

POST GRADUATE STUDIES-SECOND CYCLE

THESIS:

**“EXPERIENCE-BASED LEARNING OF ESL:
BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES”**

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate the impact experience-based learning is used by a learner in order to learn a foreign language. It explores different ways of using experience in order to achieve better academic results. As an approach, it also tries to examine how teachers can manage it, find the benefits, advantages and the challenges and be able to cope with learners.

First, I intend to create a rough idea about experience-based learning as a concept in general through exploring different famous philosophers' approaches, as Confucius, David Kolb or Aristotle. The main part of this thesis is an actual investigation in our nowadays schools' system and the way the learners learn, specifically how experience-based learning facilitates the learning as a process.

There have been several of questions that I have tried to find the answers by studying the appropriate and relevant empirical findings from literature, exploring through different academic web pages and surveying in a primary school where the English is learned as a second foreign language. Some of them that I have been concerned with were as following: How much is Experience-Based Learning (here after EBL) involved in our schools? Are teachers and students opened to the different learning approaches to be involved in their teaching/learning process? Which are their attitudes/experiences toward EBL? Is it possible that different teaching/learning approaches have different impact in learning as a process? Do the results vary from each other if the approach of learning were different? Does EBL stimulate innovation and creativity? Can exposure to the target culture indicate directly on learners' point of view?

Different approaches to the curriculum reform will be analyzed as well, in contemplation of helping the EBL find its way in to the process of learning.

Step by step, going through all of these dilemmas, I brought my study into different stages in order to come out with a specific conclusion which could serve and help to create an idea how to use EBL for better learning/teaching.

Key words: experience-based learning, motivation, foreign language, learner, teaching.

The acronym EBL stands for Experience-Based Learning and ESL stands for English as a Second Language.

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CHAPTER I: Introduction

Besides the excitement people may feel at the beginning of learning a new language, sometimes after a certain period of time, difficulties may appear and confront the new learner. The learner may become frustrated and anxious. Depending on the challenges that should be confronted, occasionally they may decide to give up learning it. Finding ways that are effective towards learning a new language in an easier and more interesting manner is becoming a challenging process for teachers of foreign languages. Despite different methods that were explored¹ and already involved and used in school context, learning a language through experience is becoming a new trend worldwide. This thesis aims to find out if experiencing a new culture, listening to new words from native speakers, and directly participating in an environment containing elements of the target culture, will result in successful and effective outcomes of gaining knowledge of that language.

There is empirical evidence from literature that if a non English-speaking person who is intending to learn the English language, lives in a country that speaks the target language, they are more likely to learn the host language sooner than someone who is learning it in their non English-speaking country. The necessity of using it in every occasion simplifies learning and makes it come naturally through the whole process. The acquisition of a new language could be obtained through different methods and experiences, as expeditions, study tours or exchange programs as well. The creativity of the teachers plays an important role in adapting their methods and work in order to generate a better learning if previous suggestions are out of reach.

1.1. Background of the study

Research has been conducted in the field of experiential learning over several decades, but it is still a main topic among philosophers and educational experts to involve Experience Based Learning (EBL) in our educational system, with the main goal to find the best solution for effective learning. Considering that drastic changes in people's lifestyle have been made over time by the evolution of technology and globalization, teaching methods should be expected to change as well in order to achieve better learning outcomes. There are several different activities

¹ Cooperative Learning, Problem-Based Learning, Inquiry-Based Learning, Game-Based Learning, etc.

that this thesis discusses, such as learning through games, experiments, exchange programs, projects that engage learners to explore in particular fields, using technology to access information, and exchange personal experiences. Another relevant factor is the learner him/herself who is nowadays completely different from the learner in the past. The rapid advances taking place in information and communication technologies are enabling transformation in libraries, as creating a global digital library, which would better serve to the readers to have access.

According to Tella (2019) “The internet explosion, proliferation of online resources and the advent of free and open access recourses in the last two decades provided the much needed impetus for libraries to inject new energy into providing quality services.” (p. 238). Faced with these circumstances, a learner extracts knowledge based on their own personal experiences toward new paths of comprehension by using technology or the internet in general. Special attention should be paid to the learner's motivation and desire, considering that they are the core elements of experience-based learning. These two elements empower the learner with an energy source that is very important in keeping them going toward the main goal, which in this case is the target language acquisition. Meanwhile, successful results are built on the stimulation of innovation and creativity during the learning process, which promote new values in different spheres for the future itself.

The central issue addressed in this thesis is the relationship between the learner and the knowledge that they get from a certain experience, the methods that are being used, and the techniques that are implemented during this acquisition period. Taking into consideration that not every experience can be used for educational purposes, a considerable level of self-control is required from the learner. That could be achieved by starting from the educational level of the family, by undergoing different stages of schooling, other trainings, travelling, exposure to the different cultures, etc. For several years, educators, philosophers, other scientists, and stakeholders have tried to promote experience-based learning but different challenges appeared, such as teachers' trainings, facilities, and curricula reforms. These were all issues that should be taken into consideration in order to offer diversity of experiences available. This research indicates that there should be consideration given to regularly changing or improving the curriculum in order to adopt it, which would help students get the best results from the school and educational system they attend in order to correspond with latest development. A

combination of some traditional forms of learning with new approaches would help in the learning process. The current study attempts to point out experience-based learning as a way to improve the learning process and also explores different problems in applying it due to centralized education, lack of facilities and lack of trained professors.

This research is built on existing knowledge in the fields of experiential learning, organizational development and social circumstances which are explored throughout the history of education scholars and philosophers such as Confucius, Aristotle, Kolb, Lewin and Dewey. They contributed a lot to this issue through their observations supporting the argument that experience-based learning has a strong impact on the learner's mind. It gives lifelong knowledge, it eases the process of learning itself and is more practical for every kind of intelligence.

In his work *Frames of Mind: The theory of Multiple Intelligences*, Howard Gardner (1983) argues that

Initially, the baby makes sense of the world, primarily through his reflexes, his sensory perceptions and his physical actions upon the world. After a year or two, he arrives at a practical or sensory-motor knowledge of the world of objects, as they exist in time and space (p.20).

Thus the central issue addressed here is the relationship between a person and the first learning that comes directly from the practice, or experience since the first days of a humans' life. Further, regardless from individual IQs, people learn from experience through their different intelligences.

1.2. Significance and the purpose of the thesis

Despite the efforts of language experts in trying to bring changes into the educational system, there is still a lot that should be worked on in order to create an effective and suitable educational environment that involves experiential learning. Even the little modifications that have been made have not been properly accomplished yet. The primary school "9 May" In Preshevo, Serbia, where this research is taking place is not yet ready for drastic changes, and the curriculum is partially modified or adjusted in accordance with new standards. Extracurricular activities are involved from time to time. Currently there is just one exchange program that takes place abroad once a year. Field trips are organized four times during an academic year and service-learning projects are being integrated as well. As of recently, the Ministry of Education

and Culture of Serbia has been trying to implement a new online system of evaluation, observing and collecting data about everything that is happening in every school during the learning process. Through the online platform, known as www.esdnevnik.rs the triangle teacher-student-parent is supposed to work efficiently, since all of them have access to the data recorded online. By being in continuous contact, they work together toward the same goal: easing the process of learning. This platform has many benefits including transparency for every participant that is engaged in the process of learning, easier communication, teachers could follow different projects and assignments that are given to students from anywhere and anytime and observe their progress, while students could keep up with each other in a specific section. This approach is expected to have a positive implementation since it encourages the teachers to bring in different approaches that would be beneficial for the experience-based learning.

The implementation of this platform was a challenge in the beginning because it has to go through four stages. The first stage is providing each school with internet and devices to be connected to the network such as computers, laptops and tablets. The second stage was the training of a small number of teachers from each school's staff from all over Serbia. The training was organized in Belgrade for a week. The third stage was the training of all active participants on this platform. The training was conducted by the teachers who had attended the previous training, which were upgraded to supervisors of the projects. They organized training lessons in their schools for other teachers, for parents and students as well. These trainings were held in the computing classroom of the school. The last stage was the implementation itself, which appears to have worked properly.

This study advances our understanding of diverse ways of teaching, other than traditional, with a contemporaneous learner. I tried to explain how the primary school "9 May" in Presevo, a town in the south of Serbia, uses its programs and what it can be done to overcome the challenges that the learner is dealing with, and which are the paths that should be followed to reach essential purpose-persuasive and productive knowledge. Finally, through this research it is possible to explore the importance of involving students in the process of experience-based learning, which consequently will contribute to a more complete understanding.

1.3. The structure of the study

This thesis is organized into eight chapters. Chapter one gives a brief overview of the introduction and provides information of the background of the research, significance, purpose and the structure of the thesis. The first section of the second chapter covers the literature review regarding experience-based learning. It examines different approaches of learning and provides a summary of findings. The second section provides an overview of experience-based learning including its benefits and challenges. The third chapter describes the methodology and other study procedures. It also introduces other important elements of the research methodology such as: participants, research design, instruments, data and other procedures. The fourth chapter present and discuss the quantitative data gathered from the questionnaires completed from the students and teachers including other observing activities. The following chapter investigates different ways of involving experience into teaching or learning practices. It also focuses on opportunities of changing the curriculum, outside the classroom, internships and lifelong learning. In the sixth chapter the attention is paid to the creativeness, innovation and art as a result of the experience-based learning. This part discusses the effectiveness that experiential learning has directly in these prospects and the results that comes out of it. Conclusion and recommendations for the future are part of the seventh chapter, and the appendixes include two questionnaires that are used in this research study.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction of literature review

The notion of experience-based learning dates back to antiquity beginning from Confucius, continuing with Aristotle, and all the way until the recent remarkable names such as Jean Piaget, John Dewey, Kurt Lewin and David Kolb. These authors worked on creating a concept of experience-based learning based on their own teaching experiences and observations. Thus, the first section of this chapter gives a summary of their work on this topic in order to create a specific idea on the subject of this research. Further, this section offers a more detailed description of what experience-based learning is and its benefits and challenges.

2.2. Theoretical background

There are several different approaches dealing with this issue directly, and many philosophers and linguists have made specific conclusions of their own research on the topic. John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Kurt Lewin and others have contributed significantly to discover a new approach to learning in order to improve the learning process. David Kolb is one of the most well-known philosophers who has been working in this area and fostered the idea of experience-based learning by providing arguments regarding the advantages of this approach. According to Kolb (1984), experience-based learning can be achieved based on personal experience and through the environmental experience. In his book, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development* (1984) he argues that: “When learning is conceived as a holistic adaptive process, it provides conceptual bridges across life situations as school and work, portraying learning as continuous, lifelong process.” (p.45)

He analyzes the transactions between the person and the environment that are involved by learning process. He points out to the importance of environmental stimuli and the response of the person, the artificial manipulation that could be done to the independent variables of that stimulation to determine the effect on dependent response characteristics. This argument supports the idea that if teachers can improvise an environment, with necessary elements, and

thus create a setting that is totally different from the traditional classroom, it is possible that everyone can experience the sense of being in a specific country that speaks the target language, a setting where students will be free to experiment and analyze, thus making the learning process easier and more successful.

Experiential learning is a particular type of learning from life experience, which is the opposite of learning in a traditional classroom where a lecturer explains and the learners observe, without the opportunity to be in a direct contact or involved. Learning based on experience offers a great variety of options toward the learning itself. Other school programs can be simulated in order to reinforce the ambition of better learning and better knowledge, such as internships or exchange students between different countries, different projects that encourage learners to involve themselves directly into different personal experiences. As Kolb (1884) points out, “it is the process of learning from experience that shapes and actualizes developmental potentialities. This learning is a social process, and thus the course of individual development is shaped by cultural system of social knowledge” (p.198). According to this statement, as a result of imitation, direct experience, communication and the interaction with the environment where the experience occurs, the potential of learning grows and expands.

John Dewey’s work influenced education by bringing up different ideas and conclusions in order to make progress in learning and knowledge. His major work on education was a guide for many people who attended his school. He believed that students are allowed to experience and interact with the curriculum and they should also have the opportunity to directly take part in their own learning process. In his work *Educating and Experience* (1938) Dewey argues that “the belief that all genuine education comes about through experience does not mean that all experiences are genuinely or equally educative. Experience and education cannot be directly equated to each other. For some experiences are miss-educative.” (p.11). According to Dewey, experience-based learning is not always an educative form of learning. When it is non-educative it directly distorts the growth of further experience, so that’s why the learner should be critical and have self-control on the experiences they go through as part of their learning process.

