Classroom-based Debate as a Teaching Strategy: Learnings in Philosophy subject among B.S. Tourism students

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ABSTRACT

The study determined the learnings of the students participating in a classroom-based debate in the subject of Philosophy. The researchers of this study employed a quantitative-qualitative research design. The respondents were eighty-three (83) fourth-year college students who were currently enrolled at the College of Business taking up Bachelor of Science in Tourism (BST). The results revealed that: (1) the respondents agreed that classroom-based debate was an opportunity to learn more in the Philosophy subject; (2) the respondents confirmed that classroom-based debate was an enjoyable strategy through their interaction with each other as the activity occurred (3) the respondents shared that engaging in this activity, they learned: the value of patience, standing or fighting for their beliefs, improved their self-confidence, teamwork, cooperation, substantial information, trust, self-preparation, critical thinking logical reasoning, listen carefully, and team-effort. Furthermore, the respondents shared that through the classroom-based debate, they learned to: organize their thoughts, respect others' opinions, decisions, and principles. They also learned to think fast and handle their emotions, learned to be attentive, and stand for what is right and just.

Keywords: classroom-based debate, learning, BS Tourism Students, and Philosophy subject

Introduction

The quality of education depends on several factors such as training of the teachers and the teachers themselves (Tolentino & Bajet, and Redoblo, 2015). The teacher is the most important factor in the successful teaching and performance of the students. The researchers underscored that the teaching process and learning strategy influenced the teacher's very high level of teaching behavior.

The teachers should see that the students who come to the classroom have different sets of developed intelligence. With this perspective of teaching, teachers should have varying strategies and styles to attract the interest of the students. Teachers should show their ability to assist in understanding the subject and help them discover their potentials. They should prepare student-centered activities that cater to the uniqueness and diversities of students to lead them to think critically and creatively relate to the classroom instructions towards the attainment of their tasks, experiences, and learnings. With this premise, the researchers believed that debate as a teaching strategy can be a tool to achieve the maximum learning potential of the students.

Debate according to studies of Goodwin (2003), Hajhashemi (2012), Seto & Hicks, (2016) is an activity that develops public speaking skills, critical thinking, research, and teamwork skills. It provides a pedagogical structure for the oral component of curricula and gives the opportunity to point out issues, resolve issues, and articulate points of view. In teaching, a debate is an activity to enhance discipline and foster divergent perspectives in the course/topics. Teaching experiences, as well as empirical research outputs, affirm that debate helps students develop content mastery, as well as argumentation and communication skills. This requires the students to contribute and bring forward the different views towards rational arguments, and force the students to know what they are talking about. It teaches them not to be narrow-minded and hear things out but to read, research, and reason out logically and rationally. In connection with this, a debate is used by the teachers to unveil how the strategy is utilized to determine the students' learnings and enhanced these capabilities towards the attainment of educational goals, thus developing them to become well-rounded, open-minded, critically-minded professionals in their different fields of work.

Hajhashemi (2012) stressed that activities towards the learning of students could help the teachers connect both teaching strategy and students' talents and capabilities. Such activities also provide the students with the best instructional strategy. Learning activities like debate, role-playing, simulation, and others increase the interest of the students in changing the focus from a teacher-centered classroom to a learner-centered classroom. It is also the stage of shifting from the product-oriented to the process-oriented of learning. In this regard, the learners are considered active participants. The effects of teaching are partly dependent on what they know such as prior knowledge, what they think about during the learning, and their active cognitive processing. The learning strategies that an individual learner applies during the learning process

and how the learner processes, new information can have an impact on their learning. In teaching, the learning strategies are important towards behaviors or actions which the learners use to achieve successful learning. Self-directed and enjoyable classroom activities and procedures give more exposure to students and thus maximize their learning. Thus, this research was conceived to determine the role of classroom-based debate towards self-directed learning and as an enjoyable classroom activity.

Statement of the Problem

This study determined the learnings of the BS Tourism students in Philosophy through the use of classroom-based debate towards self-directed learning among BS Tourism students at JBLFMU-Molo.

    (1) What is the learning in Philosophy through the use of classroom-based debate among BS Tourism students at BJLFMU-Molo as an entire group and when they were grouped according to section?

