بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

The Impact of Learning Centers on L2 Learners' Achievement in the Acquisition of English Tense System

أثر مراكز التعلم على اكتساب متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية لنظام صيغ الأفعال باللغة الإنجليزية

A Thesis Written By:

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Thesis Advisor: Dr. Azim Assaf

Birzeit University-Palestine

2010

BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY

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Dedication...

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To my father 'Mahmoud Salameh', the great instructor, whose incredible words are "Start with the learner from where he is, and then take him to wherever you want"...

To my mother, the most caring, loving person on earth, and the best supporter, since she was always there for me and my children...

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To Mustafa and "Susu"...they are my inspiration, and they have been my constant companions, and a source of delight and irritation...

Finally, I dedicate this thesis to my beloved Jerusalem, Palestine...

Rafeef Arna'out

2010

ENGLISH ABSTRACT

This study attempts to explore the role of learning center-based activities in teaching EFL in a Palestinian context. This was approached through specific examination of L2 students' achievement at acquiring the English tense system. Moreover, Students' attitudes towards the use of such centers in learning were also investigated.

This is a Quasi- experimental study, which took place in the Kufur Aqab Boys' School during the first and second semesters of the academic year 2009/2010. This study answers the following questions: 1. What is the role of learning centers in L2 learners' achievement in acquiring the English tense system? 2. How do learning centers help learners deal with the complexity of the tense system? 3. What are the learners' attitudes towards using learning centers in learning the English tense system? To answer these questions it is hypothesized that:

1. There is no significant difference at the level of $\alpha \leq 0.05$ on the means of post-achievement test between the control group and the experimental group.

Several data collection techniques were used to obtain the data; pre-and post- tests, a questionnaire, portfolios, and progress checklists. A Statistical Package for the Social Sciences program (SPSS) and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The questions of this study were answered by comparing the results of the pre and post-tests for both groups, reviewing students' portfolios and researcher's checklists, and analyzing learners' responses to the questionnaire to determine their attitudes.

The results of this study reject the hypothesis which is: There is no significant difference at the level of $\alpha \leq 0.05$ on the means of post-achievement test between the control group and the experimental group. The results of this study indicate that the experimental group has significantly outperformed the control group in the acquisition of the L2 English tense system. This is mainly attributed to the use of learning centers as a teaching technique. Furthermore, students have shown positive attitudes towards the use of these centers in learning English tense system.

ملخص الدراسة

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تقصي أثر استخدام مراكز التعلم كإستراتيجية تعليمية على تحصيل متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية في نظام صيغ أفعال اللغة الإنجليزية، كما سعت للكشف عن إتجاهاتهم نحو استخدام هذه المراكز في تعليم الصيغ المذكورة.

تم استخدام المنهج شبه التجريبي، و قد تمت هذه الدراسة في مدرسة كفر عقب الرسمية في العام الدراسي 2009/2010. وقد سعت هذه الدراسة للإجابة عن الأسئلة التالية: ما هو دور مراكز التعلم في تحصيل متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة ثانية في نظام صيغ أفعال اللغة الإنجليزية؟ كيف تساعد مراكز التعلم متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في التغلب على صعوبة نظام الأفعال فيها ؟ ما هي اتجاهات الطلبة نحو استخدام مراكز التعلم في تعلم نظام صيغ الأفعال؟

ولتحقيق أهداف الدراسة، تم تصميم الأدوات التالية: الامتحان التحصيلي، استبانة اتجاهات الطلبة، استبانة ملاحظة ومراقبة عمل المجموعات و ملفات عمل الطلاب. وأشارت النتائج بعد جمع وتحليل البيانات الكمية على وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى دلالة ($α ≤ 0.05$) في الاختبار البعدي بين المجموعة الضابطة والمجموعة التجريبية يعود لاستخدام مراكز التعلم وهذه الفروق دالة لصالح المجموعة التجريبية. أما فيما يخص اتجاهات الطلبة فقد دلت النتائج على وجود اتجاهات ايجابية لدى الطلبة نحو استخدام مراكز التعلم في تعليم نظام صيغ الأفعال. كما دلت نتائج التحليل الكيفي على أن مراكز التعلم تساعد الطلاب في تعلم نظام صيغ الأفعال.

Chapter One

Chapter One

1. The Research Problem

1.1 Introduction

We live in a highly sophisticated world mainly characterized by an extensive use of advanced technologies such as computers, the internet and a host of communication devices. Consequently, people in general, and pupils in particular, are frequently exposed to massive amounts of information for which English is the most important means of communication. In Palestinian schools, English is considered as the primary foreign language for native speakers of Arabic. Yet, Palestinian teachers of English do not possess the competence of English native speakers.

Fortunately, Palestinian educators, university instructors and students these days, as observed by the researcher as a teacher and as a university student, are paying increasing attention to English. This has also led to enhancing the teaching and learning of English in Palestine.

In order for learners to develop their mastery of English language, it is essential that effective means of teaching, learning and participation be used. Petty (2004) asserts that learning is an active process. Students should structure and organize information, so that this information can pass into long-term memory, and learners can use it in real life. He adds that this process can be enhanced by doing rather than mere listening. According to Snow (1996), students learn language effectively when they actively engage in communication activities rather than passively accept what

teachers say. Pica (2005) also stresses that language classes are becoming centers for purposeful communication and meaningful exchange, instead of being a formal setting for instruction and practice. Hence, a major task of English as Foreign Language (EFL) teachers is to develop their students' communicative competence[1].

1.2 Problem Identification

For many years, classroom practices have been mainly dominated by teacher-centered approaches. Consequently, the focus was on the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the learner, which greatly enhanced passive learning. Nowadays, diversified needs of student population together with a host of other factors such as school violence, educational reforms and technology advances demand that educators, researchers and teachers move towards more learner-centered practices (Brown, K. 2003). To ensure student success in learning, teachers should pay close attention to creating learner-centered environments in their classrooms (David Brown, 2003).

The findings of a survey data from 2,200 middle school students from diverse communities across the United States show that there are many motivational benefits (such as, positive attitudes towards learning, more learners' self esteem and more positive relations with other learners) of learner-centered practices for young adolescents (Meece, 2003). The participants in this study reported more positive forms of motivation and greater academic engagement when they perceived that their

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[1] Communicative competence as defined by Bagarić and Djigunović (2007) is the ability to use the language effectively for communication. Gaining such competence involves acquiring both sociolinguistic and linguistic knowledge (in other words, developing the ability to use the language accurately, appropriately, and effectively).

teachers were using learner-centered practices that involve thoughtful consideration from teachers , establishing higher order thinking strategies which requires using the stored knowledge (like compare and contrast, write an ending, talk about their own views), honoring and respecting students' voices and opinions, and adapting instruction to individual needs and respect diverse learners' needs. Another notable study (Denise and Kathryn, 2003) shows that children in the elementary grades notices and advocate learner-centered practices, particularly those focused around children desires for teacher care and support, tasks that promote new learning and increased competence and options to participate in various activities with peers. Furthermore, Denise and Kathryn (2003) also mention that some research began to link between young children's preference for more learner centered practices and important schooling outcomes such as motivation, self perceived competence and achievement.

The views advocated by Brown and others (Banssberg, 2003; Breznak & Scott, 2003; King-Sears, 2005, 2007; Rayan &Campa, 2000; Pica, 2005; Tran, 2007) have led to the development of learning centers as a new technique for learning. As defined by McCarthy (1977), learning centers are "special areas designed for individual and small-group learning experiences. They are equipped with a variety of high interest materials and may be set up in classrooms corners, cloakrooms, halls or wherever space is available (p.292)".

Shifts towards student-centered learning environments have created challenges for foreign language teachers by increasing their responsibilities and roles towards their students (Geeslin, 2003).

According to the APA Learner-Centered Psychological Principles, principle six[2] considers it the teachers' responsibility to create learning environments and learning opportunities for their students. They should have students working in small groups, often using a "Center Approach". This requires learners to move towards learning centers or stations where they may work with learning activities (APA Task force, 1993).

In teaching grammar by focusing on the condition referred to above, Breznak & Scott (2003) noticed that students learn best when they work with their peers. They enjoy working in small groups; teaching to someone else, and learning in a safe environment unworried about criticism. They are also free to move around, a situation appreciated mainly by kinesthetic learners[3]. Henceforth, learning centers are vital in creating such an environment which, in turn, renders more active learners, and a highly dynamic learning process.

Recognizing such a vital contribution to the learning process, the researcher in this study focuses on learning centers as an essential technique for L2 mastery. More

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[2] Principle six: Context of learning

Learning is influenced by environmental factors, including culture, technology, and instructional practices. Learning does not occur in a vacuum. Teachers have a major interactive role with both the learner and the learning environment. Cultural or group influences on students can impact many educationally relevant variables, such as motivation, orientation toward learning, and ways of thinking. Technologies and instructional practices must be appropriate for learners' level of prior knowledge, cognitive abilities, and their learning and thinking strategies. The classroom environment, particularly the degree to which it is nurturing or not, can also have significant impact on student learning (APA Task Force, 1993).

[3] A type of learner that attains information well by carrying out a physical activity instead of just hearing out a lecture, reading a book, or watching a show. They learn best through hands-on activity, doing experiments, and acting things out. They consider doing a presentation rather than writing papers (http://wiki.answers.com).

specifically, she investigates their role in the L2 learners' acquisition of the English tense system.

1.3 Statement of the problem

This study attempts to explore the role of learning centers-based activities in teaching EFL in the Palestinian context. This is approached through specifically examining L2 students' achievement in acquiring the English tense system. Students' attitudes towards the use of such centers in learning are also investigated.

1.4 The significance of the study

1. Dewy (1916) points out that communication is a process of sharing experiences till it becomes a possession. In learning centers, students share experiences; they collaborate with each other, with relatively low affective filter[4]. These centers are one way to achieve communication, collaboration and cooperation in schools contributing, in effect, to creating a socially healthy community.

2. Students differ in their acquisition of new skills. In other words, their skill levels vary and their practice opportunities fluctuate. Learning centers expose learners to varied tasks and activities in an attempt to meet their diversified learning needs. They are one of the techniques that benefit both students and teachers (King-Sears, 2005, 2007).

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[4] According to Johnson (2001) affect is considered as a 'filter' through which foreign language input has to pass before it is acquired. Learner with positive feeling is more open to input; her filter is clean and language passes easily through it. A learner with negative feelings is more closed to input; her filter is clogged, and little gets through.

3. Today, educators are for more active learning. Learners should take an active role in their learning as they work together in groups, collaborating on projects, exchanging ideas and practicing social skills, in the process. They should also be given the chance to think and make decisions. Language teachers have become teachers of language learners in meeting their students' social, academic and work-related needs (Pica, 2005).

4. Using a simple and straightforward approach such as learning centers to teach grammar in groups is bound to make students more responsible for their own learning rather than totally relying on their teachers (Breznak & Scott, 2003). As such, learning centers will function as a new strategy for grammar delivery creating in the process an interactive learning environment.

5. This study will contribute to the literature on learning centers, particularly in the Palestinian context. It will also draw attention to their role in teaching English structures such as the English tense system.

6. The findings of this study will hopefully be useful for local and international teachers of English in using learning centers as a new approach in teaching a complex structure such as the English tense system.

1.5 Research Questions

In light of the above, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What is the role of learning centers in L2 learners' achievement in acquiring the English tense system?

2. How do learning centers help learners deal with the complexity of the tense system?

3. What are the learners' attitudes towards using learning centers in learning the English tense system?

1.6 Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that there is no significant difference at the level of $\alpha \leq 0.05$ on the means of post-achievement test between the control group and the experimental group.

1.7 Definition of Terms

Learning Centers:

They are defined by McCarthy (1977) as "special areas designed for individual and small-group learning experiences. They are equipped with a variety of high interest materials and may be set up in classrooms corners, cloakrooms, halls or wherever space is available" (p.292).

Second/Foreign Language Acquisition[5]:

Larson-Freeman & Long (1994) define second/Foreign language acquisition as "the acquisition of any language(s) other than one's native language"(p.7).

The Tense System:

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[5] Some SLA studies distinguish between 'second' and 'foreign' language acquisition, and also differentiate 'acquisition' from 'learning'. Such a distinction will not be taken into account in this study.

Cowan (2008) defines the tense system as "a system of tenses used in any particular language, in English the tense in verbs expresses the time that an action occurs in relation to the moment of speaking" (p.350).

Academic Achievement:

It is defined by Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain (2005) as "the rate of learning over specific time period" (p.422).

Attitude:

In this study, attitude is defined as "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor" (Eagly and Chaiken 1993, p.1.) Although some attitudes are more resistant to change than others, the general view is that attitudes are subject to change (Eagly and Chaiken).

Chapter Two

Chapter Two

2. Literature Review

This chapter identifies the theoretical framework for this study, examining, as well, the learning centers pedagogy and previous studies in terms of four important dimensions:

Learner-centered Education,

Rationale for Teaching and Learning English Grammar,

Learning Centers in Different Domains, and

Teaching Small Groups.

In this study, despite the fact that there is a limited literature available about learning centers in the Palestinian context and in the context of language learning and teaching, the researcher has reviewed the previous dimensions with a focus on Foreign language learning and teaching.

2.1 Theoretical framework

The Constructivist and Humanistic frameworks form the underlying principles for this study. They are both manifested and embodied in the use of learning centers for teaching and learning.

Petty (2004) points out that learning is an active "meaning-making" process. Information will only stay in the long-term memory if it is reused or recalled. What governs the learners' ability to recall what they have learned is "frequency and recency"[6]. According to this view, Constructivism claims that learning occurs when learners construct their own meaning on the basis of prior learning and instructional experiences (Petty). It, further, claims that learning occurs through trial and error when it is actively practiced by students through planned activities which require them to check for their own and others' learning. Harris and Graham (1994) also mention that actual understanding can take place only when children participate fully in their own learning. This will direct them into deeper and richer understanding and use of knowledge, as a result they will promote access to this knowledge and will be able to apply what they have learned.

Therefore, teaching is just a means to an end. What learners do is more important than what teachers do. Blyth (1997) points out that teachers should

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[6] Frequency and recency principles state that those things most often repeated and most recently learned are best remembered. Therefore important point should be, practiced, repeated, restated and reemphasized to help the students remember them (Hintzman,2010).

shift their focus from teaching to learning. Tasks should be enjoyable and should lead to more cognitive engagement, participation, concentration and persistence. The Educational approaches based on constructivist roots contain "whole language[7], cognitive strategies instruction, cognitively guided instruction, scaffolded instruction, literacy-based instruction, directed discovery and many more" (Harris & Graham, 1994, p. 233).

This view of constructivism as a powerful model for explaining how knowledge is produced and how students learn is advocated by many educators including Blyth, 1997; De berg, 2006; Gorden, 2008; Graffam, 2003; Henry, 2002; Lainema, 2009; Mercer, Jordan and Miller, 1994; Rodriguez and Berryman, 2002; Schur, Skuy, Zietsman & Fridjohn, 2002; Sharon & Nimala, 2008; Terhart, 2003; and Windschitl, 2002.

Gorden (2008) asserts that constructivist teaching practices are becoming more widespread in teacher education programs. Although these programs generally vary in ways in which they relate constructivist models of learning yet constructivism is a controlling learning or meaning-making theory.

Lainema (2009) discusses how the Constructivism learning paradigm enlarges our recognition of the learning processes that take place in simulation gaming instruction. It enables us to understand how game participants are meaning makers and knowledge constructors. It also emphasizes the group

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[7] It describes a literacy philosophy which emphasizes that children should focus on meaning and strategy instruction. It is often contrasted with phonics-based methods of teaching reading and writing which emphasize instruction for decoding and spelling(Bergeron, 1990).

environment because games are social systems and they include participants, rules and resources. Furthermore, the learner is building on his internal representation of knowledge and this knowledge is always open to change. Constructivism principles can be applied when designing computer–based instructions which are used as a tool to help learners to think as well as they can be applied when designing learning centers-based activities.

Henry (2002) mentions that bringing constructivism into the classroom is an effective way to add vigor and interest to traditional history courses. It helps the instructor to cover material and encourages historical thinking in his students. He views constructivism as an important tool in strengthening classroom instruction at the postsecondary school level.

Graffam (2003) states that using constructivist practices to introduce the teaching for understanding framework clarifies the concept of understanding itself. This introduction becomes a tool for learning through which the teacher's role is transformed into a participating voice, not a controlling voice.

Blyth (1997) demonstrates how a constructivist approach to teacher education helps inexperienced teachers understand the learning and teaching of aspect, a core grammatical concept. This doesn't mean that teacher education instructors should teach teachers how to teach aspect but rather to facilitate and guide inexperienced teachers' own construction of teaching practices and continuously reflect on them. To teach aspect teachers must self-consciously experience narration in order to understand aspect as a formal system and as a process for

creating meaning. Teacher education programs should provide activities in which teachers perceive real or imagined events and then organize perceptions into a coherent recounting of events, in this way teachers construct a deeper awareness of the form /meaning aspectual correlations. Moreover, he argues that a constructivist approach to teacher education facilitates the development of innovative grammar pedagogy by challenging teachers' traditional beliefs about the nature of grammar.

Another view of learning is put forward by the humanistic approach which asserts that society, schools and colleges exist to meet the individual learner needs. Learning is easiest, most effective and most meaningful when it takes place in a non-threatening situation (Petty, 2004). Wang (2005) also adds that Humanism focuses on the importance of the learner's inner world and places the individual's thoughts, feelings and emotions at the head of all human developments.

The humanistic approach emphasizes humanism as the most significant element in the language teaching process. Longman's Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1989) defines the "Humanistic Approach" in language teaching as a term sometimes used for methods in which the following principles are considered important. These principles include the development of human values, the growth in self-awareness and in the understanding of others, the sensitivity to human feelings and emotions, and the active student involvement in learning. Reflecting on a humanistic approach to teaching and learning, Bala (2007) asserts

that the core objective of learning that teaching practices should continue to be rooted in is the enrichment and the improvement of the learner. From that perspective, the ultimate objective for a teacher is to give up authority in order to become a facilitator for empowered learning. Wang (2005) also points out that in light of the humanistic approach, language teaching and learning i.e. what to learn and how to learn is influenced by the cognitive motivation, which is determined by individuals' affect. So in language teaching, successful teachers should always bear in mind the importance of affective factors giving priority to students.

Winfred and Randall (1987) believe that "a humanistic approach to language study should recognize the necessity of learning a language in its social and cultural contexts, encompassing the ecology and the material, social, religious and linguistic cultures of the language studied" (p. 186). Furthermore Barghouthi (2008) argues that "national and culturally-based contextualized knowledge" (p. 35) should be included in teaching English as a foreign language. She adds that native culture is important because it establishes people's context of behavior and identity. In addition, their thinking, perspectives, background knowledge, cognition, conscious and social awareness are formed by their own culture. Moreover she clearly emphasizes that the success of teaching and learning processes only occurs when taking into consideration learners' own social and cultural context.

Hence, following the humanistic approach in its focus on communication, language teaching in such situations would not only reinforce mastery of tense structure but it would also improve learners' overall communicative proficiency.

Another approach claims that learners' overall communicative proficiency is improved through Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which views language as a system for expressing meaning; its function is to allow interaction and communication. Language structures reflect its functional and communicative uses. Moreover, the primary units of language are categories of functional and communicative meaning (Richards & Rodgers, 2002).