Bringle and Hatcher (1999) note that

Experience becomes educative when critical reflective thoughts creates new meaning and leads to growth and the ability to take informed actions. In contrast, experiences are miss-

educative when they fail to stimulate critical thought and they more deeply entrench existing schemata. (p.114)

Kurt Lewin , worked on the concept of experience-based learning as well. He is known as an important figure in the field of communication and at the same time expanded the understanding of experiential learning and action research. He defined ‘field’ as ‘the totality of coexisting facts which are conceived of as mutually interdependent’.

Individuals were seen to behave differently according to the way in which tensions between perceptions of the self and of the environment were worked through. The whole psychological field, or ‘life space’, within which people acted, had to be viewed, in order to understand behavior. Within this individuals and groups could be seen in topological terms (using map-like representations) where they participate in a series of life spaces (such as the family, work, school and church), and these were constructed under the influence of various force vectors (Lewin, 1951, p.240).

Therefore it might be concluded that when a person is surrounded by a specific environment, the chances to learn are a direct result of that situation. The same logic underlies that the explicit environment affects a particular behavior which leads to an individual experience with a specific knowledge that comes out of the whole process. The general concept of learning through experience is ancient and goes back to the names of Aristotle and Confucius, which strongly supported experiential learning. The well-known quote of Confucius “Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn” or the example from Aristotle in *Nicomachean Ethics* “For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them” must have been known already by almost any scholar. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that limited attention has been dedicated to the impact that negative experiences have on the knowledge and the learning that comes out of it, the lack of control a learner can get from negative experiences and the way that self-control can influence the circumstances.

2.3. WHAT IS EXPERIENCE-BASED LEARNING?

The term “experience-based learning” refers to a model in education and is defined in Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory as “a process whereby the knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience.” (Kolb, 1984, p.41) Further, Andresen, Boud and Choen have implemented a list of some important criteria for experience learning, which at the same time explain better the meaning of the concept. They are known as:

- The goal of experience-based learning involves something personally significant or meaningful to the students.
- Students should be personally engaged.
- Reflective thought and opportunities for students to write or discuss their experiences should be ongoing throughout the process.
- The whole person is involved, meaning not just their intellect but also their senses, their feelings and their personalities
- Students should be recognized for prior learning they bring into the process, and
- Teachers need to establish a sense of trust, respect, openness, and concern for the well-being of the students. (Andersen et al. 2000, p.24)

The above-mentioned authors affirm that if the learning is to be truly experiential the above-mentioned attributes are necessary in some combination.

2.3.1. Benefits and challenges of Experience Based Learning

The advantages in terms of experience-based learning highlight the importance of practice in a process of gaining useful knowledge. Different educational institutions, starting from the elementary schools to universities, have found this approach to be more convenient for stimulating their students to put their theoretical knowledge into the practice.

From sandwich courses, internships, externships to mentoring schemes, there are lots of ways to add value to your degree by participating in experience-based learning. The direct

experience gained will help ensure that you are fully equipped to enter the profession of your choice after graduating. (Bridgestock, 2012, paragraph 1)

In line with this statement, the duty of educators is to bring the learners in contact with experience through different kind of opportunities that any educative institution has the chance to create and manage. Some of the possibilities are as follows: agreements with companies that work on a specialized area, cooperation between countries, universities or high schools to exchange students, voluntary work known as service learning and study abroad placements. Each of them has a particular significance that directly contributes on gaining knowledge from experience. Starting from the first one, I will try to elaborate each of the options and the benefits that learners could get from. Agreements with companies that practice their functionalities in different areas are the most common in nowadays universities programs. They usually take place at the end of each year of the studies, or after the finishing the whole theoretical material that is intended to be delivered and learned. When it comes to learning foreign languages, it is preferable that those practicum are held in companies whose headquarters are from a country that speaks the target language, or in that exact country.

According to the article “The Advantages of Experience-Based Learning”

At the University of Bologna, Italy, all students in the School of Economics must complete at least one work placement. Professor Mauro Bernardini, director of the internship scheme, says placements are an essential part of students' learning, and also a good preparation, for future careers, whether in academia or business (Bridgestock, 2012, paragraph 13.)

As mentioned above (Bridgestok, 2012, paragraph 13) she describes: “He adds that this contact with this business world help students develop their professional and communicative skills, and also team working.”

Experience based learning shown in these exact cases, is very essential for the upcoming challenges. The information that is gathered through direct personal experience, takes form in the future of the learner. Experience-based learning is a way of learning that integrates all kinds of learning, either when a learner is learning by doing something or by being directly exposed to the target language. Cooperation between different countries’ universities or high schools to exchange students is another form that has shown its success to generate qualitative knowledge. When a young student is directly exposed to a new country, its language, culture, tradition or religion, it becomes easier to get involved in it naturally.

Being part of an exchange program by AUYYSA International, which is a youth organization, I have found that this kind of experience stimulates students to fulfill their intentions, reinforces their abilities, and improves their social and communicative skills. They become more independent, more spatially oriented, more conscious and tolerant about other cultures and religions, and fluent in that foreign language as well. As a sixteen-year-old exchange student, I have experienced US culture differently from the movies I have seen, the songs I have heard and the books I have read.

Considering all these facts, I have concluded that EBL is a great way of education. It is a virtuous way for intellectual development, lifelong memory and rightfully can be considered an attractive way of learning. Another way of including experience learning into the curriculum is voluntary work or service learning. Service-learning is a form of experiential education that supports deep learning. Through their service-learning activities, students apply classroom knowledge in practical settings to enhance their understanding of class materials. According to Bringle and Hatcher (1999):

For service learning to educate students toward a more active role in community, careful attention must be given to reflection. Reflection activities must allow students to discover the value of dialogue, embrace the importance of perplexity in the learning process, and develop the ability to make meaning of personal experience. (p.118)

Sandwich courses are an additional type of experience-based learning through which students can be exposed to individual understanding. It means symbioses of study and practical work in the same time. On the world scene, a major biennial International Conference on Experiential Learning has now been held six times, the latest being 1998 in Tampere, Finland. This provides a forum for presenting research and theory developments and demonstrating techniques and methods, but also for highlighting the directions EBL is taking across the world. Over recent conferences it has become evident that EBL is being increasingly understood in terms of a future-oriented project to tackle global educational issues such as those involved in forwarding multiracialism and multiculturalism, respect for the environment, non-aggression and coexistence, and world literacy. Andersen et al. (2001, p.7) discussed the EBL as a special way of gaining knowledge. According to them, despite the benefits the learners get from this kind of learning, there are a lot of challenges that we as a society have to deal with, in order to capture EBL in the whole context and get the best of it. Proponents of EBL have presented a challenge to

higher education providers to broaden their perspective on what would constitute appropriate standards for entry to university-level learning. The desire to more effectively harness workers' skills and knowledge, and the consequent change in notions of articulation between different levels of education, together with concerns expressed by students about the unproductive relearning of existing knowledge, have led to a major application of EBL in the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). This approach is well established in other countries, such as the US, the UK, France and Sweden. In Australia, recent nationally agreed university guidelines define learning from experience very broadly to include learning acquired from non-credentialed courses, from workplace learning and from life experience (Cohen et al. 1994)

Apart from this issue that is challenging for the EBL, another one that requires attention is time itself. Boud, Keough, and Walker (1994) draw their attention to this issue into their reflection upon the role of debriefing in experience-based learning and the direct relation it has with time as another challenge. Referring to their study, debriefing provides the opportunity for structured reflection whereby experiences are used for experience-based learning. Boud et al (1994) further described:

Effective debriefing also requires time. This time has to be included in the planning of any experience-based program. Too often is the debriefing phase of a program of which is cancelled or considerably shortened by the extension of the activity itself. Thus the commitment to the importance of the debriefing must be accompanied by a commitment by the group leader to allow sufficient time for effective debriefing to occur. (p.70)

Considering the fact that recently everything is tightly related to time, this issue is a real challenge for learners. Experience based learning requires time. It also helps to reflect upon feelings that are consequences of experiences that a learner is exposed to, and after a reflection or debriefing, the learner is provided with adequate educative knowledge. So obviously time has to be included in the planning of any experience-based program. Another important challenge that needs to be taken into consideration is the high costs that this type of learning takes. A substantial budget is necessary to apply EBL into our teaching/learning system. Programs as internships, on fields' projects or educative visits outside the classroom necessitate financial support. Changing and adapting the curriculum is also imperative in order to sustain an effective educational system.

CHAPTER III: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design and methodology

This study focuses on exploring new ways of teaching through experience-based learning and different methods that teachers could use into their practice. I will also try to see if the learning results are better in the group exposed to experience-based learning in comparison to those exposed to other approaches. For this purpose, I intend to conduct different analyses and surveys. By observing students while accomplishing different tasks, I will try to find out which way they naturally choose to acquire the specific knowledge. This will help to understand how a teacher can help to facilitate the learning process and contribute to the progress of his/her students. In order to investigate and understand the EBL, its benefits and challenges, an experimental design is going to be described and elaborated in this chapter.

Furthermore, it will examine and gather data with the main findings concerning the effect of EBL has on students and educators, as a process of learning and teaching in the same time. This research is designed as a descriptive and semi-experimental study in order to find out how the learners react toward the experience-based learning, their behavior when their exposed to it through the learning process, and the challenges and the benefits. It is a quantitative study and uses experimental methods of research. The study took place at the primary school “9 May” in Presevo. The learning process is held in two languages, Albanian and Serbian due to the different cultural backgrounds of the students. The students have a large variety of foreign languages to choose in order to add to their own program, such as: English, French, German or Russian. This environment was convenient to implement this study research because of the large number of language teachers and numbers of foreign languages learned.

In order to determine how these educators, teach their subject, and how the students learn better, this research used three instruments. First were the teachers' questionnaire which elicited their attitude toward this approach and then the students' questionnaire which determined the way they learn better. In the end a post control test is utilized to examine which model of learning is more effective and has the better results.

3.2. Research questions

This research explores if experience-based learning is practiced in our educational system and which are the educators' and learners' attitudes about this issue. It examines also the benefits and challenges they deal with. Other matters that are inspected are the longevity of knowledge that is gained through EBL, exposure to it, the motivation and the creativity as outcomes of EBL, by means of the following questions:

1. Which teaching methods can ease and improve the learning process of the language learners?
2. Does experience-based learning have an impact on the longevity of knowledge and memory?
3. How do internships help students with involving them in a new culture and language?
4. Can using EBL motivate learners, trigger creativity and innovation?
5. What are the benefits and challenges of EBL?

3.3. Research Hypothesis

According to these research questions, here are the following hypotheses of this study:

- H.1. Learners learn the target language better through experience-based learning and being directly exposed to it.
 - H.1.1 Learners learn better from exposure and experiments.
 - H.1.2 EBL keeps students motivated.
- H.2. Experience-based learning produces lifetime knowledge.
 - H.2.1 EBL has a good impact on memorizing things over a longer period of time.
- H.3. Experience-based learning can stimulate the creativeness and encourage experimenting
 - H.3.1 Creativeness is triggered directly by EBL.
 - H.3.2. Innovation is reproduced through EBL.
- H.4. Through experience-based learning, ESL learners have the opportunity to learn the target language by using multiple intelligence skills
 - H.4.1 Students benefit a lot from learning through experience.
 - H.4.2 There are also some challenges to be dealt with learning through EBL

3.3.1. Participants

The study was conducted at the primary school “9 May” in Presevo, in a southern town of Serbia. All participants were pupils and teachers of this school. The total sample included one hundred and seventy-two participants, from which one hundred and sixty were students and twelve teachers. The participants were from two nationalities: Albanians and Serbians. All participants’ data was collected between November 2018 and February 2019. A total of one hundred and fifty-six were approached and one hundred and eight agreed to take part (69.2 % positive response). This comprised ninety-seven females and seventy-five males. The age of participants ranged from eleven to fifteen for students and from twenty-eight to fifty-seven for teachers. All of them were in apparent good health.

All the teachers had higher education degrees, from which six had a master degree; five had bachelor degree, while one works with the old system which recognizes the two professional years after high school. The work experience of the teachers varies from five to thirty-three years. The school where the study took place has relatively good conditions for learning process. It is equipped with labs, cabinets for each language and has two computer rooms. It has access to Wi-Fi in the whole area and is monitored twenty-four hours a day seven days a week, elements that helped to easier observe the activities and successfully complete this research. The administration department of the school gave their approval for the research to be conducted. A completed consent form was obtained from each participant or participant's parent when a child was a minor.

3.3.2. Instruments

This research study used two questionnaires for data collection, which included one for the language teachers and one for the students.