    (2) Is there a significant relationship in learning Philosophy through the use of classroom-based debate among BS Tourism students at BJLFMU-Molo when they were grouped according to section?

    (3) What are the BST students' learnings in the use of CBD as a teaching strategy in their learning of Philosophy?

The hypothesis of the Study

The hypothesis of the present study was stated below:
Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship in the learning of Philosophy through the use of classroom-based debate among BS Tourism students at BJLFMU-Molo when they were grouped according to section.

Conceptual Framework

To understand the present study, the conceptual framework is presented below showing the relationship of Classroom-Based Debate as influenced by student-related factors such as section.
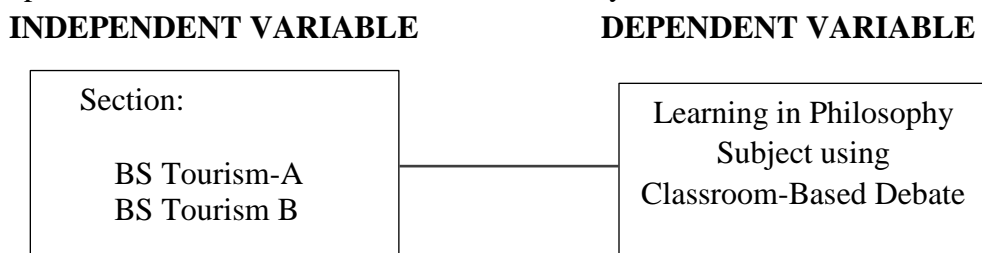
INDEPENDENT VARIABLE   **DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

Section: BS Tourism-A BS Tourism B	Learning in Philosophy Subject using Classroom-Based Debate

Figure 1: Learning in Philosophy subject using classroom-based debate as influenced by section.

Significance of the Study

The ability to effectively negotiate with other people is an important skill regardless of any situation. The researchers believe that teachers can explore some possibilities to make teaching and learning more enjoyable and exciting to make students more empowered to communicate effectively.

Teachers, students, and other practitioners will see the need to explore strategies in teaching content areas and how students take an active role in developing and exploring their thought processes and develop rational and logical ideas in various issues that may relevant to them.

The debate as a Teaching Strategy

The teaching and learning process has evolved through the years. Most often, strategies that engage students' higher-order thinking skills are encouraged. The use of debate is believed to promote critical thinking skills among the students. Given this strategy, teachers can provide students the opportunity to take responsibility for their learning. Debates, according to Snider & Schnurer (2002), foster students' active learning by giving them the responsibility to understand course content to transform their perspective from passive to active. Debates are defined in several ways. Debates can also be forms of competition or a challenge between two opposing teams. The debate can also be a potential strategy to motivate learners and provide them a chance to present facts logically and systematically.

As an educational strategy, debate fosters clinical reasoning and thinking skills as well as a heightened awareness of attitudes, values, and beliefs. With this, students' critical thinking processes are improved because they are given the chance to analyze, evaluate, and make informed decisions and also propose logical solutions to issues given to them. As a strategy, a debate is different from lectures where students are passive absorbers of knowledge. This strategy likewise exposes students to take an issue from two differing viewpoints. The structure of the debate includes the affirmative and the negative sides, which predisposes the discussion into two opposing positions on a particular subject. In class, debates cultivate the engagement of students, giving them the responsibility to critically examine issues and defend their side using evidenced-based arguments.

Research Method

The researchers utilized the classroom-based debate as a teaching strategy to the BS Tourism students of JBLFMU-Molo during the current semester. The structure of the debate was taught first so that the students will be familiar with the procedures done. The BST students were divided into two groups, Sections A and Section B.

Within the group, the students were divided into two groups with about 10-12 students. They each worked on a debating topic on the subject philosophy provided by the teacher. They had to organize themselves as debaters, researchers, and strategists who would plan the right strategy to approach the topic of the debate. Then, the debate was conducted in the different classes of the researchers. After which, the questionnaire was administered after the debate sessions when the students gathered at a particular venue. The objective of this research was explained to them specifically on the learnings they get in the use of CBD. They were requested to give honest answers. There were five (5) questions asking them about their learnings in Philosophy. There were three (3) open-ended questions to let them explain the kind of learnings they get from the use of CBD.