According to Richards (2006) CLT can be viewed as describing a set of core principles about language learning and teaching assumptions. There are several ways to practice them and they are included in different aspects of the teaching and learning processes. Dunan (1991) adds that the Communicative Language Teaching approach is characterized by the following features:

1- An emphasis on the learner to communicate through interaction in the target language;

2- The introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation;

3- The provision of opportunities for learners to focus ,not only on language ,but also on the learning process itself;

4- An enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning;

5- An attempt to link classroom language learning with language activation outside the classroom (p. 279).

In the CLT approach, learners learn a language through using it in authentic and meaningful communication which is the goal of classroom activities.

In communication, different language skills are integrated. Richards (2006) states that some focus centrally on the input to the learning process. Thus content-based teaching stresses that the content or subject matter of teaching drives the whole language learning process. Moreover, Dunan (1991) makes the point that the communicative task has evolved to become an essential component within curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation. On the other hand, Savignon (2003) asserts that the focus should be on the learner himself and the identification of learner communicative needs which should provide the basis for curriculum design.

Teachers differ in their reactions to CLT because of their own preparation and experiences. Savignon (2003) points out that some teachers welcome the opportunity to develop their own materials, providing learners with a range of communicative tasks, while others feel that the discussion of the communicative ability is ambiguous and the negotiation of meaning may be a lofty goal. Sato and Kleinsasser (1999) report on a study documenting the views and practices of CLT by Japanese second language in-service teachers. Little is known about what second language teachers actually understand by CLT and how they implement it in classrooms. Ten teachers of Japanese in ten different state high schools in a

large Australian metropolitan area participated in this study. Using multiple data sources including interviews, observations and surveys, the researchers find that teachers' views and actions dealt little with the academic literature related to CLT or their knowledge about it. Instead teachers resorted to their personal ideas and experiences; solidifying their notions of foreign language (L2) teaching in pursuing further their growing conceptions of CLT.

Musumeci (1997) questions "the role of grammar in communicative language teaching as it creates an uneasy relationship between two elements: namely, grammar on the one hand, and communication on the other". She adds that CLT is fundamentally concerned with making meaning in the language, whether by interpreting someone else's message, expressing one's own, or negotiating when meaning is unclear. Teachers can understand the complexity of the grammar of a language by viewing grammar with all of its components. It is obvious that the goal of language learning in the communicative classroom is for learners to acquire the grammar of the second language in its broadest sense, to enable them to understand and make meaning; that is, to become proficient users of the second language.

One significant approach that contributes to the development of communicative competence is Cooperative Language Teaching which, as Richards & Rodgers (2002) emphasize, promotes communicative interaction in second language classrooms. It is seen as an extension of the principles of Communicative Language Teaching. Stenlev (2003) defines cooperative learning

as "learning in small groups where interaction is structured according to carefully worked-out principles. Cooperative learning can be used at all age levels, from kindergarten to university. It is much more than just a bag of tricks to make teaching run more smoothly. It is a different way of conceiving teaching" (p.33).

According to Johnson, Johnson and Holubec (1994), cooperative learning raises the achievement of all students, helps the teacher build positive relationships among students, gives students the experience they need for healthy social, psychological and cognitive development, and also replaces the competitive organizational structure of most classrooms and schools. This has been demonstrated by numerous studies which have covered a wide range of subject areas and age groups (for reviews, see Cohen, 1994; Johnson, Johnson, & Stanne, 2001; Sharan, 1980; Slavin, 1995). Generally, the findings of these studies suggest that, when compared to other instructional approaches, group activities structured along cooperative learning tenets are associated with gains on a host of key variables: achievement, higher level thinking, self-esteem, liking for the subject matter and for school and inter-group relations.

Compared with traditional instruction, cooperative learning, Zhang (2010) concludes, tends to promote productivity and achievement, providing, as well, more opportunities for communication. When connected with foreign language learning, it shares the same basic set of principles with the widespread Communicative Language Teaching. It makes clear that the objective of foreign language teaching is not only to teach students some grammatical rules and vocabularies, but also how to put knowledge into practice in order to express or

narrate thoughts and ideas. He adds that cooperative language learning reacts to the trend in foreign language teaching method focusing on the communicative and affective factors in language learning. Moreover, he emphasizes that cooperative language learning is beneficial to foreign language learning and teaching. First, it provides more opportunities for comprehensible input and output and the processes of negotiation. Second, it offers a relaxed climate in the classroom, and also increases student motivation. Third, Cooperative language learning allows learners more chances to produce language in a functional manner. This means that it can be used to create a mimic real-life social settings in which language is normally used. Finally, the final aim of cooperative learning is to make each student a stronger individual through doing work cooperatively. It, therefore, emphasizes individual accountability. It is, therefore, worthwhile for teachers and scholars to maximize the use of this method in the language learning classroom (Zhang, 2010).

2.2 Previous Studies

Although English teachers may use various activities in the classroom, learning centers-based activities, where learners learn by themselves and rotate from one center to another, are highly infrequent. More specifically, the Palestinian educational scene does not document any studies on the use of learning centers in local academic institutions. Instead, particular emphasis is placed on diagnosing English language learning problems rather than proposing proper solutions, which is apparent through the revision of studies made in the Palestinian context. Thus, this study is a modest attempt at drawing specialists'

attention to learning centers and their role in English L2 learning. Hence, the focus is on the following dimensions:

2.2.1 Learner-centered education

Brown (2003) points out that twenty-first century classrooms should shift from traditional, teacher-centered curriculum to more learner-centered approach. The teacher-centered approach is associated chiefly with the transmission of knowledge whereas the learner-centered approach places the characteristics of all learners under the microscope with specific emphasis on low-performance learners. Learner-centered, as defined as by the APA Work Group of the Board of Educational Affairs (1997,) (Cited in McCombs, 2001,) means:

The perspective that couples a focus on individual learners—their

heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests,

capacities, and needs—with a focus on learning—the best available

knowledge about learning and how it occurs and about teaching

practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of

motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners. This dual

focus then informs and drives educational decision making. Learner-

centered education is a reflection in practice of the Learner-Centered

Psychological Principles—the programs, practices, policies,

and people that support learning for all (p.186).

Pierce & Kalkman (2003) call for applying the learner-centered psychological principles such as creating positive personal relationships, respecting students' ideas and opinions, assisting higher order thinking, and addressing students' individual needs and beliefs in teacher preparation programs to provide teachers with models of effective learner-centered practices that promote student motivation for learning.

Henson (2003) cites the following points as the premises of Learner-centered education

1. Learners have distinctive perspectives or frames of reference, contributed to by their history, the environment, their interests and goals, their beliefs, their ways of thinking and the like. These must be attended to and respected if learners are to become more actively involved in the learning process and to ultimately become independent thinkers.

2. Learners have unique differences, including emotional states of mind, learning rates, learning styles, stages of development, abilities, talents, feelings of efficacy, and other needs. These must be taken into account if all learners are to learn more effectively and efficiently.

3. Learning is a process that occurs best when what is being learned is relevant and meaningful to the learner and when the learner is actively

engaged in creating his or her own knowledge and understanding by connecting what is being learned with prior knowledge and experience.

4. Learning occurs best in an environment that contains positive interpersonal relationships and interactions and in which the learner feels appreciated, acknowledged, respected, and validated.

5. Learning is seen as a fundamentally natural process; learners are viewed as naturally curious and basically interested in learning about and mastering their world (p.207).

Moreover, Bansberg (2003) discusses how learner-centered principles such as understanding the learning process together with understanding learners' needs and their individual differences can provide a framework to creating effective curricula and instructions in literacy. He also describes learner-centered instructional approaches as those based on active learning, connecting new learning with prior knowledge, stimulating student's interest, adapting to individual developmental differences and providing a caring and supportive environment.

Meece (2003) draws the attention to the importance of using learner-centered psychological principles for improving academic engagement and learning of 13-16 years-old middle classroom students. Using survey data from 2,200 middle school students from diverse communities across the United States, the findings indicate many important motivational benefits of learner-centered practices for young adolescents. Moreover, students reported more positive forms of

motivation and greater academic engagement when they perceived their teachers were using learner-centered practices that involve caring, establishing higher order thinking, honoring students' voices and adapting instruction to individual needs. In addition, in Denise and Kathryn (2003) children in the elementary grades are aware of the learner-centered practices, particularly those focused around their desires for teacher care and support, tasks that promote new learning and increased competence and options to participate in various activities with peers. Furthermore, Denise and Kathryn also mention that some research began to link between young children's perceptions of more learner centered practices and important schooling outcomes such as motivation, self perceived competence and achievement.

In addition, Hong, Milgram and Rowell (2004) present a learner-centered homework approach designed to prove that using homework in a positive manner would improve educational achievement. They also present research findings on the relationship of the learner-centered approach to achievement and attitude toward homework. Hong, Tomoff, Wozniak, Carter, and Topham (2000) use questionnaires to assess student's preferred and actual ways of studying at home. They reported that students who actually applied their strong preference in doing homework had more positive attitudes toward homework than those who did not. Dunn, Deckinger, Withers and Katzenstein (1990) assess learning styles of college students .The findings from three examinations indicated that students group who applied their strong preferences while doing homework and studying outperformed those who did not. These studies suggest that accommodating

students' home learning preferences by manipulating environmental conditions (such as work in an environment responsive to their needs for sound, light, design, intake and mobility) will make homework completion more meaningful and productive. This will lead students to develop a more positive attitude toward homework because they will learn from doing it, and their homework performance will also improve.

Learner-centered conventions are also encouraged and preferred by teachers. In Paris and Combs (2006), eighteen teachers from nine states that vary greatly in cultural and class composition were interviewed to explore their understanding of being learner-centered teachers. Their answers reveal three broad and simple meanings of learner-centeredness which are: the student is the starting point for curriculum making; the teacher and students are co-participants in the learning process; and, the teacher strives toward intense student engagement with the curriculum.

2.2.2 Rationale for Teaching and Learning English Grammar

Over the centuries, second language educators (such as Ellis, Thornburry, Krashen) have argued whether or not to teach grammar. Approaches, methods and techniques have also been controversial (Dellicarpini, 2006; Ellis, 1998; Fitch, 2001; Frantzen, 1998; Harper, 2004; Kalivoda, 1990; Levine, 2006; McKay, 2000; Nichols, 1984; Nunan, 2005; Rienders, 2009; Tanaka, 1999; Wyse, 2006; Zhongganggao, 2001). Vavra (1996) points out that English grammar teaching debate continues and will continue by both proponents and

opponents. Vavra explains that the anti-grammar movement was bolstered by a belief among teachers that students' grammar would improve simply as a result of their writing. In addition, it is believed that pro-grammarians feed students with grammar definitions, rules, exceptions and simplistic exercises. Teaching grammar in this way will not help students. Grammar should be used as a tool to teach students how sentences work and emphasis should be put on sentences in context, paragraphs or short essays. Even before, Beaugrande (1984) emphasizes teaching grammar, he claims that the condition on which effective grammar teaching depends is that teacher should get away from the teachers' grammar and develop a learners' grammar. This implies that the use of real-life situations in grammar learning and teaching can improve both students' command of grammar and the teachers' confidence in teaching it.

Also Boon-Long(1978) points out that approaches to teaching grammar to foreign learners are based on:

1- students' interests in learning English are stimulated by their classroom activities.

2- Meaningful learning is preferred over rote learning, although both kinds are evident in human behavior, but most of the concepts, ideas and other items which are retained over a long term are a product of meaningful learning.

3- Different ways of teaching English grammar lead to different effects on students, for example, a structural approach vs. a situational approach, implicit vs. explicit.

4- Language teachers should be interested in teaching strategies that advance the student from an ability to manipulate sentence patterns in the classroom to the ability of conversing freely in real life situations outside the classroom.

5- An introduction of grammatical concepts or any other abstract criteria is important in language teaching.

Mclaughlin (2003) refers the grammar teaching debate to approaches that have been followed for teaching grammar. Particularly, he explains how the structural approach in which quiet classrooms dominated by teachers give long and complex explanations of grammatical structure, oral drills with endless written exercises and countless quizzes and tests was regarded as the only way to learn languages. Mclaughlin (2004) asserts that language is a fundamental aspect of being human. Language is not a grammatical system to be memorized and recited in perfection rather it is the tool by which genuine communication, i.e., giving and receiving real messages, is achieved. Therefore language learning success is enhanced by a classroom environment which utilizes real exchanges of information which require concentration on the functions of language. She suggests that, although language functions are expressed through grammatical structures, language teachers should find a balance between the two. One way to achieve this balance is to introduce a grammatical structure covertly or overtly

and give students the opportunity to practice using it in a functional way. Skretta (1996) also adds that grammatical knowledge is best acquired, as all language is, naturally and authentically.

Hudson and Walmsley (2005) question the importance of teaching English grammar in the twentieth century. Not only is teaching grammar indicative for the research community and school teachers but it is also a concern for the general public. Hudson and Walmsley explain why children should learn about grammar:

- To expand their grammatical competence: an explicit awareness of grammatical structure possibly helps children to expand their competence to include many grammatical structures they will need as adults.
- To strengthen this competence in performance (in reading, writing, speaking, listening)
- To support foreign-language learning: the explicit instruction is an important part of grammar-teaching, and learning grammar is easier if students understand how their first language works (Borjars and Burridge, 2001).
- To develop their ability of logical connections: children's main tool for talking is grammar. They'll be able to talk about logical connections such as classification, causation and time.
- To develop their investigation skills: existing knowledge is investigated in order to obtain new one.

- To appreciate their own minds: grammar is a highly interrelated mental system and when taught well most people find it interesting.

- To develop a critical response to some of the ways in which language is used in their everyday environment (Hudson& Walmsley, 2005).

Celce-Murcia (1991) and (1992) clarifies that the challenge for language teachers is to develop effective ways of focusing learner attention on form at critical moments while learners are using the second language for purposeful communication. It helps learners develop grammatical accuracy which indicates that a second language learner is competent; it helps open academic, social and economic doors for learners.

It is noticeable that second language educators have alternated between favoring grammar teaching approaches which focus on having students analyze language in order to learn it and those which encourage students' using language in order to acquire it. Larsen-Freeman (2001) asserts that there is little disagreement that L2 learners need to learn to communicate grammatically although the approaches remain controversial. In addition, she also shows how the choice of grammatical form often signals such things as the speaker's attitude, power and identity and the place of grammar in social interaction.

There are many different grammar teaching strategies (communicative drills, declarative knowledge, and procedural knowledge) that can facilitate learning in the classroom. Language teachers need to regain a sense of kinds of grammar teaching strategies that best facilitate learning. On the one hand, 83 four to six years old boys and girls were presented with experimental conditions where

context, transformational complexity and verbal cues were varied (Bozinou, 1983). Two experimental tasks, a perceptually Concrete task and an abstract task, were included. The technique used in this study presents subjects with obligatory contexts to elicit linguistic structures (the Present Progressive and the Past tense). Participants of the study were assigned to a verbal cue or a nonverbal cue conditions. The Verbal Cues were phrases that made specific reference to the time the activity took place. Thus the Verbal Cue for the present progressive was the phrase "right now" and for the past tense it was the phrase "already". Verbal Cues were omitted for the non verbal cue conditions. All participants responded to sentences. These sentences included both the present progressive and the past tense. The results of this study reveal significant effects of age and tense factors and improved performance on comprehension over production, with younger children making fewer errors than older ones. Participants performed better on the present progressive than on the past tense on the perceptually Concrete task while the reverse was true on the Abstract task. The findings of this study show that language performance is the result of a complex interrelationship between transformational complexity and the perceptual properties of linguistic structures.

On the other hand Larsen-Freeman (2001) asserts that there is little disagreement that L2 learners need to learn to communicate grammatically although the approaches remain controversial explicitly and implicitly. The students under the explicit teaching condition heard rules and example sentences of a given grammar structure while the students under the implicit teaching condition heard ten times more examples of the target structure than the students

under the explicit condition. A comparison of mean scores of students under each condition revealed a statistically significant difference with the students under the explicit teaching condition performing better.

Ellis and Fotos (1991) question the use of a communicative grammar-based task with two groups of Japanese EFL college students. They have argued that grammar tasks may contribute to l2 acquisition in two ways. They may contribute directly by providing opportunities for the kind of communication which is believed to promote the acquisition of implicit knowledge, and they may contribute indirectly by enabling learners to develop explicit knowledge of l2 rules which will later facilitate the acquisition of implicit knowledge. The results of this exploratory study lend some support to these claims. The Japanese EFL learners at the college level were able to increase their knowledge of difficult L2 rules by completing a grammar task. But also a number of considerations have been raised. First, the grammar task used didn't result in the same level of longer-term learning as did the traditional, teacher-fronted grammar lesson. Second, although the grammar task produced a large number of interactional modifications, the nature of the exchanges was mechanical.

Fotos (1994) investigates grammar consciousness-raising tasks as one way to integrate formal instruction within communicative framework. The subjects of his research were 160 Japanese university EFL learners making up three intact classes of first –year non English majors. The results of his study support the use of grammar consciousness-raising tasks as one possible method for the development of knowledge of problematic grammar structures (such as; indirect

object placement, word order, adverb placement and relative clause usage) through communicative activities.

Ellis (1995) suggests an alternative approach to grammar teaching based on interrupting input. He adds that this approach helps learners notice grammatical features in the input, comprehend their meanings and compare the form present in the input with those occurring in learner output. He emphasizes that a complete language program should include a variety of tasks that invite both focus on form and a focus on message conveyance.

Gaudart (1999) discusses how games can be effective tools for teaching English to speakers of other languages in Malaysia. He argues that games like card games, board games, simulation games and party-type games should be used 90% of the teaching time. Not only do games motivate students toward learning and giving them the opportunity to practice the foreign language structures, but they also allow learners to fully use the language that they have learned, and participate in the communicative process throughout the game.

Kanda and Beglar (2004) investigate the effectiveness of two experimental communicative grammar lessons in teaching the present progressive verb tense based on four instructional principles: teach form-function relations, compare similar grammatical forms, promote learner autonomy, and provide opportunities for generative use. Ninety-nine Japanese first-year-high-school students participated in this study. The results show that two experimental communicative grammar lessons based on the above-mentioned four principles are more effective than a standard structure- based lesson in helping those students acquire

a more accurate understanding of the present progressive tense and its relationship to simple present tense in English. Kanda and Beglar conclude that communicative grammar learning has the potential to improve communicative accuracy while maintaining the degree of focus-on-form demanded by the local EFL context and offer one route to effective form-focused instruction.

Andrews et al. (2006) report on the results of two international systematic reviews which focus on different aspects of teaching grammar to improve the quality and accuracy of 5-16-year olds writing in English. The results of this systematic review reveal first that the teaching of syntax (as part of a traditional approach to teaching grammar) appears to have no influence on either the accuracy or quality of writing. They explain that this doesn't mean to say that there could be no such influence but it simply means that there have been no significant studies to date that have proved such effect. The first key point must be qualified with caution. There was considerable difficulty in synthesizing studies on the teaching of syntax because of their heterogeneity: they used different intervention materials; different analytical frameworks; and there was some methodological invalidity or unreliability. Second the teaching of sentence-combining appears to have a more positive effect on writing quality and accuracy. They add that there appears to be a distinction between the two approaches they have reviewed. For example, the teaching of syntax appears to put emphasis on 'knowledge about' the construction of sentences. Sentence-combining suggests a pedagogy of applied knowledge. It is also important to mention that Cowan (2008) points out that the use of verb forms is one of the two

or three most difficult areas for English language learners to master but teaching could be improved by taking into account improving the teaching of verb forms and tense and aspect.

