



TRANSITIONING TO K-12: ESL CLASSROOM CLIMATE AND EFFECTS ON SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' SELF-ESTEEM AND MOTIVATION TO LEARN

Teresita D. Tajolosa^{a1}, Juvie Parreno^b, Ric A. Tajolosa^c

^{a,b,c} Palawan State University, Puerto Princesa City, Philippines.

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Abstract

This paper examined ESL classroom climate during the first year of senior high school implementation of the K to 12 education policy in the country. Participants in the study were composed of 331 Grade 11 learners from the three tracks namely: 89 STEM (College of Sciences), 128 STEM (College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology), and 114 ABM (College of Business and Accountancy) learners. A state university delivering the Senior High School Program in Region 4 was selected as the location of the study. Three open-ended questions sought to identify students' satisfactory and dissatisfactory experiences inside the classroom and possible effects on their self-esteem and motivation to study, drawn from Burden's (2018) Stop, Start, Continue Method in feedbacking and Fraser and Treagust' (1986) seven internally consistent dimensions of the higher education classroom climate. Data revealed that generally, most language teachers are evaluated positively by learners although some classrooms have proven very challenging for them. Several instances of teacher and peer bullying, teacher absenteeism, lack of transparency in the grading system, congested curricula and lack of classroom facility were identified among causes of students' frustrations. Unhappy experiences eventually resulted in students' loss of confidence in teacher's

ability and commitment and reduced interest in classroom engagement. The paper suggests the need for a strong, honest and consistent culture of feedbacking among students and faculty members in academic institutions to encourage improvement in ESL classrooms.

Keywords: K-12 education, ESL classroom climate, learners' self-esteem, senior high school feedbacks.

1. Introduction

A multitude of research and experts in education underscored the importance of classroom atmosphere in creating students' desire for learning and even success in performance (Byrne, Hattie & Fraser, 1986; Dart, Burnett, Purdie et al. 2000; Norton, 2008; Potowski, 2007; Burnett, 2010; Gamlen & Smith, 2013; Maxwell, S.; Reynolds, K.J.; Lee, E.; Subasic, E.; & Bromhead; Harles et al. 2014; Tarhan 2014; Sieberer-Nagler, 2015; Buitrago, 2016;).

Wells (1920, cited in Finch, 2004), established that the promotion of humanistic values, at all levels of education, should be a prime goal of educators, in order to develop in students interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, which, in addition to problem solving, critical thinking and responsibility, are essential if they are to make a positive and peaceful contribution to the race between education and catastrophe.

According to Bucholz and Sheffler (2009), the type of classroom environment that a teacher creates and encourages can either increase or decrease a student's ability to learn and feel comfortable as a member of the class. The classroom environment therefore, should do as much to foster cooperation and acceptance as the teaching methods that the teacher uses. Likewise, Graham & Gisi, (2000) maintained that classroom climate is also the best predictor of students' overall satisfaction with their college. Harris (2001, p. 42) maintained that the recognition and exploration of social problems and impediments to learning in the "safe environment" of the classroom will promote development of the social mores and qualities (positive self-images, a sense of responsibility for self and others, a capacity to trust others which are essential for future world citizens.

Ideally, the classroom should be a second home for students and learners, a place where talents and skills are honed, self-expression is encouraged, diversity is respected and mistakes are forgiven and learned from. It is a fact however, that in many classrooms, students continually struggle for respect and power, ignored, stressed and stripped of chances to enjoy learning and succeed as learners. Students' perceptions of classroom climate can only be heard if school administrations and teachers themselves will recognize the importance of consistent student feedbacking.

A good number of relevant research investigated validity of teaching evaluation instruments and some feedbacking strategies. Burden (2018), for instance, using data from 220 university students over eight semesters, compared two methods of gaining qualitative written comments from students in English language classes in a private university in Japan. Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) surveys and the STOP, Start, Continue (SSC) method underutilized in education. It was found that between the two methods, it was the SSC method that yielded fuller qualitative data which teachers may use as feedback for classroom improvement and teacher reflection. In Khan and Mahrooqi's (2015) research on Foreign language communication anxiety (FLCA), it was found that students' speaking anxiety is linked significantly to evaluation anxiety and teacher anxiety, suggesting the importance of a classroom climate managed by a compassionate and understanding teacher.