The statistical tools used in determining the respondents' responses were the mean and the standard deviation. To generate their learnings, their responses to the open-ended questions were transcribed and coded for similarities. In a way, the researchers resorted to qualitative inquiry aside from surveys. Qualitative inquiry is a method that can be insightfully used to explore people's motivations, values systems, histories, and, from their perspectives, explanations of causality in their lives (Maxwell, 2013; Saldaňa, 2015). It is a cyclical process, this process allows researchers to enable to recount the past while moving forward. This is retrieving the past to put present conditions into context and plan for future endeavors.

Qualitative data is extremely varied. It includes any information that can be captured that is not numerical. In this investigation, narrative descriptions and interviews were utilized. This included individual interviews (e.g., one-on-one). The data were recorded utilizing audio recording and written notes. In this interview, the researchers requested the respondents to be open and share what they have observed and noticed. The qualitative data were the comments and remarks of the respondents regarding their learnings from the activity, which is "Classroom-Based Debate" as a teaching strategy employed by the teacher in teaching Philosophy.

Data-Gathering Instrument
The data-gathering instrument was a questionnaire to determine the BS Tourism students' learning in philosophy. The questionnaire contains questions that were formulated to address the following questions to be answered by the study:

(1) What is the learning in Philosophy among BS Tourism students through the use of classroom-based debate as an entire group and when they are grouped as to section?
(2) Is there a significant relationship in learning Philosophy among BS Tourism students in the use of classroom-based debate as an entire group and when they are grouped as to section?

Then, BS Tourism students' responses to the open-ended questions were captured to further elaborate their learnings while participating in the classroom-based debate as a strategy in the subject of Philosophy. The data-gathering instrument was reviewed and evaluated by the experts

in research before the final administration to the respondents. These were then distributed by the researchers after the actual activity on the debate.

Respondents of the Study

The respondents of the present study were the eighty-three (83) fourth-year BS Tourism students who were currently enrolled at the College of Business of John B. Lacson Foundation Maritime University (JBLFMU)-Molo, Iloilo City, Philippines. They were classified according to their sections: Section BST 4-A had 44 (53%) and Section BST 4-B had 39 (47%). The distribution of respondents was shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents

Category	F	%
A. Entire Group	83	100
B. Section		
BST 4-A	44	53
BST 4-B	39	47

To determine learning in Philosophy among BS Tourism students through the use of classroom-based debate, mean, and standard deviation was utilized. The following scale of means and their corresponding descriptions were used.

Scale	Description
3.41 – 4.00	Very High
2.81 – 3.40	High
2.21 – 2.80	Average
1.61 – 2.20	Low
1.00 - 1.60	Very Low

To determine the significant differences in the BS Tourism students' learning in Philosophy in their engagement in classroom-based debate, the researchers employed Chi-square as a statistical tool.

Results and Discussion

BST Students Learning in Philosophy using Classroom-Based Debate as a Teaching Strategy

Based on the results of the study, as an entire group, BS Tourism students' learning in Philosophy was very high with a mean of 3.42; SD = .85. Table 2 reflects the data. BS Tourism students from both sections got very high in their learning of Philosophy with the use of classroom-based debate as a strategy used in the teaching of the subject (Table 2).

Table 2: BS Tourism Students' Learning in Philosophy through the Use of Classroom-Based Debate

	Mean	N	SD	Description
A. Entire Group	3.42	83	.85	Very High
B. Section				
Section A	3.45	44	.76	Very High
Section B	3.41	39	.65	Very High

Legend: 1-1.6 - Very Low   1.61 – 2.2 - Low 2.21 – 2.8 – Average 2.81 – 3.4 – High   3.41 – 4 – Very High

Furthermore, the students were asked whether their engagement in the classroom-based debate was beneficial to them. The majority of the BS Tourism students who were in Section A indicated that their engagement in classroom-based debate as a teaching strategy in teaching the Philosophy subject was beneficial. BS Tourism students from Section B also revealed that their engagement in debate as a classroom activity helped them in learning the subject as well as boost their self-confidence.