It's worth mentioning that the use of learning centers is not restricted to language teaching and learning.

2.2.3 Learning Centers in Different Domains

Through learning centers, it is possible to stimulate different kinds of learning in different domains and areas.

Cosgrove (1992) states that learning centers provided a specific focus on knowledge and a special learning opportunity. These centers reinforce learners to learn in a cooperative setting. Learning centers activities can be organized by skills, interests and themes. They are game-like in nature; they offer learners opportunities to learn and play at the same time. All centers activities should include objectives (teachers want to achieve), directions (learners should follow), and assessment (to evaluate learners' learning). She also emphasizes that learning centers is a way to integrate portfolio assessment into the classroom. These centers can be beneficial for both students and teachers. Learners can practice and review newly learned skills. Teachers can work with small groups of learners in an organized way.

Hainen (1977) argues that a music teacher can adapt learning centers to music education programs. These music centers help students develop their own

impression of a musical work in arts or in words since they work by themselves and without the direct involvement of the teacher.

CALLIOPE, an online learning center for business, is another successful example of a learning center. It allows learners to enhance their professional writing skills in one of five languages, one of which is English. Learners are also introduced to several techniques of completing writing tasks. They reflect on and monitor their own writing improvement (Jocobs, Opdenacker &Waes, 2005).

According to Persson (2000) science centers are new ways of institutional informal learning. They provide learners with the opportunity to do experiments, and experience hands-on learning. Persson argues that these science learning centers provide learners with an unforgettable experience and long-lasting learning. Learners may make career choices based on their experience with those centers.

In Lauderdale's (1977) study, Anthropology learning centers are viewed as a method of individualizing instruction and self directed learning. Fourteen Anthropology learning centers equipped with needed material were developed for children achieving at or above grade level in grades three through six in Michigan Elementary School. The Anthropology learning centers were evaluated on the basis of participant-observation, teacher and volunteers' interviews, student journals and taped interviews, parental opinions, and the comments of educational observers, school administrators and news reporters. The evaluation shows that the goal of individualized learning had been met. The center design

met a variety of student needs and abilities. But learning centers were less successful in meeting the goal of self-directed learning. Most of the students had little experience in choosing learning activities, scheduling their time and assuming responsibility for study.

Judge (2001) discusses the importance of integrating computer technology in the early childhood classrooms. She explains that computer technology is a new and interesting way to maximize learning. Teachers should find ways to use them in their classrooms. She finds out that one way to integrate computers is to set up a computer center in the classroom. Learners can work cooperatively at the computers. Teachers can provide them with work sheets to work on independently and further more teachers can encourage learners to choose software independently. This center should be exciting and accessible to everyone in the classroom. Judge concludes that computers centers have a significant potential not only to what learners learn but also to how they learn it.

Chen and Chang (2006) study teachers' attitudes, skills and practices of using computers in early childhood classrooms. The participants were 297 teachers from metropolitan public school system in the US. The results of this study reveal that almost half of the teachers (44.8%) felt confident about using a classroom computer centers. Half of them (50%) felt comfortable about teaching young children to use computers. Describing classroom practices, 52.7% worked with children individually and 53.3 % used computers as learning centers.

Genisio and Drecktrah (1999) suggest different learning centers activities (ABC Center, Library Center, Shared Reading Center, Sequencing Center and Read the Room Center) to support children with special needs. These centers according to them are one way to personalize learning and to stimulate these children. They assert that today's classrooms should provide a chance for everyone to learn. By creating these centers in the classroom, the learning opportunity will be enhanced for all children including those with special needs. They conclude that these learning centers are an opportunity to provide children with special needs the ability to choose and to enjoy their daily learning.

Turner (2007) explains how educators need new improved ways to present the curriculum, reinforce students, and strengthen relationships among students and overcome deficiencies. She also shows how writing centers in secondary schools are one way to resolve deficiencies. Writing centers can improve students' basic skills in writing. These centers provide students with strategies that can be applied in different writing pieces. They are also one way to individualize learning. Thus giving students the focus and the time they need to improve their writing. Turner (2001) report a study by Jones (2001) suggests that students who use the writing center gain higher grades than those who don't. They performed better than those who learn writing in a traditional way. They showed a reduction in the failure rate in a state-mandated proficiency exam in composition. They also showed improvement in the grammar skills in post tests and they produce advanced mean scores on an error recognition test after they were exposed to a writing center. In addition, Kent (2007) finds out that his high

school writing center is an effective way to shift into a constructivist pedagogy. Learner is responsible for their writing and for others' writing. Learners earn a higher assessment from the teacher and from their colleagues. He concludes that their writing center and the learners' portfolios is an effective way to promote organization of teaching writing and assessing learners' writing.

2.2.4 Studies on Teaching Small Groups

When students work in learning centers, they learn in small groups. Reviewing the literature on teaching in small groups is an important dimension of the studies on learning centers.

Teaching in small groups is a common and highly valued practice in the field of education today. Describing effective teaching principles, Ellis & Worthington (1994) claim that students achieve more in classes where they work in groups most of the time. Consequently, many articles and studies documented the effectiveness of using cooperative learning and teaching in different subject areas (AbuSleileek, 2007; Bandiera and Bruno, 2006; Bogaard, Carey, Dodd, Repath and Whitaker, 2005; Chen and Cheng, 2009; Ghaith, 2003; Kulick and Mather, 1993; Kyratzis, 2004; Nagel, 2007; Oldfather, 1993; Sachs, Candlin, Rose and Shum, 2003; Steinert, 2004; Storch, 2001; Wolford, Heward and Alber, 2001).

Soliman (1999) describes how small group instruction in higher education is a common and significant learning activity. Learners become more involved; they collaborate and examine their ideas with their peers and share views on different

topics. In small groups, learners' higher order thinking will improve. Also, small groups work involves cooperative learning.

Sharan (1980) chooses five published methods for conducting cooperative small-group learning in the classroom. They include Aronson's Jigsaw classroom, DeVries' Teams-Games-Tournaments (TGT), Slavin's Student Teams and Academic Divisions (STAD), the Johnsons' cooperative learning approach, and the Sharans' Small-group Teaching method. These methods are examined, evaluated, and compared. The first three methods are described as Peer-Tutoring methods. The additional two are described as Group-Investigation (G-I) approaches. A variety of cognitive and social-affective variables such as motivation, self-concept, self regulation, participation and attitudes are affected by those cooperative small group methods (Sharan, 1980).

Nagel (2007) argues that cooperative learning is more than working together; it helps in building positive interdependence between learners. He proposes some small group learning strategies to help the teacher of social studies move beyond the lecture.

Negal also cites the research evidence which shows that learners in small groups who learn cooperatively have significant gains in academic achievement than learners who were taught using a traditional lecture format. He also refers to many studies that identify cooperative learning in small groups as an effective learning strategy (Augustine et al., 1989-90; Coke, 2005; Johnson and Johnson, 1989; Sills and Digby, 1991; Slavin, 1995). These studies explain how many

positive cognitive, affective, and social outcomes are achieved by cooperative learning. Cooperative learning increases learners' self esteem, attendance, time on task, enjoyment of school and classes and motivation to learn.

Sachs, Candlin, Rose and Shum (2003) investigate the effectiveness of cooperative learning in the ESL/EFL secondary classroom. The students' participants were 520 male and female students from three Hong Kong local secondary schools. Students' ages ranged from 14 to 17 with mixed language proficiency across the three schools. This study looked at a one-year investigation into the teaching of English in Hong Kong secondary school classrooms. The teachers' participants were eight experienced female and male English teachers. The teachers implement small groups' cooperative language learning tasks in classrooms. Comparing the oral proficiency of students in traditional educational settings with those in cooperative language learning settings was one of the most important aims of this study. Students' performance was tape-recorded, transcribed and analyzed. The data indicated that there were no significant differences in the performance of the experimental group in this study, but these results should be explained carefully. This study shows that the learners in both groups made statically significant gains on the post test (within-subjects effects) but between-subjects comparisons showed no significant gains over the course of the projects. Sachs, Candlin, Rose and Shum (2003) report students' feedback on cooperative learning. Learners enjoy the cooperative learning tasks. They enjoyed speaking English in groups and felt that they had more freedom in class.

Springer, Stanne and Donovan (1999) investigate the research on undergraduate Science, Math, Engineering and Technology (SMET) education since 1980.The results of this meta-analysis proved that several forms of small-group learning can promote greater academic achievement. It increased Learners' attitudes toward learning, and also increased learners' perseverance of learning materials. The findings that were reported in this study support the effectiveness of using small-group learning in undergraduate (SMET).

Good, Mulryan and McCaslin (1992) examine the use of small groups in mathematics instruction. They found that small-group instruction facilitate student achievement especially in the basic skills. This strategy also promotes favorable attitudes toward peers and subject matter.

Storch (2001) investigates the performance of three pairs of adult ESL students on a writing task assigned in class in order to explore the nature of group or pair interactions, whether they are collaborative or not. Results of this study show that students working in pairs may not necessarily work in a collaborative manner, but where they do collaborate this may have an effect on task performance.

AbuSleileek (2007) explores the effectiveness of two computer-mediated techniques-cooperative and collaborative learning- designed for teaching and learning oral skills, listening and speaking. The sample in this study comprised 130 Arab-speaking freshmen in the BA program of English language and literature at the Department of English Language and Literature, College of Arts at King Saud University. Participants of the study were divided into four groups.

The first group uses the cooperative computer-mediated technique to study oral skills. The second group studies oral skills by the collective computer-mediated technique. The third group uses a cooperative traditional technique. The fourth group taught by a collective traditional technique. In collective computer-mediated communication technique, learners use the computer for communication between the teacher and them. It doesn't include group interaction. In the cooperative computer-mediated communication learners in small groups perform a task by using the computer as a means for communication between them. This study concludes that students who use cooperative computer mediated technique achieved better results on the listening and speaking test than students who were taught with the collective techniques and traditional methods.

Ghaith (2003) examines the relationship between cooperative, individualized and competitive forms of instruction, achievement in English as a foreign language and perceptions of classroom atmosphere. In this study, the participants were 135 university EFL learners. The results of this study indicated that cooperative learning in small groups was positively correlated with learners' perceptions of fairness of grading, class cohesion and social support. This means that the more participants experienced cooperative study in small groups, the more they perceive that everyone in class got the grades they deserved and had an equal chance to be successful if they work hard to achieve their goals. Also the more learners worked together the more they felt that their teachers and mates like them and care about them personally and academically.

Scott and Ytreberg (1990) advise English teachers to make room for shared experiences which can be exchanged through student grouping. Small groups are a good opportunity for language work; they create an atmosphere of involvement and togetherness. They also stressed that genuine cooperative pair work or group work is usually the result of a long process of planning and preparation.

Another study was made by Shaaban (2006) who investigated the effect of jigsaw cooperative learning (learning in small groups) and whole class instruction in improving learner's reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition and motivation to read. Forty-four fifth grade EFL learners from a private school in Beirut participated in this study. Both the experimental and control groups were taught by the same teacher who holds a master's degree and a diploma in teaching English as a foreign language with nine years of experience in teaching English. The study lasted for 8 weeks at the rate of ten 60- minute sessions per week. Although the results did not indicate any significant differences between the control and the experimental groups on the dependent variables of reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition they revealed statistically significant differences in favor of the experimental group on the dependent variable of motivation to read and its dimensions, the value of reading and reading self-concept.

Bongfiglio, Daly, Persampieri and Anderson (2006) examine the effects of several combinations of instructional and motivational interventions on oral reading fluency in the context of small group reading instruction. Four 4th grade

students from the same elementary school participate in this study. Three of the students were male and one was female. They were identified as poor readers by their elementary teacher. Nonetheless, none of them was receiving special education services. The experimental sessions were carried out in a classroom as a part of small reading group instruction. An experimenter implemented the reading group four days per week; students were assessed individually four days a week. The results of this study indicate that all treatments were effective in increasing responding for all four participants. Performance and academic engagement increased while teacher effort decreased.

In summary, this chapter has outlined the theoretical frameworks for this study; namely, the Constructivist and Humanistic. Included in the review are previous studies which are based on four important dimensions: learner-centered education, rationale for learning and teaching grammar, learning centers use in different domains and teaching in small groups . These dimensions advocate learning through the use of learning centers, promote learning through the focus on learners, and utilize the notion of small groups. This is conducted for the purpose of furnishing the necessary background of the current study; acquisition of the grammatical tense system of L2 English.

Chapter Three

Chapter Three

3. Methodology and Study Design

This chapter addresses the components of the study design. It includes the society, the subjects, the instruments used together with their validity and reliability, as well as, the procedures and implementation of the study. This chapter also describes the analysis procedures for the research questions.

3.1 Research methodology

This is a Quasi-experimental study, because the experimental and control groups haven't been randomly selected. It attempts to examine the impact of learning centers on students' acquisition of the English tense system, in addition to their attitudes towards these centers as a means of learning. This experiment took place during the first and second semesters of the academic year 2009/2010. It was conducted by the researcher who taught the experimental group. The researcher has a B.A degree in English Literature, with another two year Diploma in methods of teaching English from Birzeit University. She has been teaching English for eight years in the Kufur Aqab Boys' School and this study was in partial fulfillment of the requirements for an M.A degree in methods of teaching English as a foreign language. The control group was taught by another English teacher, from the same school, who has been teaching English for twenty four years. She taught at the UNRWA schools for fourteen years. She is a B.A holder in English language with a diploma in methods of teaching English. Furthermore,

she used to teach seventh and eighth graders, but during the time of the research she was teaching fourth, fifth and sixth graders. She used several techniques in teaching English, and also used visual aids, small group techniques, bi-lingual materials, and created a safe classroom learning environment. She used a mixture of English and Arabic in her classes to create lower affective filters and to encourage learners to participate and become more engaged in classroom activities. When teaching English tenses, she used a small group setting with several drills and exercises on tenses.

Both quantitative and qualitative means were implemented to present and interpret the findings.

3.2 The Society

Kufur Aqab Boys' School is an elementary school in Kufur Aqab town, just between Qalandia Camp and Ramallah. Although it is one of the schools that are administered by the Israeli Ministry of Education, the school uses the Palestinian curriculum that was prepared by the Palestinian Ministry of Education in all subjects except for English. English Teachers at this school have chosen an American English book named "GET SET GO!" that was prepared by Liz Driscoll. This book is published by Oxford University Press in 1997 for non English speakers. Furthermore, about fifty Palestinian teachers work at this school. Also, Seven Hundred and fifty Palestinian male students study at Kufur Aqab School. Ninety two of those students (12.3 %) are fifth graders. Those fifth

graders are divided into three sections, two of which were chosen to participate in this study.

3.3 Subjects

The participants of this study were 60 5th graders from the Kufur Aqab Boys' School. They were divided into two groups, an experimental group and a control group. The ages of the participants ranged from 10 to 11 years, Most of whom came from a social class in which their fathers were hand-laborers and their mothers were housewives. Their curriculum included five periods of English a week, each of which is forty-five minutes long. Those learners had studied English for four years with no prior exposure to the learning centers approach.

3.4 Data Collection techniques

3.4.1   Pre- and post-test

A pre-test (appendix -1) was administered to both groups to measure subjects' knowledge of the English tense system before the implementation of learning centers. It consisted of five parts: Part one was a "fill in the blanks" question, where students had to fill each blank with an appropriate tense. Part two was "multiple choice-items" question in different tense forms, appropriate for learners' levels and attention span. These items dealt with different aspects of the tense system, expressing events at different times. Part three was a completion question, in which students were required to complete the short story- that was supplied by the researcher-with verbs which are correct in terms of both tense and contextual use. Part four required students to change a variety

of verbs that were presented in sentence forms into different tenses. Part five instructed students to rewrite short paragraphs, changing the tenses in them into different tense forms as required.

The same pre-test was administered as a post-test to students of both groups in Mid-March, following the implementation of the learning centers. The purpose was to measure students' knowledge of tense at that particular point in their L2, English, development.

3.4.2   Attitude Questionnaire

A Likert type questionnaire with five point scale (appendix -2) was given to the experimental group at the end of the study to identify their attitudes towards using learning centers as a means of learning the English tense system. Some of the areas covered in the questionnaire included: learners' reactions to learning centers, their learning preferences in terms of method effectiveness, feelings, and the effect on the tense acquisition whether it has improved or not. Learners were also asked about the role of these centers in their cooperation with each other, and in their tolerance and respect of each others' opinions and ideas. This questionnaire was prepared by the researcher; it was written to students in Arabic. The items presented in this study are the English translation of the items in the questionnaire.

The questionnaire included 38 items, each of which had a five response choices: "strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree". The positive were 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27,

28, 29, 30, 31, 33, 35, 37 and 38. The negative statements were 7, 10, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 32, and 34. These negative items were considered negative because they go against the trend in the questionnaire which is designed to elicit positive responses from students.

The questionnaire items were divided into the following categories:

- General items (1,2,3,5,8,10,13,18,19,21,22,24,25,28,35,36,38)

- Working groups items (4,6,7,11,15,27,29,32,34,37)

- Try Try copy Center (items 12,17,23)

- Matching Center (items 16, 26)

- Reading Center (items 20,31,33)

- Rewrite center (items 9,14,30)

The researcher considered learners' attitudes positive if the mean was higher than three and negative if the mean was less than three.

3.4.3 Portfolio

A portfolio was created by each student of the experimental group to monitor individual progress. Portfolios were used for the first time by students at school. Each portfolio contained samples of students' worksheets for each center, and was kept inside the classroom. Students continually updated their portfolios by adding new worksheets from the learning centers whose drills and activities they have performed. Students were encouraged by these portfolios as personal records of their work. The researcher periodically revised each portfolio and

checked the points which students needed to redo. Students in the control group didn't use portfolios, each student kept his own worksheets.

3.4.4   Checklist

A progress checklist (appendix-3) was prepared by the researcher to observe students' performances and behaviors while using learning centers. The researcher observed students' use of time, their communication with each other, ability to make decisions, development of ideas, and overall production. The researcher was a participant observer, paying special attention to students' interaction, and offering assistance when it was needed. Her role was more of a facilitator. Also, the researcher has used this checklist every learning center session but she chose to present four checklists as a monthly summary of all the sessions.

3.5 Research Procedures

1. Two 5th-grade sections were selected to participate in this study; one of them was used as the experimental group, and the other as the control group.

2. Students' pupil books for the 5th grade and the previous grades were surveyed to identify the tenses to which the study groups had been, and would be, exposed (appendix -4). The researcher found that students were exposed to the past tense, present tense, present continuous tense, present perfect, and the future tense (appendix- 5).

3. A pre-test was conducted to both groups during the first week of November 2009, before the implementation of learning centers. The purpose of this test was to determine students' achievement levels in the tense system.

4. Four learning centers were implemented in teaching the experimental group. These learning centers presented learners with activities to enhance their acquisition of the English tense system in the areas of spelling, tense inflection, and tense application in different tasks such as personal introduction, scene description, story telling, and the like. The control group was taught either deductively or inductively following traditional methods of teaching with no exposure to learning centers.