The first instrument to be used was the teacher's questionnaire (Appendix 1).

The second instrument to be used was the student's questionnaire (Appendix 2).

The quantitative analysis aimed to substantiate the hypotheses regarding experience-based effects on student motivations of particular interest. For this reason, the instruments used for data

collection in the present study were two questionnaires, one for the ESL teachers and one for the students and a post-test to measure students' experience-based learning achievement.

The first instrument was teachers' questionnaire (Appendix I) and it is a modified version of the research instrumentation conducted by other researchers, who also examined the effectiveness of the experience-based learning of English language. The ten-item questionnaire investigated ESL teachers' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of experience-based learning in their classrooms. Moreover, it presented teachers' awareness regarding the pedagogical values of experience-based instruction.

This questionnaire was administered to twelve ESL teachers with different teaching experiences, all coming from the primary school "9 May" in Presevo. They were asked to tick the appropriate responses but also encouraged to provide further answers or explanation. Questions Q1 and Q2 have explored teachers' perceptions on the use of their experience and the possible reasons that may have stopped them from applying experiments in their ESL classrooms. Questions Q3, Q4, Q5, and Q6 have investigated teachers' beliefs on the overall pedagogical values of experience-based learning. Consequently, these questions evaluated teachers' attitudes towards the application of experience-based learning as creative, longevity, motivating and effective contemporary teaching methods. Questions Q7, Q8, Q9 and Q10 provided information whether teachers were aware that the use of experience-based learning could trigger creativity and also reproduce innovation. It can stimulate the creativeness and encourage experimenting to the pupils. Students benefit a lot from learning through experience and there are also some challenges to be dealt with learning through EBL. It sustains students' language learning interest.

I set up an experiment so I could be able to determine if the experience-based learning can fulfill and expand learning outcomes. Before and after the experiment was conducted, students who were selected randomly filled out a motivation questionnaire and were asked to notice the situations in which they felt motivated to learn, self-confident in using the second language outside the classroom as well as their perceptions of experience-based learning in their classroom setting. Similarly, this questionnaire was a modified version of the research instrumentation conducted by Wimolmas (2013). He attempted to investigate first year students' English language learning motivation. The instrument used a 5-point Linkert Scale, but the modified

version presents a 3-point Likert scale, ranging with response answers from “disagree” to “agree”.

The first part of the questionnaire consisted of students’ demographic information including gender and age, whereas the second part consisted of students’ perceptions regarding the motivational impact of experience-based learning. The students’ questionnaire was administered to a hundred and sixty participants that belonged in the experimental groups. They were given clear instructions and enough time to fill out the 14-item questionnaire. Questions Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 provided information whether the new pedagogical learning resource in their ESL classroom enhanced their level of learning motivation. We will learn if EBL will have a good impact in good memory to the pupils. Questions Q5, Q6 and Q7 reported students’ attitudes towards the fun, relaxing and communication enhancing aspects of experience-based instruction. EBL keeps the pupils motivated and generate self-control, so they have the courage to speak despite the atmosphere is friendly and fun. Questions Q8, Q9, Q10, and Q11 investigated the non-significant motivational impact among students of the experimental groups. Questions Q12, Q13, Q14 and Q15 presented students’ beliefs towards the experience-based approach ineffectiveness.

3.3.3. Procedures

This chapter presents and discusses the main results of the data analysis of questionnaires from the quantitative approach. As the data analysis relates to the research questions and hypotheses, this study further dealt with data collected from students’ perspective. The following section of the chapter deals with the overall findings of this study and is focused on summarizing the results and interpreting in general perspective. The analysis of the total study findings is related to the research questions that served as a guide for this research.

As the very first step, permission from the schools’ principals was obtained for the study to be conducted. The written permission was obtained from the parents as well. Personal data were assured that will remain confidential since the participants’ names were not required.

CHAPTER IV: OBSERVING ACTIVITIES

4.1. Analyzing and comparing results

This chapter presents and discusses the main results of the post-tests and data analysis of questionnaires from the quantitative approach. As the data analysis relates to the research questions and hypotheses, this study further explores the demographic data such as students' gender, age, vocabulary English proficiency grades, levels of motivation after the experience-based learning of ESL. Moreover, the findings of this study address the correlation between students' performance scores and motivation, differences between their experience-based learning of ESL, as well as the differences between motivation and demographic factors such as their knowledge proficiency. All analyses and graphs were done by using excel. The other section of the chapter addresses findings and is focused on summarizing. The analysis of the total study findings is related to the research questions that served as a guide for this research.

4.1. Questionnaire results elaboration

4.1.1. Results from teacher's questionnaire

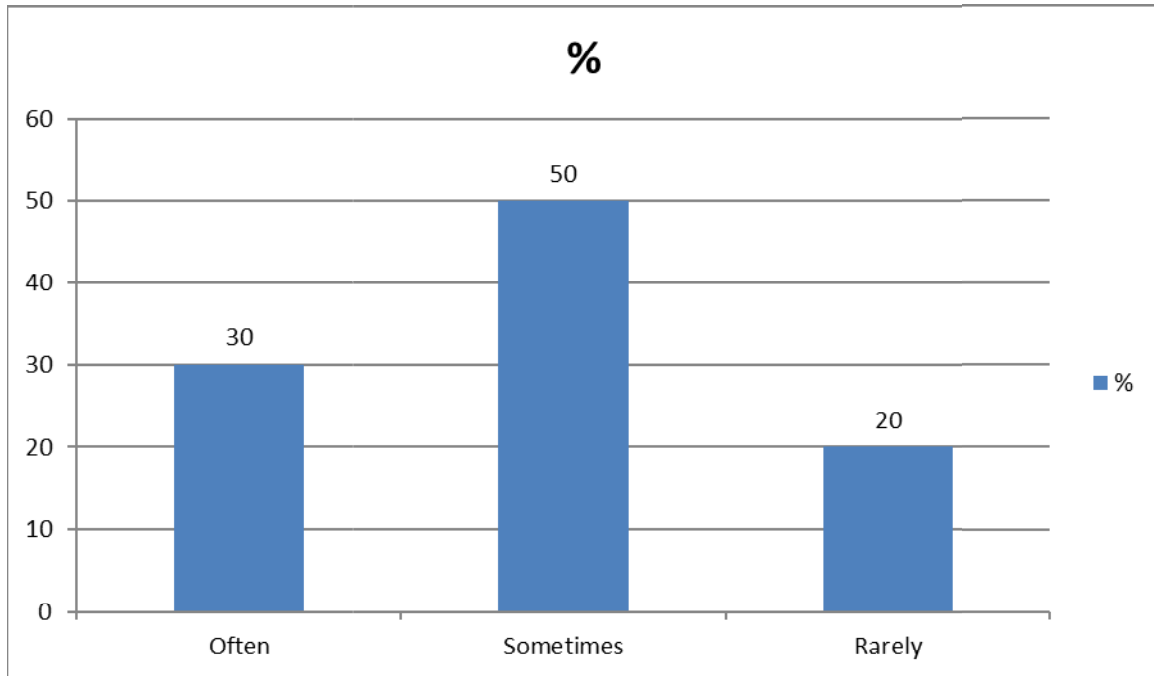
Analysis of teachers' questionnaire regarding the effectiveness and motivational impact of experience-based learning of ESL

Q1: How often do you use different teaching methods in the ESL classroom?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely

ESL teachers are aware that the experience-based learning in a formal ESL classroom environment encourages students to learn more than the traditional English teaching practices, as well as increases students' level of learning motivation.

Table 1 - The tabular representation of teachers' responses regarding the item question: How often do you use different teaching methods in the ESL classroom?

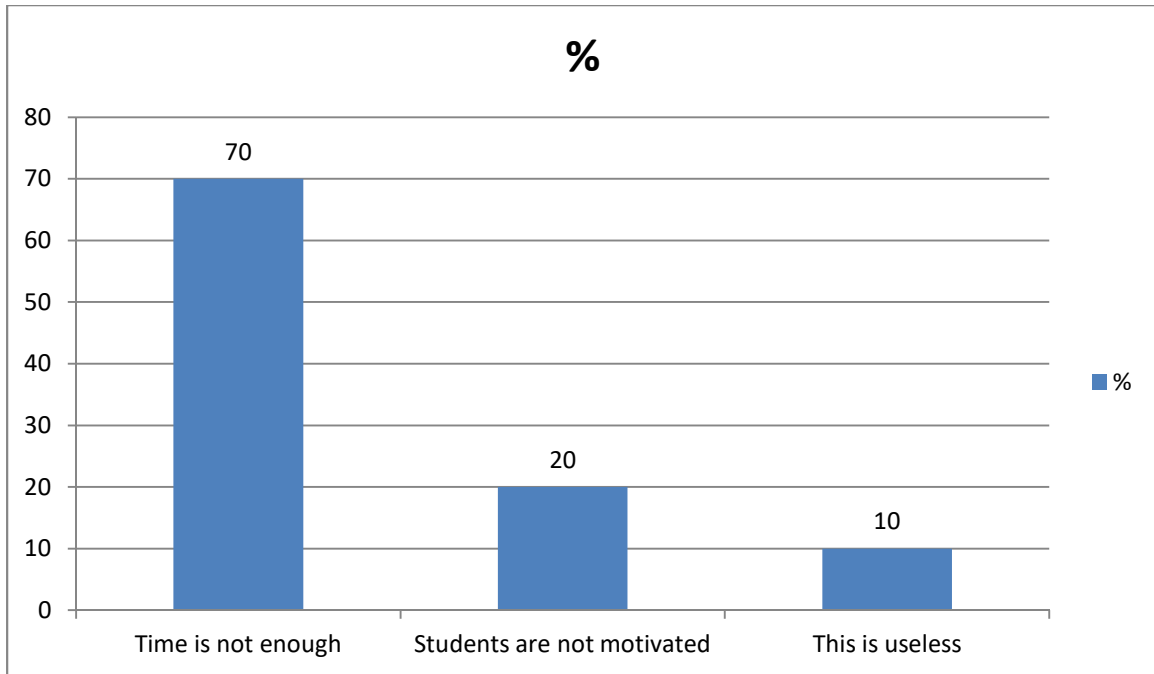


The table highlights teachers' responses regarding the use of different teaching methods in their ESL classrooms. Their responses are as following: 30% of the teachers have reported to have “often” used different teaching methods in their ESL classrooms, 50% of the teachers reported that they have “sometimes” used different teaching methods in their ESL classrooms, while just 20% of the teachers have reported to “rarely” use different teaching methods in their ESL classrooms.

Q2: Why don't you use experience-based learning instructions more often in your ESL classes?

There is not enough time	Students are not motivated	This is useless

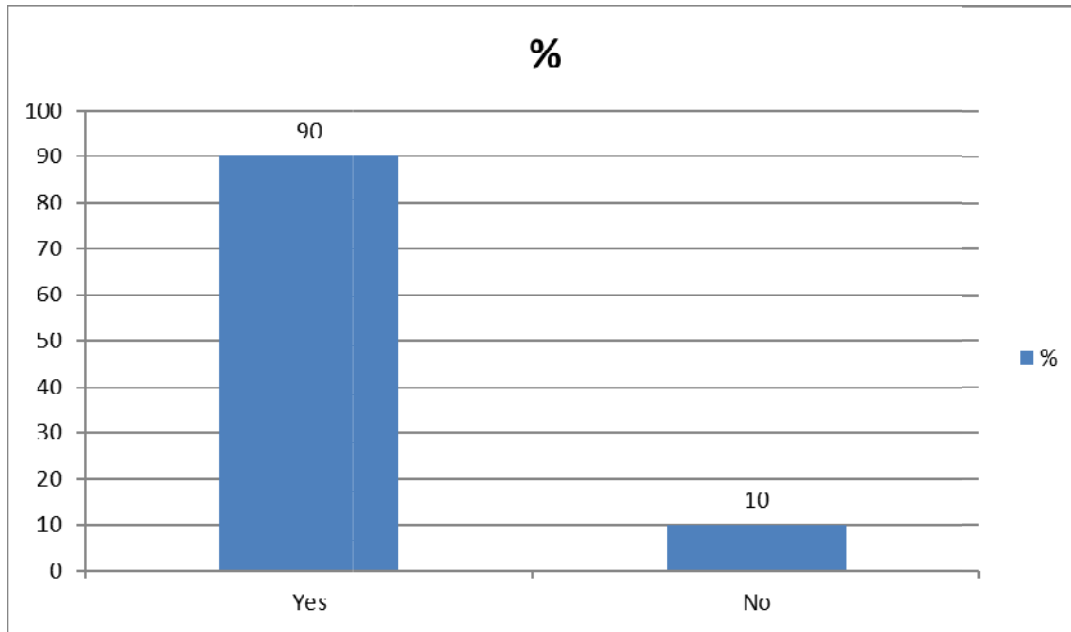
Table 2 - The tabular representation of teachers' responses regarding the item question: *Why don't you use experience-based learning instructions more often in your ESL classes?*



The table highlights teachers' responses regarding their attitudes towards not using the vocabulary word-games. Their responses are as following: 70% of the teachers have reported that they don't use experience-based learning instructions more often because "Time is not enough", 20% of the teachers have reported that they don't use experience-based learning instructions more often since "Students are not motivated", while 10% of the teachers have reported that they don't use experience-based learning instructions more often since "This is useless"

Q3: Do you believe that experience-based learning has an impact on the longevity of knowledge and memory?