Relationship in BST Student's Learning in Philosophy when they were grouped as to Section using Classroom-Based Debate (CBD)

Using Pearson's r coefficient of relationship, the results in Table 3 indicate that there was no significant relationship in the students' learning in philosophy in the use of classroom-based debate (CBD) when they were grouped according to section as indicated by the value of their Pearson's r coefficient of the relationship of .819 with a degree of freedom of 1. This means that the selection and/or grouping did not influence BST students' learning in the use of CBD in the teaching of the subject Philosophy. Although, both BS Tourism A and B students considered CBD as an opportunity to maximize learning in the subject of Philosophy, their learning in Philosophy in the use of CBD was not related when they were grouped as to section (Table 3).

Table 3: Relationship between BST Students' Learning in Philosophy when they Grouped as to Section

Section		Total	df	Sig
BST-A	BST-B			
44	39	83	1	.819

Learnings of the Respondents in the Use of Classroom-Based Debate as a Teaching Strategy

The respondents shared with the researchers their learnings during the Classroom-Based Debate as a teaching strategy in the teaching of Philosophy subject. The respondents from the BST 4-A shared that through this activity, they learned the "value of patience," and "to stand or fight for their beliefs." This led the students to express their feelings in their search for the truth. By presenting their beliefs and topics into the arguments, they do this with confidence and pride and this made them critical thinkers. The students also learned self-confidence, teamwork,

cooperation, substantial information, trust, self-preparation, critical thinking, logical reasoning, listening carefully, and teamwork. The studies according to Goodwin (2003), Hajhashemi (2012), and Seto and Hicks (2016) that debate is an activity to develop public speaking skills, critical thinking skills, research skills, and teamwork skills support these results. It also provides an opportunity to point out issues, resolve them, and articulate points of view. The results of this study are connected to their teaching because the debate is an activity to enhance discipline and fostering divergent perspectives in the course topics. The results affirm that debate helps students develop content mastery, as well as argumentation, and communication skills. This requires the students to contribute and bring forward the different views to form rational arguments and force the students to know what they are talking about. The students are not to be narrow-minded and hear things out but to read, research, and reason out logically, and rationally as mentioned by Tolentino and Bajet Paz (2015) and Redoblo (2015). Moreover, respondents from the BST 4-B agreed that through this classroom-based debate, they learned to "organize their thoughts," "respect others' opinions, decisions, and principles," "they learned to think fast and handle emotions," "learn to be attentive, and stand for what is right and just." Analyzing the views and learnings of the respondents from the two sections, they shared that they learned to "stand for individual's belief, stand for what is right and just" emerged as common responses. These learnings are in the same vein as the study of Hajhashemi (2012) stating that this activity could help teachers to connect both teaching strategy and students' talents and capabilities. This also provided the students with the best instructional strategy. The learning activities taken from debate could increase the interest of the students in changing the focus from a teacher-centered classroom to a learner-centered classroom. The activity in a debate is also shifting from the product-oriented to the process-oriented kind of learning. The students are considered active participants in the teaching-learning process. The effects of teaching are partly dependent on what students know such as their prior knowledge, what they think about during the learning and their active cognitive processing. This learning strategy would lead an individual to apply the learning process and how the learner processes the new information. This teaching strategy brings the learners to achieve successful learning, including self-directed, and enjoyable classroom activities.

