they process grammatical features. Interpretation is successful if individuals are exposed to comprehensible input (they must be able to understand the language they are exposed to) and message-oriented language input (they must be able to extract meaning from the input). For language learners to make progress in the acquisition of a language, they need to receive meaningful and comprehensible input. Features of

language make their way to the language-internal system if they have been linked to real-world meaning. Interpretation and processing language input are the first and most important stages in second language acquisition.

Negotiation of meaning

Language learners negotiate meaning while they interact with each other. When a communication problem arises, learners are engaged in resolving it through interaction and negotiation of meaning. In the example below, the Native Speaker (NS) engages with the Non-Native Speaker (NNS) by negotiating meaning.

- NS: *Did you have a nice weekend?*
- NNS: *Hum...?*
- NS: *Saturday, Sunday...did you have fun?*

Negotiation has been defined (Lee, 2000) as interactions during which speakers come to terms, reach agreements, make arrangements, solve a problem or settle an issue by conferring or discussing. Negotiation has an important role in second language acquisition as it provides language learners with exposure to more comprehensible and meaningful input. Empirical research on tasks promoting negotiation (Benati, 2020) has overall indicated that language learners develop more opportunities to use the language communicatively.

Expression

An expression can be either oral or written and it refers to any type of production during a communicative event. Communication is a multilayered event where interlocutors are engaged in interactions to interpret and communicate a message.

Two important constructs in communication are context and purpose. The construct of context refers to two principal aspects of communication: the setting and the participants (Benati, 2020). The use of language differs based on what the context and the setting may be, who the learner is addressing and where. For example, a language learner in the context of a classroom may use formal language to communicate with the instructor. However, the same learner would use a different, more informal language when interacting with a close friend. The fact that language is used for a specific purpose makes it essential to understand why people communicate with each other. Among the main reasons people communicate

are two: (i) they interact and communicate for a psycho-social reason; (ii) they interact and communicate for a cognitive-informational reason (VanPatten, 2018).

A psycho-social purpose entails communication for the establishment and maintenance of social relationships. The purpose of this communication is used for example when one greets a passerby to maintain or develop one's relationship, or when we meet with someone and we ask about how that person is doing. A cognitive-informational purpose entails obtaining information for a specific reason, such as opening a bank account or booking a holiday.

Overall, communication plays a key role in the success of fostering language acquisition.

1.2. The Problem of Equating Communication to the Question/Answer Paradigm (Whole-class Discussion)

The Question/Answer paradigm takes place when a language teacher stands before the class and asks open-ended questions such as, 'what did you do last weekend?' or 'can you talk about the last movie you watched?' Very often, what happens is that one student ventures an answer and the whole class remains silent. Lee (2000, p.19) argues that discussions in these cases reach no conclusion because "the discussion involves only a few people and excludes many more."

The use of discussion questions as a mean of structuring interaction has many flaws. First of all, only few learners participate in class discussions. Secondly, the whole-class discussion tends to become a conversation between few language learners and the instructor. Thirdly, this types of discussion questions become very often a teacher-centered exercise, as the instructor tends to talk most of the time. Instructors' questions aim at extracting information from one language learner, rather than engage the language class in genuine interaction. Fourthly, the role of the instructor is to be the one person who is asking the question and the role of the language learner is simply reduced to responding to the question.

Communication can't be equated to simply asking questions and waiting for individuals to venture an answer. This paradigm does not promote acquisition and it does not encourage students to negotiate meaning for a specific purpose (Lee, 2000).

The main purpose of the Question/Answer paradigm is for language learners to practice the language they already know. However, language learners need the opportunity to interact with other learners and to access the new language. The role and nature of communication, described in this chapter, is in antithesis to the traditional practice largely used in textbooks.

There are several common traditional oral activities. One is when language learners are, for example, asked to look at pictures or dialogue and then perform the dialogue following a specific pattern. A typical activity is ‘look at the pictures and practice the following patterns in the target language’. Another form of a traditional oral activity is to ask learners to talk about a topic (e.g., describe a friend or a member of your family or talk about your weekend, etc.) Without taking into consideration the main principles of the communication act.

Communitive tasks require the use of language for a specific purpose. In another traditional instruction, language learners normally exchange very little real information. Language instructors spend most of their time asking so-called ‘display questions’ for which learners already know the answers. Typically, an instructor asks a question, such as ‘Where is the pen?’ (showing everybody that the pen is on the table) for which the learner already knows the answer. What often happens is that the individual learner answers, then the instructor evaluates or corrects the answer, and the cycle begins again with another learner and another question to which everyone already knows the answer.

Display questions have clear limitations as, on one hand, they do not offer genuine communication practice, and on the other hand, they take learners away from the use of language for communicative purposes.

Assuming that we aim to engage language learners in real communication activities where they need to interpret, negotiate and express meaning in content and for a specific purpose, effective communicative tasks that stimulate communication need to be developed. Much of the time allocated to the communicative task must be occupied by language learners’ talk and not instructors’ talk. L2 learners need to be exposed to an appropriate, comprehensible and accurate level of the target language. Language instructors must address some of the problems related to getting learners to talk in the classroom.

Lee (2000) suggests ways on how we engage language learners in activities that promote communication:

- (a) Language instructors should develop communicative tasks that increase language learners' talk time and at the same time lower the inhibitions of learners who are unwilling to speak in front of the full class. In group work, learners perform a learning task through small-group interaction.
- (b) Language instructors should base the communicative task on easy and comprehensible language that will help learners to produce target language with a minimum of hesitation.
- (c) Language instructors should keep students speaking the target language and monitor learners' use of the target language at all times during their tasks. Learners should be allowed to initiate communication during speaking tasks that involve negotiation for meaning.
- (d) Language instructors should provide clear instructions to accomplish the task. Opportunities for interaction should be created. If the task is based on group discussion, then, instructors should include instructions on how to participate. For example, instructors should tell learners to make sure that everyone in the group contributes to the discussion. To this end, a chairperson should be appointed to each group who will regulate participation.
- (e) Language instructors must play the role of the 'resource person' and the 'architect' in a task. They provide linguistic support when needed and they plan the task to enhance opportunities for interpretation, expression, and negotiation of meaning. Language learners must take initiative and responsibility and make decisions to complete the task successfully.
- (f) Language instructors should create a classroom environment where students are exposed to authentic real-life communication. This can occur when language learners collaborate to achieve a specific communicative goal. Language learners must be involved in an activity where they need at least two things: (i) something to talk about; (ii) and someone to talk to.
- (g) Language instructors should develop an essentially goal-oriented task and that requires learners to achieve an objective that is usually expressed by an observable

result (e.g., write brief notes or lists, rearrange jumbled items, draw a picture, prepare a spoken summary).

1.3. The Role of Task-based Activity in Promoting Communication

Tasks-based activities are developed to promote communication that are goal-oriented. In these activities language learners gain knowledge from interpreting language input and exchanging information. In designing a task-based activity, one must make sure that learners are involved in activities designed for a specific purpose. Lee (2000) has indicated that in structuring an oral task-based activity, language instructors should adopt the following criteria:

- a) They should identify the desired information outcome by planning the kind of information that should be extracted from interaction and by establishing the purpose of the interaction.
- b) They should break down the main topic into subtopics. In this way, language learners will better comprehend the nature of the topic, and this will lead to more interactions, negotiations, and discussions.
- c) They should create and sequence concrete tasks for learners to complete. These tasks should ensure learners use the information to express meaning.
- d) They should build in linguistic support (both lexical and grammatical). This refers to the fact that whenever language learners face problems of trying to encode or retrieve something in the target language, the instructor should support their needs and help them to keep the discussion going.

In a task-based activity, language learners will be able to answer all the questions raised by the end of the task by expressing and exchanging their own opinions.

A task-based activity requires students to (a) comprehend, (b) manipulate and (c) produce the target language as they perform some set of work plans. Tasks provide learners with a purpose for language use and make language teaching more communicative. Tasks are activities which involve understanding and processing of the target language (Ellis, 2003).

Students are encouraged to engage in a task-based activity by being provided communicative activities that are related to their 'outside-classroom reality'. Littlewood

(2004) claimed that the ‘inside-classroom pedagogy’ tasks “should reflect students’ needs, interests, and experiences” (2004, p.324) to help students interfere with the organization of a task that is helpful for them to learn new components of the target language.

Littlewood (2004) presents an example that shows how students are involved in a task that helps them form meaning connections and express.

“Qualities of a good friend

Learners are required to think and talk about qualities and characteristics a good friend should have. On a list of characteristics given to them, learners number 5 of them in order of importance. Each learner then writes a poem to his/her good friend in class based on the chosen items on the list.” (Littlewood, 2004, p. 324)

Learners are required to brainstorm and list characteristics of what a good friend should have along with their class members. Assuming that this activity approaches communication, Littlewood (2004, p. 325) demonstrates that students in this activity will not be told to shift their focus on producing any specific grammatical item. They will eventually produce it without being informed because the task involves learners to express meaning and communicate

1.4. Rationale of this Study

What is the nature of communication? As we argued in this introductory chapter, very often communication is equated to the use of the Question/Answer paradigm. This practice very often results in the following: few learners participate; native speaker speaks a lot; roles for both instructor and learner are restricted; language learner speaks very little; not much interaction and negotiation of meaning is involved.