Table 3- The tabular representation of teachers' responses regarding the item question: Do you believe that experience-based have an impact on the longevity of knowledge and memory?



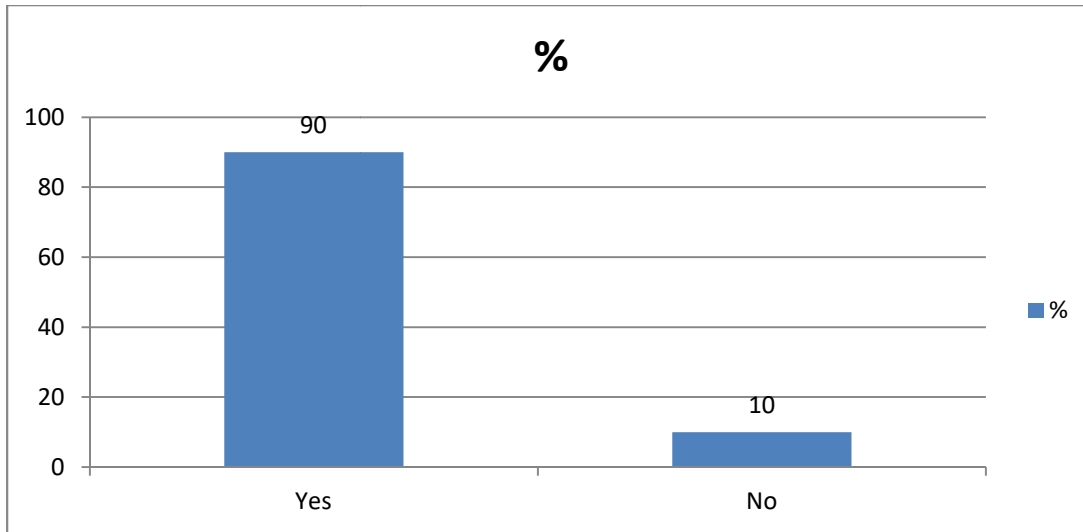
The table highlights teachers' responses regarding their attitudes towards the impact on the longevity of knowledge and memory of experience-based learning. Their responses are as following: 90% of the teachers have agreed that using experience-based learning have an impact on the longevity of knowledge and memory and 10% of the teachers have reported the opposite.

Q4: What's your students' level of motivation when you use experience-based learning instruction?

Highly motivated

Fairly motivated

Table 4- The tabular representation of teachers' responses regarding the item question: *What's your students' level of motivation when using experience-based learning instruction?*

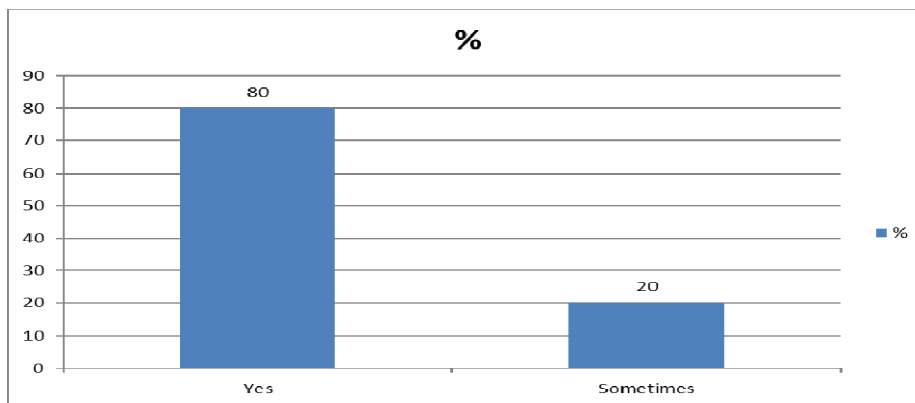


The table highlights teachers’ responses regarding the motivational impact of vocabulary word-games on ESL students. Their responses are as following: 90% of the teachers have reported that the use of *experience-based learning* “highly motivates” their ESL students and 10% of the teachers have reported that the use of *experience-based learning* “fairly motivates” their ESL students.

Q5: Do you think the internships help students to involve themselves in a new culture and language?

Yes Sometimes

Table 5- The tabular representation of teachers’ responses regarding the item question: *Do you think the internships help students to involve themselves in a new culture and language?*

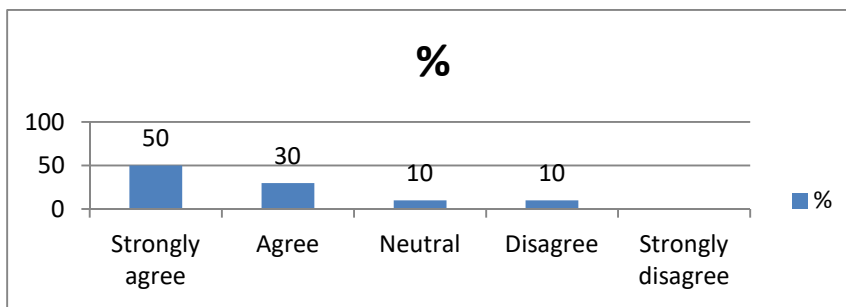


The table highlights teachers’ responses regarding the effectiveness of the internships to help students to involve their-selves in a new culture and language. Their responses are as following:

80% of the teachers have reported “Yes” and agreed that the internships help students to involve themselves in a new culture and language and just 20% of the teachers have reported “Sometimes” the internships help students to involve themselves in a new culture and language.

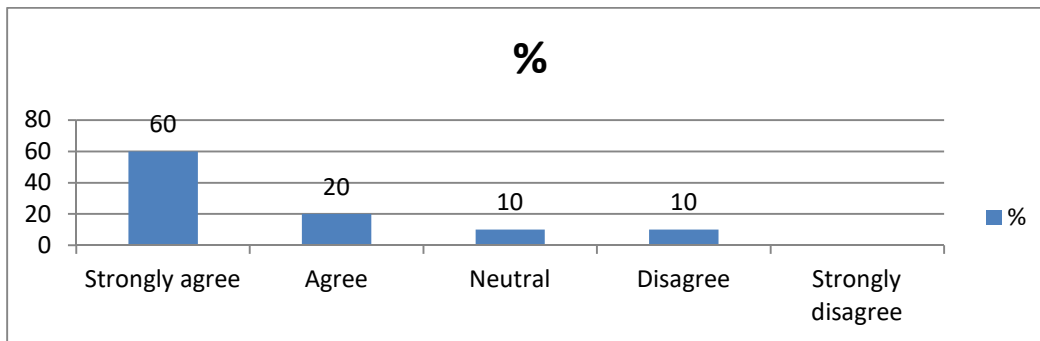
Q6: Being exposed to the target culture influences directly on learners’ concepts about the target language and its issues (like having a personal statement about its difficulties as grammar, phrasal verbs or vocabulary)

Table 6- The tabular representation of teachers’ responses regarding the item statement: *Exposing to the target culture indicate directly on learners’ point of view.*



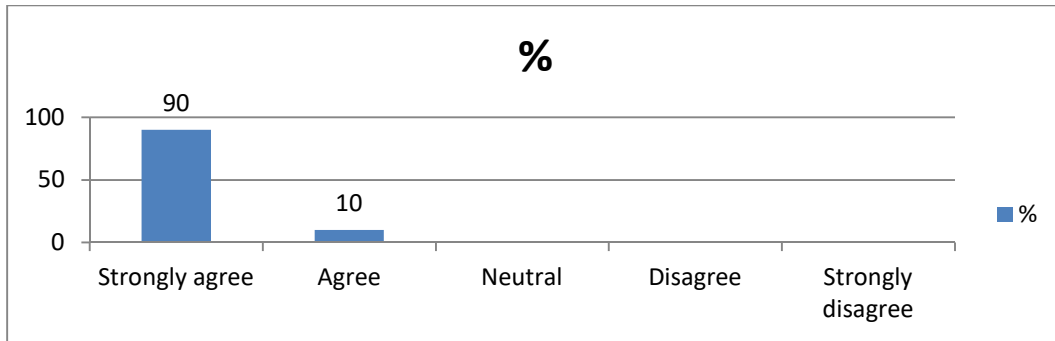
Q7: Experience-based learning helps learners to sustain their learning motivation.

Table 7- The tabular representation of teachers’ responses regarding the item statement: *Experience-based learning help learners to sustain their learning motivation.*



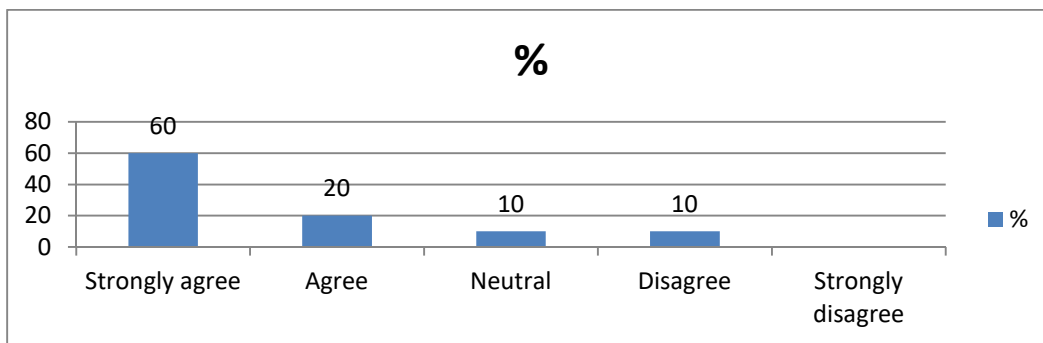
Q8: Using EBL trigger creativity and also innovation is reproduced through EBL.

Table 8- The tabular representation of teachers’ responses regarding the item statement: *Using EBL trigger creativity and also innovation is reproduced through EBL.*



Q9: Experience-based learning can stimulate the creativeness and encourage experimenting.

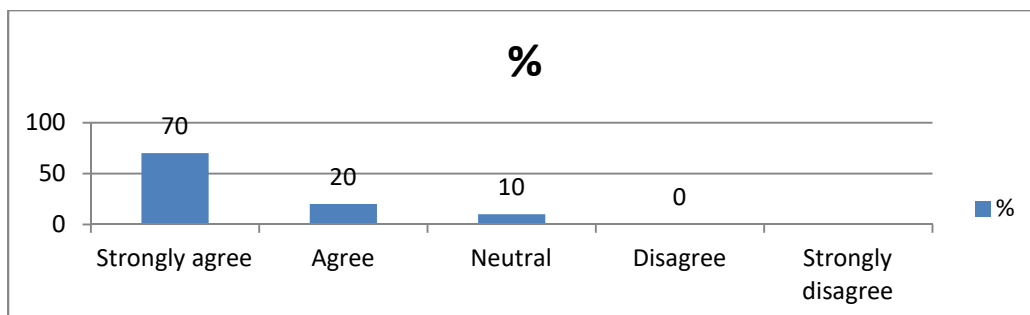
Table 9- The tabular representation of teachers' responses regarding the item statement: Experience-based learning can stimulate the creativeness and encourage experimenting.



The percentages of teachers' responses are as in the table above.

Q10: Students benefit a lot from learning through experience but there are also some challenges to be dealt with learning through EBL (as the high budget required)

Table 10



Teachers reported that they 90 % are positive and just 10 % are neutral with the statement that students benefit a lot from learning through experience and there are also some challenges to be dealt with learning through EBL.