In this study, the researcher had prepared four learning centers with varied activities which were designed to enhance students' understanding and acquisition of tenses. Included in these centers were:

Center 1:Try Try Copy

This was a writing center that focused on students' identification of verbs and recognition of their different tense forms. In this and other centers, learners worked in groups of six to eight, in order to practice more than only their knowledge of tenses but also their ability to write these tenses with correct spelling. The group leader, one of the students, said a verb from a provided list, and other students were supposed to write it correctly. The group leader was supposed to dictate within his group members. For example, the verb "bought", was supposed to be written down, but whenever the

students missed the right spelling, he dictated it again saying try. He would give them two chances to write it correctly, and then he would allow them to copy it. Students also had to discuss the tense[s] of these verbs and write it/them on their sheets. This center provided students with the opportunity to focus more on irregular verbs in a nontraditional way. This was enjoyable, competitive and less stressful.

Center 2: Reading

This was a reading comprehension center that focused on students' identification of verbs using short stories or paragraphs. In this center, students worked in groups of six to eight to practice reading paragraphs. They practiced different tenses through reading authentic materials, followed by questions that check students' comprehension. Students, also, had to discuss the tenses used in this story and write them on their sheets. Groups were formed in a heterogeneous manner in order to maximize the benefits of the small group work.

Center 3: Matching

In this center, students were asked to carry out a matching task. They were given a verb in the infinitive form, and then were asked to match it to its past, present continuous, present perfect, and future tense forms. These verbs were made as a domino game in which they match the past tense with the present tense of the verb, or the future tense with the present continuous tense in an amusing way.

Students were also provided with different pronouns and nouns and had to match them with the correct verb form, making a correct sentence which is a bigger unit than verbs.

Center 4: Rewriting

In this center, students learn to rewrite sentences using different tenses. They first started with short sentences and shifted to paragraphs at a later stage. This center was meant to enrich students' understanding of sentence elements and components. It was also another way to teach students that changing sentence tense wasn't difficult, and that it was very similar to a game with words.

5. Towards Mid March 2010, a post test was conducted to examine the impact of learning centers on students' achievement in the acquisition of the tense system.

3.6 Tools Validity

3.6.1 Test Validity

The pre-test was given to seven referees for review and assessment, three of whom were Ph.D-degree holders, one of which was an expert in subject matter, three had M.A degrees in methods of teaching English, and the 7th was an expert teacher with a B.A degree. The referees found that the test was valid i.e., tested

what it was designed to test (appendix- 6). Some of them thought that the time period should have been longer; therefore, the researcher increased the test-time length and divided it into two sessions to decrease boredom, minimize the effect of fatigue, and obtain more reliable results. Following their reviews, the researcher incorporated the referees' comments and recommendations into the test design and its items.

3.6.2 Questionnaire Validity

The questionnaire was given to six referees for review and assessment. Three of whom had Ph.D degrees, one of which was an expert in subject matter, while three others had M.A-degrees in methods of teaching English. The referees found that the questionnaire was valid and that it truly examined students' evaluation of learning centers as a mean of teaching the English tense system (appendix- 7). Some of them thought that some items needed revision or modification; therefore, the researcher modified some items, added other items and added more space for learners to provide their comments. Moreover, the researcher incorporated the referees' comments and recommendations into the questionnaire and its items.

3.6.3 Test Reliability

To measure its reliability, the pre-test was administered to two groups, in addition to the control and experimental groups. These two extra groups had the same characteristics as those of the control and experimental groups. They involved male learners, studying the same book, learning English in a traditional

way. They also lived in the same area. Both groups were given the pre-test on October 24, 2009. The results of these groups were analyzed using independent T-Test to examine if the differences between the groups were statistically significant. The results of these tests can be viewed in table (1):

Table (1)

Groups means comparison (Reliability of the test)

Groups	Students Number	Means	Standard Deviation	F Value	P Probability
Group One (Dar Al- Ma'rfa Boys' School)	22	2.73	0.94	2.86	0.94
Group Two(fifth grade section – C in Kufur Aqab Boys' School, which was not part of this study)	22	2.86	0.94		

The means of those groups are not significantly different. This means that had the test been given to different groups under the same conditions, the results would have been almost the same. As the table above shows, no significant differences were found between the means of the two groups of learners. This, in turn, confirmed the reliability of the test.

3.6.4 Questionnaire Reliability

To determine the reliability of the questionnaire, "Chronbach-Alpha Coefficient" was used. The 29 questionnaires were distributed to students. To

determine reliability, Coefficient of Chronbach's Alpha of this questionnaire

produced a result of 0.89 which supported the instrument's reliability.

3.7 Data Analysis

Statistical Package for the Social Sciences program (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. The questions of this study were answered by comparing the results of pre and post-tests for both groups, and by reviewing students' portfolios and researcher's checklists. They were analyzed to explore the role of the learning centers in the acquisition of the tense system. The results of the pre-and post-tests were analyzed using the Independent T-Test analysis to compare the groups' means.

In addition, learners' responses to the questionnaire were analyzed to determine the learners' attitudes towards using learning centers as a means of learning the English tense system. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) were used to present the learners' responses.

Chapter Four

Chapter Four

4. Data Analysis and Results

This chapter presents the results of this study and the answers for the three research questions. Data gathered by the pre-post test and the analysis of the questionnaires is analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics; reverse coding, T-Test, means and standard deviations. Whereas Data gathered through the researcher's checklist and students' portfolios is analyzed qualitatively.

4.1 Introduction

This study attempts to explore the role of learning center-based activities in teaching EFL in the Palestinian context. This was approached through specific examination of students' L2 achievement in acquiring the English tense system. Students' attitudes towards the use of such centers in learning were also studied. Consequently, this study aims to answer the following three questions:

1. What is the role of learning centers in L2 learners' achievement in acquiring the English tense system?

2. How do learning centers help learners deal with the complexity of the tense system?

3. What are the learners' attitudes towards using learning centers when learning the English tense system?

It was further hypothesized that:

1. There is no significant difference at the level of $\alpha \leq 0.05$ on the means of post-achievement test between the control group and the experimental group

The results of this study are based on analyzing

- Researcher's observations collected through checklists (appendix-3).

- Students' Portfolios.

- Pre-post test (appendix -1).

- Attitude questionnaire (appendix -2).

4.2 Checklist Results

A progress checklist (appendix -3) was prepared by the researcher in order to observe students when they were working in groups. This checklist documented how group members behaved within their group, if they listened quietly to each other, waited for the speaker to finish before speaking, if they encouraged each other, if one of them tried to impose his ideas on others, and also if they disagreed with others opinions without getting angry. It also checked how group members worked within their group, if they made comments and presented ideas relevant to the topic at hand, if they asked questions when they didn't understand other group members, if they stayed on task, if they kept on track with the time allotted for the activity, and how they managed their problems.

Results and observations were obtained from the researcher's checklist through out the implementation of the centers in class at the ends of November, December 2009, January and February 2010. The following tables (2a and 2b) present students' progress after the implementation of the four centers (towards the end of November, 2009).

Table (2a)

Checklist 1: Results at the End of November, 2009

When working in a group:	yes	no	?? Not sure
1. Group members listen quietly to each other		✓	
2. Wait for the speaker to finish before speaking.		✓	
3. Make comments and submit ideas that are on relevant topic.		✓	
4. Disagree with others' opinions without getting angry.		✓	
5. One member tries to impose his ideas on others.	✓		
6. Encourage other group members.			✓
7. Ask questions when needed.			✓
8. If the group has a problem, they take part in the problem solving process, if needed.			✓
9. Students stay on task with regards to assigned activities.		✓	
10. Stay within the time allotted for each activity.		✓	

Table (2b)

Checklist 1: The Results of the Group Work on each Aspect Towards

the End of November, 2009

1. Use of time	
a.	Much time spent without purpose. ✓
b.	distracted others and got off track . ✓
c.	used their time wisely, once they got their ideas clear.
d.	No wasted effort, they stayed on target.
2. Development of Ideas	
a.	Little done to generate ideas. ✓
b.	imposing their ideas on the group. ✓
c.	trying but not creative.
d.	encouraging and fully exploring ideas.
3. Ability to make decisions	
a.	Poor resolution of differences. ✓
b.	Let one person rule the group. ✓
c.	Made compromises to get the job done.
d.	Genuine agreement and support.
4. Overall Productivity	
a.	Did not accomplish their goal. ✓
b.	Barely accomplished the job. ✓
c.	Just did what they had to.
d.	Highly productive.

Checklist-1 observations in tables (2a) and (2b) above reveal that:

1- Learners did not listen to each other while working in groups and frequently interrupted each other.

2- In the four existing groups, one or two members tried to impose their ideas on the others.

3- Group members didn't manage the time appropriately because they didn't listen to each other. Thus, some periods ended before the students were able to finish the required task.

4- Students in all groups weren't able to make decisions because they were working as competitors and didn't work cooperatively. They neither made comments nor presented ideas relevant to the studies topics. They did not encourage other group members.

The following steps were taken to remedy the aforementioned problems:

1. The researcher talked to the experimental group to explain the importance of cooperative work and the importance of using these centers as groups; she explained that learners were supposed to work with each other to complete the required tasks in the allotted time. Moreover, the researcher asserted the importance of listening to each other, which would lead them to focus on tasks and to use time effectively.

2. In individual sessions, the researcher talked to students who, she noticed, were trying to impose their ideas on others. She also pointed out the importance of exchanging ideas, collaborating with each other and working as a team. The researcher encouraged them to behave more as a group with their group members.

Until the twenty third of December, 2009 before students started their winter holidays, the researcher kept reviewing the progress checklist over and over again. Afterwards, she made the presented observations in tables (3a) and table (3b) below:

Table (3a)

Checklist 2: Results Towards the End of December, 2009

When working in a group:	**yes**	**no**	**?? Not sure**
1. Group members listen quietly to each other		✓	
2. Wait for the speaker to finish before speaking.		✓	
3. Make comments and submit ideas that are on relevant topic.			✓
4. Disagree with others' opinions without getting angry.		✓	
5. One member tries to impose his ideas on others.	✓		
6. Encourage other group members.			✓
7. Ask questions when needed.			✓
8. If the group has a problem, they take part in the problem solving process, if needed.			✓
9. Students stay on task with regards to assigned activities.	✓		
10. Stay within the time allotted for each activity.		✓	

Table (3b)

Checklist 2: The Results of the Group Work on each Aspect Towards

the End of December, 2009

1. Use of time	
a.	Much time spent without purpose.
b.	distracted others and got off track . ✓
c.	used their time wisely, once they got their ideas clear. ✓
d.	No wasted effort, they stayed on target.
2. Development of Ideas	
a.	Little done to generate ideas.
b.	imposing their ideas on the group. ✓
c.	trying but not creative.✓
d.	encouraging and fully exploring ideas.
3. Ability to make decisions	
a.	Poor resolution of differences.
b.	Let one person rule the group. ✓
c.	Made compromises to get the job done.✓
d.	Genuine agreement and support.
4. Overall Productivity	
a.	Did not accomplish their goal.
b.	Barely accomplished the job. ✓
c.	Just did what they had to. ✓
d.	Highly productive.

Checklist -2 observations in table (3a) and (3b) above reveal that:

1- Students still did not listen to each other. When they disagreed with each

other, they got angry, which made them sometimes get off track.

2- In one of the four groups, one student did not fit well within his group; he

thought that he was better than them. Therefore, his attitude towards

working in centers wasn't positive at all. Moreover, he felt that he liked working individually on the assigned tasks.

3- The groups made a great deal of noise while working at the learning centers.

4- Learners are more encouraged to work in group, they were trying to work on tasks but still they were not creative, they just did what they had to do.

5- One group sometimes finished the requested tasks before other groups; they were very cooperative with each other, divided the material and the tasks effectively, and, therefore, managed the time successfully.

The researcher also noticed that the transition between the centers wasn't smooth, the centers were very close to each other, the setting arrangement was not comfortable for students and they had problems when they wanted to move from one center to another.

To remedy these problems, the following steps were taken:

1. The researcher talked to the student who wasn't cooperative with his group members in an individual session; she explained to him the importance of cooperative learning, and then talked to his group in his presence; she explained what made him unsatisfied with them and they, also, explained how his snobbish behavior upset them. They agreed to have a new start and work on tasks as a group.

2. The researcher talked to the groups' members who were making too much noise and they agreed to become quieter, and to listen to each other.

3. The researcher included more assignments in the learning centers for groups who did their tasks quickly; learners were provided with new tasks to work on when they finish early.

4. To ensure a smoother transition, the researcher scattered the centers, thus, increasing the space between them.

After two months of the center's implementation, the researcher made a new set of observations. These observations were recorded after students had come back from their winter holidays (December, 24th 2009 till January, 10th 2010). Three weeks after the students' returned from the winter holidays, the researcher made the observations presented in tables (4a) and (4b).

Table (4a)

Checklist 3: Results Towards the End of January, 2010

When working in a group:	yes	no	?? Not sure
1. Group members listen quietly to each other	✓		
2. Wait for the speaker to finish before speaking.	✓		
3. Make comments and submit ideas that are on relevant topic.	✓		
4. Disagree with others' opinions without getting angry.		✓	
5. One member tries to impose his ideas on others.	✓		
6. Encourage other group members.	✓		
7. Ask questions when needed.			✓
8. If the group has a problem, they take part in the problem solving process, if needed.	✓		
9. Students stay on task with regards to assigned activities.	✓		
10. Stay within the time allotted for each activity.	✓		

Table (4b)

Checklist 3:The Results of the Group Work on each Aspect towards

the End of January, 2010

1. Use of time
a.   Much time spent without purpose.
b.   distracted others and got off track .
c.   used their time wisely, once they got their ideas clear.
d.   No wasted effort, they stayed on target.✓
2.   Development of Ideas
a.   Little done to generate ideas.
b.   imposing their ideas on the group.
c.   trying but not creative.✓
d.   encouraging and fully exploring ideas.
3.   Ability to make decisions
a.   Poor resolution of differences.
b.   Let one person rule the group.
c.   Made compromises to get the job done.✓
d.   Genuine agreement and support.
4.   Overall Productivity
a.   Did not accomplish their goal.
b.   Barely accomplished the job.
c.   Just did what they had to.   ✓
d.   Highly productive.

Checklist-3 observations in tables (4a) and (4b) reveal that:

1- Students became quieter than before, they listened to each other and they waited for the speaker to finish before speaking.

2- Students used their time effectively. They spent time working and they tried to finish the tasks in the allotted time.

3- Students were more cooperative with their group members. They encouraged their group members, they made comments, presented ideas relevant to the topic and they tried to generate new ideas, yet they didn't ask questions.

4- The same learner who didn't get along with his group returned to his mischievous behavior; he was mean to other group members, talked to them rudely, refused to collaborate with them, and worked on the tasks individually. It was a matter of learning style; he preferred whole-instruction learning. Furthermore, his group didn't give him a chance because they thought that he believed that they were beneath him.

5- The most motivated group, on the other hand, made noise and did not respect other groups' work.

6- Five students were very quiet and only did what they were required to do. They followed what they were instructed either by their teacher (the researcher) or by other group members.

7- The transition between groups was smooth.

After these three weeks (the end of January, 2010), the researcher did the following:

1- Created more individual sessions with quiet learners. The researcher encouraged them verbally to be more involved with their group members, to ask questions if they don't understand and to take part in the discussions.

2- Encouraged students and motivated them to respect other groups' work. Every time students worked on centers, eight members from all groups or even from one group received eight presents as rewards because they were the quietists, most cooperative and enthusiastic.

3- The researcher made the tasks and the centers run more smoothly, since subject matter and tense proved to be difficult areas to address with ESL learners. She always encouraged the learners, accepted the errors they made and assured the learners that they would fully understand the tenses even if it took them some time.

Before the end of this study (towards the end of February, 2010), the researcher made a final set of observations, as shown in tables (5a) and (5b) below.

Table (5a)

Checklist 4: Results Towards the End of February, 2010

When working in a group:	yes	no	?? Not sure
1. Group members listen quietly to each other	✓		
2. Wait for the speaker to finish before speaking.	✓		
3. Make comments and submit ideas that are on relevant topic.	✓		
4. Disagree with others' opinions without getting angry.	✓		
5. One member tries to impose his ideas on others.	✓		
6. Encourage other group members.	✓		

7. Ask questions when needed.	✓		
8. If the group has a problem, they take part in the problem solving process, if needed.	✓		
9. Students stay on task with regards to assigned activities.	✓		
10. Stay within the time allotted for each activity.	✓		

Table (5b)

Checklist 4: The Results of the Group Work on each Aspect towards

the End of February, 2010

1. Use of time
a.   Much time spent without purpose.
b.   distracted others and got off track .
c.   used their time wisely, once they got their ideas clear. ✓
d.   No wasted effort, they stayed on target.
2.   Development of Ideas
a.   Little done to generate ideas.
b.   imposing their ideas on the group.
c.   trying but not creative.✓
d.   encouraging and fully exploring ideas.
3.   Ability to make decisions
a.   Poor resolution of differences.
b.   Let one person rule the group.
c.   Made compromises to get the job done.
d.   Genuine agreement and support.✓
4.   Overall Productivity
a.   Did not accomplish their goal.
b.   Barely accomplished the job.
c.   Just did what they had to. ✓
d.   Highly productive.

Checklist-4 observations in tables (5a) and (5b) reveal that:

1- Although the subject matter was difficult, students were enjoying learning centers activities. They were enthusiastic in the class, and during the week they kept asking the researcher if they were going to work on centers next Monday.

2- Students were comfortable to work in groups, they supported each other and cooperated with each other; the classroom on Monday mornings was similar to a beehive; each learner was busy with his group, enjoying his tasks and learning at the same time.

3- Students listened to each other. Although they became more active they were quieter.

4- Students worked on their tasks, they made comments, submitted ideas, asked questions, and discussed their topics. If they had a problem, they took parts in solving it.

5- Although students worked and completed the required tasks they were not creative. They did what they had to do; they did not make any conclusions and barely made connections.

6- The transitions between the centers were smooth. All groups finished the tasks on time and they knew where to go and how to move around. They enjoyed the movement between centers.

7- The English classroom became an enjoyable class even for "trouble-makers", for they enjoyed the activities with their groups and they tried to learn.

4.3 Portfolios Results

The researcher reviewed students' portfolios on regular basis. At the end of each month during the study she collected the students' portfolios and reviewed them.

After the first month of learning centers implementation (the end of November, 2009), the researcher recorded the following observations:

1- She needed to give students more guided practice before they started working on the Rewrite and the Reading centers; this included a better explanation of procedures, which involved breaking the procedures down for students to increase their knowledge and skill with the new content.

2- The majority of students had difficulty rewriting the tenses in the Rewrite Center (for some Rewrite Center sheets see appedndix -8). In this center, students faced difficulty when they attempted to finish the task of rewriting sentences with new subjects; they either changed the verb incorrectly, especially with the present, present perfect and present continuous tenses, or they rewrote the subject ignoring that the sentences included new subjects which meant that every sentence ended up with two subjects. In some cases, though, they wrote the sentence without any subject at all.

For example: when they were asked to rewrite the sentence "He played football yesterday" into the present tense with the pronoun "She", they either wrote it   "Everyday she play football " or " everyday she *I* play football", or "Everyday play football" without any subject at all.

3- In the Try Try Copy Center, students wrote the verbs incorrectly and the leaders didn't make them rewrite those verbs.