Communication cannot be equated with whole-class discussion practice. Communication is the expression, interpretation, and negotiation of meaning in a given context for a specific purpose.

How do we ensure we implement this concept in second language teaching? In this chapter, it was argued that task-based activity should be used as a substitution of the whole-class discussion.

Tasks are the quintessential communicative event in contemporary language teaching. They involve the use of the language to express, negotiate and interpret meaning and their main purpose is not mere language practice. Tasks-based activities promote acquisition and provide a purpose for language use. They are an effective example of interactive communication tasks and should substitute the Question/Answer paradigm.

Chapter 2: The Role of Interaction

2.1. The Role of Interaction

The Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1996) has emphasized the key role of comprehensible input and interaction. Language instruction should focus on providing a rich variety of comprehensible input and opportunities for the learners to use language in spontaneous and meaningful interaction (Krashen, 1985). Comprehensible input plays a key role in second language acquisition and interactional modifications are crucial in making input comprehensible.

Interaction refers to some kind of communicative exchange involving the learner and at least another person. During an interaction, language learners exchange information and do essentially two things: (a) modify input; (b) provide feedback related to the linking of meaning and form.

Input modifications (negotiation of meaning) occur when the interlocutor perceives that the learner does not understand what is being said, and restates something by simplifying, exemplifying or otherwise altering the original statement. In other words, negotiation of meaning is triggered when there is a mismatch between a speaker's intended message and what the listener interprets as the intended meaning. Feedback occurs when the interlocutor uses particular devices to inform the learner about something he or she has said. Both input modifications and feedback can bring something in the input into the learner's focal attention at a given moment, offering an opportunity to perceive and process language.

Negotiation of meaning might facilitate the acquisition of vocabulary, morphology, syntax and pronunciation. When the language learner does not understand the other interlocutor, interactions that elicit negative feedback can have a facilitative role in acquisition. Native-Speakers and Non-Native Speakers can work actively together to achieve mutual understanding. Negotiations involve both linguistic and interactional modifications and facilitate acquisition because it connects input, learner's abilities, attention and production in a useful way.

Research (VanPatten, Smith and Benati, 2020) has manipulated and measured the types of interactions learners are involved in and the types of feedback they receive during

interaction. Overall the evidence has indicated that there is a robust connection between interaction and language acquisition:

- Learners need to be exposed to comprehensible and meaningful input
- Learners and instructors must resolve breakdowns in communication (negotiation of meaning)
- Learners need opportunities to communicate by performing communicative functions

In task-based activities, the purpose of language use is to accomplish some task, not to practice any particular form. Input will provide the linguistic data necessary to develop an L2 linguistic system and output will help language learners develop the use of the language for communicative purposes. The purpose of developing oral language skills is to permit chances for L2 learners to interpret, negotiate and express meaning.

Through appropriate communicative tasks, language learners must develop their ability to manage interaction as well as engage in the negotiation of meaning. The management of the interaction involves such things as when and how to take the floor, when to introduce a topic or change the subject, how to invite someone else to speak, and/or how to keep a conversation going. Negotiation of meaning refers to the skill of making sure the interacting persons understand one another.

Classroom research has indicated that interactional modifications and negotiation take place more in paired group activities than teacher fronted activities (Doughty and Pica, 1986). Negotiation has been defined by Lee (2000, p. 11) as “interactions during which speakers come to terms, reach agreements, make arrangements, solve a problem or settle an issue by conferring or discussing”.

Classroom research revealed that teachers’ use of the Question/Answer paradigm showed little results in language learners’ understanding (Lee, 2000). The IRE pattern shows the sequence of verbal acts of a discussion taking place in a classroom discourse. These three verbal acts are:

- Teacher-initiated act (I)
- Learner response act (R)
- Teacher-evaluation act (E)

The IRE pattern is what teachers rely on during a discussion where the instructor asks a question and students answer, and again the same procedure of turn-taking. This helps teachers to maintain and control the structure of classroom communication, and students should be familiar with the structure and learn to participate within it (Lee, 2000). Below is a brief review of the observations made out of three lessons given in a language classroom following the IRE pattern see (Lee, 2000) for more information.

Lesson 1

The first lesson is an introduction to a Spanish language course. Language learners in this course were in their first year of university. The class was divided into groups and language learners were asked to work on a topic called 'create a person'. Groups were given 25 minutes to create the person and to make a presentation to the other groups. When learners were given their description, the instructor kept asking questions that removed the need for learners to negotiate meaning with each other. Learners were not given opportunities to fully report and provide information to other members of the group about their descriptions. The questions raised by the instructor served no communicative purpose. At the end of the lesson, the instructor asked another set of questions, and only two students participated during the discussion. This brief review of a short classroom language lesson demonstrates that learners were not given the opportunity to exchange information and interact with each other and this practice was replaced with the Question/Answer paradigm.

Lesson 2

The second lesson observed, was given by a native Spanish speaker. The instructor was given the freedom to choose the materials and structured the class session. The lesson took place after a midterm exam where the two central activities involved reading the lyrics of a song and watching the music video. Learners spent three minutes watching the video and the remaining thirty-five minutes listening to the instructor. The instructor in this lesson wanted the students to compare “love and hate” and kept asking learners questions (see example below).

I: Is it better to hate or love?

Ss: [no answer.]

I: Or detest?

Ss: [no answer.]” (Lee, 2000, p. 21)

As in the example above, the teacher had to provide answers to her own questions. This is a one-sided conversation that, in fact, shows no sign of the key components of the communication act. This pattern is what is known as the Question/Answer paradigm, and this can happen when an activity in a language classroom is teacher-fronted instead of learner-centered.

Lesson 3

The third lesson observed, was given to second-semester graduate students learning French (see lesson extract below).

I: So you think there is really one French personality, a typically French personality? Yes?

Ss: No.

I: No? Why? [Pause.] Claudia?

S: Um ... I think there's a –

I: [*Interrupting.*] That there's a French personality? Good. Describe the French personality.

S: *How do you say "pride"?*

I: Oh ... You've already had two words. [*Writing on the blackboard*] Okay, "la fierte" is like in English "pride," and the adjective, "fier." Je suis fier, *I'm proud*. Good, are the French very proud? Do they have a lot of pride?

[*Silence.*] Are the French nationalistic?" (Lee, 2000, p. 25)

The instructor's goal was to provide the learners "opportunities to communicate". According to (Lee, 2000), there are several decisions the instructor made that provided opportunities for communication. The instructor, in the above excerpt, did not allow Claudia to finish what she had to say. The instructor assumed to know what Claudia was about to answer. The instructor did not answer Claudia's question with one word. Instead, she was provided with grammatical information. In the end, the instructor abandoned the topic and asked another question. Silence from the learner followed the explanation and the question. This lesson obviously lacked any opportunity for communication. There were no opportunities for negotiation for meaning.

2.2. Motivation of this Study and Research Questions

Communication is the interpretation, negotiation and expression of meaning in a given context for a specific purpose. Language learners must be given the opportunity to engage and acquire language following the key characteristics of communication. However, the brief lessons reviewed in the previous section revealed that the common practice in language teaching is the use of the Question/Answer paradigm or the so-called open-ended questions type of activities. The type of activities used by the instructors in the three lessons observed demonstrated that language learners are not engaged in communicating language.

The examples above show that these types of activities is for language learners to practice a particular form and/or use specific and relevant vocabulary. The fact that they might be working together and speaking does not necessarily mean they are communicating. An examination of the participation patterns will provide evidence as to whether or not learners are engaging in real communicative tasks and discussions with real opportunities to interpret, negotiate and express meaning.

Based on the key role of communication and interaction that plays in second language acquisition the purpose of the current study is twofold:

- To measure the effectiveness of the task-based activities in developing learners' communication skills;
- To compare the effectiveness of task-based activities vs. Whole-class discussion in enhancing opportunities to communicate.

The assumption is that contrary to the Question/Answer paradigm, tasks-based activities promote acquisition and provide a purpose for language use. The aim of this project is to assess the opportunities language learners have to interpret, negotiate and express meaning by comparing two groups: one group exposed to a whole-class discussion approach; and a second group exposed to task-based activities. Two specific questions are formulated to establish language learners' opportunities to interpret, negotiate and express meaning:

Q1: What are the participation patterns of the two groups?

Q2: How much information do the learners in the two groups remember immediately after the exposure and after one week?

The current project investigates participation patterns in terms of how many learners participate in discussions compared to task-based activities. In addition, it examines how much information emerges through the two interactional treatments and how much information the two groups remember immediately after instruction and after one week.

Chapter 3: Design

3.1. Participants

The participants of this classroom study were university-level students (18-20 years old) at the American University of Sharjah. An IRB approval form “Application for Review of Research Involving Human Subjects” was approved prior to starting the experiment with the students. The students were studying English (intermediate level) in the Achievement Academy/Bridge Program in order to obtain the required IELTS scores to be admitted to a bachelor program. All the participants had different L1 backgrounds. However, most of them were Arabic native speakers.