Students' evaluation of teaching has been part of the academic culture especially in elementary and secondary schools. However, much of these evaluations conducted at the end of the year are standardized in nature which means students will measure a particular experience using Likert Scale. Students do not really offer their perceptions about their experiences nor do they offer suggestions about how a particular experience could be improved by the teacher handling the class. In the Philippine context, the addition of two years to basic education, referred to as Senior High School is a relatively new experience in the educational system. Understandably, there will be much needed room for improvement. It was observed however, that teachers were not evaluated by senior high school students at the end of the first semester and even after the second semester of the first school year, using the teaching evaluation surveys being administered in school. Likewise, it was observed that language teachers and even those assigned in other departments did not solicit feedbacks from their students regarding their classroom experiences.

Being the only country in Asia which had ten-year basic education for many decades, it would be interesting to investigate the classroom climate after the Philippines implemented the Senior High School Program in 2015. The Enhanced K + 12 Basic Education Program has four main features: (1) compulsory kindergarten offered in public schools, (2) reduction of contact hours to decongest curricula, (3) converting the curricular content to performance-based and (4) the addition of two years in high school. Prior to the implementation, the Philippines was the only country in Southeast Asia and one of the only three remaining countries in the world whose basic education is 10 years, making its high school graduates unprepared for the workplace and its college graduates unfit for work (UNESCO). According to POEA, the Philippine basic education program makes the overseas Filipino workers and those who intended to study abroad ill-equipped as professionals. Furthermore, according to International Standards (the Washington Accord, the Bologna Accord), 12-years basic education is an entry requirement to recognition of engineering professionals and for university admission and practice of profession in European countries.

Just like any educational policy at its early stage of implementation, the K to 12 program is expected to review the performance of delivering institutions to improve the services to clientele. It

is for this purpose that the government through the Department of Education needs feedback about its performance through research. One important focus of research would be the examination of ESL setting in the context of the Senior High School Program. The classroom climate is a reflection of students' opinions of their academic experience (Reid & Radhakrishnan, 2003). This includes students' perceptions of the rigor of the class, their interactions with their instructor and class peers, and their involvement in the class. Although each student will develop his or her individual sense of the classroom environment, there is also a community, or collective, sense among the students and the instructor, so the classroom climate is a general feeling shared by all in the class (Fraser & Treagust, 1986).

To reduce the effects of the new policy, tertiary education institutions both public and private, have signified intentions to offer senior high school. That would mean subjecting many of their college instructors and professors to K -12 trainings so they could handle Grade 11 learners. Despite the criticisms received by the government regarding its unpreparedness to fully and effectively implement the policy, the K + 12 curricular restructuring started in 2012 and became fully implemented in June 2016, where there were more than 1.2 million Grade 11 admissions all over the Philippines.

Acknowledging the issues surrounding the implementation of the K to 12 program, more specifically, the problems that might be encountered by learners in the introduction of the Senior High School program, the present study was conducted.

The present study aimed to investigate how ESL classroom climate affects senior high school learners' motivations and performance. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What are the Senior high school learners' perceptions of the following:
 - a. factors that causes satisfaction about their ESL classroom climate
 - b. factors that causes dissatisfaction bout their ESL classroom climate
2. What are the learners' perceived effects of the ES classroom climate to their motivation and self-esteem to perform?

2. Theoretical framework

The present study adapts Burden's (2018) Stop, Start, Continue (SSC) method in getting students' feedback of teachers' performance. As mentioned earlier in this paper, Burden compared two feedbacking methods from 220 university students in an English class and found that the SSC method gave fuller data than the usual Student Evaluation of Teaching (SET) surveys commonly administered by school administration every semester to measure teachers' classroom performance. In the present study, the Stop, Start, Continue method was a bit modified. Administered to senior high school learners during the second semester, three open-ended questions were given to students. The questions

aimed to receive feedback about the ESL classroom climate. The following questions were given to be answered in narrative within forty-five minutes.