For example: when they were asked to write the verb "caught", they wrote it "cout", they tried again but still made the same error, (see Try Try Copy sheet appendix-9).

4- Most of the students encountered difficulties with verbs ending with the letter (y). They didn't change it to (i) when they added +es or +ed.

For example: when they were asked to write "cry" into the present tense with the third person *she/he* they wrote it "crys" or "cryes" instead of "cries".

When they were asked to change "fry" into the past, they wrote it "fryed" or "fryd" instead of "fried".

5- In the Reading Center (for some Reading Center sheets, see appendix 10), most of the students had difficulty understanding the content of the reading passages. Students weren't able to answer comprehension questions because they could not grasp the meaning of the passages either because they included unfamiliar words (such as: ingredients, picnic, cheered, ribbons, whenever, whatever...etc) or because they didn't understand the tense-forms (present perfect, future, present continuous) used in the passages.

For example: in one of the paragraphs, there was a sentence "Hadi's family has been in Nablus since 2000". This passage was followed by a question "Where does Hadi's family live?" students could not answer the question because they did not understand the present perfect tense.

6- Students faced difficulties as they attempted to form verbs (especially with verb- *to be*) and this was apparent in the Rewrite Center activities.

    For example: they could not rewrite the following sentences:

    1-Yesterday I was thirsty. Today I <u>wases thirsty.</u>

    2- My sister is a doctor at the main hospital. Last year my sister <u>ised a doctor at the main hospital</u>.

    3- I am very happy today. Yesterday she <u>amed very happy.</u>

7- Unfortunately, weak learners couldn't work on the tasks because the content was beyond their scope of knowledge. The term "weak learners" applies here to those who were having learning difficulties, and behavioral issues.

    As a remedial plan the researcher;

- Explained to students what is required of them in the Reading, and Rewrite centers; they should read the passages and the sentences carefully, try to understand them and investigate the sentence parts carefully (especially in the Rewrite Center); to locate the subject, the main verb and the object of the sentence.

- Prepared more sentences with new subjects in the Rewrite center so that learners could have more practice rewriting the verbs into different tenses with different subjects and also in order to ensure the use of tenses in context.

- Added more tasks with familiar words in the Reading center.

- Included more tasks with verbs ending with the letter (y).

- Added more tasks with special focus to verb-*to be* in all the centers.

After the second month of the learning centers' implementation (towards the end of December, 2009), the researcher reviewed students' portfolios and recorded the following observations:

1- Students still had problems with tenses. Tense replacement, especially in the Rewrite center, was the most difficult task. For example, students could not rewrite the following sentences:

  - "Yesterday my mother slept early". Sometimes she <u>sleep early</u>.

  - "She leaves at eight o'clock every morning". Next week she <u>leave at eight o'clock every morning</u>.

  - "My father usually buys me new toys". Yesterday he <u>buyed</u> me a new story.

2- Also, some paragraphs in the Reading Center proved to be difficult for them. Although students had studied the words (buy, borrow, turned, pot, teach…etc) which are used in these tasks, they still couldn't successfully complete the tasks, especially the weak learners.

3- In the Rewrite Center, students still faced difficulty when the subject of the sentence was changed; they either changed the verb incorrectly, or they rewrote the existing subject after the new subject or, in other cases, they wrote the sentence without a subject.

   For example: students could not rewrite the following sentences

  - "Last year she travelled to Jordan". Today I <u>traveling</u> to Syria.

  - "They watched TV last night". Everyday she <u>watch TV</u>.

- "I eat an apple everyday". Tomorrow <u>I ate an apple</u>.

4- In the Try Try Copy Center, the students were not able to write the ten required tenses. Thus, the researcher was satisfied with eight verbs to ensure timely transition to other centers.

5- Students faced difficulties when attempting to form questions and this was apparent through the Rewrite Center. They could not rewrite the following sentences:

- He missed the bus yesterday. <u>Does he miss </u>the bus today?

- I'll open the door for you. <u>Did open the door </u>for me?

- She goes to school everyday. <u>She did go </u>to school yesterday?

The researcher included more tasks on the previously mentioned points. She provided more practice on these points in the learning centers activities. The researcher included easier tasks for weak learners such as simpler reading paragraphs, and varied the questions on these paragraphs in the reading Center.

After the third month of the learning centers' implementation (towards the end of January, 2010), the researcher reviewed students' portfolios and recorded the following observations:

1- The majority of the students had difficulty using the present perfect tense form, while the past participle structure was not easy for them, and they always failed to use this structure; instead, they replaced it with the past tense form especially in the Reading Center and the Rewrite Center.

For example: they could not rewrite the following sentences:

- "She left school at one o'clock". Now it's five, she <u>leaved</u> for three hours.

- "I stayed there for few minutes". Ahmad <u>stays</u> for a long time.

2- Most of the students still faced difficulty when attempting to form verbs (especially the irregular verbs and verb *to-be*) and questions and this was apparent through the Rewrite Center.

They could not rewrite the following sentences:

- Hanin is a nurse. She <u>ised a nurse</u> since 2002.

- They saw the camel yesterday. <u>Does they saw</u> the camel yesterday?

- She goes to the park two times a week. Everyday I <u>went to the park</u> .

3- Students became more proficient in Try Try Copy Center; they succeeded in writing the verbs correctly on the first trial.

4- The Matching Center (for Matching Center game, see appendix -11) was the most enjoyable center because it consisted of a game based activities.

As a remedy for previously mentioned problems the researcher added more tasks on the past participle and the present perfect forms in the Matching, Rewrite and Try Try Copy centers. She provided the students with more tasks containing irregular verbs, verb –to be, and question formation.

Towards the end of the study (the end of February, 2010), students' portfolios were reviewed again. Consequently, the following observations were recorded:

1- Students became more aware of the adverbial cues. They were also more aware of the subjects of the sentences and how to match the verb to each subject as part of the process of subject verb agreement.

2- In the Try Try Copy Center sheets, fewer mistakes were made by students. Students became more proficient and they recognized the verbs and their tenses.

3- In the Rewrite Center, nearly one third of the students worked better than before; they succeeded in rewriting sentences using new tense forms, and they became aware of the sentence parts, the subject, the verb, the object and the adverbial phrase.

4- Students comprehended the passages given in the Reading Center. That was apparent after noticing that most of them were able to answer the questions on the passages, and that they also discussed the tenses used in the passages and wrote them down.

5- The weak learners still couldn't perform the tasks, since their portfolios showed mere copying from other group members.

4.4 Test Results

The pre-post test results were analyzed quantitatively using SPSS. The analysis included results within and between the experimental and the control

groups. Independent T-Test was used to compare the means within and between groups.

4.4.1 The Experimental Group Results

In the following table (6), the results within the experimental group on the pre-test and the post-test are presented. Means and standard deviations for the overall test and for each question in the test were calculated. (For test questions see Appedix-1)

Table (6)

Means and Standard Deviations for the Experimental Group

	Exam	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Q1	Pre Test	30	4.77	2.353	0.43
	Post Test	29	5.07	2.72	0.51
Q2	Pre Test	30	5.61	2.16	0.40
	Post Test	29	8.54	3.31	0.61
Q3	Pre Test	30	1.64	2.46	0.45
	Post Test	29	3.81	3.19	0.59
Q4	Pre Test	30	1.43	1.04	0.19
	Post Test	29	5.83	4.12	0.77
Q5	Pre Test	30	2.50	2.30	0.42
	Post Test	29	5.17	3.96	0.73
Total	**Pre Test**	**30**	**15.95**	**6.94**	**1.27**
	Post Test	**29**	**28.42**	**15.61**	**2.90**

Table (6) reveals that students' total mean on the post test (28.42) is higher than the total mean of the pre-test (15.95). This table also shows that students' means on the first and the third questions in the post-test were a little higher than students' means on these questions in the pre-test. Students' means on the second, fourth and fifth questions in the post test are noticeably higher than students' means on these questions in the pre-test. To examine if these means were statistically significant, Independent T-Test was used to analyze them. Table (7) presents the T-Test results.

Table (7)

Independent Samples Test for Experimental Group

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	Ret	DF	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference			
		Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower
Q1	Equal variances assumed	1.00	0.32	-.45	57	**0.65**	-0.30	0.66	-1.62	1.02
	Equal variances not assumed			-.45	55.26	**0.65**	-0.30	0.66	-1.63	1.03
Q2	Equal variances assumed	13.97	0.00	-4.05	57	**0.00**	-2.93	0.72	-4.38	-1.48
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.02	47.96	**0.00**	-2.93	0.73	-4.40	-1.46
Q3	Equal variances assumed	5.44	0.02	-2.94	57	**0.01**	-2.17	0.74	-3.65	-0.69
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.92	52.68	**0.01**	-2.17	0.74	-3.66	-0.68
Q4	Equal variances assumed	38.62	0.00	-5.66	57	**0.00**	-4.39	0.78	-5.95	-2.84
	Equal variances not assumed			-5.57	31.43	**0.00**	-4.39	0.79	-6.00	-2.79
Q5	Equal variances assumed	21.78	0.00	-3.19	57	**0.00**	-2.67	0.84	-4.35	-0.99
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.16	44.69	**0.00**	-2.67	0.85	-4.38	-0.97
Total	Equal variances assumed	29.49	0.00	-3.99	57	**0.00**	-12.47	3.13	-18.7	-6.20
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.94	38.36	**0.00**	-12.47	3.17	-18.87	-6.06

Table (7) reveals that students' total mean on the post test is statistically significant because Sig. =0.00. This means that there is a significant difference at the level of $\alpha \leq 0.05$ on the means of post achievement test within the experimental group.

This table also shows that students' means on the first question are not significant because Sig. =0.65. Students' means on the second, third, fourth, and fifth questions are statistically significant. Therefore, this table shows that the results within the experimental group for the overall test and for each question, except the first question, are significant. Furthermore, students in the experimental group showed improved achievement in the post-test results.

The following figure (1) shows the maximum, minimum and average scores for the experimental group for the pre-and post-tests.

Figure (1)

The Maximum, the Minimum and the Average Scores for the Experimental
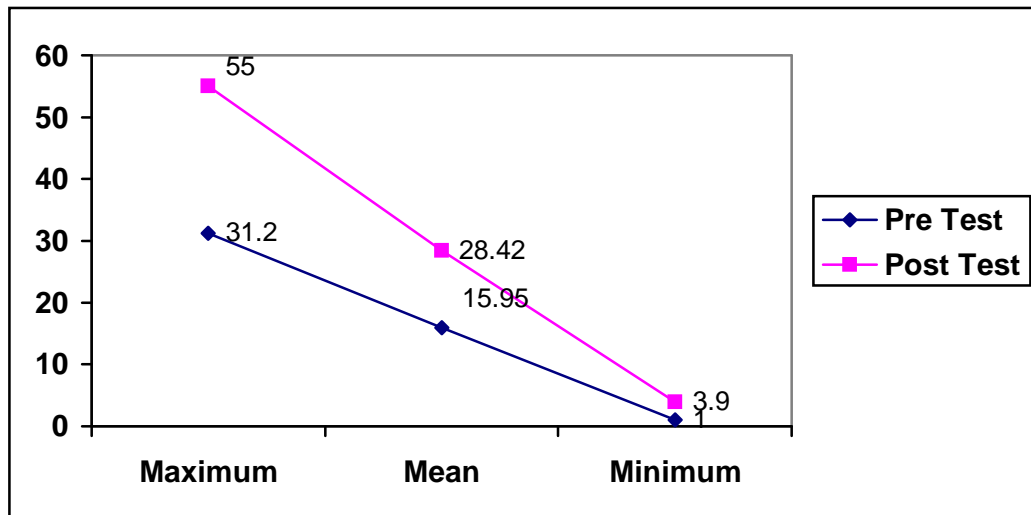
Group

Figure (1) reveals that the maximum score of the experimental group in the post- test (55) is much higher than the maximum score of the pre-test (31.2). The average score of the post-test (28.42) is also much higher than the average score (15.95) of the pre-test. The minimum score of the post test (3.9) is higher than the minimum score (1) in the pre-test.

4.4.2   The Control Group Results

Table (8) presents the results within the control group on the pre-and post-tests. Means and standard deviations for the overall test and for each question in the test were calculated.

Table (8)

Means and Standard Deviations for the Control group

	Exam	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Q1	Pre Test	30	2.83	2.57	0.47
	Post Test	27	3.14	2.83	0.55
Q2	Pre Test	30	5.25	2.19	0.40
	Post Test	27	5.29	3.26	0.63
Q3	Pre Test	30	2.10	2.96	0.54
	Post Test	27	1.83	2.25	0.43
Q4	Pre Test	30	1.57	2.28	0.42
	Post Test	27	1.37	2.20	0.42
Q5	Pre Test	30	1.23	2.21	0.40
	Post Test	27	1.30	2.27	0.44
Total	**Pre Test**	**30**	**12.98**	**9.92**	**1.81**
	Post Test	**27**	**12.93**	**10.98**	**2.11**

Table (8) reveals that students' total mean on the post test (12.93) is a little lower than the total mean of the pre-test (12.98). This table, also, shows that students' means on the first , second and fifth questions in the post-test are little higher than students' means on the same questions in the pre-test. Students' means on the third and fourth questions in the post test are lower than students' means on these questions in the pre-test.

To examine if these means were statistically significant, Independent T-Test was used to analyze them; Table (9) presents the T-Test results within the control group.

Table (9)

<u>Independent Samples Test for Control Group</u>

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower
Q1	Equal variances assumed	0.45	0.50	-0.44	55	**0.66**	-0.31	0.72	-1.75	1.12
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.44	52.82	**0.66**	-0.31	0.72	-1.76	1.13
Q2	Equal variances assumed	4.68	0.04	-0.05	55	**0.96**	-0.04	0.73	-1.50	1.42
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.05	44.83	**0.96**	-0.04	0.74	-1.54	1.46
Q3	Equal variances assumed	0.43	0.51	0.38	55	**0.71**	0.27	0.70	-1.14	1.68
	Equal variances not assumed			0.39	53.57	**0.70**	0.27	0.70	-1.12	1.66
Q4	Equal variances assumed	0.36	0.55	0.33	55	**0.74**	0.20	0.60	-1.00	1.39
	Equal variances not assumed			0.33	54.72	**0.74**	0.20	0.59	-1.00	1.39
Q5	Equal variances assumed	0.03	0.87	-0.11	55	**0.92**	-0.07	0.59	-1.25	1.13
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.11	54.03	**0.92**	-0.07	0.59	-1.25	1.13
Total	Equal variances assumed	0.78	0.38	0.02	55	**0.99**	0.05	2.77	-5.50	5.60
	Equal variances not assumed			0.02	52.72	**0.99**	0.05	2.79	-5.54	5.63

Table (9) shows that there are no significant differences between the results of the pre- and post-tests for the control group because Sig. =0.99. This table also reveals that students' results on each question of the exam don't show any significant differences. Students in the control group show nearly the same achievement in the post test.

The following figure (2) presents the maximum, minimum and average scores for the control group, for the pre- and post-tests.

Figure (2)

The Maximum, the Minimum and the Average Scores for the Control Group
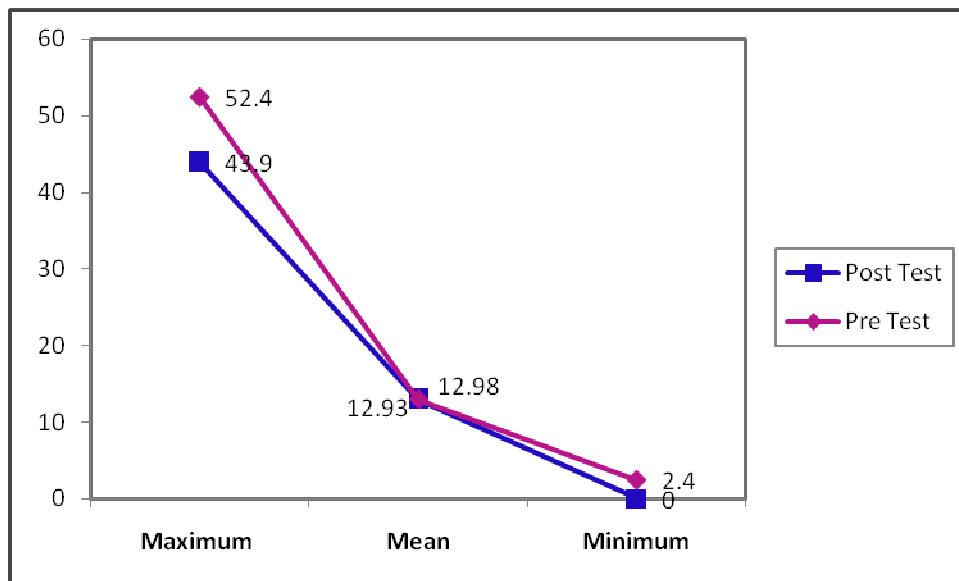
Figure (2) shows that the maximum score (52.4) of the control group for the pre- test is much higher than the maximum score (43.9) of the post-test. The average score of the post-test (12.93) is also lower than the average score (12.98)

of the pre-test. The minimum score of the pre-test (2.4) is a little higher than the minimum score (0) for the post-test.

4.4.3 Test Results Between Groups

1- Pre-Test Results

In the following table (10), the results of the experimental group and the control group for the pre-test are presented. Means and standard deviations for the overall test and for each question in the test were calculated.

Table (10)

Means and Standard Deviations of the Pre-test for the experimental and the Control groups

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Q1	Experimental	30	4.77	2.35	0.43
	Control	30	2.83	2.57	0.47
Q2	Experimental	30	5.61	2.16	0.39
	Control	30	5.25	2.19	0.40
Q3	Experimental	30	1.64	2.46	0.45
	Control	30	2.10	2.96	0.54
Q4	Experimental	30	1.43	1.04	0.19
	Control	30	1.57	2.28	0.41
Q5	Experimental	30	2.50	2.30	0.42
	Control	30	1.23	2.21	0.40
Total	**Experimental**	**30**	**15.95**	**6.94**	**1.27**
	Control	**30**	**12.98**	**9.92**	**1.81**

Table (10) reveals that the experimental group's total mean on the pre-test (15.95) is a little higher than the total mean of the control group (12.98). This table also shows that the experimental group's mean on the first question in the pre-test is noticeably higher than students of the control group's mean on the same question. The experimental group's mean on the second, third, fourth and fifth questions in the pre- test are similar and close to the control group's means on these questions in the pre-test.

To examine the significance of the previous values, they were analyzed using the Independent T-Test. Table (11) presents the T-Test results of the experimental and the control groups on the pre-test.