Two existing classes were used for this experiment. Each group received a different instructional treatment. The first group ($n=10$) discussed a topic through the whole-class discussion treatment. The second group ($n=14$) carried out the task-based activity treatment on the same topic.

3.2. Procedure

The experiment involved the comparison of two separate groups (whole-class discussion vs. Task-based activity). Both treatments lasted for one hour. One group performed the task-based activity, and the other group responded to the discussion questions. The two sessions were videotaped and recorded. Transcriptions were produced for data analysis purposes. The learners were all informed one week before the two sessions began of the nature of the experiment and their participation was completely voluntary.

Given the nature of the interactions in the two treatments, each session actually required a different amount of time (see Table 1).

Table 1: Time Spent (minutes) per Phase of Lesson

	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Total
Whole-class discussion				
Week 1	2	3	7	12
Task-based activity				
Week 1	In groups: 10 Follow-up: 4	In groups: 12 Follow-up: 4.2	5	35.2

The whole-class discussion interaction lasted about 12 minutes. On the other hand, the task-based activity took 35.2 minutes. Immediately after interaction, the two groups were given a sheet of paper with specific instruction. They were asked to summarize (maximum 20 minutes for this task) in writing the information discussed in class (see below). They were told to write using their first language.

Writing Material

You have talked about how knowledge is gained. What I would like you to do now is summarize the information you talked about in class. I would like you to write as much as you can.

One week later, the same procedure was adopted to measure how much information had been retained (see Table 2). Between the week of the experiment and the follow-up session one week later no exposure or discussion about the same topic took place.

Table 2: Overview of the Study

	Treatment 1 (whole-class discussion)	Treatment 2 (Task-based activity)
Week 1	Instruction (1 hour) followed by a sheet of paper to summarize what was discussed (immediate effects)	
Week 2	Sheet of paper to summarize what was discussed (delayed effects after one week)	

3.3. Materials

Two sets of materials covering the same topic were developed for this language classroom experiment. In the whole-class activity (divided into three phases), participants were asked questions related to 'gaining knowledge' assigned as their topic and they were expected to answer the questions. The three phases were supposed to facilitate and guide the discussion between instructors and participants.

In the first phase, language learners were asked to find associations in 'gaining knowledge from books' and 'gaining knowledge from experience'. In the second phase, learners answered the questions based on their own knowledge and/or experience. In the third phase, learners were asked questions about the topic and compared the differences between knowledge obtained from books and knowledge obtained from experience.

Whole-class Discussion

Phase 1. Association

What do you associate with the phrase “gaining knowledge from books”?

What do you associate with the phrase “gaining knowledge from experience”?

Phase 2. Gaining knowledge

How can you gain knowledge from books?

How can you gain knowledge from experience?

Phase 3. Conclusions

Do you think you gain knowledge from books and experience in the same way?

Do you think they are two different processes?

Do you think gaining knowledge from reading books is more effective?

Do you think gaining knowledge from experience is more effective?

In the tasked-based activity, participants worked together and had the opportunity to exchange information, interact and negotiate meaning. This particular activity facilitates learners' acquisition by providing communication opportunities. The same topic was covered, but learners worked in groups to accomplish the task. The task was divided into three phases. The first phase is called 'Assumptions'. Learners must fill the table by writing

a few words of what they assume gaining knowledge from books and experience is. The second phase focuses on developing learners' views about knowledge in terms of effects and possible advantages or disadvantages according to what they believe. The third phase consists of highlighting the possible differences between gaining knowledge from experience and gaining knowledge from books.

Task-based Activity: Knowledge

Phase 1. Assumptions

Step 1. In a group of two-three, prepare a list of what you assume is gaining knowledge from books and gaining knowledge from experience consist of. (fill in the table)

	Knowledge from books	Knowledge from experience
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Phase 2. Perspectives

Step 2. As a group of two-three, what do you believe is more effective? Tick your choice:

- Gaining knowledge from books.
- Gaining knowledge from experience.

Step 3. In a group of two-three. State several reasons why you think gaining knowledge from *books* is an advantage or disadvantage.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Step 4. In a group of two-three. State several reasons why you think gaining knowledge from *experience* is an advantage or disadvantage.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Phase 3. Conclusions

Step 5. What do you think?

Do you think you gain knowledge from books and experience in the same way?

Do you think they are two different processes?

Do you think gaining knowledge from reading books is more effective?

Do you think gaining knowledge from experience is more effective?

Chapter 4: Results

4.1. Participation Pattern

The first question that guided this study was: What are the participation patterns of the two groups? Table 3 shows how many students spoke in each session. In the whole-class discussion session, eight students participated. Whereas in the task-based activity, students participated as a group and all students interacted with each other.

Table 1: Participation Patterns

	Number of Learners Who Spoke
Whole-class Discussion	Week 1: 8/10
Task-based Activity	Week 1: 14/14

4.2. Treatment 1: Participation During the Whole-class Discussion

In the whole-class discussion practice, only a very small number of students engaged in any sort of extended speaking practice. Most of the students who participated in the discussion gave one or two-word answers. They did not elaborate much on their answers, which shows that students in this group did not have a chance to interact with each other, to gather information and to brainstorm ideas. Very often, the whole-class discussion turned into a one-to-one conversation between the instructor and one or two students. In most cases, students only interacted with the instructor.

The following is the transcript of the first week of the whole-class discussion session and shows that only five out of 10 students participated in phase one. Only four students participated in phase 2. During phase 1, students were asked to define what knowledge is or what they associate with the term. Most of the learners were not familiar with the term, or most likely, could not recall what it meant. Only one student (line 4 in the transcript), was able to define what is knowledge and another student came up with a one-word answer (line 6 in the transcript). Afterward, they all went silent (line 9 in the transcript), waiting for the instructor to answer. Participants did not interact with each other. The instructor asked the questions and the students answered them (communication = question and answer).

Phase 1 Associations

1. I: So, do you all know what knowledge is?
2. S1: Yes.
3. I: Can you tell me?
4. S1: Knowledge is ... err... is the amount of information you know.
5. I: So, what do you associate with knowledge? ... Like when you say knowledge what comes in mind?
6. S2: Study.
7. I: Studying.
8. S1: Business.
9. I: Business.
(silence)
10. I: It's like information, understanding something. What do you associate with the phrase ... amm... how do you gain knowledge? Do you know how?
11. S3: From books.
12. S2: Books, websites, newspaper.
13. S4: Experience.
14. I: And experience.
15. S3: Lectures.
16. I: From lectures. Yes. So, it's basically reading which is from books and experience.

During phase 2, the participation pattern slightly changed as more students participated in the discussion. However, the same participation pattern was present. Only two students expressed some ideas (in line 23 and 35), while the other students continued to answer questions with one- or two-words. There was, though, a moment where the discussion turned into a conversation with one student (lines 37 - 47). However, this conversation was not successful in providing more opportunities for interaction and negotiation of meaning. The symbol ss signifies that more than one student spoke at the same time.

Phase 2: Gaining knowledge

17. I: And, so what do you associate with it? Give me an example of how do you gain from books? What kind of books? ... Other than google.
18. S3: Lectures books.
19. S5: Education.

20. I: Education.
21. S2: History.
22. I: History. Yes. And what about experience?
23. S3: What we do in our life.
24. I: Have you experienced like, let's say for example, have you broken a bone before?
25. S2: Yup.
26. S3: Yes.
27. I: And how was it like?
28. S3: *It did hurt.* (Said in Arabic)
29. S1: Bad experience.
30. I: It did hurt, so yes, it is a bad experience. And let's say for example like driving a car, do you read a book to drive a car?
31. Ss: No.
32. I: How do you gain that knowledge?
33. Ss: By experience.
34. I: By experience. Yes. And so how can you ... Amm... what do you think? Are you with gaining knowledge from books or against?
35. S2: I'm with, because not everything by experience, some things ... some knowledge by books you gain.
36. I: And who else has an answer? You?
37. S1: I think...
38. I: You had an idea.
39. S1: By experience I think if you have a job and worked for a couple of years, you know what to do and not to do in the future.
40. I: Yeah.
41. S1: For example, ...
42. I: Like what do you want to be in the future?
43. S1: Me? A businessman.
44. I: A businessman, so you have to read and ...
45. S1: Read and also get jobs and gain experience from my other employees and see what I did so in the future I know what to do.
46. I: So, in order to get a job, you need experience, right?
47. S1: Yes.

During the third phase, only one student expressed (lines 49 and 52) an idea based on his own experience about the difference between gaining knowledge from books and gaining knowledge from experience. The rest of the class remained silent until the instructor began asking questions (from lines 53 till the end). Some

conversations occurred and a form of negotiation for meaning took place between the instructor and S6. The main issue here is that only one opportunity to negotiate meaning was given. Two more students (S7 and S8) remained silent until the instructor went around the class pointing at students and asked them direct questions.