1. What makes you happy about your English language class?
2. What makes you unhappy about your English language class?
3. What are the effects of your happy and unhappy experiences on your motivations to study and to your self-esteem?

Learners' responses were analyzed thematically. Apart from thematic analysis, data were further analyzed using Fraser and Treagust's (1986) seven internally consistent dimensions of the higher education climate. The seven dimensions are the following:

1. Personalization
2. Involvement
3. Student Cohesiveness
4. Satisfaction
5. Task Orientation
6. Innovation
7. Individualization

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The present study is a descriptive qualitative inquiry. Learners were invited to participate in the study. After the permission to conduct research was granted by the English Department and the English teachers handling the classes, the proponent administered the qualitative survey to the senior high school learners. Forty minutes of the class' time was requested from the teacher after which the purpose of the study was explained to the learners after which, the questionnaires were administered to them. To encourage authentic responses, participants were allowed to write their narratives in the language of their choice (English or Filipino or both).

Four narrative essay prompts were distributed to the participants during the second semester of school year (SY 2016-2017). Such prompts invited the learners to write about how they feel about their classroom experiences. The present study acknowledges the fact that although different groups of students might have similar experiences, their backgrounds are different and they have been taught by different teachers which may result in varied answers. Data were analyzed thematically. To validate some responses in the survey, individual and small group interviews were conducted with selected learners from the three colleges.

3.2 Participants and setting

Participants in the study were composed of 331 Grade 11 learners from the three tracks namely: 89 STEM (College of Sciences), 128 STEM (College of Engineering, Architecture and Technology), and 114 ABM (College of Business and Accountancy) learners. A state university delivering the Senior High School Program in Region 4, in the Philippines, was selected as the location of the study. The university through a contract with the Department of Education, started offering Grade 11 in June, first semester of school year 2016-2017. The university offers the following programs to Grade 11 learners from high schools all over the city who wish to enroll in senior high school namely ABM (College of Business Administration), STEM (College of Sciences) and STEM (College of Engineering). Three hundred students thirty one from the three programs participated in the study during the second semester. Each section of learners was generally composed of 30 to 40 students although at the time of the survey, some learners were not present. To ensure the validity of the data, the present study administered the survey to all the students present in each classroom at the time the survey was conducted. Data were collected in March of 2017 before the close of the second semester. To address ethical standards, the name of the university and the participants in the study have been kept in confidentiality and anonymity. Informed consents were administered and collected from the respondents.

4. Results and Discussion

This section discusses findings from the data.

4.1 Satisfaction about the ESL classroom climate

In Fraser and Treagust (1986), **Satisfaction** refers to extent of enjoyment of classes and is one of the seven dimensions of classroom climate. Teachers are people in authority and generally, learners in their charge treat them with respect. Data have shown that about sixty-six percent (66%) of the English language teachers handling courses at the Senior High School Department are evaluated positively by learners although some classrooms and teachers have proven very challenging for them. Learners consider their teachers to show respect for them by means of the following: (1) by treating them equally, no favoritism and allowing them to express themselves, (2) reprimanding them in private, by not humiliating them in front of classmates, (3) by trying to be helpful, explaining to them parts of the lessons which learners find more difficult, and by considering what interests them (e.g. providing varied interesting classroom activities. Everyone deserves to be respected, regardless of one's age, gender, education and religious or political affiliation. Such belief is upheld in any race and is generally an important belief in the Filipino culture and is generally taught by parents to their children. Learners therefore, come to classroom expecting that their teachers and peers will help them achieve their learning goals. Below are some of the expressions of satisfaction of students about their ESL classroom. Responses which were given in Filipino have been translated into English.

When asked about what makes the student happy in his/her ESL classroom, S 23 said, ““I can say that I am happy and I have learned so much from my (language) teacher. Whenever I ask her a question, she would respond to me well, unlike other teachers who are not as accommodating”. S 105 said: “My teacher respects me by being kind and accepting of our responses. He/She often patiently waits for us until we have submitted our papers and he/she lets us all to participate orally”.