Table (11)

Independent Samples Test Between Groups (Pre-Test)

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		T-Test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower
Q1	Equal variances assumed	0.35	0.32	3.06	58	**0.00**	1.95	0.64	0.67	3.22
	Equal variances not assumed			3.06	57.55	**0.00**	1.95	0.64	0.67	3.22
Q2	Equal variances assumed	0.37	0.00	0.63	58	**0.53**	0.35	0.56	-0.77	1.48
	Equal variances not assumed			0.63	57.99	**0.53**	0.35	0.56	-0.77	1.48
Q3	Equal variances assumed	0.73	0.02	-0.65	58	**0.52**	-0.46	0.70	-1.87	0.95
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.65	56.10	**0.52**	-0.46	0.70	-1.87	0.95
Q4	Equal variances assumed	4.60	0.00	-0.29	58	**0.77**	-0.13	0.46	-1.05	0.78
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.29	40.52	**0.77**	-0.13	0.46	-1.06	0.79
Q5	Equal variances assumed	2.01	0.00	2.18	58	**0.03**	1.27	0.58	0.10	2.43
	Equal variances not assumed			2.18	57.90	**0.03**	1.27	0.58	0.10	2.43
Total	Equal variances assumed	0.73	0.00	1.34	58	**0.18**	2.97	2.21	-1.45	7.40
	Equal variances not assumed			1.34	51.89	**0.18**	2.97	2.21	-1.47	7.40

Table (11) reveals that there are no significant difference between the experimental and the control groups on the pre-test because Sig. =0.18. This means that the experimental and the control groups have a similar performance level. Furthermore, this table shows that the means of the first and the fifth questions are statistically significant between the experimental and the control groups in the pre-test. This table, also, shows that the results of the experimental group and the control group on the second, third, and the fourth questions in the pre-test are not significant.

2- Post-Test Results

In the following table (12), the results of the experimental group and the control group on the post-test are presented. Means and standard deviations for the overall test and for each question in the test were calculated.

Table (12)

Means and Standard Deviations of the Post-test for the Experimental and the Control Group

	Groups	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Q1	Experimental	29	5.07	2.72	0.50
	Control	27	3.14	2.83	0.55
Q2	Experimental	29	8.54	3.31	0.61
	Control	27	5.29	3.26	0.63
Q3	Experimental	29	3.81	3.19	0.60
	Control	27	1.83	2.25	0.43
Q4	Experimental	29	5.83	4.12	0.77
	Control	27	1.37	2.20	0.42
Q5	Experimental	29	5.17	3.96	0.73
	Control	27	1.30	2.27	0.44
Total	**Experimental**	**29**	**28.42**	**15.61**	**2.90**
	Control	**27**	**12.93**	**10.98**	**2.11**

Table (12) reveals that there is a huge difference in the means of the experimental group (28.42) and the control group (12.93) on the post- test. This table also shows the differences between the means of the experimental and the control groups for each question on the post-test.

To examine if these means were statistically significant, Independent T-Test was used to analyze them. Table (13) shows the T-Test results.

Table (13)

The Independent T-Test Results for the Post-Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Interval Difference	Confidence of the Difference
		Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower
Q1	Equal variances assumed	0.07	0.79	2.60	54	**0.01**	1.93	0.74	0.44	3.42
	Equal variances not assumed			2.60	53.31	**0.01**	1.93	0.74	0.44	3.42
Q2	Equal variances assumed	0.46	0.50	3.70	54	**0.00**	3.25	0.88	1.49	5.00
	Equal variances not assumed			3.70	53.82	**0.00**	3.25	0.88	1.49	5.00
Q3	Equal variances assumed	5.08	0.03	2.66	54	**0.01**	1.98	0.74	0.49	3.47
	Equal variances not assumed			2.70	50.48	**0.01**	1.98	0.73	0.50	3.45
Q4	Equal variances assumed	11.74	0.00	4.99	54	**0.00**	4.46	0.89	2.67	6.25
	Equal variances not assumed			5.09	43.42	**0.00**	4.46	0.88	2.69	6.22
Q5	Equal variances assumed	23.07	0.00	4.45	54	**0.00**	3.88	0.87	2.13	5.62
	Equal variances not assumed			4.54	45.19	**0.00**	3.88	0.85	2.16	5.60
Total	Equal variances assumed	7.99	0.01	4.26	54	**0.00**	15.49	3.63	8.21	22.77
	Equal variances not assumed			4.32	50.36	**0.00**	15.49	3.59	0.44	22.69

Table (13) reveals that the differences between the experimental group's and the control group's total means on the post test are statistically significant because Sig. =0.00. This means that there is a significant difference at the level of α ≤ 0.05 on the means of the post achievement test between the experimental group and the control group. Moreover, students in the experimental group have shown a better achievement in the post-test results than students in the control group.

4.4.4   Test Results for Verb Types

The pre- and post –tests were analyzed to determine students achievement on each verb. The following table (14) shows the experimental group achievement on each verb in the pre- and post- tests.

Table (14)

Tenses Analysis on the Pre- and Post- Tests for the Experimental Group

The verb	The grade for each verb in the exam	Pre- Test Experimental group average on each verb	The percentage of each verb (100%)	Post –Test Experimental group average on each verb	The percentage of each verb (100%)
Past Tense	24.4	5.73	**23.5%**	11.6	**47.5%**
Present Tense	18.9	4.68	**24.76%**	8.3	**43.9%**
Future Tense	7.90	1	**12.65%**	4.6	**58.2%**
Present perfect	6.20	2	**32.25%**	2.7	**43.5%**
Present Continuous	2.60	0.78	**28.8%**	1.2	**46.1%**

Table (14) presents the experimental group results on each tense in the pre- and post- tests. It reveals that students' averages on all tenses in the post-test are noticeably higher than their averages in the pre-test.

Although students in the experimental group had equal practice on tenses, table (14) shows different results for each tense. Students' best achievement was on the future tense whereas their achievement on the past and the present continuous tenses was somewhat lower.

The following table (15) shows the control group's results on each tense.

Table (15)

Tenses Analysis on the Pre- and Post- Tests for the Control Group

The verb	The grade for each verb in the exam	Pre- Test Control group average on each verb	The percentage of each verb (100%)	Post –Test Control group average on each verb	The percentage of each verb (100%)
Past Tense	24.4	5.2	**21.3%**	5.1	**20.9%**
Present Tense	18.9	3.14	**16.6%**	3.7	**19.57%**
Future Tense	7.90	1.75	**22.15%**	1.8	**22.78%**
Present perfect	6.20	1.13	**18.2%**	1.5	**24.19%**
Present Continuous	2.60	0.67	**25.76%**	0.7	**26.9%**

Table (15) presents the control group's results on each tense in the pre-and post- tests. Furthermore, it reveals that the students' highest average (25.76%) was on the present continuous in the pre-test, which is a little lower than its

average in the post test (26.9%). Students' averages on the present perfect and present tenses in the post-test are higher than their averages in the pre-test .However, their average on the future tense in the pre- and post-tests remained nearly the same. Students' average on the past tense in the post test (20.9%) is lower than their average in the pre-test (21.3%).

4.5 The Questionnaire Results

To investigate students' attitudes towards learning centers, the researcher used a Likert type questionnaire with five point scale. It was administered to students in Arabic and the items in the tables are a translation. The questionnaire results were analyzed quantitatively. Descriptive statistics (means, reverse coding and standard deviations), were used to analyze learners' responses to the questionnaire. Students' responses to the positive items were coded using: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree. The reverse coding was used to analyze learners' responses to the negative items 7, 10, 13, 15, 18, 19, 24, 32, and 34. Students' responses' to the negative items were coded reversely: 1=strongly agree, 2= agree, 3=neutral, 4= disagree, 5= strongly disagree. The negative items are highlighted in the tables.

The researcher distributed twenty nine questionnaires; only twenty eight questionnaires were filled; although one of the questionnaires (number 27) was missing answers to nine items, the researcher kept it.

The researcher assumed that if the mean was more than three, learners had positive attitudes toward using learning centers. If the mean of the responses was

less than three, that meant that students had negative attitudes towards using learning centers.

In order to present the questionnaire results as clearly as possible, the researcher grouped the questionnaire items as follows: general items(1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 10, 13, 18, 19, 21, 22, 28, 35, 36, 38), learners' attitudes to group work items (4, 6, 7, 11, 15, 27, 29, 32, 34, 37), Reading Center items(20,31,33), Rewrite Center items(9,14,30), Try Try Copy Center items(12,17,23),and Matching Center items (16,26).

The following items: 1,2,3,5,8,10,13,18,19,21,22,28,35,36, and 38 are general items assess learners' attitudes. The means and the standard deviations for these items appear in table (16).

Table (16)

Learners' General Attitude Towards the Use of Learning Centers

No.	Item	Mean	SD
1	Using learning centers has helped me in learning the English tenses system.	4.62	0.86
2	I prefer to learn the English tense system through learning centers	4.31	0.97
3	I find learning centers fun.	4.31	1.29
5	Learning centers Have made learning the English tense system easy.	4.21	1.08
8	I prefer to use learning centers to learn every aspect of English, not only the English tense system.	4.52	0.99
10	I am against using learning centers to learn	4.28	1.33

	the English tense system.		
13	I prefer learning the English tense system via the conventional methods of teaching.	4.00	1.60
18	It's difficult for the teacher to control the classroom when using the learning centers.	4.21	1.32
19	I find the learning centers boring	4.18	1.54
21	I've liked learning via learning centers because it contained various activities.	4.31	1.23
22	I liked shifting between centers	4.28	1.31
24	The learning centers did not help me learning the tenses well.	4.34	1.29
25	I hope that learning centers are used in learning the other subjects.	3.90	1.54
28	I told my friends about the learning centers which we used to learn the tense system.	3.48	1.50
35	I told my family how much I like the learning centers.	3.79	1.55
36	Based on what I've seen, the learning centers still need some modification.	2.21	1.37
38	I told my teachers about the learning centers which we used in order to learn the English tense system.	3.14	1.53

Table (16) reveals that learners have positive attitudes towards using the learning centers method to learn the English tense system. The mean of item no.1 (4.62) was the highest among the general items. The means of all the general items are above three, except for item 36. Although the means is below three, students thought that the learning centers don't need any modifications. This table

also shows that the standard deviations of these items are relatively low which indicate that the data points tend to be close to their means.

As for items: 4, 6, 7, 11, 15, 27, 29, 32, 34, and 37, showing learners' attitudes towards group work, their means and standard deviations are presented in table (17).

Table (17)

learners' Attitudes Towards Group Work

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
4	Using learning centers has encouraged me to cooperate with other learners.	4.52	1.09
6	I felt attended to as I used those learning centers.	4.43	0.84
7	Learning centers have made it difficult to sustain relations among students.	4.31	1.14
11	We use the time effectively when using the learning centers.	4.48	1.09
15	Learners have made fun of me when we were using the learning centers.	4.21	1.52
27	My group members helped me when we used the learning centers.	4.10	1.35
29	The learning centers have improved my interaction with other learners.	4.41	1.02
32	I haven't felt that I received enough attention when I used the learning centers.	4.21	1.26
34	The problem with learning centers is that only one person takes control over the center.	3.48	1.79

| 37 | The group members have listened to each other in the learning centers. | 3.97 | 1.35 |

Table (17) reveals students' attitudes towards group work in the learning centers activities. The means of all of the items were above three, and the standard deviations were low. Therefore, students have positive attitudes towards group work practice. Moreover, the highest mean was (4.52) for item no. 4 which indicates that the learning centers' activities encouraged learners to cooperate with each other. The lowest mean was (3.48) for item no.34.

The third set of items relates to learner's attitudes towards the Reading Center, as shown in table (18).

Table (18)

Attitudes Towards the Reading Center

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
20	It has been easier for me to comprehend the reading passages after understanding the tense forms used in them as I used the Reading Center.	4.18	1.44
31	There is no doubt that the Reading Center has been enjoyable.	4.14	1.30
33	Working in the Reading Center helped me to understand the reading passages better.	4.24	0.95

Table (18) reveals that students' means on the items (20, 31, and 33) were above four. Therefore, students have positive attitudes towards using the Reading Center.

Learners' attitudes towards working in the Rewrite Center are shown in table (19).

Table (19)

Learners' Attitudes Towards the Rewrite Center

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
9	I have enjoyed using the Rewrite Center.	4.11	1.10
14	I have learned how to write several forms of the verb in the Rewrite.	4.10	1.37
30	Rewriting sentences, while changing tense forms, in the rewrite center helped me understand the English tense system.	4.14	1.13

The previous table (19) shows that learners' means on items (9, 14, and 30) were above four. Therefore, students have positive attitudes towards working in the Rewrite Center

Table (20) shows the means and the standard deviations of the items 12, 17 and 23, which describe learners' attitudes towards Try-Try-Copy Center.

Table (20)

Attitudes Towards Try-Try-Copy Center

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
12	I have learned the tense system more effectively in the Try..try..copy Center	4.46	1.11

| 17 | I believe that the Try try copy Center is fun to use. | 4.54 | 1.26 |
| 23 | I enjoyed writing tenses in the Try..try..copy Center even when I wrote incorrectly. | 4.38 | .90 |

Table (20) shows that students' means on items (12, 17, and 23) were above four. Students, therefore, have positive attitudes towards Try Try Copy center.

As for learners' attitudes towards the Matching Center, they are represented in table (21)

Table (21)

Attitudes Towards Working in the Matching Center

Item No.	Item	Mean	SD
16	I learned how to match verbs in the Matching Center.	4.38	1.15
26	I enjoyed using the Matching Center.	4.41	1.12

Table (21) reveals that learners have positive attitudes towards the Matching Center, their means on these items were above four.

Students Comments

In order to provide students with another chance to add comments, they were given an open ended question at the end of the questionnaire. Most of the twelve students who answered this question had positive attitudes towards using learning centers. Some of students' comments were:

-I found learning centers interesting and I wish them to stay for ever.

- I wish that learning centers would stay but with different group members.

-I wish that the centers would stay and we would stay working in groups.

-I enjoyed Try Try Copy and Matching centers.

-I wish that all the subjects use learning centers; I enjoyed Try Try Copy and Matching centers. I wish them to stay till the end of the scholastic year.

-I enjoyed working in groups very much.

- Learning centers are interesting and I wish them to be more interesting.

- I wish that the centers would stay.

Two students had negative comments towards using the learning centers in learning the English tense system, these were their comments:

-I don't want to use the learning centers any more.

-The learning centers are a waste of time.

Chapter Five

Chapter Five

5. Discussion and Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and implications of the qualitative and quantitative results given in the previous chapter. Answers to pertinent research questions are highlighted and comparisons with concepts raised in the literature are made.

The data for this study is gathered through the use of researchers' checklists, students' portfolios, pre-post tests, and an attitude questionnaire.

5.2 Discussion of Checklists' Results

The checklists results are an indicator of students' behavior and work within a group. A thorough analysis of the checklist results (tables 2a-5b in chapter four) may lead one to infer the following:

1. Learners needed time to be familiar with the centers; the results may have been disappointing at first, but step by step, they understood and recognized the procedures.

2. It is sensible to have differences between students in groups, and since the groups were heterogeneous, students had different learning styles as well as different views of English in that some hold positive attitudes while others have negative ones.

3. Learning centers offered students an opportunity to develop their ability to work in groups, and, therefore, students address each others' problems, listen to each other, and respect each others' opinions. This finding asserts the benefits of working in groups, which is also in accordance with many studies that identify cooperative learning in small groups as an effective learning strategy (Augustine et al., 1989-90; Coke,2005; Johnson and Johnson, 1989; Sills and Digby,1991; Slavin,1995). These studies explain how positive cognitive, affective, and social outcomes are achieved by cooperative learning. Moreover, cooperative learning increases learners' self esteem, attendance, time spent on tasks, enjoyment of school and classes and motivation to learn.

4. Learners also needed time to learn how to cooperate with their group members, since they were used to competitive and individualistic learning.

5. The researcher found it necessary to create harmony between group members and to use different techniques to deal with them, such as individual group sessions, and whole class sessions.

6. Learning centers were an opportunity to enhance and increase students' knowledge of tense forms. Students discussed the tense forms, and recognized them. Thus, these centers offered an opportunity to focus on this important system of the English language within a group.

7. Learning centers did not minimize the teacher's role. They needed preparation, and continuous revision and studying of the groups' work. In the class, the researcher observed students' work, facilitated tasks and examined each student's progress. The focus of learning centers is mainly on both the learner and the content and the role of the teacher is transformed into a participating voice, as was asserted by Graffam (2003), who emphasizes that the constructivist practices, which is clear in the use of learning centers in the present study, become a tool for learning, through which the teacher's role is transformed into a participating voice, not a controlling voice.

8. Working within a group in learning centers didn't necessarily result in noticeably higher achievement, especially for weak learners. Although they tried to cope with other learners, they still did not show noticeable results, as expected, and they didn't make links between tenses. Furthermore, working in small groups was supposed to enhance students' learning among all students of different levels; this was not achieved among weak learners. This finding is not in accordance with Good, Mulryan and McCaslin's findings (1992); they found that small-group instruction facilitates all students' achievement, especially with the basic skills. Also, this finding is not in accordance with Johnson, Johnson and Holubec's findings (1994); that cooperative learning raises the achievement of all students.

9. The checklists' use was very important in this study, as they provided the researcher with indicators about the groups' work progress during the study period. They, also, revealed how different learners worked within groups, how working in small groups affected their learning style and increased their motivation towards learning English, and how learners created relations with their group members. It was also important to use the checklists at different intervals throughout the study. The changes and improvements of learners' work and groups' harmony were shown and reflected using the checklists at different points.

5.3 Discussion of Portfolio Results

The portfolio results presented in chapter four, section 4.3, indicate the following:

1. Learning centers were an opportunity to enhance and increase students' knowledge of English verbs. This was reflected through students' portfolios, where students recognized different verb forms and tenses.

2. The English tense system turned out to be a difficult area for learners, as they had to cover five different tenses, each with its own activities and demands (spelling, rewriting, comprehension and matching.)

3. Learners needed time to show their understanding of the tense system. Nevertheless, their work improved gradually. Therefore, continuous practice of the tenses leads to improved students' results.

4. Students' achievement on the tense system improved. Nevertheless, some improved more than others. This is mainly due to their different levels of performance, to their learning styles, views, and degrees of motivation.

Learning centers did not reduce the teacher's work load, for the teacher needed to revise students' portfolios on a continuous basis. The use of the portfolios was also very important because the portfolios reflected students' strengths and weaknesses and gave a clearer image of their performance levels. They helped the researcher (their teacher), extract relevant information to address problematic issues. Consequently, the students' overall work was enhanced and fewer errors were made towards the end of the study. Kent (2007) concluded in his study that his writing center and the learners' portfolios were effective ways to promote organization of teaching writing and assessing writing. Cosgrove (1992) also pointed out that learning centers is a way to integrate portfolio assessment into the classroom. These centers and portfolios can be beneficial for both students and teachers, since learners can practice and review newly learned skills, and teachers can work with small groups of learners in an organized way, based on their needs and capacities.

5.4 Discussion of Test Results

Using the pre- and post- tests was very important to investigate students' achievement on the English tense system. The results of the control and

experimental groups, within and between groups, showed the effectiveness of the learning centers' approach verses the conventional approach.

The experimental group's pre- and post-test results revealed how the use of learning centers causes significant differences within this group. Furthermore, the achievement of the experimental group, in learning the English tense system using learning centers has been enhanced and improved. In contrast, the control group's pre-and post- test results revealed that the conventional approach in teaching the English tense system did not improve their achievement in acquiring the English tense system. This could be due to the lack of using games, learning centers, checklists and portfolios. Also it could be caused because different materials were used and different teachers' approaches were followed.

The pre-test results between groups, also, revealed that both groups which participated in this study were equivalent groups. Although Table (12) in chapter four reveals that there are no significant difference at the level of $\alpha \leq 0.05$ on the means of pre-achievement test between the control group and the experimental group. There were, still, significant differences between the experimental and control group means on the first and fifth questions.