Phase 3: Conclusions

48. I: Okay. And, so do you gain knowledge from books and from the experience in the same way?
49. S2: It depend on the thing that I'm doing like if I'm ... Amm ... like if I experience like riding a horse, I cannot gain experience from reading books. I must try it and practice it.
50. I: And they are two processed in different ways, right?
(silence)
51. I: Yes, they are processed in different ways because as he said experience is processed by doing something and books are processed in different ways, gaining knowledge from books is by reading, and so do you think it is effective? Even if you are against it. Do you think it is effective?
52. S2: When you read books, you will gain more ... get more experience and more data.
(silence)
53. I: Alright, lets expand a little bit, who broke a bone?
54. S3: Me.
55. I: How did you do it?
56. S3: Umm, I was jumping from the house with my brother.
57. I: Explain, from the house? Explain.
58. S3: We were in the farm, my brother say to me to jump, I said I will do it, then I jumped and it broken.
59. I: Jumped from where?
60. S3: House.
61. I: From the roof?! How old where you?
62. S3: Seven.
63. I: And what did you break?
64. S3: My foot.
65. I: Your foot, okay. What did you learn from that experience?
66. S3: I don't listen to my brother.
67. I: Absolutely, okay so that was an important knowledge, now is that a disadvantage of experience?
68. Ss: Advantage.

69. I: Now, how did you feel when you hit the ground?
70. S3: Die.
71. I: So, experience can be pain and suffering and is that a good thing about experience?
72. S3: No.
73. I: Humaid, can you ride a horse?
74. S2: Yes, yes.
75. I: You used that as an example, do you think there is anything that you can learn about horses by reading a book?
76. S2: Yes, Amm, about his feet, about his muscles, about how to wear the saddle, and to put the saddle and all of that.
77. I: So, riding a horse is not just experience?
78. S2: Riding is an experience, not, yes yes yes, I'm on your side.
79. I: So, if I say squeeze with your knees, don't kick with your heels. What do I mean? ... Squeeze with your knees, don't kick with your heels.
80. S1: You're riding a horse, so it's an information.
81. I: Is it correct information?
82. S6: No.
83. I: No? Do you ride horse? Okay, how to make the horse go faster?
84. S2: Kick it by your feet.
85. S6: Beating him.
86. I: With a stick?
87. S6: Yeah.
88. S2: No, no, by your feet.
89. I: By your...?
90. S2: Feet.
91. I: The feet?
92. S2: Yes.
93. I: So, this? (points at his heel)
94. S2: Yes.
95. I: What's this? Against your edge?
96. S6: Heels?
97. I: Heels. Heels. Okay. And where are your knees?
98. Ss: Knees. (points at their knees)
99. I: There. So, I said squeeze with your knees, don't kick with your heels.
- 100.S2: Squeeze like...
- 101.S6: We don't sneeze with our knees.
- 102.I: You don't squeeze with your knees?
- 103.S6: Sneeze?

- 104.I: No squeeze, like that. So, if maybe I know the English way, if you want the horse to go faster, you do it like that. You don't do it like that. Because the horse learns if you squeeze it, you're not giving it pain, maybe I'm wrong. Hey, the horse nearly killed me once, so that was an experience. Good um, associations, books, if I say reading first word?
- 105.S7: Book.
- 106.I: Book. Okay, reading...
- 107.S4: Newspaper.
- 108.I: Newspaper! Reading ...
- 109.S2: Knowledge.
- 110.I: Knowledge! Reading...
- 111.S3: Data.
- 112.I: Data. Reading...
- 113.S4: Words.
- 114.I: Words. Reading...
- 115.S3: Book.
- 116.I: Book. Okay, reading?
- 117.S1: Book.
- 118.I: Book. Reading?
- 119.S8: Studying.
- 120.I: Studying? I haven't got the answer I want, yet.
- 121.Ss: Information?
- 122.S3: Magazine?
- 123.I: In the first week, I gave you a reading about reading.
- 124.S3: Articles?
- 125.I: Do you remember what the students say when I said reading?
- 126.S7: *Why?*
- 127.I: Hahaha, *why "Laish"* so why do students say that? Reading is ...
- 128.S7: Boring.
- 129.I: Thank you. Do you agree with that?
- 130.Ss: Yes.
- 131.I: Yes, what is boring? Have you done the IELTS homework?
- 132.S5: No.
- 133.S3: No.
- 134.I: No? Why not?
- 135.S4: Its reading.
- 136.S1: Reading.
- 137.I: It's reading. What's the first reading about?
- 138.Ss: Amm...
- 139.I: You did it. (points at a student)

140.S1: About the...

141.S2: Lights.

142.S4: Light.

143.I: Lights at nights.

144.S1: Which reading?

145.I: The first one in the homework. So reading is boring, what ... in IELTS ... what do you think is the highest score and the lowest score?

146.Ss: Lowest score four.

147.I: Lowest score is four of the four skills. The lowest score is ... in this country?

148.S3: One.

149.I: What do students get the lowest score?

150.Ss: Four.

151.S2: Writing. ... Reading. Reading.

152.I: Reading is lower than writing.

153.S4: Oh.

154.I: What do you guys get the highest score on?

155.S1: Speaking.

156.I: So, let's go to China. What did the Chinese get the lowest score on?

157.S1: Speaking.

158.I: And the highest?

159.S1: Reading.

160.I: The other way around. Okay, why?

161.S6: Materials.

162.S2: Because they don't have the experience in speaking.

163.I: But why are they so good in reading?

164.S3: They are clever.

165.I: Are they any cleverer?

166.S2: No.

167.Ss: Practice more?

168.I: Practice more.

169.S5: And their school system is different.

170.I: School system. Absolutely, so books and reading attitudes depend on?

171.S7: Signatures.

172.I: On school... education and things like that, ok, so at the moment what are you reading?

173.S3: Articles?

174.Ss: Articles.

175.I: About?

176.S6: Practicing IELTS.

177.S1: Knowledge.

- 178.S5: Guiding discussion.
- 179.S1: About everything.
- 180.I: If I say what are you reading at the moment?
- 181.S3: Nothing.
- 182.S7: News?
- 183.I: News. So, nobody is reading a book? Abdulaziz, you put your hands up?
- 184.S7: New assignments.
- 185.I: Assignments. Okay, different process.

4.3. Treatment 2: Participation During the Task-based Activity

The main purpose of task-based activities was to ensure that all language learners exchanged information through interactions. Given the way each phase of the task-based activity was constructed, certain learners spoke on behalf of their group (four groups) and this is designated by the symbol G (Phase 1 and Phase 2). Sometimes more than one learner from the same group shared the group’s answers. Some other learners shared their own opinions mostly in the conclusion and are symbolled as S. In gathering and reporting the fruit of group interaction, each of the four group representatives spoke multiple times (see Table 4).

Table 2: Number of Times Group Representatives Spoke During the Activity

	Phase 1	Phase 2
G1	3	2
G2	5	5
G3	5	2
G4	4	2

The transcript reporting instructor and student’s speech during group reporting demonstrates the high amount of content and information elicited through the task. In Phases 1 and Phase 2, there were moments where students could not wait for their turn to express their ideas, for example in line 16. In line 15, it can be seen that the representative

from G1 struggled to answer, but after hearing the other group member in line 16, this particular student paraphrased the answer.

It is clear from the transcript that various ideas were presented from each group. Participants exchanged information as well as participated and shared ideas much more than students in the whole-class discussion treatment. Participants in the task-based activity were able to interact and negotiate meaning.

Phase I: Assumptions

Step 1

1. I: What did you associate with knowledge from books? Group 1?
2. G1: Vocabulary and grammar from books.
3. I: Yes, vocabulary and grammar. That's good. And ... (points at group 2)
4. G2: Reading, grammar.
5. I: Yes, reading and grammar. That's what you gain from books?
6. G2: Yes.
7. I: Yes, that's right. Group 3?
8. G3: Amm... Correct data.
9. I: Yes, good. And what about you?
10. G4: Knowing new information. Gaining new words from books.
11. I: Yes. Gaining new words.

12. I: What about knowledge from experience? What comes in mind when we say knowledge from experience?
13. G1: Movies.
14. I: Movies?! How is it movies?
15. G1: Movies... It depends on movies that kind of movies that kind of ...
16. G2.1: Communication of other people.
17. G1: Movies, yes. Ahhh... new words, listening people idea. I see movie, yeah.
18. I: Yes... I think sometimes you can rely on movies. That's good.
19. G2.1: Communication with other people.
20. I: Communicating with other people.
21. G2: Ability to manage things.
22. I: Yes. Communicating with other people ... does it help you gain experience of how to speak?
23. G2: Yes.
24. I: Yes. And what about you? Group 3?
25. G3: Be confidence.
26. I: Being confident?
27. G3: Being confident. Yes.
28. G3.2: License ... driving.