S 23 voices a learner who is happy and such happiness is derived from the teacher’s kindness and respect. Similarly, the learner in S 105 expresses contentment and happiness that his/her teacher respects them by being kind and also respectful of their responses (during recitations), and by allowing all the learners to express themselves. Casual interviews with participants validated their responses in the questionnaire. Although they have admitted that adjusting to the program is difficult, having considerate and kind teachers raise their self-esteem and motivate them to work harder.

4.2 Dissatisfaction about the ESL classroom climate

About 34 percent of the learners reported dissatisfaction about their ESL classroom climate. Below are the causes of such dissatisfaction.

4.2.1. Teacher bullying

Negative experiences with English language teachers, especially, outright disrespect for their students/learners, may cause the latter unhappiness and dissatisfaction. Disrespect for learners’ feelings created by harsh words or even simply occurrences in classrooms which demonstrate teacher as powerful and render learners are powerless, create negative image among learners as shown in the following attestations.

S 25 says, “With our teacher, we do not feel that we are respected because we are so slow with grammar (English). She would often encourage us but she can’t avoid belittling us.” Sharing the unhappy experience in her class, S 60 says, “ We have adjusted already in our Filipino (classroom) but not in English because she (the teacher) assigned our seats according to those who passed (in the midterm exam) and those who failed. It is humiliating that we (who did not pass) were seated separately as if we’re a hopeless case.”

It can be derived from data that the learners’ dissatisfaction arises from belittlement received from their language teacher. Another language teacher, mentioned by S60, physically grouped her learners according to their performance, hence learners perceived that they are assigned “bobo”(stupid) learners and “matalino” (bright) learners’ identity. Another class reported that their English language teacher would often express frustration that her students had difficulty expressing themselves in the language. According to her students, whenever the teacher did not receive the answer she was expecting from the group, she would often say, “My pet dog is much brighter than you.” Such putdown connotes lack of respect for students as human beings. All the experiences of bullying

experienced by learners in the study were perpetrated by female teachers. Interviews with classmates validated the responses given in the narratives of the students.

4.2.2 Being assigned a confusing brand- the high school or college brand

Although creation of an identity takes a process, (Norton, 2008) teachers however, may unconsciously assign a temporal identity to their students. This could happen in the case of Senior high school students who in the old system would have been a college, yet with the addition of two years in the basic education, these sixteen to seventeen year olds have become Senior High School students. This group are not junior high school students and are neither college students.. This is an identity that is although temporal, may be static as long as learners are engaged in the program or classroom. Compared to the old basic education curricula where learners were generally referred to as “students”, all of them who are enrolled in kindergarten to senior high school are referred to as “learners”. Senior high school learners are teens who are mostly 16 to 18 years old, the only difference in age takes place when some went to grade one at six or seven or stopped schooling somewhere during elementary or high school years. These teens are the same teens during the past many decades who would normally be in college before our educational system implemented the K to 12. According to the participants, one problem they encountered is that their teachers who used to be (or who are) college teachers would keep on telling them that they (learners) are supposed to be in college had it not been for the new policy, and they are supposed to behave as college students. During the casual interviews with the learners, they confessed that the branding confused them. They are referred to as “high school” but some of their language teachers would insist that they should behave like “college” students, and therefore, their teachers would treat them like the latter. Some learners reported that their teachers would often say, “Senior high school is just the same with college. The college students are just moved to the Senior High Program” or “The courses you are taking are just the same, college courses.” If such reports were true, the teacher is insinuating that senior high school learners should be treated in the manner college students have been treated. For a smaller group of students, (about 10 percent), the high school/ college brand” often results in confusion making it difficult for learners to adjust.