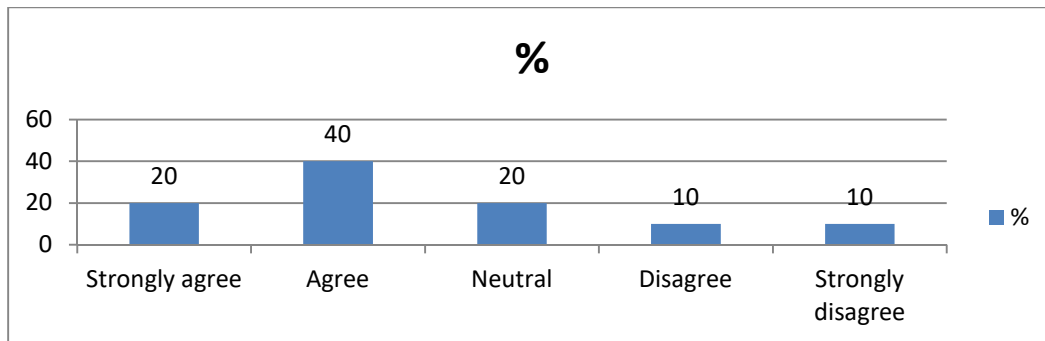
4.1.2 Results from the students' questionnaire

This section presents the analysis of students' questionnaire regarding the effectiveness and motivational impact of experience-based learning. In order to find out if experience-based learning as instructional setting provides motivational-enhancing attributions in a formal ESL classroom environment, a fourteen-item questionnaire was used among ESL students of the experimental group.

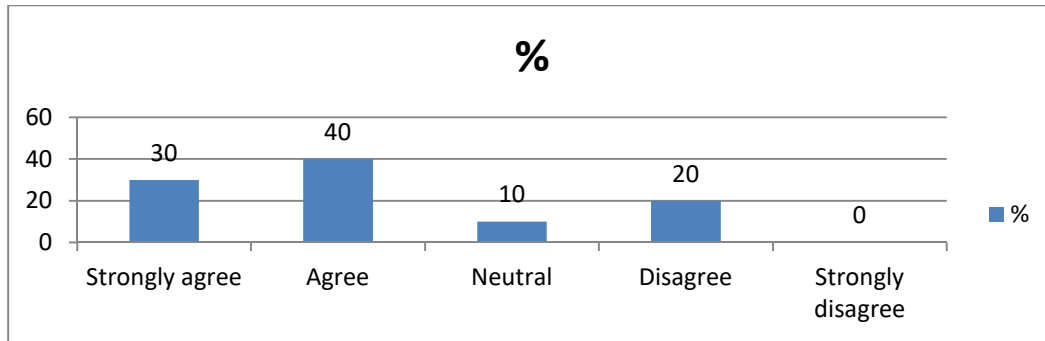
Q1: Learning new lexical items in an experience-based learning approach motivates me to learn even more.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree

Graph 1- The graphical representation of students' responses regarding the item statement: *Learning new lexical items in an experience-based learning approach motivates me to learn vocabulary even more.*

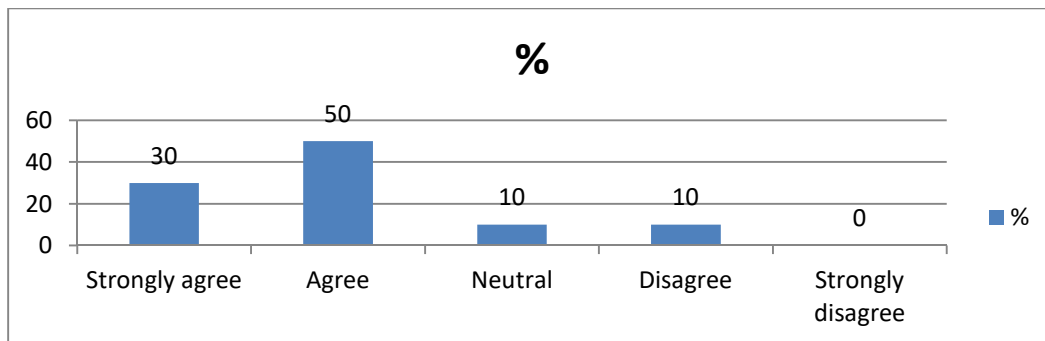


Graph 2- The graphical representation of students' responses regarding the item statement: *EBL has a good impact in good memory so I get motivated by this learning way.*



The graph highlights students' responses whether EBL has a good impact in good memory and if they get motivated by this learning way.

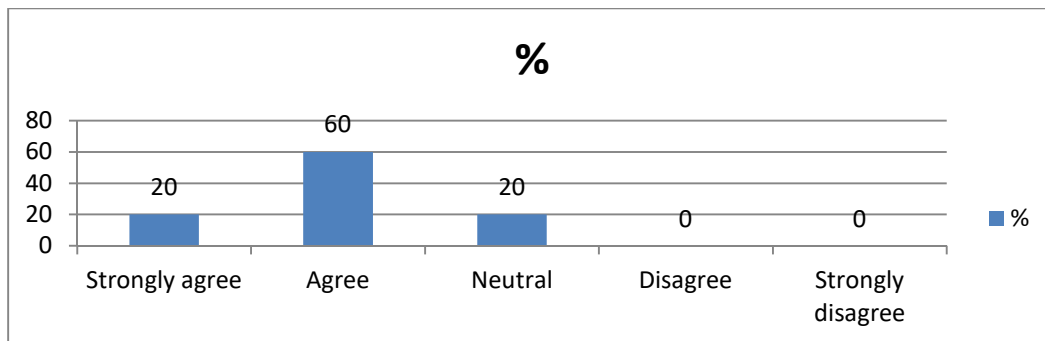
Graph 3- The graphical representation of students' responses regarding the item statement: *My achievement in English is not the same if the teachers don't use experience-based learning.*



The graph highlights students' responses about the statement above.

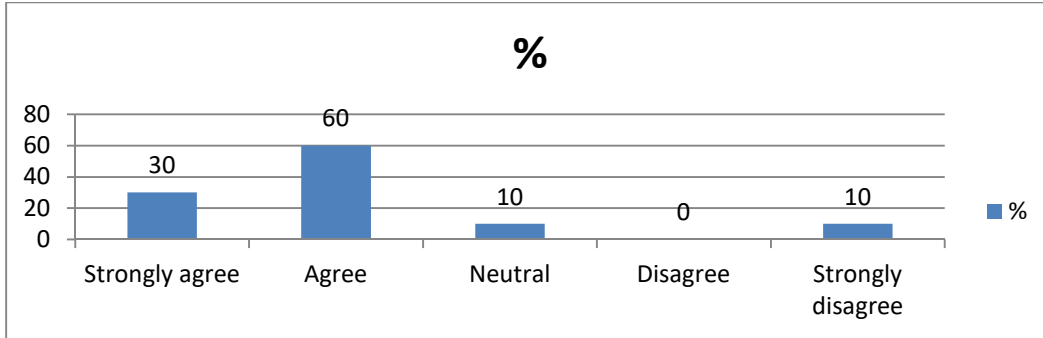
Q4: Experience-based learning can stimulate the creativeness and encourage experimenting.

Graph 4- The graphical representation of students' responses regarding the item statement: Experience-based learning can stimulate the creativeness and encourage experimenting.



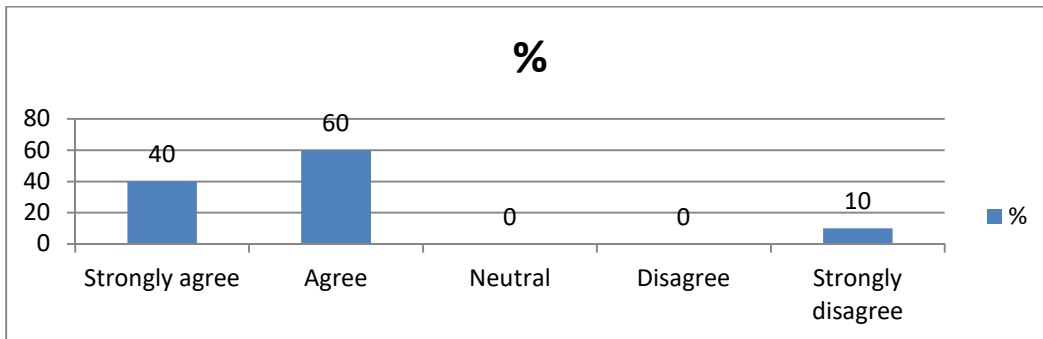
Q5: Experience-based learning produces lifetime knowledge of ESL

Graph 5- The graphical representation of students' responses regarding the item statement: Experience-based learning produces lifetime knowledge of ESL.



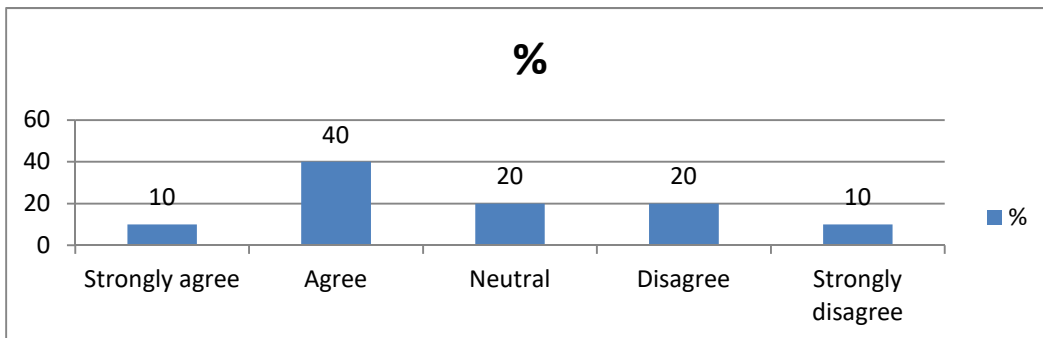
Q6: EBL keeps us motivated and generates self-control, so I have the courage to speak despite the atmosphere is friendly and fun.

Graph 6- The graphical representation of students' responses regarding the item statement: *EBL keeps us motivated and generate self-control, so I have the courage to speak when the atmosphere is friendly and fun.*



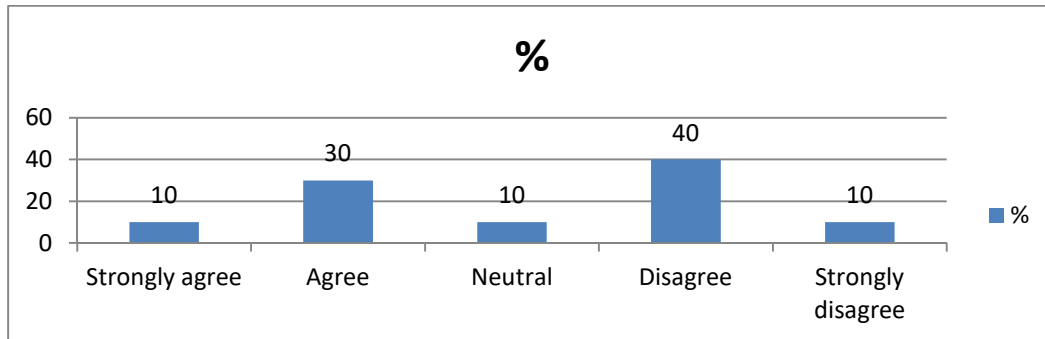
Q7: I am confident in saying words and sentences in English language outside of the school if we have learned them by experience-based learning method.

Graph 7- The graphical representation of students' responses regarding the item statement: *I am confident in saying words and sentences in English language outside of the school if we have learned them by experience-based learning method.*



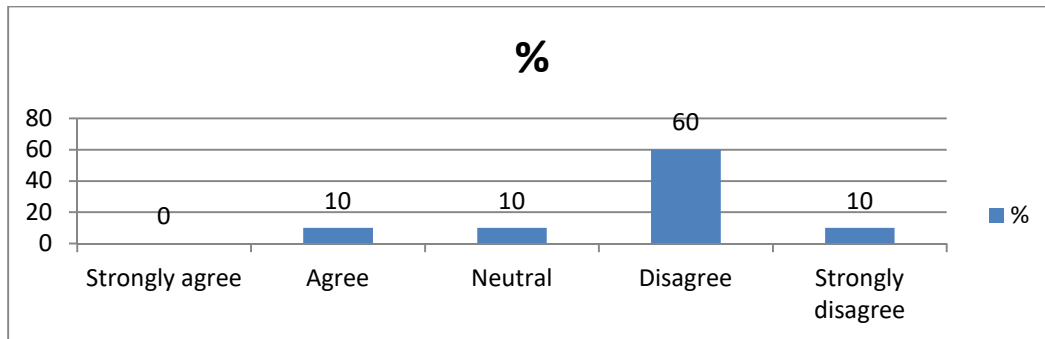
Q8: It is not important whether I learn English language by experiments or under other circumstances.