29. I: Yes. And what about you here? How do you gain knowledge from experience?
What does it mean?
30. G4.1: Getting information.
31. G4.2: New culture.
32. I: New culture ... so you can learn about different cultures.
33. G4: Yes, and others.
34. I: Yeah. Does anyone have anything else they didn't mention from gaining
knowledge from books?
35. G2: Self-confidence.
36. I: Yes, you can read about how to gain confidence. Yes. What else?
37. G2: Avoid mistakes.
38. I: To avoid mistakes. Yes, that's good. What about you? (pointing at G1) Do you
have any?
39. G1: General information.
40. I: General information. So, you can learn about different cultures?
41. G1: Different cultures, or political information.
42. I: Yes, that's good. What about group 3?
43. G3: From books or experience?
44. I: Books.
45. G3: Collect data.
46. I: Yes, so you can collect data from different resources, right?
47. G3: And research.
48. I: Yes. And group 4?
49. G4: We can learn how to take responsibilities and be strong.
50. I: Yes. That's good. Do you have anything left in your list?
51. G4: Learn from our mistakes.
52. I: Learn from your mistakes. Yes. Okay, and what about knowledge from
experience? Do you have anything you haven't mentioned yet?
53. G2: Ability to face issue.
54. I: Yes, good point. The ability to face your issues. Yes.
55. G3: Be strong.
56. I: That's a good point, too. To be strong. Do you want to share any other point?
57. G1: Difficulties ... difficulties in your life.
58. I: Yes. So, you learn facing difficulties ...
59. G1: Yeah, it is will solve issues from our experience for knowledge.
60. I: Yes.

During phase 2, each group came up with new ideas showing great creativity. Each of the ideas was unique. Students were able to accomplish the steps in the task by expressing their own ideas to the group. The task-based activity clearly showed that students interacted based on a learner-to-learner centered interaction approach and not the teacher-to-learner discussion approach typical of the whole-class discussion. Opportunities

for negotiation for meaning can be detected in lines 83 – 86, where the group’s point was initially misunderstood and then clarified.

Also, in lines 69 and 73, we can see that the representative of the group was able to express the point of not having much time to read.

Phase 2: Perspectives

Step 2 and 3

61. I: For step 2, what do you believe is more effective? Do you believe gaining knowledge from books is better or gaining knowledge from experience?
62. Ss: Experience.
63. I: As a group, do you all have the same answers? And step 3 give me the reasons why gaining experience from books or experience is effective ...

64. I: Step 2 ... amm ... step 3, what are the reasons that you gave? Why do you think books is an advantage or a disadvantage? So, group 1 you chose it as a disadvantage?
65. G1: You make you bored if you read a lot.
66. I: It makes you bored if you read a lot. And then you feel sleepy?
67. G1: Yes.
68. I: And what about group 2?
69. G2: So many books, so little.
70. I: Did you choose is to be an advantage or disadvantage?
71. G2: Disadvantage.
72. I: Disadvantage.
73. G2: Yes, so many books but little time. So, we don’t have time.
74. I: So, lack of time.
75. G2: Yes.
76. I: And, what about you (pointing at group 3)?
77. G3: I get a headache when I read.
78. I: You get a headache when you read?! And the other group? You chose it as an advantage or disadvantage?
79. G4: Disadvantage.
80. I: All of you? As a disadvantage?! Give me an example. Why did you consider it as a disadvantage?
81. G4: Because, actually, we don’t care about books. *I mean* (in Arabic) if I read, I read just stories and it’s fun.
82. I: You read stories and you think it is fun. And what other point do you have?
83. G2: Spend free time as an advantage of reading books.
84. I: Spending great time?
85. G2: Spending free time.
86. I: Free time. Yeah, you can spend your free time reading books. That’s a good idea. What else do you have in the list?

87. G2: Disadvantages. I will spend time alone. I have to stay at home. Because we don't have any communication with other people. All the time we read books at home we be unsocial.
88. I: It will unsocialized you?
89. G2: Yes.

Step 4

90. I: For step 4, gaining knowledge from experience, do you think this is an advantage or disadvantage?
91. G2: Advantage. Learning from mistakes, be strong, have many experience than reading.
92. I: Yes. Give me an example.
93. G3: Learn how to drive.
94. I: You learn how to drive. So how do you learn to drive?
95. G3: We go in the car and start driving.
96. I: That's good. You have to do it to gain experience, you cannot read about it, right?
97. G3: Yeah.
98. I: And what about this group? Group 4?
99. G4: Learn to ... Learn to ... handle your issues.
100. I: Learn how to?
101. G4: Handle.
102. I: Yes, handle issues. You learn how to handle issues. Yeah. You can solve your issues by experiencing. What else do you have?
103. G1: We can learn from our mistakes, looking to be careful without making mistakes next time. Like for example, if we made ... ahhh ... wrong choice this time we have to learn from this experience to make correct choice ... like this.
104. I: Yeah, that's good.
105. G2: Finding a different job as an advantage for gaining experience.
106. I: Yes, so finding a good job. What else do you have? Nothing? Okay.

From the concluding phases, we can again notice the differences between whole-class discussion and the task-based activity approach. Much more interaction took place during the task-based activity compared to the whole-class discussion. Students in the task-based activity more clearly vocalized their ideas and views about the topic compared to students in the whole-class discussion. Participants in the task-based activity rarely murmured a one- or two-word answer which was a characteristic of whole-class discussion interaction. Finally, participants in the task-based activity were not engaged in a Question/Answer practice, as they were actively involved in interaction and exchanging information at all times.

Phase 3: Conclusion

107. I: As for the conclusion, what do you think ... of gaining knowledge in general?
108. S1: You can gain experience.
109. I: Yes, you can gain knowledge from experience. Do you think you can gain knowledge from books and experience in the same way?
110. Ss: No.
111. S2: They are different.
112. S3: Experience we make mistakes with them but books we don't make mistakes.
113. I: What about you? What do you think?
114. S4: I think the experience knowledge is more valuable because it will learn from mistakes and from anything like ... ahhh... I mentioned, it will be more memorable in the brain than from books. That's it.
115. I: Yes. That's a good answer. What about you? What do you think? Is it in the same way?
116. S5: Not the same way.
117. I: And why do you think is that?
118. S5: Because experience is practical ...
119. I: Yeah, that's good. What are the different processes ...?
(Silence)
120. I: So, you learn from experience. I've learned from my experience that if I want students to listen, they need to do what? What do they need to do?
121. S4: To concentrate.
122. I: Concentrate and to ...?
123. Ss: Remove their phones.
124. I: Yup. That helps with learning from experience. But you're learning from books or learning from reading, what's the process when you look at your phone?
125. S4: You also concentrate.
126. S6: Yeah, you get so into it.
127. I: Yes. Who told their story about their sister and her phone?
128. S7: Me.
129. I: Yeah? What happened?
130. S7: (laughs) Okay. She fell down because she was using her phone and Whatsapp-ing and focus on her phone so that's why she fell down.
131. I: And where did this happen?
132. S7: Here, in the university.
133. I: Right there, have you seen anyone fall down because of ...
134. Ss: the phone?
135. I: Their phone.
136. Ss: Yes.
137. I: You go on youtube and you can see many videos. So that's a good experience and the processes are different. Now. This week. Now, are you reading a book?
138. Ss: Yes.
139. I: What's the book?

140. S1: We haven't started yet.
141. I: You haven't started yet.
142. S4: The Steve Jobs one.
143. I: The Steve Jobs book. Have you started it?
144. S4: Yes.
145. I: So, what's the process? How do you read?
146. S4: I read 4 pages, 3 pages in the mornings.
147. I: Okay, in the mornings, so you have time? You have a routine? What time do you read?
148. S4: I read in daylight, before sunrise, when I wake up. And I read like 5 pages to 7 pages.
149. I: Okay. So, you set a time for reading, that's the process.
150. S4: Yes.
151. I: Okay, what process is going on here? (a boy on his phone) What are you learning now?
152. S6: From my phone? How to text.
153. I: Okay, so there is a process there. Now, you need to learn something. What is more effective? A book? Or your phone – text? Or experiencing it yourself?
154. Ss: Experiencing it.
155. I: Most of you are saying experience. So, it's better to do than to read about.
156. Ss: Yes.
157. S4: Yeah, if we read something and we do that as an experience then it will be better.
158. I: It will be better. Why is it better to learn from an experience?
159. S3: Because we learn from mistakes.
160. I: Because you learn from mistakes... That's some serious thumb actions. What are you working on?
161. S8: Playing a game.
162. I: You're playing a game! What's the game?
163. S8: It's Ping Pong.
164. I: It's Ping Pong. Are you winning or losing?
165. S8: Winning.
166. I: Why are you winning?
167. S8: Because I know how to play.
168. I: Because you know how to play. So how do you know how to play?
169. S8: Experience.
170. I: Experience. So, the more you do something the better you get at it. Have you ever read a book on how to Ping Pong?
171. S8: No.
172. I: It wouldn't work, would it? Good, good. So, you all think experience is more effective?
173. Ss: Yes.
174. I: What are you going to have to do to get your degree?
175. Ss: Read.
176. I: You going to have to read. So, you need to think about ...?
177. Ss: Reading.

178. S9: Priorities.
 179. I: Priorities. Reading. Yes.

4.4. Content Remembered Immediately After Interaction

The participation pattern shows that students in the task-based activity outperformed in number the students in the whole-class discussion. Also, the participation pattern presented in the transcript demonstrated that the number of ideas developed from the participants in the task-based activity was higher than the ones in the whole-class discussion. Many more ideas emerged during the task-based activity than the whole-class discussion. Considering that the task-based activity emphasizes an informational outcome, the second question of this study was: How much information did learners in the two groups remember immediately after the exposure and after one week?