As S 220 said, “The pressure was too high. Being a SHS (senior high school) in _____ is like being a college student, unlike the high school days (Junior high).” Similarly, S 150 said, “ Are we really high school, or are we really college students already? They have been treating us both _____ and _____ and sometimes this can get frustrating. When there are events exclusively for the high school students, we get excluded, because they say, we are already supposed to be college students. This also happens with college events, we get treated unfairly.” Likewise, S 25 said, “Actually, I’m not sure if I have already adjusted because some teachers will treat as like college...And we’re assigned plenty of _____

requirements from our nine courses. We come to class 6 days a week hence, from time to time, we don't have time to think of ourselves. It's just school and the home only."

Adolescents are going through the transition period between childhood to adulthood, who experience confusion and who can be easily influenced by people around them and their environment. skills, the right knowledge and more importantly, the right values, modeled by their teachers. It should be emphasized that senior high school is not just a preparation for college, but a preparation for legal employability as well. Adolescent years are the years where our learners are forming their personality. The role of our teachers therefore, is very crucial in ensuring that our learners will acquire the right teachers therefore, should not take the senior high school years as just the first two years in college that is reclassified and treat the senior high school learners as "just the college students rebranded"; for that connotes lack of understanding of the vision and mission of the government in reforming the system.

4.2.3 Lack of innovation/ Lack of Task Orientation

Innovation refers to the extent to which the instructor plans new, unusual class activities, teaching techniques and assignment. Task orientation refers to the extent to which class activities are clear and well organized. Students reported dissatisfaction with their learning experience owing to the following which suggest lack of innovation and lack of task orientation for the students.

4.2.3a Congested curricula

One example of ESL classroom occurrence that delimits learners' chances to enjoy learning is the assignment of unusually heavy load. Data from the first semester showed that about 45 percent of the total respondents reported having difficulty adjusting to the program which they find "stressful", "difficult" and "exciting yet tiring". After the second semester, data showed that about 59 percent reported having adjusted, more than 18 percent are still adjusting, about 14 percent have not adjusted at all, almost 5 percent are not sure ("Maybe") while the remaining 3 percent did not answer. One clear practice in the senior high school program that may many students feel unhappy about is the congested schedule of the Grade 11 learners. Such situation is ironic since one important aim of the K to 12 program is to address the persistent problem of the system, the congested curriculum, especially the Junior High School Program. Ironically, while efforts to decongest the curricula is being done in the Junior program, Senior high program language classroom has excessive demand on learners to make good. According to S 245 "The truth it has been difficult to adjust because we have to come to classes on Mondays thru Saturdays and our classes are between 7:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Everyday, (in most courses) we have quizzes and assignments. It's so stressful, (the work) even our teachers and the way they teach us. That is aside from the contributions that they're (the teachers) are asking us to pay." Likewise, S 120 said, "Our language teacher gets impatient so easily and sometimes she embarrasses us. She gives us plenty of requirements but she's never considerate (when we submit late)."

Analysis of learners' responses revealed that participants consider being in the senior high school program as a "totally new experience". While they are still adjusting, they feel and believe that they are being bombarded by heavy requirements from all sides and the feeling is not good. Firstly, the learners have been used to learning all their courses (or subjects) within ten months. With the senior high school program, learners have to acquire all the learning objectives/competencies for the enrolled courses within one semester (or four months, since there are plenty of interruptions). Secondly, most basic courses in college are now being taught in the senior high school program. There does not seem to be a problem there, since, as some teachers believe, Grade 11 learners are the same teenagers learning the same courses. Seriously however, that is not the case. For the courses adopted from college such as English and Filipino, have been restructured, not to make them simpler, but to make them complex. For instance, the English course, Developmental Reading, is not actually a basic course for all but is offered to BSED and BEED students only during the second semester of their freshmen year. With the senior high school program, the said courses are fused. It is now Basic Reading and Writing. With two major goals to accomplish, learners are expected to be given heavy tasks. Another important basic course in college, Research 1 which is taught to college in their junior year (second semester) is now offered as a Filipino course taught during the second semester of the First year. Understandably, the course is going to be extremely difficult for many because it is now offered two years earlier, when the learners are still adjusting and still acquiring/strengthening their reading, writing and speaking skills.