To understand the respondents' learnings, Figure 1 shows the qualitative remarks and views derived from students' responses to the open-ended questions.
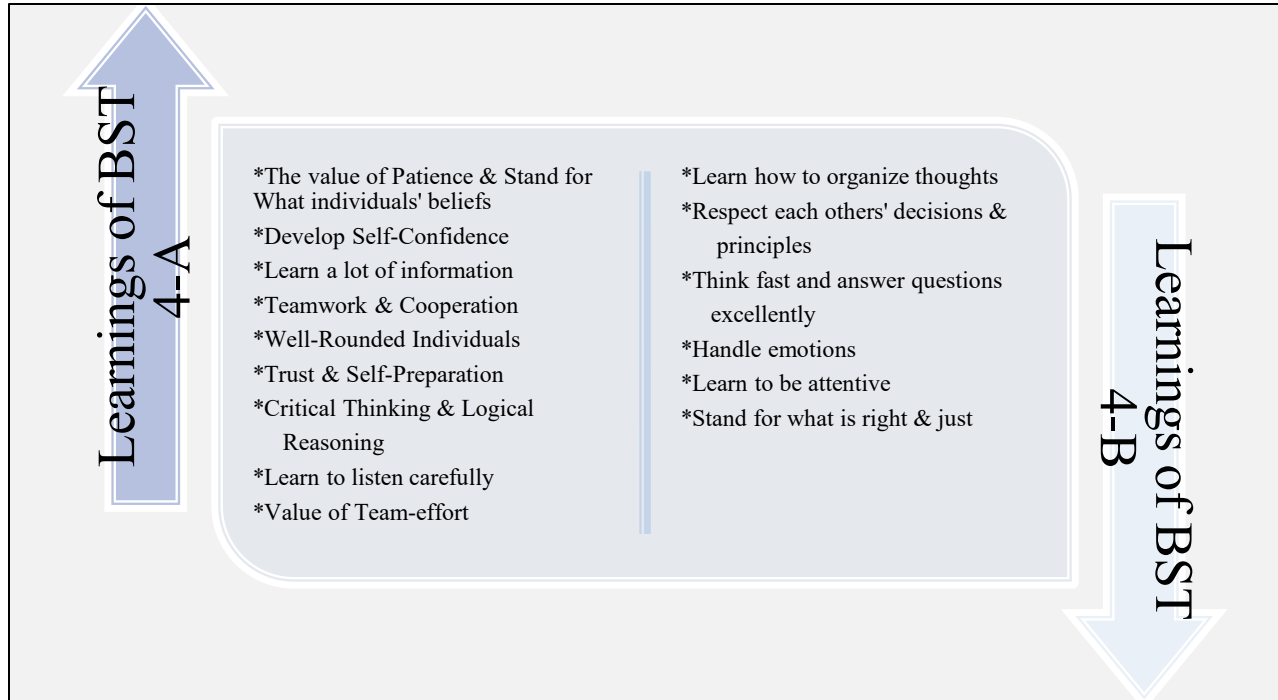
Figure 1: Learnings of the Respondents from Classroom-Based Debate as a Teaching Strategy

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the present study, the following conclusions were drawn:

(1) BS Tourism students' very high level of learning in the use of CBD as a teaching strategy in the teaching of philosophy proves that debate remains to be an effective strategy that can be used by the teachers not only those handling philosophy but other subjects as well.

(2) Grouping of students is not related to learning specifically in Philosophy.

(3) BS Tourism students shared that through classroom-based debate, they learned to "organize their thoughts," "respect others' opinions, decisions, and principles," "think fast and handle emotions," "be attentive, stand for what is right and just, " and "stand for their individual belief."

Implications of the Study

The results of the present study as indicated by the "very high level of learning in the use of CBD as a teaching strategy in the teaching of philosophy can be used as a model for an interactive teaching strategy not only in the teaching of Philosophy but should be utilized in the majority of the general and major subjects in the course of BS Tourism. It means that allowing the students to select their groupings is a manifestation of their freedom in learning in whatever type of subjects. The students' sharing and testimonies through classroom-based debate proved that learning takes place if the students are well-organized, have the freedom to express their

ideas, developed critical thinking, and have strong individual beliefs. This study can serve as baseline data for determining students' learning and instructors' initiative for making classroom activities active and innovative.

Recommendations

After analyzing the results and conclusions of this study, the researchers would like to suggest the following:

1) The administration shall encourage the instructors to be innovative and creative in dealing with their students to make the teaching and learning enjoyable and fulfilling. The subject area heads, program heads, and deans shall conduct and monitor how classes are conducted to further ensure that classroom-based activities are innovative and learning-centered.

2) Teachers shall continue to explore appropriate teaching strategies that would develop the students' holistic development. They shall engage in the training, seminars, and workshops that deal with the different styles and strategies in teaching that would lead to the students' cognitive-thinking development, logical analysis, and critical decision.

3) The researchers suggest conducting parallel studies to determine other teaching strategies coherent in their influence on the learning development of the students. Studies on teaching strategies and methods, not only using debate, but also the use of ICT among the teachers in the college. These studies will generate the overall classroom-based learning activities of the teachers in dealing with their students in the College of Business and College of Engineering at John B. Lacson Foundation Maritime University (JBLFMU)-Molo to maintain the status of the maritime university as the top in the Philippines.

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