Table 5 shows the number of ideas that were remembered immediately after both treatments. In this table, the ideas remembered are both totaled and distributed among the three phases. To measure immediate effects after the interaction, the writing task summary was administered to the two groups. To collect the results of the immediate effects the following scoring procedure was adopted: accurate ideas remembered received a score of one; information that was not part of the interaction received a zero.

Table 3: Average Number of Ideas Remembered and Standard Deviations Immediately Following Interactions

	Whole-class discussion	Task-based activity
Phase 1	5.82	20.64
SD	1.1	2.2
Phase 2	7.82	15.88
SD	1.3	1.8
Phase 3	6.76	9.76
SD	1.2	1.7
Total	20.4	46.28
SD	1.8	2.2
N	10	14

Table 5 clearly indicates that participants in the task-based activity recalled much more than those in the whole-class discussion. This main finding is demonstrated statistically in Table 6 which presents the significant differences between both groups.

Table 4: Test of Significant Differences Between Discussions and Task-based activity

	Difference	Critical Difference
Phase 1	14.82	1.456*
Phase 2	8.06	1.235*
Phase 3	3.0	.890*
Total	25.88	1.980*

Note. Significantly different at $p < .05$ level

Table 7 displays the number of participants who remembered any information. Overall, participants in the task-based activity performed better than those who participated in the whole-class discussion. In all three phases, participants in the task-based activity scored a higher percentage than the whole-class discussion group. The percentage of ideas remembered by the task-based activity group was particularly high in Phase 1 (92.8%). Less information was remembered by participants in the whole-class discussion, particularly in Phases 1 and 3. Overall, students in the task-based activity remembered more information than those who participated in the whole-class discussion. The number of ideas generated in the task-based activity demonstrated that this instructional treatment fosters students' communication and language learning.

Table 5: Number of Participants Who Remembered Any Information

	Whole-class discussion	Task-based activity
Phase 1	4 = 40%	13 = 92.8%
Phase 2	7 = 70%	11 = 78.6%
Phase 3	5 = 50%	8 = 57.1%
N	10	14

4.5. Content Remembered After One Week

Data were collected one week later to address the question related to retention (one week later). Participants were asked to write what they could remember from the

interaction that took place the week before. The main findings are displayed in the tables below.

Overall Table 8 and Table 10 indicate that in comparison with the finds from immediately after the activity, the average number of ideas dropped across both groups. Despite this, the results after a week are substantially the same as the ones obtained immediately after instruction.

Table 6: Average Number of Ideas Remembered 1 Week After Instruction

	Whole-class discussion	Task-based activity
Phase 1	4	9.88
SD	1.3	1.9
Phase 2	7.76	17.7
SD	1.7	2.4
Phase 3	2.88	9.76
SD	.56	1.7
Total	14.64	37.34
SD	1.5	2.0
N	10	14

Table 9 demonstrates statistically that participants in the task-based activity recalled much more (see also Table 8) than the ones in the whole-class discussion. These differences are across the three phases.

Table 7: Test of Significant Differences Between Discussions and Task-based Activity

	Difference	Critical Difference
Phase 1	5.88	.875*
Phase 2	9.94	.956*
Phase 3	6.88	.890*
Total	22.7	1.677*

Notes. Significantly different at $p < .05$ level

The percentages of the number of participants who remembered any information after a week (see Table 10) indicate that students benefited more in the task-based activity than in the whole-class discussion which implemented the Q/A paradigm. Task-based activity practice encouraged interaction, negotiation and expression of meaning. All

learners who participated in the task-based activity retained a good percentage of information after one week.

Table 8: Number of Participants Who Remembered Any Information 1 Week Later

	Whole-class discussion	Task-based activity
Phase 1	3 = 30%	8 = 57.1%
Phase 2	7 = 70%	12 = 85.7%
Phase 3	3 = 30%	7 = 50%
N	10	14

The transcripts clearly showed that more ideas were generated during the task-based activity compared to the whole-class discussion. The summary task showed that more ideas were retained by the task-based activity group.

4.6. Summary of Findings

The whole-class discussion group practice lasted 12 minutes. During this instructional treatment, participants did not interact or talk much. The interaction was mainly with the instructor and consisted of a one or two-word answer. Only a small number of students participated, and the majority showed no participation at all or remained silent, leaving the instructor wondering if they had understood the question or not.

The task-based activity session lasted for 35 minutes and students engaged with a higher number of ideas by working in groups. For instance, in Phase 1, participants were exchanging ideas together and they were exposed to different ideas from their group members. Participants were also exposed to different ideas during the follow-up that took place after the in-group interaction, which allowed all participants to be exposed to various ideas other than their own.

To compare which of the two treatments were considered an effective pedagogical tool to promote interaction, participation patterns among the two treatments were measured. The participation patterns in the whole-class discussion demonstrated that it followed a Question/Answer pattern and it was very much teacher-fronted.

Participants in the task-based activity were able to interact with each other (learner-centered approach), expand their answers and elaborate on them, as evidenced by the transcripts which show participants expanding from one- or two-word answers to a full sentence.

Overall, percentages and statistical analysis demonstrated that more ideas were generated and retained during the task-based activity compared to the whole-class discussion.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

5.1. Discussion of the Findings

Two main research questions guided this study:

Q1: What are the participation patterns of the two groups?

The findings presented in this study showed that participants in the whole-class discussion have a lower percentage of participation compared to the ones in the task-based activity (14/14), where all students participated. The opportunities students had in the task-based activity to interpret, negotiate and express meaning was clearly evident through the transcripts. Also, members of groups in the task-based activity had the opportunity to discuss ideas before sharing their answers to the whole class. All participants had the opportunity to express and exchange their opinions. Lines 84-86 in the activity transcript demonstrate that negotiation for meaning occurred. Group interactions took place in the task-based activity permitting opportunities for students to collect ideas, negotiate meaning and exchange information.

On the other hand, participants in the whole-class discussion were not encouraged to express, interpret meaning and or interact with each other. Communication was equated to simply a question and answer pattern. The teacher-student interaction focused on asking participants direct questions with expected straight answers in response. Overall, a smaller number of students, compared to the task-based activity, participated in the whole-class discussion. Many students did not utter a word at all (remained silent). They either chose not to participate or they were hesitating and clueless. Participants in the whole-class discussion were not given the chance to interact and exchange information with their colleagues. The instructor continued non-stop asking questions.

The Question/Answer Paradigm did not offer opportunities to interpret, negotiate and express meaning-- processes essential to the nature and role of communication in language learning.

Q2: How much information did learners in the two groups remember immediately after the exposure and after one week?

The results demonstrate that participants in the task-based activity remembered more ideas than those who participated in the whole-class discussion (particularly in Phase 1 and Phase 3) immediately after the exposure to the instructional treatments. Overall, task-based activity yielded more information remembered by more participants.

After a week, the main findings indicate that there was a loss of information/ideas across both treatments. However, participants in the task-based activity retained more ideas and information than participants in the whole-class discussion treatment.

More ideas and information came out during the task-based activity than during the discussion and this influenced the results.

5.2. Implications

The overall findings in this study support the view that task-based activity is a better pedagogical treatment than whole-class discussion group, in terms of promoting communication.

The results of this study have several implications:

Firstly, they support the view that the Question/Answer paradigm does not provide genuine opportunities for communication. It does not provide language learners with opportunities for interaction, expression and negotiation of meaning (Lee, 2000).

Secondly, the results from this study provide evidence that appropriate interaction takes place only in the task-based activity as compared to the whole-class discussion treatment. Classroom activities promote interaction if the activity integrates strategies that allow students to learn. Some activities are teacher-fronted (such as in the case of whole-class discussion) while the other type of activities (such as task-based activities) focus on a learner-centered approach where the instructor allows learners to form groups and work together. The latter type of activities is known to promote acquisition more than the former because it encourages interaction. Interaction, as stated by Gass and Mackey (2007, p. 194) “facilitates the process of acquiring a second language”. Through interactions,

learners have the advantage of being exposed to language input and being able to negotiate meaning by making some conversational adjustments.

Thirdly, another main finding from this study demonstrates that teachers should encourage the use of activities that are concept-oriented. As indicated by VanPatten (2007, p. 58) “the concept-oriented approach begins with a learner’s need to express a certain concept”. Communicative tasks should focus on concepts rather than focusing on linguistic devices to foster language learning. Specific contexts and those which carry a purpose for language learners to interact, incite learners to more effective communication and successful acquisition of the target language. Engaging language learners in a communicative task will create opportunities for interpretation, negotiations and expression of meaning.

The data collected in this study demonstrate that language learners learn better when they engage in a task-based activity. Teacher’s understanding of communication is sometimes not accurate or clear. One of our main goals as language teachers is to ensure that our language practices take into account the real nature of communication. Effective language teachers concentrate their efforts to ensure language learners have opportunities that provide appropriate language exposure to comprehensible and meaningful input and have opportunities to interact with others and negotiate and express meaning. Communication cannot be equated to simply responding to open-ended questions during question and answer practice.

5.3. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Although positive results were obtained in this small-scale study, several limitations need to be considered.

Firstly, the results of this study need to be replicated before findings can be generalized. More findings would need to be collected using different populations or backgrounds other than Arabic.