4.2.3b. Hectic schedule

Another contribution to the learners' difficulty in adjusting is the nature of their schedule. Most sections of senior high school learners in the three colleges, if not all, have to come to class six days a week and they would often start the first period at 7 or 7:30 am. There will be some break at the middle, then they will have classes again mid afternoon until evening. On top of the difficulty are the teachers who willingly embraced the senior high school program and allowed themselves to be guided accordingly by the system. According to S 23 "My English subject is quite difficult, because my subject teacher gives us too many paper work that causes us to have more pressure. We have 9 subjects also and we have Saturday class, that's why we cannot relax our minds." Similarly, S 75 said, "I hope there will be time management because 7:30 is too early for us and our class ends at 4:30 pm. It's so tiresome. Maybe the school needs to add some buildings to adjust our schedule. We have classes from Monday to Saturday. "

The learners complain of their schedules because they have to come early to class and oftentimes have to go home late, six days a week. They feel all they do is study and they hardly have time for themselves. Evidently, the reason for having to come to class six days a week is that the Grade 11 rooms are shared with college students.

Teachers partly contribute to learners' life's "indigestion". It can be derived from the excerpts that teachers are not described as compassionate, understanding and flexible. Judging from the learners' attestations, their teachers seem to have become "tormentors". With courses that are fused and sometimes are offered too early in the program, a high school life where learners have to come on Saturdays and have to deal with teachers who seem to love loading them with requirements, the situation creates identities such as "stressed" learners, "unhappy" learners. Certainly, under the circumstances mentioned, no learner would describe himself/herself as happy or contented.

4.2.4 Lack of Personalization

Personalization refers to emphasis on opportunities for individual students to interact with the instructor on concern for students' personal welfare. Below are some causes of lack of personalization in language classroom.

4.2.4a lack of transparency in the grading system

Another source of students' frustration is the lack of transparency in the grading system. According to them, they feel that their teachers are not using the standard grading system for senior high school learners. Data from the first semester of K 11 implementation showed that learners were often frustrated by their teachers' lack of transparency in computing their grades. According to them, most of their efforts were rendered useless because after having submitted the requirements, some teachers would tell them "You failed to submit this and that". Such reports were validated by classmates who reported the same. According to them, they worked so hard, although they were just average learners, yet despite their efforts, they will just receive low grades because teachers would not record some requirements that they have submitted. Excerpts below show that learners during such situations, generally consider themselves powerless.

S200 says, I hope teachers will use the right grading system po. Some teachers do not use the standard grading system. They have their own system of computing grades.

S222 admits, "Our teachers sometimes don't care about our own insights and ideas, especially when it comes to our grades. There are complaints about our grades but they just reject them and based on their own way of computing, sometimes wrong computation".

Data from the first semester showed a considerably large number of learners (35 percent) who complain about their grades not only in language course but in other courses as well. Many of them feel that their teachers would demand plenty of requirements from learners which they would eventually lose, then make the learners suffer by giving them failing grades. Bullying is the struggle between the one with power and the one with less power or no power at all. If it is indeed true that some teachers are deviating from the standard grading system and is not transparent about learners' grades, then knowingly or unknowingly, they are committing classroom bullying. Such situation renders the learners powerless and limits their chance to create a strong identity as language learners.

The situation implies the importance of thorough orientation for students and teachers on the senior high school grading system.

4.2.4b_The Noise

Another cause of dissatisfaction arising from lack of personalization or concern for students is the noise among students. Noise is not considered bothersome when learners are engaged in performance tasks. As long as the class will not disturb its neighboring classes, noise coming from happy students who are interacting well during classroom task is an indication of a healthy classroom atmosphere. Outside of such context however, is the observation that learners tend to be noisy. Teachers have observed that college students also have the tendency to become talkative during the first semester while they are still adjusting. Just recently, the senior high learners' when asked "Is being noisy, typical of you?" Some seniors confessed that "being noisy" is one freedom they still wish to enjoy in their senior years, they expressed belief that they would soon mature. To some extent, they equate this to freedom of expression, of being oneself.