Graph 8- The graphical representation of students' responses regarding the item statement: It is not important whether I learn English vocabulary by experiments or under other circumstances.



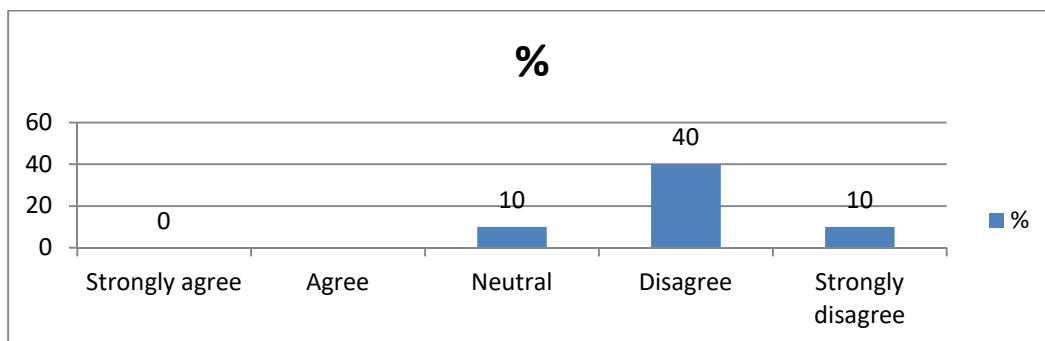
Q9: Learning English language by the use of experience-based learning is boring.

Graph 9- The graphical representation of students' responses regarding the item statement: Learning English language by the use of experience-based learning is boring.



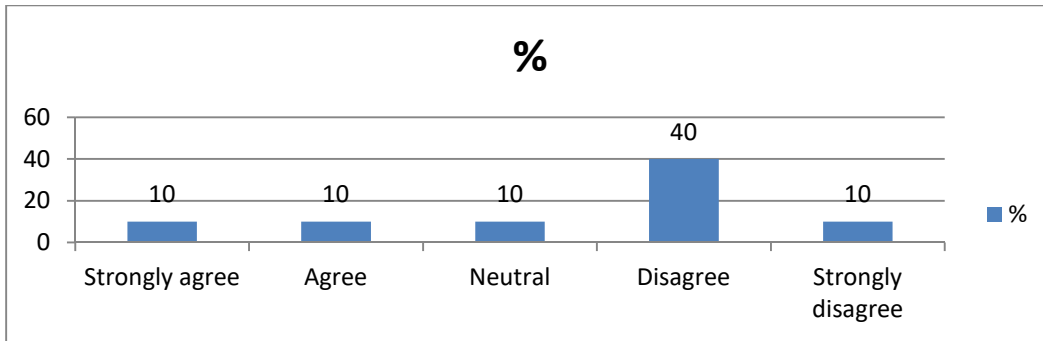
Q10: I am more interested in being graded than learning English language itself.

Graph 10- The graphical representation of students' responses regarding the item statement: *I am more interested in being graded than learning English language.*



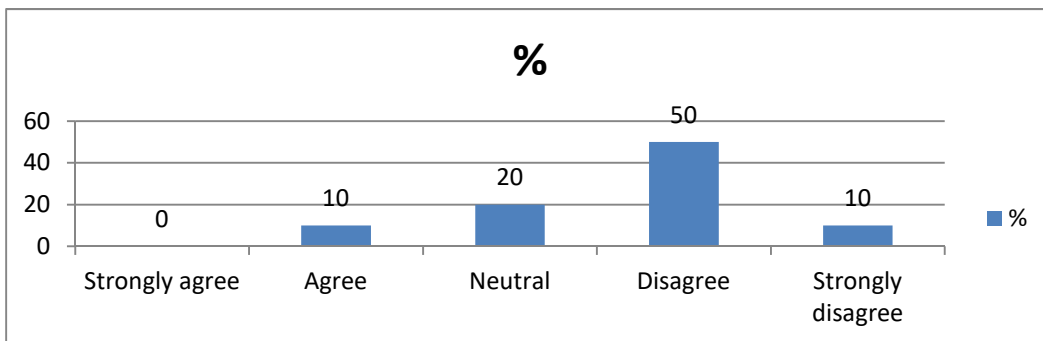
Q11: I mainly focus on studying English for class assignments and exams

Graph 11- The graphical representation of students' responses regarding the item statement: *I mainly focus on studying English for class assignments and exams.*



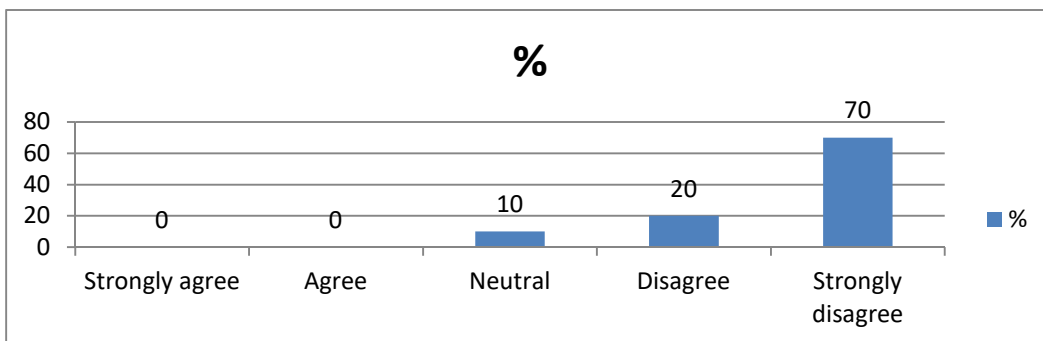
Q12: Experience-based learning doesn't make me able to succeed more.

Graph 12- The graphical representation of students' responses regarding the item statement: *EBL doesn't make me able to succeed more.*



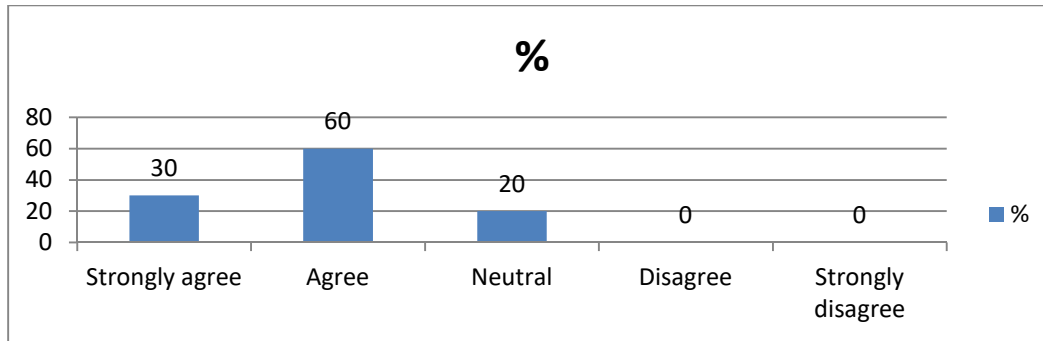
Q13: Experience-based learning doesn't trigger creativeness or reproduce innovation.

Graph 13- The graphical representation of students' responses regarding the item statement: *Experience-based learning doesn't trigger creativeness or reproduce innovation.*



Q14: I benefit a lot from learning through experience.

Graph 14- The graphical representation of students' responses regarding the item statement: *I benefit a lot from learning through experience.*



CHAPTER V: EXPLORING DIFFERENT WAYS TO INVOLVE EXPERIENCE INTO TEACHING/LEARNING PRACTICES

5.1. Changing/improving the curriculum

The main goal of every teacher broadly is to make sure that the learning needs of his/her students are met through an appropriate way of learning. In order to achieve this, teachers try to incorporate all their previous knowledge and experience to serve better and accomplish their mission. Since the teaching/learning process currently used in the educational system in Serbia is organized with a curriculum, that is a standard created from the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, sometimes it interferes with teachers' objectives that in every day occasions are more flexible responding to the students' needs.

A project named "Implementation of four objectives of the strategy for education development by 2020" is taking attention lately in all schools of Serbia. It was adopted at session of the Republic of Serbia on 25th October 2012 and published in the "Official Gazette of RS" no 107/2012 of 9th November 2012. These four objectives as are stipulated by the Strategy for the education development are: Increasing the quality, Increasing the coverage, Achieving and maintain the relevance of education and Increasing the efficiency. All of them have a direct impact on experience-based learning, considering that each of them has a close connection with the main purpose of EBL target- raising efficiency of learning.

The first objective, the purpose of which is arising from scientific knowledge into educational practice helps the experience-based learning implement more easily and effectively. Teachers have been being trained during this time in order to prepare them to successfully

achieve educative aspiration, set clearly in the curriculum starting officially from academic year 2019/2020. The second objective covers all educational levels, which also helps a lot to actualize EBL starting from preschoolers to the universities. Involving the learners just from the beginning of their education into the practical learning makes it more acceptable and initiates productive learning. In Serbia, the system of education has changed and has been transformed for many years. The reformed educational profiles have been developed in cooperation and within these profiles; the ratio of practical and theoretical lessons were changed to the benefit of practical lessons in school cabinets and workshops, but also in companies. (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Serbia, 2018, p.8)

This statement in the official report is proving the tendency of the state to facilitate the opportunity of teachers to involve experience-based learning into their teaching curriculum. Even though during the past years, the EBL was an indivisible part of school programs, nowadays it is accelerating the presence of it in almost every lesson. The practical part encourages the learners to be in the center of the content, activates him/her by stimulating all his senses, abilities and skills. Higher education in Republic of Serbia is more independent and has its autonomy on the developing its own curriculum and study programs. Nevertheless, these institutions promote the experience-based learning during all their study programs, by establishing relationships with other region countries with programs as ERASMUS or TEMPUS, by setting up practicum in different companies and corporations, organizing exchange programs and internships. Creating a fund that supports students with scholarships and other forms of incomes encourages different activities that support EBL as an approach. This is a closely related issue to the challenge of EBL regarding the low budget envisaged for a year.

Traditional classroom settings are less expensive and easier to organize compared to the different activities as an outcome of EBL, even though they are not as attractive and inspiring places to learn as they used to be. Changing traditional classroom regulation, by replacing it with outdoor learning or other forms of learning, requires a lot of commitment, training of educators- if online learning is considered to take place as well.

5.2. Learning/ teaching outside the classroom (different environments)

Learning outside the classroom brings a lot of advantages in the learning process. Being involved in new situations in a real world, results to be more useful for future projects in any field that is intended to be studied than just planning the future in theory. The motivation also could be found in a direct contact with different kinds of environments, which would be a very suitable for every kind of learner.

Nowadays in some European countries such as Switzerland, England, Germany, and in some other countries in the Balkans like in Kosovo, Albania and Serbia a new practice is being introduced of taking the learners outside the classroom and explore elements that could be found in nature- a way of learning known as “Outdoor Learning”. Starting from the preschoolers, teachers are trying to incorporate outdoor learning by stimulating the learners to be more productive and creative simultaneously. Little explorers are being encouraged to investigate the nature with their own little hands and find out the emotions they feel doing the activities. In most cases, these emotions results to be positive so the teachers try to cultivate them again and again in order to keep their students active and productive.

Another important element in learning as a process is the longevity of the information gained during the study. The longevity of the knowledge is closely related to the emotion that a student experiences during learning and that can be easily achieved through learning outside the classroom. Engaging all the senses, by seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, may help to recreate a specific emotion related to the information. To validate this termination stands the general content in “Learning outside the Primary Classroom”, Sedgwick (2012), “Teaching children outside the classroom, almost regardless of what we are teaching increases the vitality of learning” (p.3).

There are some platforms and web sites available online in the internet, as www.lotc.org.uk , www.easchooltours.com, or www.creativeeducation.co.uk that bring the teachers or educators closer and enhance the performance of this kind of learning. The exchange of information, ideas and successful results is very profitable to everyone interested to try it as an option of teaching. Further, this kind of learning is closely related to the learning of a foreign language. Being part of an open environment raises the opportunity to catch more information than just being present in a classroom. Different companies across the world organize travel or cruises in different countries. This would be considered as a good opportunity to know closely a certain language,

culture or other elements of any other nation. They help the travelers with their guidance, logistical organization, but basically a traveler considered in this case as a learner is stripped of his theoretical knowledge and has a chance to confront with a new reality, where he or she can be in a contact with natives. The opportunity to listen to the pronunciation, enrich the vocabulary and phrasal verbs, interact and being surrounded all the time by the language that is a target to be learned, raises the potentiality to learn that foreign language faster and better than in a conventional classroom.