Additionally, the post-test results showed how learning centers play a crucial role in the acquisition of the English tense system between the experimental and the control groups. Not only was the experimental group's post-test mean, 28.42, higher than the control group's post-test mean, 12.93, but, also, the difference between the means was significant, since students in the experimental group

achieved better than students in the control group. These findings, clearly, do not confirm the hypothesis of this study which is:

-There are no significant differences at the level of $\alpha \leq 0.05$ on the means of post-achievement test between the control group and the experimental group

This study rejects this hypothesis because there is a significant difference at the level of $\alpha \leq 0.05$ on the means of post-achievement test between the control group and the experimental group. The insignificant results of the control group showed how the conventional approach didn't enhance learners' achievement on the English tense system. The teacher-fronted activities, the continuous drills and repetition, and the long exercises did not result in significant results. Whereas the learning centers method, where learners worked independently on tasks, the different, carefully prepared activities, the teacher handling of problematic issues, and the different tasks yielded significant results.

Analyzing students' achievement on each tense in the experimental and the control group, as presented in section 4.4.4 in chapter four, presents the learning centers' noticeable role in improving the experimental group's achievement on each tense.

While table (15) in chapter four revealed that the control group's performance on each tense didn't improve, table (14) in chapter four revealed that the experimental group showed a noticeable improvement on each tense. However,

the tenses did not have equal weighs in the pre and the post tests, the ratio of each tense to the over all tenses which were covered might not be accurate.

5.5 Discussion of Questionnaire Results

Reviewing tables (16-21) in chapter four reveals that students had positive attitudes towards using the learning centers to learn the English tense system. Learners liked the learning centers and have, even, told their parents and teachers about them, since they enjoyed the activities contained within them, have found it easier to acquire the English tense system through these centers, and have enjoyed moving around as they moved from one center to the next. Learners also enjoyed working in groups, helped and encouraged each other. They used the time effectively and they felt attended to when they used the learning centers. The learning centers also have improved their interaction with other learners and they have developed positive relationships.

Furthermore, the students comprehended the reading passages easily because they had understood the tense forms which were used in these passages at the reading center.

They also had positive attitudes towards working in the Rewrite Center, which means that learners have enjoyed it. They have, also, learned how to write several forms of the verb, and they understood the English tense system because they rewrote many sentences, and they changed the tense forms correctly.

Learners' attitudes toward the Try Try Copy Center were also positive, which indicates that learners have enjoyed writing tenses, even when they wrote them

incorrectly, since they found this center amusing and it helped them learn the English tense system.

Learners, also, had positive attitudes towards working in the Matching Center; they have learned how to match verbs and they have enjoyed using this center.

These and other previous results will be discussed in relation to the study questions.

Students were provided with an open ended question as an opportunity for them to add more comments. However, only twelve students answered this question, simply because they might have felt that the questionnaire covered all the important points. In addition, students' responses to this question varied from one student to another. Nevertheless, most of them held positive attitudes towards using the learning centers. They mostly enjoyed the Matching and Try Try Copy centers; they wished that they could stay using the centers and continue working in small groups. These results are in accordance with Gaith (2003) who found out that the more learners worked together the more they felt that their teachers and mates liked them and cared about them personally and academically. In addition, these results are in accordance with Sachs, Candlin, Rose and Shum (2003) who report students' feedback on cooperative learning. Furthermore, they stated that learners enjoy cooperative learning tasks, since their students enjoyed speaking English in groups and felt that they had more freedom in class.

Additionally, only two pupils had negative attitudes towards using the learning centers, one of whom didn't want to continue using the centers, and the

other one simply thought of them as a waste of time. After checking this student's identity, it was found that this student was the one who previously had problems adapting to his group; it might have been that he didn't get along with his group or that the competitive learning was his own learning style.

5.6 Discussion of the Study Questions

5.6.1 First Question: What is the role of learning centers in L2 learners' achievement in acquiring the English tense system?

Learning centers' activities enhance and improve students' acquisition of the English tense system. Also, students' understanding, knowledge, application and practice of the tenses are improved since students' portfolios and the pre- post test results indicate that the experimental group's achievement in acquiring the English tense system has improved.

It is essential to mention, here, that the results of the present study reflect the difficulty of learning the English tense system by nonnative learners of English. This difficulty poses a great challenge for Palestinian English language teachers. Moreover, this challenge is addressed by Celce-Murcia (1991) and (1992) who point out that the main challenge for language teachers is to develop effective ways of focusing learner's attention on form at critical moments while learners are using the second language for purposeful communication, which helps learners develop grammatical accuracy.

The results of the present study also assert that while there are many different grammar teaching strategies, such as communicative drills, declarative, and procedural knowledge (Mckeachie, Pintrich and Lin, 1985), which can facilitate learning in the classroom, language teachers, still, need to discern a sense of that guides them to the grammar teaching strategies which best facilitate learning.

The portfolio results in this study also indicate that learning centers enhance and increase students' achievement in the acquisition of the English tense system. Students' work on the tenses enhanced gradually, and continuous practice led to better results, as students became more aware of the tense forms; they recognized the tenses in authentic contexts. Furthermore, this finding is also in accordance with Ellis (1995), as he suggests an alternative approach to grammar teaching, based on interrupting input by making learners notice grammatical features in the input, comprehend their meanings, and compare the form present in the input with those occurring in learner's output. He, also, emphasizes that a complete language program should include a variety of tasks which invite both focus on form and focus on message conveyance.

Learning centers provide an opportunity for teachers to focus on learners' needs. This was reflected through the continuous revision of the researcher checklists and students' portfolios, and the continuous updates of the activities to meet learners' needs. On the other hand, weak learners in the classroom did not show better results in the acquisition of the English tense system. Also, their portfolios reflected the difficulty they faced with this grammatical area of English, since their work showed mere copying from their group members. Not

only are their results linked to the controversial debate on the teaching and learning of the English grammar, whether to teach English grammar or not, but, also, these results are in accordance with Cowan's (2008) statement, as he points out that the use of verb forms is one of the two or three most difficult areas for English language learners to master. Nevertheless, teaching could be improved by taking into account the enhancement of teaching of different things, including verb forms, tense and aspect. It is also important to keep in mind that these results are limited to the time period during which this study took place.

It is worth mentioning that students' achievement in the experimental group on each tense form has also improved; further practice for a longer period may increase students' achievement on the tense forms.

Based on the above, it is still reasonable to search for, and examine, different techniques and strategies to teach grammar, in order to enhance the teaching and learning of grammar in the Palestinian context as well as the communicative competence of the Palestinian learners of English. This new paradigm in the English classroom, the learner-centered paradigm, recognized by the use of the learning centers, should be introduced and adopted in Palestinian English classrooms. Through the use of this technique, learners' knowledge of the English tense system is enhanced and their achievement is improved.

Moreover, the use of learning centers functions as a tool for grammar raising consciousness which is in accordance with Fotos (1994), who investigates grammar consciousness-raising tasks as one way to integrate formal instruction within a communicative framework. The results of his study support the use of

grammar consciousness-raising tasks as one possible method for the development of knowledge of problematic grammar structures, such as; indirect object placement, word order, adverb placement, and relative clause usage, through communicative activities.

5.6.2 Second Question: How do learning centers help learners deal with the complexity of the tense system?

Results of the checklists, students' portfolios, attitude questionnaire and the pre- post tests reveal that the implemented learning centers help learners deal with the complexity of the tense system. Learners in the learning centers practice the tenses, and are asked to recognize and discuss them. Furthermore, the pre-and post-test results support the assumption that the tasks which address the tense system were more in number and usefulness than those used in conventional classes. The tasks weren't moved linearly as followed by with the control group, there was more reinforcement and continuous representations. The tasks were reviewed and revised continuously. Moreover, learners in the experimental group became more active in the process of learning the tense system. By using the learning centers, they were also given more time to absorb and practice the tense system. These finding are in accordance with Petty (2004), who points out that learning is an active "meaning-making" process; information will only stay in the long-term memory if it is reused or recalled. Hintzman (2010) states that what governs the learners' abilities to recall what they have learnt is "frequency and

recency" which means that those things which are most often repeated and most recently learned are best remembered. Therefore, the important points should be practiced, repeated, restated and reemphasized to help the students remember them (Hintzman). In this study, students practiced, repeated, restated and reemphasized the important points in the tense system each week for around four months.

The checklists' results indicate that the cooperative atmosphere, the enjoyment of the tasks and the transition between them enhance students' work and achievement. This was, also, emphasized by Scott and Ytreberg (1990), who advise English teachers to make room for shared experiences which can be exchanged through student grouping. Small groups are a good opportunity for language work, for they create an atmosphere of involvement and togetherness. They, also, stress that genuine cooperative pair work or group work is usually the result of a long process of planning and preparation.

Furthermore, because students' needs are different, working in learning centers provide opportunities for each member of the group to address his weaknesses and to observe and learn from others' strengths as was revealed by the checklists' results. The use of learning centers provides an opportunity for cooperative learning in class. This finding is in accordance with Ghaith (2003), who examined classroom atmosphere and its relationship with cooperative, individualized, competitive forms of instruction and achievement in the English language classrooms. In Gaith's study, the participants were 135 university EFL

learners. The results of indicate that cooperative learning in small groups was positively correlated with learners' perceptions of fairness of grading, class cohesion and social support. This means that the more participants experienced cooperative study in small groups, the more they perceived that everyone in class got the grades they deserved and had an equal chance to be successful if they worked hard to achieve their goals. Also, the more learners worked together the more they felt that their teachers and mates liked and cared about them personally and academically.

Bongfiglio, Daly, Persampieri and Anderson (2006), examined the effects of several combinations of instructional and motivational interventions on oral reading fluency in the context of small group reading instruction. The results of their study indicate that all treatments were effective in increasing responses for all participants. Furthermore, Performance and academic engagement increased. The use of learning centers in the present study asserted the importance of using different strategies and approaches in teaching EFL, which is in accordance with Bongfiglio, Daly, Persampieri and Anderson.

It is essential to mention the importance of using games in teaching English, as learners in this study have enjoyed practicing the learning center activities which were presented as games. Gaudart (1999) discusses how games can be effective tools for teaching English to speakers of other languages in Malaysia; he argues that games like card games, board games, simulation games and party-type games should be used in 90% of the teaching time. Not only do games

motivate students to learn and gives them the opportunity to practice the foreign language structures, but they also allow learners to fully use the language that they have learned, and participate in the communicative process throughout the game.

The learners' responses to the questionnaire items, that describe the centers, were positive. These centers as was mentioned before motivate learners toward learning, judging by the fact that students have enjoyed all the centers; it can be concluded that these centers function as a motivating factor for learning ;they provide learners with the opportunity to practice English grammar in a nontraditional way which helps them deal with the complexity of the tense system.

5.6.3 Third Question: What are the learners' attitudes towards using learning centers in learning the English tense system?

The results of the questionnaire show that students had positive attitudes toward the learning centers' activities; they have enjoyed the activities and benefited positively from them. They viewed them as better tools to learn the English tense system. Moreover, students became more enthusiastic and thrilled about the English class, and despite the fact that weak learners did not show higher achievement in the post test, the majority of learners, still, had positive attitudes towards using learning centers in learning the English tense system. The findings of this study are in accordance with a study conducted by Shaaban (2006), who investigated the effect of jigsaw cooperative learning, learning in

small groups, and whole class instruction in improving learners' reading comprehension, vocabulary acquisition and motivation to read. Shaaban's study reflects reality; the results of his study did not indicate any significant differences between the control and the experimental groups on the dependent variables of reading comprehension and vocabulary acquisition, they, still, revealed statistical, significant differences in favor of the experimental group on the dependent variable of motivation to read and its dimensions, the value of reading, and reading self-concept. Clearly, although there might not be any significant differences between groups, there might be other motivational benefits such as positive attitudes toward learning English, a more relaxing atmosphere, and more positive personal relationships.

5.7 **Limitations of the Study**

A number of limitations need to be addressed and acknowledged regarding the present study. First of all, this study was conducted in Kufur Aqab Male School in the scholastic year 2009/2010 so it investigates the impact of learning centers on male learners only. Further research on female learners is needed. Also, the number of participants in this study is too small to warrant generalizations. It is also possible that the use of portfolios and checklists with the experimental group only might have impacted its progress in acquiring the tense system. Therefore, it is important to neutralize the impact of such tools in further studies. Additionally larger scale studies are needed to confirm the findings of the present study.

5.8 **Conclusions and Suggestions for Further Research**

The results of this study have many implications which are highlighted within the frameworks of this study. Moreover, this study reflects that what learners do is more important than what teachers do, since teaching is just a means to an end. This brings into discussion that the results of this study emphasize the necessity of bringing the constructivist practices into the classroom, in which the teacher's functions is a facilitator not a controller and in which the most important entity is the learner. By emphasizing the learner, this study asserts the principles of the humanistic approach which includes the development of human values, the growth in self-awareness and in the understanding of others, the sensitivity to human feelings and emotions, and the active student involvement in learning. Moreover, Bala (2007) asserts that the core objective of learning is that teaching practices should continue to be rooted in the enrichment and the improvement of the learner. Learning centers' practices are rooted in this belief.

The findings of this study emphasize benefits of cooperative language learning to foreign language learning. The learning centers' activities provide chances for comprehensible input and output. In addition, they offer a relaxed climate in the classroom, and also increase student motivation.

The learner-centered practices are emphasized and encouraged by the findings of this study. This study focuses on the learners' individual needs, for it builds on their experiences and backgrounds and it respects their capacities and interests, in that they prefer games, transition and small group work. It, also, recognizes how

learning occurs. Harris and Graham (1994) mention that actual understanding can take place only when children fully participate in their own learning. This will direct them into deeper and richer understanding and use of knowledge; as a result, they will promote access to this knowledge and will be able to apply what they have learnt. The use of the learning centers provides learners with opportunity to fully practice and participate in their own learning, as the students' practice of tenses in the learning centers directed them into deeper and richer understanding of the English tense system.

Additionally, the present study suggests a new way for teaching the English tense system. Furthermore, teaching the English tense system using the conventional approach didn't result in any significant differences, whereas using the learning centers emphasizes the need for English teachers to try and explore different teaching strategies and techniques.

Teaching English grammar to non-native learners is a controversial issue. The techniques and the approaches that are used are controversial also. This study attempts to present teaching grammar as an important dimension in enhancing learners' communicative competence. It is important for Palestinian teachers to improve the methods of English teaching. They should impose and try several and different techniques to provide their students with the maximum range of opportunities to learn English, and become competent learners. The learner-centered paradigm is a distinguished paradigm in the learning and teaching of

EFL. Further research is needed to emphasize the findings of this study. It may include:

- Other approaches to teaching English as a foreign language, and its different aspects (such as vocabulary, reading, writing..etc) need to be addressed. Since this study only discusses the learner-centered approach in teaching the English tense system, it is very important to conduct further research discussing the teacher-centered approach and the interrelationship of these two areas. The reason behind this need lies in the need for relating the learner-oriented approaches to teacher-oriented ones, which could lead to comprehensive EFL teaching/learning methods through which a more comprehensive teaching method might result.

  Since this study studied students' attitudes, what motivates and helps them acquire the tense system, teacher-oriented research needs to be conducted. It is essential to investigate the approaches used by the teachers and the conventions behind them. Actual observation of what is currently happening in classrooms, teaching methods and learning preferences, needs to be carried out. This is due to the insufficient, qualitative, descriptive research in that field. To explain more, quantitative research, whose data is collected through questionnaires and such, lacks the descriptive qualities which qualitative research has. This might help in finding ways to relate teachers' approaches to learners' needs.

- The limited number of subjects used in this study cannot be generalized to all language learners in Palestine. Therefore, true-experimental research, on larger scale, is needed. This would help implement this approach in Palestinian classrooms.

- Most research conducted, so far, has not been used in the Palestinian class rooms. This lack of research implementation results in wasting all these efforts and endeavors. Due to this, I suggest attempting to implement some of the researched teaching/learning methods in teachers' preparation programs. This should increase the effectiveness of teaching English as a foreign language, which will continue to improve, providing learners with more effective ways to acquire English.

- As for the learning centers' techniques, teachers training programs should be implemented to train teachers to use this technique in their classes, since, as this thesis asserts, the learning centers' approach should replace the conventional way of teaching the English tense system.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Pre-Post Test

Session one   Kufur Aqab School

English Grammar Test

Name: _____

Date: _____   5th Grade

Time Needed: 40 minutes   Total Marks (_____/35)

This is a grammar test. It has three parts. Please read the questions and answer them carefully.

_____

Part One

(10 minutes)   (___/8) points

**Fill in the blanks with the correct tense. The first one is done for you as an example.

Everyday I   Yesterday I

1. play   _played_   football.
2. make   _____ a chocolate cake.
3. stay   _____ at home after school.
4. _____   _wrote_   a short story.
5. _____   _got_   home at two o'clock.
6. _____   _took_   my bike to the park.
7. sleep   _____ early.
8. have   _____ fruits for breakfast.

9. travel   _____ to school by car.

10. _____   <u>went</u> to the cinema.

11. _____   <u>saw</u> my holiday photos.

Part two:

(15 minutes)   (____/ 12) points

** Circle the correct answer. The first one is done for you as an example.

1. Yesterday she _____with her friends.

a. plays   b. is playing   c. played

2. Helen _____ after she finishes this story.

a. slept   b. will sleep   c. has slept

3. The train to Haifa _____at eight o'clock every morning.

a. leaves   b. left   c. leave

4. Did you _____ a good holiday?

a. has   b. have   c. had

5. My brother _____ his passport. He can't find it now.

a. loses   b. has lost   c. have lost

6. Someone _____on the door now.

a. knocks   b. knocked   c. is knocking

7. Do you _____ swimming?

a. likes   b. liked   c. like

8. Ali can't wait until now. He_____ his lunch.

a. has eaten   b. is eaten   c. was eaten

9. They didn't _____ by train.

a. travel   b. travels   c. travelled

10. She is tired. She_____ a picture tomorrow.

a. painted   b. will paint   c. has painted

11. Autumn _____ _____after winter.

a. don't come   b. doesn't come   c. didn't come

12. Please be quiet. He _____ now.

a. was working   b. am working   c. is working

13. They _____in America for three days.

a. has been   b. been   c. have been

14. The teacher _____ his parents tomorrow. He will be busy.

a. don't call   b. won't call   c. didn't call

15. Ahmad _____ to his work at half past seven yesterday.

 a. arrived   b. arrives   c. is arriving.

16. Ali _____ in the library for two hours.

a. have been   b. has been   c. were

Part Three:

(15 minutes)   (_____/ 15) points

**Read this story then fill in the blanks with the verbs in the box. The first one is done for you as an example

will come-   started-   play –   takes-   lost-   fell- woke-   get-   goes-   missed-   climbed-   sat-   are –

John is late

John ___takes___ the bus to school every morning. He _ _ _ home by bus every afternoon.

Yesterday he _ _ _ _ _ _ the bus because he _ _ _ _ _ _ his watch that morning at the swimming pool.

John _ _ _ _ _ _ to walk home. It was a long walk. He _ _ __ _ down under a tree and then he _ _ _ _ asleep. John _ _ _ _ _ up suddenly. He heard a noise. It was his father's car. His father was angry.

"Next time you_ _ _ _ _ late you must phone me. Then I   _ _ _ _ _ _ _ and _ _ _ _ _ you," said his father.