Survey data however showed (18 percent) that to some extent, being noisy is associated to the lack of proper room ventilation and comfortable chairs, reasons that make it difficult for learners to adjust in the program. At least two groups of learners admitted, "The hotter is the room, the more noisy we become. "

S 43 suggests, "I wish there were better and comfortable room too, with enough electric fans for us to feel the comfort, chairs that are not broken and cleaning materials for us to be able to clean properly." while S 234 says, "I am looking forward that our classroom and teachers will improve next school year, a classroom with comfortable chairs and functioning electric fans and teachers who will understand our situation and not stress us. "

Interviews with participants validated what they have written in the questionnaire. According to them, classmates are quite noisy but they are especially noisy during midday (10-12am and 1-4pm) because rooms have no fans and they feel so uncomfortable. It turned out that except with the two sections of ABM program, the rest of the sections from the same program and all the sections of STEM from the other two colleges have problems with noise from their own classrooms during midday. About 10 percent of the participants reported that the moments when there is barely a noise is when (1) there is an exam or quiz and when (2) when they like their teacher. To some extent, noise is tempered during the first period when room is not warm yet. Interviews also yielded that learners are likewise noisy during late afternoon because they are already tired. From the two sections who did not complain about ventilation, it was noted that there is hardly a classmate who reported of noise problems with classmates. Instead, the noise identified is the one that comes from learners from neighboring classes who have just come out of their classes, or those who arrive for the next class and the noise that comes from vehicles passing by. Compared to buildings in the other two colleges, the ABM building has lounges where students and learners alike may standby making it possible for

everyone to “join and be noisy”. Creating noisy learners out of the learners have to some extent limit their chances to learn and enjoy learning.

4.2.4c Lack of Student Cohesiveness

Student cohesiveness refers to the extent to which students know, help and are friendly toward each other. About 21 percent of students reported being bullied by peers. Although learners generally enjoy the company and friendship of classmates, there are isolated cases of peer bullying and they come in the form of insult, physical bullying and spreading of rumor. Physical bullying is commonly experienced by males. S 90 says, “I’m being bullied by my seatmate. I often received insults and even physically hurt. I have difficulty adjusting”. Similarly, S240 maintains, “Yes, I’m bullied by my classmate and teacher. I found myself degraded even my ability to do things. I have difficulty adjusting”. S 128 says, “It hurts to know that nobody cares for me. You often have the feeling of not wanting to go to school anymore because you know you’ll be bullied”.

Peer bullying creates identity in the learners that project that the victims do not deserve to be respected, or the feeling of being unloved. All the victims of peer bullying although they acknowledge the negative effects of the act on them, seem to have not resisted the act.

4.3 Effects of ESL Classroom Climate to Learners’ Motivations and Self-Esteem

Generally speaking, good classroom situation motivates/inspires learners but negative classroom atmosphere affects them morally and emotionally. This subsection discusses the effects of classroom environment to learners’ motivations and self-esteem.

4.3.1 Maturity and acceptance

Interview with participants after two semesters revealed that unlike the first semester, they were more certain now that they are not college students, rather, they are teenagers who are classified as senior high school learners. When asked if they would rather go to college now if they were given a chance, they smiled widely and said, “Not too soon. We’d rather be called high school learners and enjoy all the privileges of being young”. According to them, helpful and understanding teachers have slowly made them realize the importance of the reform in the policy. Although it has taken them some time to adjust, time has helped them to become less resistant to the requirements and helped them develop some level of maturity. For the other learners who have not adjusted yet or who are still adjusting, just like majority of their contemporaries, they are not confused about their identity, that they are not college, but high school learners. By being conforming, adhering to institution’s policy, complying with classroom policy and satisfying teachers’ expectations, the learners were able to adjust to the program. This does not mean however, that learners derive happiness or satisfaction from conforming or that they feel they have achieved their goals.

4.3.2. Low self-esteem and passivity

Survey data have shown that bullying received from English language teachers and sometimes, classmates, have debilitating effects on learners. S 47 says, “It’s annoying. We can’t even defend ourselves”. S 320 maintains, “Yes. This is being belittled because of my physical appearance. I just ignore it to prevent trouble”. Similarly, S 290 admits, “It (being bullied by teacher) lowers my self-esteem to be reprimanded repeatedly in front of classmates. She was the only teacher who made me cry”. From sad ESL experiences, S267 suggests, “We hope we could have in the future a better teacher. We do not complain but it pressures you when you come to school in good mood and here is a teacher who grumbles. Most of us have difficulty concentrating”.

At rare instance do learners take bullying positively as in the case of S45 who admits, “My teacher in English would humiliate me. I started losing interest in school. I used the situation instead as a motivation to work harder to avoid the reprimand.”

Learners reported feeling boredom, irritation, loss of self-esteem and loss of interest in coming to class. Similar responses of learners from the same classes validated students’ report above. Classroom bullying according to students, add difficulty and stress in adjusting to the program.

3.3. Doubt for teacher’s ability and commitment

Despite the efforts that learners put into their courses/subjects, they still feel such efforts are inadequate to satisfy their teachers. Such feelings caused the learners to doubt their teachers’ ability and commitment. According to S 80, “Perhaps what we need are English teachers who are trained to become teachers, so they will be concerned about our feelings. While S 279 suggests, “There are many things that this University needs to improve on such as having too many courses to handle, with so little time, Teachers keep on assigning difficult projects. Consequently, we do not have time to rest because our teacher demands so much of our time. Some teachers do not come to class regularly yet she assigns too many projects.”

The enumerated reports were validated with interviews with the respondents. It can be derived here that the seeming lack of concern for students’ welfare by teachers which they see from the teachers’ manner of teaching, manner of grading to manner of behaving toward the learners often result in the latter’s loss of respect for their teachers, doubt of their teachers’ ability and loss of trust in the system.

Overall, there are occurrences in ESL settings that promote the creation of positive learners’ identities such as: teachers’ kindness, resourcefulness and creativity, learners’ desire to learn, diligence and self-discipline and the joy that comes from family and friends are internal support and strengths which assisted learners in their adjustment to the program. Likewise, there are factors/areas which create static and limiting learners’ identities such as the confusing branding, the treatment teachers give the learners, the lack of ventilation, lack of transparency in the grading system have

become source of learners' frustration which further affect learners' sense of self worth and distrust in teachers' ability and commitment. It is important to stress that peer and teacher bullying are detestable acts which should not be encouraged in all institutions of learning. As educators, teachers should promote peace and one way to do that is ensuring that classrooms are free from "fear". More importantly, bullying learners may have far-reaching effects on victims which may not be erased by time.

Despite their young age, learners have clear concepts of factors that make a peaceful classroom; one that is conducive to learning and that can be achieved by combined efforts of a committed, hardworking and compassionate teacher and a set of diligent and responsible learners.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The present study lends support to Fraser and Treagust (1986), Burden (2018) and Sieberer-Nagler (2015), among others, establishing the effects of classroom climate to language learners' self-esteem and motivations to learn. Now that the senior high school program in the Philippines is in its early stage, it is important that teachers fully understand that there is something more noble than keeping a profession, and that is being able to mold young Filipinos who possess not only the right knowledge and skills but the right values. This can only be realized if teachers will not forget the importance of hard work, compassion, resourcefulness, creativity and dedication as they fulfill their duties in building the nation.

To address classroom discomforts, delivering institutions are encouraged to address problems with classroom ventilation, over-crowding, lack of comfortable chairs and projectors which are imperative in ensuring peaceful and conducive learning atmosphere.

Further research on the employment of qualitative surveys in measuring teacher performance is highly encouraged. This act promotes the feedbacking culture and the important role students play in improving teacher performance. Further, this act may reduce observed cases of teacher absenteeism, classroom bullying and encourage transparency in the grading system. Teachers on the onset, may feel uncomfortable being evaluated and university administration may consider this an additional responsibility. The proponent however, believes that if both sides are united toward creating quality and humane education, then spontaneous and honest qualitative feedbacking every semester should form part of the academic culture.

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