Watching movies, listening to audio books or just music, reading books for fun as novels or magazines are other options of learning a language outside the classroom. Using technology and social media may help as well. Some students have tried to find a pal to exchange letters, mails or emails. They write to each other regularly and express their feeling or everyday experiences. This is highly recommended for students in high schools, because this may serve to increase psychological health as well, considering teenagers' problems and their constant need to be in the center of attention. By writing down, discussing the issues that they are concerned about, they will be able to review the situation from a different angle and not be so emotional about it.

A theory of learning outside the classroom speculates that “every person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances. Learning outside the classroom is about raising achievement through an organized, powerful approach to learning in which direct experience is prime importance” (Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto, DfES Publications, 2006). The assumption that the classrooms remain an isolated environment for students, who wish to expand their horizons of knowledge, is becoming more and more realistic. Sedgwick (2012) stated that “outside learning is an immeasurable, random but more powerful way more than it would have been learning in the relatively sterile atmosphere of the classroom” (p.10).

5.3. Students' exchange programs –Learning Culture

Exchange programs all over the world are smoothing the progress of learning as a concept for future learners. The opportunity that students have to exchange their culture, language, tradition and the way of life, have been shown to be successful. After a new experience abroad in another country, students have reported to feel more independent, self-confident and more open-

mindful for new things. The influence of the previous experience reflects on their future decisions, in academic or professional fields as well. The personification of the information gained during the exchange experience results to nurture a better attitude towards the learning itself. The acquisition of the target language with its everyday expressions becomes more prominent and naturally developed.

As maintained by Cherington, (2011) “Learning about cultural differences through international exchange leads to greater understanding and opens doors for world peace, one family at a time” (p.5). This statement leads to another relevant benefit for the whole mankind that is achieved through this program- cultivating the idea of world peace. An individual who personally experience a certain feeling knowing a culture, a tradition, a way of life in a country where he/she was part of it for a time, probably will never raise against it and fight it. Further, as claimed by Fantini, (1984) “Exploring a new culture involves a sense of adventure, a willingness to take risks, an openness to look at the world in new ways, and a responsibility to accept people on their terms.”(p.23). This proclamation has led to another advantage that exchange programs reflect to a student, as being more conscientious about their own deeds as citizens. The learning as a course of action comes first and last in this whole process. Starting from the beginning by dealing with completely new situations, new people, diverse culture, different language and belief- and then gradually becoming familiar with it by accumulation of the whole culture in general, makes it a wonderful, extraordinary and unforgettable experience.

Personally, I have experienced the feeling of being an exchange student as well. I still feel grateful to my host family who have accepted me as their own family member, as their own daughter and sister, and made me feel I was home. They shared everything with me; they opened their home and their hearts for me. Nowadays, a lot of universities worldwide are continuously organizing exchange programs all the time, across all levels of study. The goal of these universities is to try to create a society, which is enthusiastic to embark itself in a concept of world citizens. Therefore, an experience of exchange programs have many benefits, such as acceptance and understanding diversities between nations, their tradition and their culture, acquisition of the language that is intended to be learned, awareness rising on different global issues, etc.

5.4. Continuing learning for teachers

The graduation of a teacher is just the beginning of learning. Life-long learning is a concept that should be adapted from the beginning of the academic career. This kind of education in literature is known with different notions, but mostly is found as CPD- Continuous Professional Development. Day and Sachs (2004) propose a common definition of CPD, as:” CPD is as a term used to describe all the activities in which teachers engage during the course of a career which are designed to enhance their work.” (ibid, p.3) This definition refers to different activities that teachers have to engage in, as teachers’ practice with educational policies, improvement of their performance and improvement of prestige of teaching as a profession.

There are two factors known that initiate changes into teaching, known as intern and extern. According to Fullan (2016) , “change may come about either because it is imposed on us, or because we voluntarily participate in or even initiate change we find dissatisfaction, inconsistency, or intolerability in our current situation” (p.19). Otherwise stated, if a factor is considered external, we may assume in political or social changes, and if it results intern then is alluded into changes that are undertaken by teacher themselves for different reasons.

Some challenges that teachers deal with into their life-long learning profession are present in almost every school, locally and beyond, which we can identify in literature as well. According to Ucan (2016): “...there are many problems related to school culture, such as isolation of teachers in the classroom, lack of collaboration and support among colleagues, and discouragement of self-disclosures that teachers must cope with before achieving successful CPD” (p.39).

In the primary school “9 May” in Presevo, according to the principal, Mr. Enis Sejdiu, there is a lack of organization of seminars by the Ministry of Culture and Education in Belgrade compared to other schools in other cities in Serbia. He points out that the main issue is the language, because we live and work in a state as a minority, adding other political reasons.

“Young teachers, who express their will to attend any seminar or want to continue their education, have to do it privately and with their own incomes”-he says. Mr. Sejdiu adds the fact that the continuity of learning should be the responsibility of the school according to the laws of Serbia, but in a state that doesn’t recognize even the diplomas of the universities that have educated our teachers in their mother tongue, there is less hope for other facilities.

Experience based learning is a way of learning that requires a well-prepared teacher, who is willing to correlate with students beyond the regular school schedule, outside the classroom and further than expected in ordinary relationships teacher-students. The quality of the teachers' professionalism is in the proper proportions with the achievements of students and their success in achieving their goals.

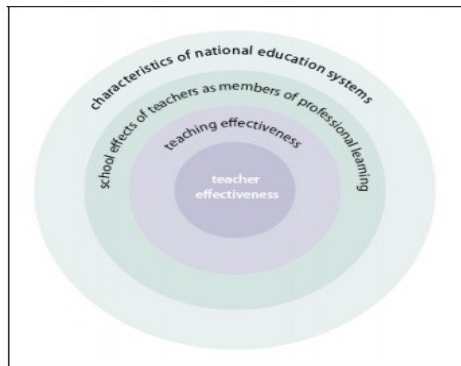


Diagram: Layers of analysis in identifying contents and forms of teachers' professional development, from Teachers' Professional Development: Europe in international comparison, a secondary analysis based on the TALIS dataset. Ed.: Jaap Scheerens. European Commission, Luxembourg 2010.

This diagram analyzes teachers' professional development while describing the rings of impacts that each of these sectors has in the whole process. In a manner corresponding to it, there is a detailed explanation of the diagram in a document of European Commission in the text below.

As stated in "Education and Training 2020, Thematic Working Group-Professional Development of Teachers" by Francesca Caena:

Literature on educational effectiveness seems to outline a conceptual framework that can be described as an 'onion-ring' model, going from the micro-level to the macro level perspective-with individual teachers' personal characteristics (competences, beliefs and attitudes) at the core, a second layer concerning teaching effectiveness in the classroom (instructional repertoires), a further layer about teachers' cooperation in school contexts, and finally considering national policies and organizational features (including issues of anatomy, accountability, evaluation in education systems) as the outer layer. (European Commission, 2011, p.3)

In general, teachers who continuously educate themselves are better prepared to the new situations that experience-based learning may impose in regular bases. The commitment toward teaching as a complex profession requires a lot of dedication, time, skills and abilities. And all of these elements need to be expanding and increasing continuously in order to correspond to a better teaching.

CHAPTER VI: INNOVATION AS A RESULT OF EXPERIENCE-BASED LEARNING

6.1. Creativity

Stimulating creativity in students necessitate a complex previous preparation of some elements, as teachers' professional background, a convenient environment, motivation, while encouraging students to think out of the box and generate new and creative ideas in order to be innovative. Teachers who instruct their students to think beyond boundaries of the mind and find motivation and stimulation have found the right way to contribute for the future of mankind. An innovative society is hope for a brighter future. But in this symbiosis, students themselves have an important role in it. As summarized by Brodin (1992) the creative person is described by having these characteristics: strong motivation, endurance, intellectual curiosity, deep commitment, independence in thought and action, strong desire for self-realization, strong sense of self, strong self-confidence, openness to impressions from within and without, attracted to complexity and obscurity, high sensitivity, high capacity for emotional involvement in their investigations.

Experience-based learning is closely related to creativity because during this kind of learning students are continuously confronting with real life problems. In such situations a combination of intelligence, intuition and problem solving results into creativity and innovation. "Creative person has the ability to make alternative views of reality, has good communication between logic and imagination, has a belief in their own ideas and is emotionally involved in the work of creation". (Andersson & Rhyammer, 1998 as cited in Craft, 2001, p.8)

As maintained by Seltzer and Bentley (1999): "Learners must draw on their entire spectrum of learning experiences and apply what they have learned in new and creative ways". (p.viii). Conforming to this statement, experience-based learning except that it serves as a facility for creativity, it also serves as an environment where the synthesis of knowledge and imagination may occur. They also emphasized that the creativity cannot be learned in a vacuum. Rather than being a skill which can be performed on command, it is a form of interaction between the learner and her environment.

Experience-based learning promotes creativity of every student in almost every field, by offering the opportunity to experiment, experience and explore the world outside. Below is a

figure by Ken Robinson that shows 12 benefits of creativity involved into teaching/learning process:



Based on the Robinson's idea, the author of the picture above is Duckworth, Sylvia (2017). 12 Benefits of Creativity. Retrieved from <https://www.teachthought.com/learning/innovation-imagination-12-benefits-creativity/>

Research findings provided by Sinay, Nahornick and Graikins (2017) supports the idea that: Professional learning is crucial for any initiative to take hold as teachers must be trained in order to achieve specific goals such as increased creativity and innovation. Professional learning gives teachers and administrators new ideas and practices and helps create a sense of belonging and purpose affiliated to the topic of the professional learning. (p. 13).

So, referring to this statement, continuing learning for teachers is closely related to creativity of the students they teach. Teachers should always have to be updated with latest developments and able to manage these changes into the progression of learning itself.

As far as this idea is concerned, Sinay and collaborators refer to this statement by citing multiple research studies: "Teachers can play a significant part in nurturing students' creativity

and innovation and their importance of employing innovative teaching to increase students' creativity has been widely acknowledged in the literature". (Ayverdi, Asker, Oz Aydin, & Saritas, 2012; Begheetoo, 2005; Esquivel, 1995; NACCCE, 1999; Sharp, 2004; Simplicio, 2000).

A major question that is raised recently and is gaining attention is: Are human beings born creative genius and the education system dumb us down? Conforming to an article written by Engels (2017), NASA has developed a test that it would serve their scientific purposes to measure creativity among their scientists. Even though it turned out to be successful, there were left some questions to be answered as far as creativity was concerned. So they decided to give the same test to the children of ages 4 to 5 and they found out that 98 % of these kids fell in the genius category of imagination, because the test measured the ability to come up with new, different and innovative ideas to problems.

Engles points out that:

The scientists were astonished that they decided to make it a longitudinal study and tested the children again five years later when the same children were about ten years old, only to find out that only 30 % fell in the genius category of imagination. (paragraph 5)

Further in this article is described that the test was repeated after another 5 years and the results came to the 12%, emphasizing that in our time adult's use only 2% of creative imagination.

Pursuant to Coert Engels (2017) there are two kinds of thinking that take place in the brain, one is known as divergent-that's imagination, used for generating new possibilities and the other is called convergent-when making a judgment, decisions, you're criticizing or evaluating. This recognition leads us to the idea that the way that our educational system is regulated, the curriculum that is being implemented, is a frame that doesn't try to stimulate or encourage creativity and innovation. The possibility to recuperate the creativity of mankind is to focus more in the divergent thinking and the models of teaching to be more oriented toward modern strategies, in order to develop a generation who could contribute creatively form themselves and the future.

6.2. Innovation

Innovation and creativity have special role in experience-based learning, considering that they emphasize the importance of learning through experience and valuable results. Even though it is known the significance of innovation, there are a lot of challenges to deal with in our educational system nowadays. According to Heick (2014) there is a lot that can slow down innovation, and below are some guesses at some of those road blocks busy parents, school policies, passive meetings, scripted curricula and overworked teachers. Each of these factors has a direct impact in decelerating innovation as an essential part of learning. By busy parents, the author alludes to parents that have no time to support the innovative learning of their children that does manage to occur. They will also show difficulties to understand another way of schooling other than traditional models of learning.