The End of the Question

Thank You

No Gains Without Efforts

Session two   Kufur Aqab School

English Grammar Exam

Name: _____

Date: _____   5th Grade

Time Needed: 40 minutes   Total Marks (_____/25)

    This is a grammar exam. It has two parts. Please read the questions and answer them carefully.

_____

Part One:

(20 minutes)   (____/ 15) points

** Write the correct form of the verb in brackets. The first one is done for you as an example

1. You___had___ a holiday last week. (have).
2. I usually _____my lunch at home. (take)
3. She _____ these shoes since 2006. (have)
4. My uncle _____ next Monday. (leave)
5. Adam always _____ cereal for breakfast. (have)
6. Last year they _____ a little house. (buy)
7. I_____ this newspaper, you can take it. (finish)
8. Ahmad and Ali _____their bikes now. (ride)
9. Bill _____the monkeys this morning. (feed)
10. Samer_____ the shop tomorrow. (open)
11. Letters _____usually sent by air. (be)
12. _____ you bring the letter yesterday? (do)

13. Ahmad moved to Nablus two days ago. He _____ in Ramallah for 5 years. (live)

14. My mother _____ us lunch if she has time. (cook)

15. Yesterday I _____him. (meet)

16. He _____ tomorrow in the big race. (run)

Part two:

(20 minutes)   (_____/ 10) points

**Read, then complete the following paragraph.

Every night my teacher carries his bag, leaves school and returns home where he has dinner with his family. After that he watches TV with his family till eight o'clock.

Last night my teacher _____

_____

_____

** Read, then complete the following paragraph.

Yesterday it was very hot. I woke up at seven o'clock in the morning. I put on my clothes and left to the swimming pool where I enjoyed my time.

Today it _____ _____

_____

_____

The End of the Questions
Good Luck
No Gains Without Efforts

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

استبانة لقياس اتجاهات طلبة الصف الخامس الابتدائي نحو استخدام مراكز التعلم في
اكتساب بعض صيغ أفعال اللغة الانجليزية

رقم الاستبانة:........................

أعزائي الطلبة....

أود أن أعلمكم بأني أقوم بإجراء دراسة علمية حول معرفتكم للغة الإنجليزية. لذا،
وكما لاحظتم في الأشهر الماضية استعملت عدداً من مراكز التعلم لتدريس جزء من مادة
اللغة الانجليزية المقررة عليكم. وهنا اطلب مساعدتكم في دراستي. أعطوني رأيكم في تلك
المراكز. عبروا عن رأيكم بكل صراحة وحرية. آراؤكم ستساعدني وستساعد مدرسين
آخرين لإيجاد الوسيلة المناسبة لتدريسكم و تدريس غيركم من الطلاب بطريقة أفضل.

أرجو أن تنتبهوا إلى ما يلي:

- قراءة جميع العبارات بعناية.
- الاستفسار عن أي عبارة غير واضحة.
- إعطاء رأيكم في جميع العبارات.
- لا داعي لذكر الإسم.
- قد تحتاجون قرابة الساعة للإجابة على العبارات.

و شكرا جزيلا لمساعدتكم
الباحثة: معلمتكم رفيف أرناؤوط

دائرة التربية

كلية الدراسات العليا

جامعة بيرزيت

*التعليمات:

من فضلك ضع إشارة (✓) عند الاختيار الذي يعبر عن وجهة نظرك نحو كل عبارة من العبارات التالية.

لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق	محايد	أوافق	أوافق بشدة	العبارة	الرقم
					استخدام مراكز التعلم ساعدني على تعلم الأفعال في مادة اللغة الإنجليزية.	1-
					أفضل أن أتعلم الأفعال عن طريق مراكز التعلم.	2-
					أجد بأن مراكز التعلم ممتعة.	3-
					استخدام مراكز التعلم شجعني على التعاون مع الطلاب الاخرين.	4-
					تجعل مراكز التعلم دراسة الأفعال سهلة.	5-
					لقد أحسست باهتمام كبير نحوي من خلال مراكز التعلم.	6-
					تجعل مراكز التعلم العلاقات بين الطلاب صعبة.	7-
					أفضل استخدام مراكز التعلم بشكل دائم في تعلم كل تطبيقات اللغة الإنجليزية و ليس فقط الأفعال.	8-
					استمتعت باستخدام مركز التعلم Rewrite..	9-
					لا أؤيد استخدام مراكز التعلم في دراسة الأفعال.	10-
					نستغل الوقت بشكل جيد حين نعمل في مراكز التعلم.	11-
					تعلمت كتابة الأفعال بشكل أفضل في مركز التعلم Try..try..copy.	12-
					أفضل طريقة التدريس العادية المألوفة على مراكز التعلم في دراسة أفعال اللغة الإنجليزية.	13-
					تعلمت كتابة عدة صيغ لنفس الفعل في مركز التعلم ..Rewrite.	14-
					كان الطلاب يهزأون بي حين كنا نستعمل مراكز التعلم.	15-
					تعلمت مطابقة صيغ الأفعال المتشابهة في مركز التعلم Matching center.	16-

					أرى بأن مركز التعلم Try try copyممتع.	17-
					تصعب سيطرة المعلمة على الصف عند استخدام مراكز التعلم.	18-
					أرى بأن مراكز التعلم مملة.	19-
					كان فهم قطع القراءة سهلاً عندما فهمت الأفعال الموجودة فيها باستعمال مركز التعلم Reading center .	20-
					أحببت التعلم في مراكز التعلم وذلك لأنها تحتوي على فعاليات متنوعة.	21-
					أحببت التنقل بين مراكز التعلم.	22-
					استمتعت بكتابة الأفعال في مركز التعلم Try..try..copy حتى و إن أخطأت.	23-
					لم تساعدني مراكز التعلم على تعلم الأفعال بشكل جيد.	24-
					أود لو أن مراكز التعلم تستخدم في تعلم المواد الأخرى.	25-
					استمتعت باستخدام مركز التعلمMatching center.	26-
					ساعدني طلاب مجموعتي حين استخدمنا مراكز التعلم.	27-
					حدثت أصدقائي من طلبة المدرسة عن مراكز التعلم التي نستعملها في دراسة أفعال اللغة الإنجليزية.	28-
					حسنت مراكز التعلم تفاعلي مع الطلاب الآخرين.	29-
					إن تحويل الجمل من صيغة فعل لصيغة فعل أخرى في مركز التعلم Rewrite ساعدني على فهم أفضل للأفعال.	30-
					لا شك بأن مركز التعلم Reading center كان ممتعاً.	31-
					لم أشعر بالاهتمام الكافي بي من خلال استخدام مراكز التعلم.	32-
					ساعدني العمل في مركز التعلم Reading center على فهم القطع بشكل أفضل.	33-
					المشكلة في مركز التعلم هي أن شخصاً واحداً يتحكم به.	34-
					حدثت عائلتي عن حبي لمراكز التعلم.	35-
					بناءاً على ما رأيت فإن مراكز التعلم تحتاج إلى بعض التعديل.	36-

| | | | | | كان أفراد المجموعة يستمعون إلى بعضهم البعض في مراكز التعلم. | 37- |
| | | | | | حدثت معلمي المواد الأخرى عن مراكز التعلم التي نستعملها في تعلم أفعال اللغة الانجليزية. | 38- |

هل لديك ملاحظات

أخرى_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Translation of Questionnaire Items

لا أوافق بشدة **Strongly disagree**	لا أوافق **disagree**	محايد **Neutral**	أوافق **Agree**	أوافق بشدة **Strongly Agree**	العبارة(**Items**)	الرقم (**Number**)
					Using learning centers has helped me in learning the English tenses.	-1
					I prefer to learn the English tense system through learning centers.	-2
					I find learning centers fun.	-3
					Using learning centers has encouraged me to cooperate with other learners.	-4
					Learning centers Have made learning the English tense system easy.	-5
					I felt attended to as I used those learning centers.	-6
					Learning centers have made it difficult to sustain relations among students difficult.	-7
					I prefer to use learning centers to	-8

						learn every aspect of English, not only the English tense system.	
						I have enjoyed using the Rewrite Center.	-9
						I am against using learning centers to learn the English tense system.	-10
						We use the time effectively when using the learning centers.	-11
						I have learned the tense system more effectively in the Try..try..copy Center	-12
						I prefer learning the English tense system via the conventional methods of teaching.	-13
						I have learned how to write several forms of the verb in the Rewrite Center.	-14
						Learners have made fun of me when we were using the learning centers.	-15
						Matching center. I learned how to match verbs in the Matching Center.	-16
						I believe that the Try try copy center is fun to use.	-17
						It's difficult for the teacher to control the classroom when using	-18

						the learning centers.	
						I find the learning centers boring.	-19
						It has been easier for me to comprehend the reading passages after understanding the tense forms used in them as I used the Reading center.	-20
						I've liked learning via learning centers because it contained various activities.	-21
						I liked shifting between centers.	-22
						I enjoyed writing tenses in the Try..try..copy center even when I wrote incorrectly.	-23
						The learning centers did not help me learn the tense system well.	-24
						I wish that learning centers would be used in learning all the other subjects.	-25
						Matching center.التعلم I enjoyed using the Matching Center.	-26
						My group members helped me when we used the learning centers.	-27
						I told my friends about the learning centers which we used to learn the tense	-28

						system.	
						The learning centers have improved my interaction with other learners.	-29
						Rewriting sentences, while changing tense forms, in the rewrite center helped me understand the English tense system.	-30
						There is not doubt that the reading Center has been enjoyable.	-31
						I haven't felt that I received enough attention when I used the learning centers.	-32
						Working in the Reading center helped me to understand the reading passages better.	-33
						The problem with learning centers is that only one person takes control over the center.	-34
						I told my family how much I like the learning centers.	-35
						Based on what I've seen, the learning centers still need some modification.	-36
						The group members have listened to each other in the learning centers.	-37

					I told my teachers about the learning centers which we used to learn the English tense system.	-38

<u>Appendix 3: Progress Checklist</u>

Directions

The researcher should complete a copy of this form for each group while performing in learning centers. This checklist is useful for monitoring group progress, on issues such as cooperation and collaboration with each other.

A) **Indicate YES**, **NO**, **??** (not sure). For each of the following items

B) Upon completing the ten statements above, identify the three most problematic items that need remedies

Student's group:_____   Date:_____

When working in a group:	yes	no	?? Not sure
1. Group members listen quietly to each other			
2. Wait for the speaker to finish before speaking.			
3. Make comments and submit ideas that are on relevant topic.			
4. Disagree with others' opinions without getting angry.			
5. One member tries to impose his ideas on others.			
6. Encourage other group members.			
7. Ask questions when needed.			
8. If the group has a problem, they take part in the problem solving process, if needed.			
9. Students stay on task with regards to assigned activities .			
10. Stay withen the time allotted for each activity.			

C- **Tick** the statements that best express the work of the group on each aspect below:

1. **Use of time**

    a.   Much time spent without purpose

    b.   distracted others and got off track

    c.   used their time wisely, once they got their ideas clear

    d.   No wasted effort, they stayed on target.

2. **Development of Ideas**

    a.   Little done to generate ideas

    b.   imposing their ideas on the group.

    c.   trying but not creative

    d.   encouraging and fully exploring ideas.

3. **Ability to make decisions**

    a.   Poor resolution of differences.

    b.   Let one person rule the group.

    c.   Made compromises to get the job done.

    d.   Genuine agreement and support.

4. **Overall Productivity**

    a.   Did not accomplish their goal.

    b.   Barely accomplished the job

    c.   Just did what they had to.

    d.   Highly productive.

Appendix 4 : A Survey of the Tenses learned by students from 1st to 5th Grade

Source:Liz, Driscoll. (2001). *Get Set Go, pupil's book*, 8th Ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

PRESENT SIMPLE	PRESENT Continuous	PRESENT PERFECT	FUTURE SIMPLE	PAST Continuous
✔ Present simple of verb to be				
✔ present simple of verb to be + like+ want	✔ action verbs			
✔	✔			
✔	✔	✔	✔ be going to	
✔	✔	✔ present perfect with since / for	✔	✔

<u>Appendix 5: Tenses Explanation</u>

The Past Simple

CONTENT	KNOWLEDGE	COMPREHENSION	APPLICATION	ANALYSIS	SYNTHESIS	EVALUATION
The Past Tense: express the idea that an action started and finished at a specific time in the past. Examples: • I **saw** a movie yesterday. • I **didn't see** a play yesterday. • **Did** you **have** dinner last night? Regular and Irregular Verbs:			✔	✔		
<u>New Verbs: travelled, stayed, bought, wrote, slept, read, did, verb to be</u>						

The Present Simple

CONTENT	KNOWLEDGE	COMPREHENSION	APPLICATION	ANALYSIS	SYNTHESIS	EVALUATION
The Present Tense: express the idea that an action is repeated or usual. The action can be a habit, a hobby, a daily event, a scheduled event or something that often happens. It can also be something a person often forgets or usually does not do. Examples: • I **play** tennis. • She **does not play** tennis. • **Does** he **play** tennis?			✓	✓		
New Verbs: feed tidy, water, live, burn, visit, kill, collect, leave, melt, move						

The Future Simple:

CONTENT	KNOWLEDGE	COMPREHENSION	APPLICATION	ANALYSIS	SYNTHESIS	EVALUATION
The Future Simple: the form of "will" " refer to a specific time in the future. "Will" often suggests that a speaker will do something voluntarily. A voluntary action is one the speaker offers to do for someone else. Similarly, we use "will not" or "won't" when we refuse to voluntarily do something. Examples: • You will help him later. • Will you help him later? • You will not help him later			✓	✓		

New Verbs: carry, find, speak, lay down, verb to be, start,

The Present Perfect:

CONTENT	KNOWLEDGE	COMPREHENSION	APPLICATION	ANALYSIS	SYNTHESIS	EVALUATION
The Present Perfect is used to say that an action happened at an unspecified time before now. The exact time is not important We can use the Present Perfect with unspecific expressions such as: ever, never, once, many times, several times, before, so far, already, yet, etc. Examples: • I **have seen** that movie twenty times. • There **have been** many earthquakes in California We often use the Present Perfect to talk about change that has happened over a period of time.(since/for) Examples: • You **have grown** since the last time I saw you.			✓	✓		

New Verbs: thrown, fallen, swallowed, spun, eaten, verb to be

The Past Continuous:

CONTENT	KNOWLEDGE	COMPREHENSION	APPLICATION	ANALYSIS	SYNTHESIS	EVALUATION
The Past Continuous indicates that a longer action in the past was interrupted. The interruption is usually a shorter action in the Simple Past. This can be a real interruption or just an interruption in time. Examples: • I **was watching** TV when she called. • When the phone rang, she **was writing** a letter. • While we **were having** the picnic, it started to rain.			✓	✓		

New Verbs: no new verbs

Some of the material and examples were taken from Englishpage .com

http://www.englishpage.com/index.html

Appendix 6: Referees' Quotations (Test Validity)

1. Content of the test:

    "The test is considered holistic; it covers a lot of the material if not all.

    Moreover the test is varied in the sense of the questions' instructions. It is

    varied from fill in the blanks to choosing the correct answer."

    "The test has clever questions which measure the true understanding of

    the students; the questions require students to be fully aware of all the

    verb tenses and their uses."

    "The exam is appropriate and reliable."

    "The questions cover all the tenses to be tested."

2. Design of the test:

    "The test looks like a test and there are no mistakes."

    "The general lay out of the test is clear."

    "The test format is acceptable."

    "The sentences are simple enough for grade five in terms of vocabulary."

<u>Appendix 7: Referees' Quotations (Questionnaire Validity)</u>

1. Content of the questionnaire:

   "The questionnaire covers all the contents points".

   "The questionnaire has negative points which measure if the learners

   understand the content or answer randomly; the questions require students

   to be fully aware of all the sentences."

   "The sentences are simple and plain for fifth graders".

   "The sentences measure different points"

   "The questionnaire is valid".

2. Design of the Questionnaire:

   "The questionnaire design is considered simple for fifth graders."

   "The questionnaire sentences are clear".

Appendix 8: Rewrite Center Sheets

Kufur Aqab School

Name:_____.

Date:_____.   5th B

Rewrite the following sentences

1- Yesterday I was very thirsty.
   Today _____.

2- I listened to the music yesterday.
   Usually _____.

3- The supermarket was next to the post office.
   _____.

4- Yesterday my mother slept early.
   Sometimes_____.

5- My sister was a doctor at the main hospital.
   _____.

Thank you….

Kufur Aqab School

Name:_____.

Date:_____.   5th B

Rewrite the following sentences

1. I go swimming everyday.

She _____yesterday.

2.She takes the bus to the cinema.

Last week they_____.

3. Samer and Yousif live in Ramallah.

We _____many years ago.

4. I don't miss my friends now

I_____last week

5. I am happy today.

She _____yesterday.

Thank you

Appendix 9: Try Try Copy Sheet

Try try copy

Name:_____.   Date:_____.

Try	Try	Copy

What is the tense of these verbs?_____

How do we change verbs into this tense?_____

Verbs Lists:

Have climbed	will climb	eats	will eat	did
Has fallen	will fell	sees	will see	went
Have thrown	will threw	say	will say	stayed
Has included	will include	paint	will paint	were
Have opened	will open	wears	will wear	took
Has moved	will call	ride	will ride	made
Have called	will swallow	swim	will swim	got
Has swallowed	will spin	swing	will swing	drove
Have spun	will begin	jumps	will jump	ran
Has begun	will move	hurts	will hurt	started

Appendix 10: Reading Center Sheets

Name: _____ .   5th B

Date: _____.

The Big Race

    The big race is today. All the animals **are waiting** to begin the race. The monkey **is standing** next to the elephant. The elephant **is standing** next to the giraffe. The giraffe **is standing** next to the lion. The lion **is standing** next to the alligator.
One, two, three, go! The monkey **is swinging** through the trees and the alligator **is swimming** in the river.
The lion **is climbing** over some rocks. The giraffe **is jumping** over a small river.

And the race is over! The lion is first, the monkey is second and the alligator is third.

*Answer the following questions:
1- What are the animals doing?
_____

2- How many animals are in this race?
_____

3- Who is first?
_____

4- Who is second?
_____

5- Who was third?
_____

These verbs (is jumping, is swimming, is climbing)
are_____tense.

Name: _____ .   5th B

Date: _____.

<u>Hadi and the Pot</u>

One day Hadi borrowed a pot from his neighbor Ali. The next day he brought it back with another little pot inside. "That's not mine," said Ali. "Yes, it is," said Hadi. "While your pot was staying with me, it had a baby."

Some time later Hadi asked Ali to lend him a pot again. Ali agreed, hoping that he would once again receive two pots in return. However, days passed and Hadi had still not returned the pot. Finally Ali went to demand his pot. "I am sorry," said Hadi. "I can't give you back your pot, since it has died." "Died!" screamed Ali, "how can a pot die?" "Well," said Hadi, "you believed me when I told you that your pot had had a baby."

**Answer the Questions

1- What did Hadi borrow from his neighbor Ali?
_____

2- What was inside the pot when Hadi return it?

_____

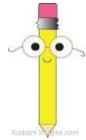3- Did Hadi bring the pot back?

_____

4- Why didn't he bring it back?

_____

5- The tense of these verbs (borrowed, brought, was, had)_____.

Thank You….

Appendix 11: Matching Center Game

1- Present -past

carried	buy

bought	go

went	have

had	throw

threw	sing

sang	swim

swam	beat

beat	do

did	travel

travelled	eat

ate	carry