Secondly, the number of participants is too small and more studies need to be carried out using multiple classes or a larger number of subjects.

Thirdly, the current study is a small-scale study using a kind of ‘action research’ methodological approach. A full experimental study should be carried out to make the

methodology of this classroom study more valid and reliable. Future research should address these limitations.

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Appendix (samples of transcripts)

Transcript 1: Whole-class Discussion

Phase 1 Associations

1. I: So, do you all know what knowledge is?
2. S1: Yes.
3. I: Can you tell me?
4. S1: Knowledge is ... err... is the amount of information you know.
5. I: So, what do you associate with knowledge? ... Like when you say knowledge what comes in mind?
6. S2: Study.
7. I: Studying.
8. S1: Business.
9. I: Business.
(silence)
10. I: It's like information, understanding something. What do you associate with the phrase ... amm... how do you gain knowledge? Do you know how?
11. S3: From books.
12. S2: Books, websites, newspaper.
13. S4: Experience.
14. I: And experience.
15. S3: Lectures.
16. I: From lectures. Yes. So, it's basically reading which is from books and experience.

Phase 2: Gaining knowledge

17. I: And, so what do you associate with it? Give me an example of how do you gain from books? What kind of books? ... Other than google.
18. S3: Lectures books.
19. S5: Education.
20. I: Education.
21. S2: History.
22. I: History. Yes. And what about experience?
23. S3: What we do in our life.
24. I: Have you experienced like, let's say for example, have you broken a bone before?
25. S2: Yup.

26. S3: Yes.
27. I: And how was it like?
28. S3: *It did hurt.* (Said in Arabic)
29. S1: Bad experience.
30. I: It did hurt, so yes, it is a bad experience. And let's say for example like driving a car, do you read a book to drive a car?
31. Ss: No.
32. I: How do you gain that knowledge?
33. Ss: By experience.
34. I: By experience. Yes. And so how can you ... Amm... what do you think? Are you with gaining knowledge from books or against?
35. S2: I'm with, because not everything by experience, some things ... some knowledge by books you gain.
36. I: And who else has an answer? You?
37. S1: I think...
38. I: You had an idea.
39. S1: By experience I think if you have a job and worked for a couple of years, you know what to do and not to do in the future.
40. I: Yeah.
41. S1: For example, ...
42. I: Like what do you want to be in the future?
43. S1: Me? A businessman.
44. I: A businessman, so you have to read and ...
45. S1: Read and also get jobs and gain experience from my other employees and see what I did so in the future I know what to do.
46. I: So, in order to get a job, you need experience, right?
47. S1: Yes.

Phase 3: Conclusions

48. I: Okay. And, so do you gain knowledge from books and from the experience in the same way?
49. S2: It depend on the thing that I'm doing like if I'm ... Amm ... like if I experience like riding a horse, I cannot gain experience from reading books. I must try it and practice it.
50. I: And they are two processed in different ways, right?
(silence)
51. I: Yes, they are processed in different ways because as he said experience is processed by doing something and books are processed in different ways, gaining

- knowledge from books is by reading, and so do you think it is effective? Even if you are against it. Do you think it is effective?
52. S2: When you read books, you will gain more ... get more experience and more data.
- (silence)
53. I: Alright, lets expand a little bit, who broke a bone?
54. S3: Me.
55. I: How did you do it?
56. S3: Umm, I was jumping from the house with my brother.
57. I: Explain, from the house? Explain.
58. S3: We were in the farm, my brother say to me to jump, I said I will do it, then I jumped and it broken.
59. I: Jumped from where?
60. S3: House.
61. I: From the roof?! How old where you?
62. S3: Seven.
63. I: And what did you break?
64. S3: My foot.
65. I: Your foot, okay. What did you learn from that experience?
66. S3: I don't listen to my brother.
67. I: Absolutely, okay so that was an important knowledge, now is that a disadvantage of experience?
68. Ss: Advantage.
69. I: Now, how did you feel when you hit the ground?
70. S3: Die.
71. I: So, experience can be pain and suffering and is that a good thing about experience?
72. S3: No.
73. I: Humaid, can you ride a horse?
74. S2: Yes, yes.
75. I: You used that as an example, do you think there is anything that you can learn about horses by reading a book?
76. S2: Yes, Amm, about his feet, about his muscles, about how to wear the saddle, and to put the saddle and all of that.
77. I: So, riding a horse is not just experience?
78. S2: Riding is an experience, not, yes yes yes, I'm on your side.
79. I: So, if I say squeeze with your knees, don't kick with your heels. What do I mean? ... Squeeze with your knees, don't kick with your heels.
80. S1: You're riding a horse, so it's an information.
81. I: Is it correct information?

82. S6: No.
83. I: No? Do you ride horse? Okay, how to make the horse go faster?
84. S2: Kick it by your feet.
85. S6: Beating him.
86. I: With a stick?
87. S6: Yeah.
88. S2: No, no, by your feet.
89. I: By your...?
90. S2: Feet.
91. I: The feet?
92. S2: Yes.
93. I: So, this? (points at his heel)
94. S2: Yes.
95. I: What's this? Against your edge?
96. S6: Heels?
97. I: Heels. Heels. Okay. And where are your knees?
98. Ss: Knees. (points at their knees)
99. I: There. So, I said squeeze with your knees, don't kick with your heels.
- 100.S2: Squeeze like...
- 101.S6: We don't sneeze with our knees.
- 102.I: You don't squeeze with your knees?
- 103.S6: Sneeze?
- 104.I: No squeeze, like that. So, if maybe I know the English way, if you want the horse to go faster, you do it like that. You don't do it like that. Because the horse learns if you squeeze it, you're not giving it pain, maybe I'm wrong. Hey, the horse nearly killed me once, so that was an experience. Good um, associations, books, if I say reading first word?
105. S7: Book.
106. I: Book. Okay, reading...
107. S4: Newspaper.
108. I: Newspaper! Reading ...
109. S2: Knowledge.
110. I: Knowledge! Reading...
111. S3: Data.
112. I: Data. Reading...
113. S4: Words.
114. I: Words. Reading...
115. S3: Book.
116. I: Book. Okay, reading?
117. S1: Book.

118. I: Book. Reading?
119. S8: Studying.
120. I: Studying? I haven't got the answer I want, yet.
121. Ss: Information?
122. S3: Magazine?
123. I: In the first week, I gave you a reading about reading.
124. S3: Articles?
125. I: Do you remember what the students say when I said reading?
126. S7: *Why?*
127. I: Hahaha, *why "Laish"* so why do students say that? Reading is ...
128. S7: Boring.
129. I: Thank you. Do you agree with that?
130. Ss: Yes.
131. I: Yes, what is boring? Have you done the IELTS homework?
132. S5: No.
133. S3: No.
134. I: No? Why not?
135. S4: Its reading.
136. S1: Reading.
137. I: It's reading. What's the first reading about?
138. Ss: Amm...
139. I: You did it. (points at a student)
140. S1: About the...
141. S2: Lights.
142. S4: Light.
143. I: Lights at nights.
144. S1: Which reading?
145. I: The first one in the homework. So reading is boring, what ... in IELTS ...
what do you think is the highest score and the lowest score?
146. Ss: Lowest score four.
147. I: Lowest score is four of the four skills. The lowest score is ... in this country?
148. S3: One.
149. I: What do students get the lowest score?
150. Ss: Four.
151. S2: Writing. ... Reading. Reading.
152. I: Reading is lower than writing.
153. S4: Oh.
154. I: What do you guys get the highest score on?
155. S1: Speaking.
156. I: So, let's go to China. What did the Chinese get the lowest score on?

157. S1: Speaking.
158. I: And the highest?
159. S1: Reading.
160. I: The other way around. Okay, why?
161. S6: Materials.
162. S2: Because they don't have the experience in speaking.
163. I: But why are they so good in reading?
164. S3: They are clever.
165. I: Are they any cleverer?
166. S2: No.
167. Ss: Practice more?
168. I: Practice more.
169. S5: And their school system is different.
170. I: School system. Absolutely, so books and reading attitudes depend on?
171. S7: Signatures.
172. I: On school... education and things like that, ok, so at the moment what are you reading?
173. S3: Articles?
174. Ss: Articles.
175. I: About?
176. S6: Practicing IELTS.
177. S1: Knowledge.
178. S5: Guiding discussion.
179. S1: About everything.
180. I: If I say what are you reading at the moment?
181. S3: Nothing.
182. S7: News?
183. I: News. So, nobody is reading a book? Abdulaziz, you put your hands up?
184. S7: New assignments.
185. I: Assignments. Okay, different process.

Transcripts 2: Task-based Activity (sample)

Phase 1: Assumptions

Step 1

1. I: What did you associate with knowledge from books? Group 1?
2. G1: Vocabulary and grammar from books.
3. I: Yes, vocabulary and grammar. That's good. And ... (points at group 2)
4. G2: Reading, grammar.
5. I: Yes, reading and grammar. That's what you gain from books?
6. G2: Yes.
7. I: Yes, that's right. Group 3?
8. G3: Amm... Correct data.
9. I: Yes, good. And what about you?
10. G4: Knowing new information. Gaining new words from books.
11. I: Yes. Gaining new words.

12. I: What about knowledge from experience? What comes in mind when we say knowledge from experience?
13. G1: Movies.
14. I: Movies?! How is it movies?
15. G1: Movies... It depends on movies that kind of movies that kind of ...
16. G2.1: Communication of other people.
17. G1: Movies, yes. Ahhh... new words, listening people idea. I see movie, yeah.
18. I: Yes... I think sometimes you can rely on movies. That's good.
19. G2.1: Communication with other people.
20. I: Communicating with other people.
21. G2: Ability to manage things.
22. I: Yes. Communicating with other people ... does it help you gain experience of how to speak?
23. G2: Yes.
24. I: Yes. And what about you? Group 3?
25. G3: Be confidence.
26. I: Being confident?
27. G3: Being confident. Yes.
28. G3.2: License ... driving.
29. I: Yes. And what about you here? How do you gain knowledge from experience? What does it mean?
30. G4.1: Getting information.
31. G4.2: New culture.
32. I: New culture ... so you can learn about different cultures.
33. G4: Yes, and others.
34. I: Yeah. Does anyone have anything else they didn't mention from gaining knowledge from books?
35. G2: Self-confidence.

36. I: Yes, you can read about how to gain confidence. Yes. What else?
37. G2: Avoid mistakes.
38. I: To avoid mistakes. Yes, that's good. What about you? (pointing at G1) Do you have any?
39. G1: General information.
40. I: General information. So, you can learn about different cultures?
41. G1: Different cultures, or political information.
42. I: Yes, that's good. What about group 3?
43. G3: From books or experience?
44. I: Books.
45. G3: Collect data.
46. I: Yes, so you can collect data from different resources, right?
47. G3: And research.
48. I: Yes. And group 4?
49. G4: We can learn how to take responsibilities and be strong.
50. I: Yes. That's good. Do you have anything left in your list?
51. G4: Learn from our mistakes.
52. I: Learn from your mistakes. Yes. Okay, and what about knowledge from experience? Do you have anything you haven't mentioned yet?
53. G2: Ability to face issue.
54. I: Yes, good point. The ability to face your issues. Yes.
55. G3: Be strong.
56. I: That's a good point, too. To be strong. Do you want to share any other point?
57. G1: Difficulties ... difficulties in your life.
58. I: Yes. So, you learn facing difficulties ...
59. G1: Yeah, it is will solve issues from our experience for knowledge.
60. I: Yes.

Phase 2: Perspectives

Step 2 and 3

61. I: For step 2, what do you believe is more effective? Do you believe gaining knowledge from books is better or gaining knowledge from experience?
62. Ss: Experience.
63. I: As a group, do you all have the same answers? And step 3 give me the reasons why gaining experience from books or experience is effective ...
64. I: Step 2 ... amm ... step 3, what are the reasons that you gave? Why do you think books is an advantage or a disadvantage? So, group 1 you chose it as a disadvantage?
65. G1: You make you bored if you read a lot.
66. I: It makes you bored if you read a lot. And then you feel sleepy?
67. G1: Yes.
68. I: And what about group 2?

69. G2: So many books, so little.
70. I: Did you choose is to be an advantage or disadvantage?
71. G2: Disadvantage.
72. I: Disadvantage.
73. G2: Yes, so many books but little time. So, we don't have time.
74. I: So, lack of time.
75. G2: Yes.
76. I: And, what about you (pointing at group 3)?
77. G3: I get a headache when I read.
78. I: You get a headache when you read?! And the other group? You chose it as an advantage or disadvantage?
79. G4: Disadvantage.
80. I: All of you? As a disadvantage?! Give me an example. Why did you consider it as a disadvantage?
81. G4: Because, actually, we don't care about books. *I mean* (in Arabic) if I read, I read just stories and it's fun.
82. I: You read stories and you think it is fun. And what other point do you have?
83. G2: Spend free time as an advantage of reading books.
84. I: Spending great time?
85. G2: Spending free time.
86. I: Free time. Yeah, you can spend your free time reading books. That's a good idea. What else do you have in the list?
87. G2: Disadvantages. I will spend time alone. I have to stay at home. Because we don't have any communication with other people. All the time we read books at home we be unsocial.
88. I: It will unsocialized you?
89. G2: Yes.

Step 4

90. I: For step 4, gaining knowledge from experience, do you think this is an advantage or disadvantage?
91. G2: Advantage. Learning from mistakes, be strong, have many experience than reading.
92. I: Yes. Give me an example.
93. G3: Learn how to drive.
94. I: You learn how to drive. So how do you learn to drive?
95. G3: We go in the car and start driving.
96. I: That's good. You have to do it to gain experience, you cannot read about it, right?
97. G3: Yeah.
98. I: And what about this group? Group 4?
99. G4: Learn to ... Learn to ... handle your issues.
100. I: Learn how to?
101. G4: Handle.

102. I: Yes, handle issues. You learn how to handle issues. Yeah. You can solve your issues by experiencing. What else do you have?
103. G1: We can learn from our mistakes, looking to be careful without making mistakes next time. Like for example, if we made ... ahhh ... wrong choice this time we have to learn from this experience to make correct choice ... like this.
104. I: Yeah, that's good.
105. G2: Finding a different job as an advantage for gaining experience.
106. I: Yes, so finding a good job. What else do you have? Nothing? Okay.

Phase 3: Conclusion

107. I: As for the conclusion, what do you think ... of gaining knowledge in general?
108. S1: You can gain experience.
109. I: Yes, you can gain knowledge from experience. Do you think you can gain knowledge from books and experience in the same way?
110. Ss: No.
111. S2: They are different.
112. S3: Experience we make mistakes with them but books we don't make mistakes.
113. I: What about you? What do you think?
114. S4: I think the experience knowledge is more valuable because it will learn from mistakes and from anything like ... ahhh... I mentioned, it will be more memorable in the brain than from books. That's it.
115. I: Yes. That's a good answer. What about you? What do you think? Is it in the same way?
116. S5: Not the same way.
117. I: And why do you think is that?
118. S5: Because experience is practical ...
119. I: Yeah, that's good. What are the different processes ...?

(Silence)

120. I: So, you learn from experience. I've learned from my experience that if I want students to listen, they need to do what? What do they need to do?
121. S4: To concentrate.
122. I: Concentrate and to ...?
123. Ss: Remove their phones.
124. I: Yup. That helps with learning from experience. But you're learning from books or learning from reading, what's the process when you look at your phone?
125. S4: You also concentrate.
126. S6: Yeah, you get so into it.
127. I: Yes. Who told their story about their sister and her phone?
128. S7: Me.

129. I: Yeah? What happened?
130. S7: (laughs) Okay. She fell down because she was using her phone and Whatsapp-ing and focus on her phone so that's why she fell down.
131. I: And where did this happen?
132. S7: Here, in the university.
133. I: Right there, have you seen anyone fall down because of ...
134. Ss: the phone?
135. I: Their phone.
136. Ss: Yes.
137. I: You go on youtube and you can see many videos. So that's a good experience and the processes are different. Now. This week. Now, are you reading a book?
138. Ss: Yes.
139. I: What's the book?
140. S1: We haven't started yet.
141. I: You haven't started yet.
142. S4: The Steve Jobs one.
143. I: The Steve Jobs book. Have you started it?
144. S4: Yes.
145. I: So, what's the process? How do you read?
146. S4: I read 4 pages, 3 pages in the mornings.
147. I: Okay, in the mornings, so you have time? You have a routine? What time do you read?
148. S4: I read in daylight, before sunrise, when I wake up. And I read like 5 pages to 7 pages.
149. I: Okay. So, you set a time for reading, that's the process.
150. S4: Yes.
151. I: Okay, what process is going on here? (a boy on his phone) What are you learning now?
152. S6: From my phone? How to text.
153. I: Okay, so there is a process there. Now, you need to learn something. What is more effective? A book? Or your phone – text? Or experiencing it yourself?
154. Ss: Experiencing it.
155. I: Most of you are saying experience. So, it's better to do than to read about.
156. Ss: Yes.
157. S4: Yeah, if we read something and we do that as an experience then it will be better.
158. I: It will be better. Why is it better to learn from an experience?
159. S3: Because we learn from mistakes.
160. I: Because you learn from mistakes... That's some serious thumb actions. What are you working on?
161. S8: Playing a game.
162. I: You're playing a game! What's the game?
163. S8: It's Ping Pong.
164. I: It's Ping Pong. Are you winning or losing?

165. S8: Winning.
166. I: Why are you winning?
167. S8: Because I know how to play.
168. I: Because you know how to play. So how do you know how to play?
169. S8: Experience.
170. I: Experience. So, the more you do something the better you get at it. Have you ever read a book on how to Ping Pong?
171. S8: No.
172. I: It wouldn't work, would it? Good, good. So, you all think experience is more effective?
173. Ss: Yes.
174. I: What are you going to have to do to get your degree?
175. Ss: Read.
176. I: You going to have to read. So, you need to think about ...?
177. Ss: Reading.
178. S9: Priorities.
179. I: Priorities. Reading. Yes.

Vita

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