School policies refer to all the organizational work of the school such as curriculum, different professional developments for teachers and conferences. According to his article, Heick (“12 Barriers to innovation in Education”, 2014, paragraph 16) thinks that “all of these help to ensure that everyone is on the same page” and that is contrary to the idea of innovative learning, where everyone should feel unique and themselves. On the other hand, passive meetings represent the regular meetings where the teachers attend and try to exchange information with each other, in order to “get on the same page”. The author doesn’t underestimate the relevance of the collaboration between teachers, and says that:

The meetings are undoubtedly necessary on some level, but with so many digital tools and social media platforms available, a huge percentage of the information exchange at meetings could be distributed elsewhere and in ways that could be curate for broader sharing, input and reference later as well. (Heick, 2014, paragraph 16)

Finally, with the term “scripted curricula”, Heick hints at curricula that try to generalize all the teachers’ work and attempts to get same results. It also restricts the opportunity of individual growth. We should tailor specific solutions to specific problems, and considering that: “Teaching is an incredibly personal act-creating a climate where learning doesn’t come as the magic result of an industrialized formula, but the carefully planned interaction between teacher, learner and content” (Heick, 2019), the attention should be focused into finding a harmonious relationship between these three factors.

According to Fullan (2007), significant educational innovation must contain three elements: Use of new revised materials (curriculum materials or technologies, use of new teaching approaches (teaching strategies or activities) and alteration of beliefs (pedagogical assumptions).

When innovation is being discussed as an issue in the educational system, Fullan thinks that to develop and stimulate it, scholars should focus into these three factors, adding the climate of trust and the opportunity to implement new ways of organizing things.

A large number of alternative ideas have been developed over the last few decades trying to find the best way to involve and promote innovation into teaching programs. Among others, a group of authors have pointed out some factors relevant for this process as well. “Other dimensions to optimize the conditions are Opening up to partnership by working with ‘external’ players such as families, communities, other education levels, cultural institutions, other schools, etc.” (Licht, Tasiopoulo & Wastiau, 2017. p.18). Play, role-play and games are considered important elements to keep the innovative spirit among learners. Even though they are underappreciated, the benefits of them have shown to be very useful for learning through experience-based learning. “Play makes a valuable contribution to the learning process throughout life and is a natural way of exploring the world”- (Branch et al. 2017, p.21).

As a conclusion, the most important advantage of this method is that it can perform very well because everyone loves playing and games. Learners will feel more relaxed and open-minded to get information and use it in real-world during the play, than just sitting and listening in a traditional set of classroom. Innovation and creativity may be product of these activities in a natural way without straining.

6.3. Art

Art is recognized as a field of a deeper understanding for people, with beautiful and a challenge sense of learning, but the question is how teachers can relate art and experience-based learning?

Curriculum is considered to be one of the most important elements in the process of teaching art. Knowing where art should be placed in the curriculum shows how much time and effort should be dedicated to this subject. Speaking about the place of art in curriculum, Donahue and Stuart (2010) say that: “Because we see the arts supporting habits of thinking that are part of thinking in other disciplines, we believe they can stand at the center of a course” (p.6).

Another statement that supports how important is the change and adaption of the curriculum comes from the book “Teaching for artistic behavior practices” where it is specified that: “Student need time to explore materials, techniques and concepts in meaningful ways, and teachers need to connect the art curriculum to the lives and interest of children. This requires rethinking the art program.” (Douglas and Jaquith, 2018, p.3). There are also other factors mentioned that indicate the final results as: accommodating different needs of all students, motivation of students, better-knowing them, managing their work and learning strategies.

Other scholars have also dealt with art and different ways of teaching it, and most of them have concluded that experience is the key to it. Even when a school learns in a traditional classroom setting, it is preferable to transform it somehow in a class where the center of attention is the student, to improvise and make the learners experience something that is intended to be learned. “Classroom need to be more student-centered, based more on inquiry, and more experientially connected to real-world issues” – pointed out Werberger (2016, p.2). Further, as Dewey (1980) elaborates the relationship between art and experience, he distinguishes the fact that almost everything has its source in experience: “The actual work of art is what the product does with and in experience”. (pg.3) Creating art requires creative and innovative minds, which can previously be stimulated by different methods, but mostly by involving experience as much as possible.

Similarly, art can empower the transformation of the classic school and bring experience-based learning in almost every subject. That can happen by activating imagination, creativity, flexibility and other attributes, in order to shape an active learner. Donahue and Stuart (2010) highlighted that : ”The integration of arts in schools can serve as the conceptual framework for thinking about learning and teaching in English, social studies, science, and math, in addition to

art” (p.5). The crucial issue here is the fact that art can serve a lot in the mission of transforming the old ways of teaching into new ones in the interest of better learning.

Another approach of EBL is teaching anything through art itself. Learners or students can do it through different kind of art. Basically learning a new language could be possible through participating in different art classes, as dancing, singing, movies, artistic writing or other forms of visual arts. This way a student can explore different fields of art and learn a foreign language in the same time, without even straining at all.

The below writing introduces a different approach of learning, and it has already got interest of a large number of teachers, educators and learners.

Arts-based learning encourages expression through art, such drama, dance, music, visual art, film, poetry writing and literature. Learners can either participate by creating ‘art’ or by engaging with the artwork of other artists. Both of these can be engaging and transformative experiences for the learners (“Art-based Learning”, n. d., para.1).

To illustrate a result, a simulation of creativity, imagination and innovation is performed when learning a language through art. Other subjects can be learned this way as well. Different intelligences can be engaged as well. The eight identified intelligences which include linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, body-kinesthetic, naturalistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal (Gardner, 1999) could be triggered through different performing arts.

CHAPTER VII: Conclusion

This chapter concentrates on the overall conclusions drawn from this study. Section 7.2 deals with the general conclusion and summarizes the main study findings. It tries to summarize them and give the ultimate idea on each of the issues that the study has been dealt with. Lastly, section 7.3 presents the recommendations for future research in this second language field.

7.1. General conclusion

Since there has been an interest in involving different approaches into teaching, and considering the fact that “what is needed now is the development of specific theories of experiential learning and instruction based upon a general philosophy of experiential education” (Wichman, 1988, p. 71), experience-based learning is an approach that can be actualized practically in schools.

This research aimed to identify benefits and challenges when a foreign language is intended to be learned by experience-based learning. Based on quantitative analyses of students’ statement, it can be concluded that EBL is a desirable way of learning and that they learn more when this approach is included into the teaching program. The results indicate that even the teachers agree that this kind of learning has brought better results when applied.

A lot of benefits have been identified, as longevity of the information gained; feeling more entertained during EBL; the increase of creativity, innovation and art. Challenges are considered as well. There are recognized some issues that have to gain attention, in order to improve and implement of EBL into the educational system, such as: low budget income, non organization of different seminars, symposiums or other forms of education for continuing learning, lack of harmonization with other countries in exchange programs.

Most of the challenges seemed to be external, as poor politics and social issues, meanwhile the internal elements are considered functional and very profitable for the learners. The relationship between the teachers and the learners is another factor that is considered very healthy and advantageous in Experience-Based Learning. Internships programs, through which students are exchanged from their home country to another, in order to gain more knowledge, experience and learn from other cultures, have been shown to be very successful as well. Experience-based learning promotes this kind of learning and encourages students to try and be involved in such experiences. Outcomes have been notable as better language skills; critical thinking has been developed; and social skills have been improved. Exposing a learner into an

environment surrounded by all the elements that are directly or indirectly part of a target language or target culture, have been shown to ease and smooth the process of learning. Experience-Based Learning does that through different techniques and this way have been producing successful learners.

Learners benefit a lot from the EBL, by being in a center of learning or the main factor in process of learning all the time. To accomplish this, teachers should be continuously prepared and attending the latest teaching trends to correspond to the needs of their students. Seminars, symposiums, workshops and various courses are constantly being organized by the Ministries of Education in most of the Balkan states in order to create and maintain a satisfactory level of teachers. This study tries to highlight the significance of Experience-Based Learning and its inclusion into the education system by identifying, analyzing and examining its benefits and challenges. With the help of various statistical operations, interviews and observation, the framework of the hypotheses has successfully been proved. Essentially, the experimental design of the study has provided evidence of constructive relationships among Experience-Based Learning, teachers and the learners into their journey toward the acquisition of a new language.

The findings from the questionnaire's study have asserted that participants immensely value the role of Experience-Based Learning into their learning as a process, since EBL has been reported to be an attractive and motivational approach of learning. By extension of this, it is crucial to incorporate the EBL in today's teaching/ learning process.

The general findings of this study have provided significant suggestions on the effectiveness of incorporating Experience-Based Learning into educational system nowadays, as in teachers' work, curriculum designers, learners and parents. Almost all the hypotheses have been proved that EBL serves to a better learning. According to the answers I got from the questionnaires, nearly all the questions has resulted with positive responses, when I tried to find out if students think that they better learn through EBL and when they are directly exposed to it. They also confirmed that they feel more motivated, creative and produced lifetime knowledge when they use Experience-Based Learning as an approach of learning.

By learning through experience students have approved that they stay motivated to explore more and more, memorize the vocabulary easily and for a short time. Students that have fulfilled the questionnaires have also confirmed that they feel more creative and innovative when they are directly exposed to the new experiences that have learning outcomes.

All the hypotheses have been proven to be valid when put into practice, based on observation and descriptions of the exposed group to EBL. Students have shown to be more vigilant, opened to challenges, creative and innovative as well. The only challenge to be dealt of on implementing the EBL into the schools and its everyday program is the budget itself. It requires a high budget to meet the needs of different activities outside the classrooms, as field trips, exchange programs, educational visits and excursions.

7.2. Recommendations for future research

This study has been focused in a quantitative assessment but future research of this subject may be investigated through qualitative design. The principal of the school “9 May” was interviewed in order to get more information of the school organization and other important data to accomplish successfully the research, but a qualitative design would be recommended where all the ESL teachers, students of all levels and ages, even the parents could be interviewed and find their perceptions of Experience-Based Learning. The findings of a qualitative design would point out an overall generalization in terms of the educational importance of EBL in ESL. Since this study did not cover the comparison with other teaching/learning approaches but just its importance, benefits and challenges, therefore investigating the effectiveness of different approaches and try those experimentally, would be very beneficial and more approximate to the final findings.

Another issue to get attention would be finding the way to change or adapt the curriculum in order to involve EBL into the teaching, as much as possible. This would require a dedication, hard work, patience and constancy, considering the autocracy of institutions when it comes to giving information.

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APENDIXES

Appendix A- Teachers' questionnaire

Dear teacher,

The following questionnaire is a part of a work that investigates the effectiveness of using experience based of leaning of ESL, as an instructional technique to enhance students' knowledge and learning motivation. The answers will provide a great help for my study's findings. Put a tick (√) in the appropriate box for your responses.

Section One: Background Information

English level of qualification

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Doctoral degree

Section Two: An Overview on EBL

Q1: How often do you use different teaching methods in the ESL classroom?

Often	Sometimes	Rarely

Q2: Why don't you use experience-based learning instructions more often in your ESL classes?

Time is not enough	Students are not motivated	Games are useless
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Q3: Do you believe that experience-based learning have an impact on the longevity of knowledge and memory?

YES

NO

Q4: What's your students' level of motivation when you use experience-based learning instruction?

Highly motivated

Fairly motivated

Q5: Do you think the internships help students to involve their-selves in a new culture and language?

Yes

Sometimes

Q6: Exposing to the target culture indicate directly on learners' point of view.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q7: Experience-based learning helps learners to sustain their learning motivation.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q8: Using EBL trigger creativity and also innovation is reproduced through EBL.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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Q9: Experience-based learning can stimulate the creativeness and encourage experimenting.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q10: Students benefit a lot from learning through experience and there are also some challenges to be dealt with learning through EBL.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Appendix B- Students' questionnaire

Put a tick (✓) in the appropriate box for your responses.

Section one: Demographic information

Gender: Male

Female

Section two: An overview of the level of learning motivation in experience-based approach.

Q1: Learning new lexical items in an experience-based learning approach motivates me to learn even more.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q2: EBL has a good impact in good memory so I get motivated by this learning way.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q3: My achievement in English is not the same if the teachers don't use experience-based learning.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q4: Experience-based learning can stimulate the creativeness and encourage experimenting of us.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q5: Experience-based learning produces lifetime knowledge of ESL.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q6: EBL keeps us motivated and generate self-control, so I have the courage to speak when the atmosphere is friendly and fun.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q7: I am confident in saying words and sentences in English language outside of the school if we have learned them by experience-based.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q8: It is not important whether I learn English language by experiments or under other circumstances.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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Q9: Learning English language by the use of experience based learning is boring.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q10: I am more interested in being graded than learning English language itself.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q11: I mainly focus on studying English for class assignments and exams.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q12: Experience based of learning doesn't make me able to succeed more.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Q13: Experience-based learning doesn't trigger creativeness or reproduce innovation.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree

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Q14: I benefit a lot from learning through experience.

Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree