

## Understanding Student Perceptions of Class Participation Kelly Wonder, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire, wonderka@uwec.edu

**Abstract:** Located in the Philippines, this study explored the perceptions secondary English education majors at a public university in Metro Manila, Philippines, have of classroom participation. Through an open-ended questionnaire and a series of interviews, the researcher found participants defined class participation as "recitation," such as student responses to teacher-generated questions with limited interaction with peers. Participants also reported a strong power distance relationship between student and teacher and suggested a fear of failure restricted their class participation. Despite these challenges, participants expected their participation to be assessed. When examined through the lens of Willingness to Communicate, student perceptions were contrary to the skills expected of 21st century learners. Understanding the student perception of class participation has the potential to mediate perceptual mismatches and create more effective learning environments.

**Keywords:** participation, higher education, willingness to communicate, student engagement, English as a foreign language

The development of 21st century skills is at the forefront of education professionals in the Philippines due to the influence of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN). In 2017, the Republic of the Philippines Department of Education issued order DO42, S. 2017 regarding the adoption of new professional standards of teachers "brought about by various national and global frameworks such as the K to 12 Reform, ASEAN integration, globalization and the changing character of the 21st century learners...". The idea of nurturing human growth through critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and motivation is present in several frameworks that define a 21st century education (Lai & Viering, 2012; Wagner, 2010). However, Ananiadou and Claro (2009) suggested insufficient training and difficulty assessing contributions limit use. Orhan Göksü and Kurt (2017) confirmed that in the context of 21st century skills, teachers often teach the way they learned. Therefore, the schema of the teacher may not align with the schema of the learner and may be more likely to create generational conflict. Orhan Göksü and Kurt (2017) also suggested cognitive skills were most widely used by pre-service teachers while autonomous skills were least used. Knowledge based activities were less likely to transfer to external tasks. When the classroom environment intentionally builds skills and ways of thinking that are meaningful outside of the classroom, participation in class aids in the development of 21st century skills.

Whether problem-based, discovery-based, inquiry-based, project-based, or case-based, a constructivist environment requires learners to actively participate (Hood Cattaneo, 2017). Learners "build on their prior knowledge, think critically, reflect, and present information individually and in a small group" (p. 146). Effective teaching through active participation is created through intentional practices that

integrate content with 21st century skills while building an environment where learners are willing to communicate. Students who participated in class went on to participate in society (Quinlan & Fogel, 2014).

This study examined the student perception of participation through the lens of Willingness to Communicate (WTC) to learn how pre-service English teachers in Metro Manila, Philippines, interpreted the instructional approach employed in the classroom. While prior WTC studies have taken a comprehensive look at communication (Riasati & Noordin, 2011), this study emphasizes oral production in a language classroom. The findings suggest participants viewed participation as recitation, were fearful of how their English language proficiency and their responses were perceived, and that despite this fear of failure, expected their participation in class to be graded. This article asserts that by understanding learner perceptions of class participation, educators can develop learners WTC, which in turn has implications for developing 21st century skills.

### **Relevant Literature**

English plays an important role in the Philippines. The medium of instruction transitions to English in fourth grade. It is an official language of the country as the well as the working language and lingua franca amongst ASEAN nations. These roles necessitate that learners build English language skills for use outside of the classroom. For language learning to take place, all members of the community play a role in creating learning opportunities (Kumaravadivelu, 2003). Mustapha, Rahman, and Yunus (2010) found instructor ability to build a supportive environment, encourage participation, value a range of contributions, and help learners overcome fears stimulated participation.

### **Willingness to Communicate and Class Participation**

WTC illustrates how a learner's ability to enter a conversation at a given point in time is influenced by a series of variables and behaviors. A summary of WTC is presented in Figure 1 (MacIntyre et al., 1998).

**Figure 1**

*WTC*

Layer 1: Communication Behavior	Second Language (L2) Use	
Layer 2: Behavioral Intention	Willingness to Communicate	
Layer 3: Situated Antecedents	Desire to Communicate with a Specific Person	State Communicative Self- Confidence

Layer 4: Motivational Propensities	Interpersonal Motivation	Intergroup Motivation	L2 Self- Confidence
Layer 5: Affective- Cognitive Context	Intergroup Attitudes	Social Situation	Communicative Competence
Layer 6: Social and Individual Context	Intergroup Climate		Personality

*Note.* Modified from MacIntyre, Dörnyei, Clément, & Noels (1998)

Several studies have tested the WTC model in the English language classroom. Wood (2016) emphasized the connection between fluency and WTC, finding that as cognitive demands of a task changed, even within the task, WTC would also change. Fatemi and Choi (2014) used structural equation modeling to investigate the linguistic, psychological, and contextual variables used to predict WTC. Their findings emphasized the role of the teacher in establishing a classroom environment where students were willing to engage in oral language activities. Hsu and Huang (2017) focused on the connection between teacher confirmation and learners Willingness to Talk. They determined teacher confirmation was positively connected to the classroom environment and improved the perception of language proficiency, reduced anxiety and increased oral participation. Additionally, student centered discussions encouraged participation in the classroom. Students were more likely to engage when they practiced in small groups prior to large group discussions and when large group discussions continued throughout the semester (Yashima, MacIntyre & Ikeda, 2018). Developing WTC in the classroom is a means to build 21st century skills. In the Philippines, the need for a WTC is twofold: 1) English is the working language of the country and the official language of ASEAN and 2) English is the lingua franca of Southeast Asian nations (Hill & Fernandez-Chung, 2017; Kirkpatrick & Bolton, 2010).

Participation in a class occurs on many levels. Participation may be spontaneous, voluntary, compulsory, or forced; student-initiated or teacher-initiated; passive or active; positive or negative; student to student, student to teacher, or student to course (Loftin et al., 2018; Weaver & Qi, 2005). Sociocultural theory emphasizes oral contributions as “a fundamental component of language learning” (Thoms, 2012, p. S10; Swain, 1997). In the language classroom, participation is frequently associated with vocalized oral contributions (Bernales, 2016; Ellwood & Ikuko, 2009; Kim, 2008). WTC orally in class can be indicated through vocalized participation and evidence of a desire to participate by a student raising his/her hand. A desire to participate without a concrete act indicating intention on the part of the student has been more difficult to capture (Bernales, 2016). The sociocultural view emphasizing the importance of oral contributions to classroom are of particular significance to this study.

Sfard (1998) illustrated the dichotomy of learning through the metaphors of acquisition and participation. The acquisition lens described the learner as one who

acquires knowledge and emphasizes individual cognitive growth. The participation lens described learning as community based where the learner takes an active role. When learners exchanged ideas with their peers and/or the teacher, they developed higher order thinking skills in addition to acquiring language. Articulating insights led to negotiation, problem solving, analysis, evaluation, and creation building both communicative competence and 21st century skills. Participation through active learning increased the responsibility of the learner. This shift from passive to active learning is what Ohashi (2013) described as "transformational linguistic participation" (p. 33).

Students who are more engaged in a course perform better. Handelsman et al. (2005) found, "the only significant predictor of final examination grades was participation/interaction engagement ( $\beta=.62$ )" (p. 189). One form of class participation, active learning, improved the transfer and retention of knowledge (Barkley, 2010) and has also been found to influence critical thinking skills (Kim et al., 2012; Niu et al., 2013). Dallimore et al. (2008) found that students enrolled in classes where the instructor explicitly stated their expectations for participation and graded those contributions were more prepared for class, participated more frequently, and reported a significant effect on their oral communication skills.

Class participation is one way that English learners can develop their WTC with other Asian speakers of English. Lingua Franca communication emphasizes intelligible English, acknowledges variations in pronunciation to allow for accented English, and accepts grammatical imperfections that do not interfere with comprehensibility (Fatemi & Choi, 2014).

Understanding participation as a type of student engagement and the effects of engagement on student performance provides insight into why the student perspective is significant. Several studies found differences in what teachers and learners perceive (Barkhuizen, 1998; Block, 1994, 1996; Kumaravadivelu, 1991; National Survey of Student Engagement, 2017). Kumaravadivelu (2003) terms these learner-teacher differences as "perceptual mismatches." Perceptual mismatches in class participation are no exception. Fritschner (2000) found that definitions of participation vary widely and were influenced by age, gender, and level of course. If student engagement, particularly participation, has implications for learner achievement, then a clearer understanding of participation is necessary.

### **Methodology**

This exploratory case study aimed to understand the participants' perspectives on class participation within the secondary English education major at one institution. Research was conducted at a public university in Metro Manila, Philippines, where English is the medium of instruction. Data was collected through a questionnaire and interviews in accordance with human subjects guidelines.

## **The Questionnaire**

Using Patton's idea of purposeful sampling (Glesne, 1999), the questionnaire was distributed to students enrolled in five classes at the start of the semester. Data were collected from 139 students who voluntarily completed the open-ended questionnaire (see Appendix A). The open-ended questions sought to understand how the participants view participation and elicit responses related to the classroom environment, their role as well as the role of the teacher and their classmates, and their feelings towards participation.

Twenty participants identified as male, 118 as female, and one did not to identify a gender. Participants included second, third, and fourth year students with an average age of 18.5. At the time this survey was conducted, participants completed high school at grade 10. As a result, traditional college students began their first year at approximately 16 years of age. Demographic information was collected for reference purposes only and limited to gender, year in school, and age to protect the identity of the participants. This sample is representative of students enrolled in the major.

## **The Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 students. During the interviews, participants described their experiences as college students, the expectations of students, and the relationships students have with faculty and peers. Interviews allowed the researcher to probe more deeply into themes that arose in the survey. Seven participants were female and three were male. Two participants were second-year students, four were third-year students, and two were fourth-year students.

## **Data Analysis**

Initial coding identified themes that emerged in the data (Saldana, 2013). Questionnaires were coded and analyzed first. Data were coded across question to identify themes that arose across the data overall. Interviews were transcribed and coded individually. A thematic hierarchy was used to group data, determine higher order codes, and understand relationships within the data. The themes identified in the survey were compared to those identified in the interviews.

As an outsider immersed in the educational setting of the Philippines, my lens is subject to cultural interpretation. To address validity, I used several verification procedures (Glesne, 1999). Data was collected through multiple methods to allow for triangulation. Interview participants reviewed emerging findings to affirm their experiences were accurately represented. As a final measure, a Filipino colleague familiar with the experiences of this sampling of participants conducted an external audit of the findings to verify that I had accurately reflected the perspectives of the participants. Quotations from participants have not been edited.

## Findings

The analysis of the data yielded three key findings. Participants 1) described class participation as "recitation," such as student responses to teacher generated questions with limited interaction with peers; 2) reported a strong power distance relationship between student and teacher and suggested a fear of failure restricted their class participation; and 3) expressed an expectation that class participation be assessed.

### Understanding Recitation

Participants defined participation in a number of ways. They used terms to describe oral and written activities, active and passive learning, and interactions with the content, students, and teachers. "Class participation is involving oneself's (sic) actively in the class through recitation, written output (papers, etc) evaluation (quizzes and exams), and attendance" (second year, female). Formal assessment tools like research papers and oral reports were included in definitions. However, participation was more likely to be described as oral contributions to classroom.

The most common theme amongst responses was the persistent use of the term "recitation" to describe of class participation. Forty participants used the word "recite" in their survey responses. Additionally, several participants described participation as recitation without using the term directly.

Class participation is how students interacts inside the classroom. It can be by how the response to the question the teacher throws, it can also be by how they cooperate within assigned groups and co-student. It is a way of letting them speak and respond. (third-year female)

Understanding the data requires an understanding of the word "recite." Merriam-Webster (n.d.) includes in the definitions for the verb "to recite" as "to read from memory or read aloud publicly; to repeat or answer questions about (a lesson); to reply to a teacher's question on a lesson." An examination of the *Corpus of Web-Based Global English* (Davies, 2018), shows 104 examples of the word "recite" being used in this way in the Philippine context. The term "recitation" is used in the corpus in the same context defined by Merriam-Webster (n.d.): "the act of saying or repeating something out loud for the audience; the act of describing or listing many things in a series."

Interviewees described three types of recitation that take place in the classroom. Two formats are less frequently used: 1) formal, similar to an oral quiz and 2) reading aloud or recalling a poem/literature from memory. Most commonly "the teacher asks questions. The student answers in relation to what the teacher has asked" (second-year female). A third-year female stated

(Recitation) It's done when the teacher asks something then the students who knows the answers just raise their hand and the teacher will (call on)

whoever he/she thinks can answer. If the teacher wants more, the teacher will ask other students who raise their hand.

Participants indicated raising your hand and being called upon was more typical than cold calling. In defining participation and the roles of the classroom, the participants tend to perceive participation as "recitation," a response to teacher-generated questions.

Students indicated their WTC through recitation for a variety of reasons. Participants emphasized the need to be self-confident to participate.

I think recitation is very common in the Philippines because whenever a person recites that person is very bold inside the class. They are the kind of students that voice out their answers or answer questions from the teacher vocally. They are competent enough if they are able to do that. (third-year female)

A second-year female added, "I recite when I think I have a point. When I talk I should make sense, or it's wasting time."

Students who do not recite run the risk of not being recognized by the teacher, which impacts their grade. A fourth-year female who described herself as a non-talker added,

Most of the time there are two to three persons who always speak. Whatever happens they always speak. There are days I don't get to participate, or I don't get to speak in class because others consume the whole time. Professors think I am an average student if I am not talking. Participation is giving ideas, not just think of ideas, but give it out so others can receive. Teachers think I am not participating because I don't talk.

A third-year female described a similar experience. "I don't like it (recitation). My classmates told me I have to recite, so the professor will recognize me. (Recognition) That's one of the advantages of recitation. If I recite in class, I will earn more credit." A third-year male reiterated, "you have to talk to be noticed".

A recitation model of class participation poses two potential problems. First, recitation limits interaction within the classroom and the development of 21st century skills. Secondly, recitation creates competition amongst classmates by privileging large group oral contributions as class participation.

The descriptions of recitation provided by the participants align with the Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) model of classroom discourse. The IRE model emphasizes interaction between student and teacher that is initiated by the teacher (Mehan, 1979; Sinclair & Coulthard, 1975; Thoms, 2012). The participants described the pattern of recitation that begins with the teacher posing a question and students raising their hands to indicate their desire to answer. A student is called upon by the teacher, and the response is evaluated by the teacher. If the

answer is incorrect or requires elaboration, another student is called upon to recite. If the answer satisfies the teacher, a new question is posed, and the process repeats. In the IRE model, the teacher who is posited as the expert, controls participation. The teacher determines who participates and evaluates the accuracy of the response. This pattern limits who speaks and interacts.

For a student to participate, they must have personality, communicative competence, self-confidence, and desire. Layers 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the WTC model are simultaneously determining whether or not the student will enter the conversation. In the model described by participants, the teacher must also be willing to enter the conversation with the student as indicated by selecting a specific student from those who have raised their hands to answer the question. WTC is determined by raising your hand, and vocalized oral participation is determined by the teacher.

Additionally, the IRE model of class participation creates a competitive environment that privileges those who are willing to vocalize contributions to the large group rather than promoting collaboration amongst peers (Hsu & Huang, 2017).

Of course there is competition. They want to get high grades. They want to achieve something more than their classmates have. They just don't know their eagerness is a type of competition. As for myself, I want to get the highest grade possible. (second-year male)

In large classrooms, it is nearly impossible for all learners to contribute, therefore, only the most confident and assertive are heard. The competition transcends to small group presentations as well.

Even if the teacher is not good but the first group (that talks) produces a very good output, the second group will be pressured to do a better output. The students are intrinsically motivated to do more than expected. The teacher will give a better grade. (fourth-year male)

The social situation described in layer 5 of the WTC model equates confidence with the experience within the community (MacIntyre et al., 1998). Zhang et al. (2013) found English learners improve comprehension and production "through language-rich Collaborative Reasoning discussions" (p. 57).

Criticisms of the IRE model have emphasized the limitations to interaction that inhibit higher order thinking skills in a teacher-student-teacher model of discourse. Students rarely speak freely, pose questions, or respond to comments made by other students (Fagan, 2017; Rustandi, 2017). Students volunteer to answer because they are confident in their response whereas those who are less motivated or anxious about either their content knowledge or language proficiency are unlikely to contribute.

The recitation model described here creates an expectation of discourse in the classroom, which is contradictory to the development of 21st century skills for



learners at a high proficiency level. Through the lens of Bloom's Taxonomy, the word "recite" corresponds with the knowledge dimension. Recitation can show factual knowledge, conceptual knowledge, procedural knowledge, and metacognitive knowledge (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). The word "recite," while not used to describe the cognitive process dimension, is most closely associated with the process categories of remembering, where learners "retrieve relevant knowledge from long-term memory" (p. 31). However, to show understanding and "construct meaning from instructional messages," learners transition to more complex tasks that include paraphrasing and inferring grammatical principals from examples (p. 31). The cognitive tasks shift moderately in the category of understanding but become more significant in the categories of applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating. Carrying out procedures, deconstructing parts, making judgments, and forming patterns are higher-level skills than recitation. Even if the teacher poses a question that builds upon higher-order skills, the teacher posing of questions and the limited student interaction limits the development of 21st century skills.

Fritschner (2000) found student views of participation varied depending on if the student classified themselves as a "talker" or "non-talker." Faculty defined participation on a spectrum. At the lower end of the spectrum, participation included characteristics such as staying awake, coming to class, taking notes, and doing assignments, while higher levels of participation included asking questions, making comments, providing input, and coming to class with additional questions. Listening is noticeably absent from student and teacher definitions of participation in Fritschner's study. Sung (2017) found if students are not invested in the classroom activity, they are less likely to engage. The interviewees that described themselves as talkers were comfortable with the IRE model, while non-talkers preferred a broader definition of class participation that included more small group work and valued active listening.

### **A Fear of Failure**

The classroom is a dynamic environment with a broad range of characteristics that incorporate the physical space, teacher, and classroom climate (Brown, 2007). The participants in this study expressed a traditional view of the classroom environment through their account of their roles and expectations in the classroom. "My role in class is a student, and as a student I am to conform with the tasks and requirements given by teachers" (third-year, female). A second-year female added, "I think it would be easy if the teacher was enthusiastic and friendly." Students expressed fear to recite in class because they are afraid their answers might be wrong and thus be ridiculed by both the teacher and the classmates. A second year male added, "I seldom participate because I'm afraid to commit mistakes in front of my classmates." "I fear that if I don't get to answer correctly, the people around might laugh at me which is too embarrassing or if in activities I showed vagueness or something; it is also embarrassing" (third-year, female).

The fear of failure appears to be linked to the practice of recitation and the IRE model of discourse. The tone of the environment set by "recitation" aligns with the

banking model of education, which alienates students from learning and impedes confidence.

I feel inferior because I feel most of my classmates are ahead of me and they have better ideas than I do. They have more confidence than I do. I just keep my ideas to myself because if I say something wrong it will make me more inferior. So if I commit a mistake, I will feel more inferior. It is not just me making me feel inferior, but the others also. If I make a mistake, they will look down on me. (fourth-year female)

A study of Chinese English learners by Mak (2011) suggested lack of preparation by students and fear of a negative evaluation by both teachers and peers are the main contributors to classroom speaking anxiety.

This fear of giving an incorrect or incomplete answer is heightened by the expectation to respond quickly and having one's performance negatively evaluated by either peers or the teacher (Mak, 2011; Ohashi, 2013). Additionally, Mystowska-Wiertelak (2016) found the power dynamics within the classroom and speaking in large group settings influenced the growth of WTC in learners. Emphasizing WTC over accuracy by using mitigating techniques such as think-pair-share activities allows students the opportunity to process the question and practice their responses before speaking publicly; increasing wait time reduces anxiety and encourages more active participation (Mak 2011; Sung, 2017). A classroom that is intentionally democratic and inclusive helps learners develop language skills and reduces fear.

The Hofstede Insights (n.d.) model of national culture identifies six dimensions that provide insight into the values and behaviors of a culture: power distance, individualism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity, long-term orientation, and indulgence vs. restraint. The scores, out of 100, evaluate countries on a spectrum with higher scores indicating greater value within the culture. While it is necessary to acknowledge individual learner differences, Hofstede's Value Dimensions serve as a framework for understanding the culture of the classroom. Table 1 shows how the Philippines scores in each dimension.

**Table 1**

Hofstede's Value Dimensions for the Philippines

Power Distance	Individualism	Uncertainty Avoidance	Masculinity	Long-Term Orientation	Indulgence vs. Restraint
94	32	44	64	27	42

*Note.* Hofstede Insights (n.d.).

The value indicators for the Philippines place teachers in a position of power. The IRE model as an instructional approach is consistent with this lens in that the

teacher poses the questions, controls the pace, and evaluates the response. Morales (2014) found the hierarchy presents itself in the classroom through the need to save face and avoid shame. A third year female stated, "when you question your professor, you are showing your classmates, you are deeper than your professor." In a high power distance environment, the teacher would maintain a teacher-centered environment to maintain the appearance of "expert." Students aim to please the teacher through correct responses and obedience. In a low uncertainty avoidance environment, preference is given to one correct answer. The hesitation to participate is consistent with the need to avoid the uncertainty of how the teacher and classmates will respond.

Recitation provides structure which both students and teachers are familiar, while democratic discussion leaves more room for uncertainty. The collective nature of the culture leaves less room for individualization in terms of student learning needs and open-ended questions with the potential for subjective responses. The low individualism score suggests that a collective understanding is preferred over an individualized response that may challenge the ideas of the teacher, classmates, institution, or country. This perception of challenge may create additional uncertainty. Lou and Noels (2016) found a mindset such as the fear of failure can change if the learning environment is supportive. Creating a democratic classroom environment required leveling of the playing field and reducing the distance between student and teacher (Ayyash, 2011). For the teacher and students, this often means showing vulnerability in the classroom: relinquishing control to put the students at the center of the discussion and not knowing how the audience would respond. In contrast, participants viewed students who participated as "bold" and "confident" whereas vulnerability suggested weakness.

It is also important to consider the impact English Medium of Instruction (EMI) plays in fear. The mother tongue-based multilingual education program was implemented after the participants of this study entered college. They learned content in English, which is not the first or second language of most Filipinos, yet proficiency in the first language or mother tongue is often a predictor of proficiency in other languages (Jorolan-Quintero, 2018). Many of the mother tongue languages of the Philippines are rooted in oral tradition, which should contribute to class participation. However, the power-distance relationship complicated by the limitations and inhibitions EMI has on language development may stoke the fear of failure. In the Filipino context, participation has the potential to enhance learning as it builds upon the oral traditions of the culture.

One variable influencing WTC is the relationship between students and teacher and amongst students. Layer 3 of the WTC model describes the role of anxiety and perceived self-confidence established by the classroom climate (MacIntyre et al., 1998). The "fear of failure" illustrated the distance between interlocutors and suggests the fear extends beyond the confidence individual students feel in independent situations. Participants of this study expressed a desire to please the teacher, but anxiety overruled their WTC. Educators should consider the possibility that students are self-actualizing their fear of failure, which can be mediated by classroom structure and variations in evaluation and feedback.

## **Assessment of Participation**

Despite their fears, the majority of participants felt class participation should be assessed. "I feel it's but proper to grade my participation because it's effort. The teacher can see my interest and enthusiasm in learning through my participation. For me, my grade doesn't have to rely only on exams, quiz, and projects" (fourth-year, male). Participants viewed participation as motivating and rewarding, despite the challenges they face in the classroom.

The students expressing concern about graded participation expressed a lack of confidence and concern about intergroup climate. "I feel unconfident or I feel that there is a discrimination because sometimes professors give good grades to those students they know by name and for the class officers that assist them" (third-year female). A fourth-year female added "I feel worried because I am not the participative type who expresses my opinion regularly."

The need or want for assessment of class participation is juxtaposed to the expressed fear of failure. However, students wanted to be rewarded and wanted to please the teacher. Assessment provides opportunities to quantify what students know. Formative assessment provides a layer of feedback that pre-service English teachers can use to develop their confidence and proficiency. When they are in front of their own classroom, the need to save face by speaking English accurately prevails.

While not explicitly discussed in the WTC model, assessment offers motivation to learners. Assessment can be tied to "behavior standards" that create a positive communicative environment (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 553). For class participation to be successful at any level, students need to prepare. Assessment of participation holds learners accountable for their preparatory work and builds autonomous and self-directed learning (Muldrow, 2013). However, Woods (2007) cautioned that assessing participation could lead to an environment that promotes competition rather than cooperation amongst class members. Creating an environment that allows for different voices to contribute should be a consideration for educators in a large classroom. Layer 6 of the WTC model includes intergroup climate and personality which are the hesitations expressed by participants of this study (MacIntyre et al., 1998). The social and individual context, including intergroup climate and personality, keep those not predisposed to contributing from participating.

## **Implications**

In the 21st century, students are not only expected to master core subjects, but are also expected to be innovative, creative, and critical thinkers who are self-directed and adept in information technology (Greenhill, 2010). In February 2009, Article 34 of the ASEAN Charter declared, "the working language of ASEAN shall be English" (2008, p. 29). This declaration further increased the importance of being able to communicate effectively in English. This study finds the recitation model

described by the participants limits interaction in the classroom and has the potential to limit 21st century skill development. WTC through class participation can be inhibited by fear and lack of assessment.

In recent years, the Philippines experienced a series of education reforms spurred in part by the role of ASEAN. In 2012, Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education was implemented for the first four years of schooling (Metila et al., 2016). The Basic Education Act added three years of formal education in 2013 (Abulencia, 2015). Most recently the Department of Education adopted professional standards for teachers in 2017 (Department of Education, 2017). These reforms present challenges to educators and policy makers ranging from understanding the dynamics of the community to finding qualified teachers. While this study does not discuss the negative implications of English as a Lingua Franca on regional languages, the significance of ASEAN's influence on education policy and the role of English in the Philippines is clearly indicated in the reform initiatives.

The classroom presents a place for learners to develop their English language skills. However, for participation to be effective, the instructor must consider how students perceive participation as it impacts their WTC. These perceptions include intentionality of pedagogy to engage students, the power distance relationship between teacher and students, and the assessment practices used to motivate and measure student participation. Martin (2014) found Communicative Language Teaching, Task Based Language Teaching, and English for Specific Purposes to be the predominant pedagogical approaches to language teaching in the Philippines. However, Martin also found a perceptual mismatch between understanding and usage of these fluency and functionality based approaches as educators reported near equal time emphasizing form and function. This is consistent with Barrot's (2014) findings that novice teachers do not have the experience or the theoretical underpinnings to implement active learning strategies effectively. Inconsistent use can result in unclear expectations of class participation.

While the amount of scaffolding and teaching guidance varies based on student need, it is essential throughout the learning process. In a language classroom, the cognitive demands of a task may vary considerably. Language proficiency and ability to use higher order skills may not develop at the same rate. To increase oral participation, increase WTC, and develop 21st century skills, educators will need to re-imagine classroom discourse beyond the IRE model and vocalized oral contributions. This can be done by encouraging different forms of participation, integrating higher-order skills into the language classroom, and providing feedback that balances language proficiency, content, and skill sets. Consistent as opposed to intermittent use of active learning and discussion-based practices can help learners make meaning and build 21st century skills.

### **Limitations**

This study of secondary English education majors focuses on participants with motivation to achieve, if not perfect, English language proficiency. Their career paths necessitate use outside of the sheltered classroom environment. The Datu

and Valdez (2015) study into psychological capital as a predictor of academic engagement of Filipino high school students supports this notion. Students who are highly motivated by hope, optimism, resilience, and self-efficacy are more likely to be academically engaged. The motivation to communicate in the target language may influence the perception participants have on class participation and WTC. Secondly, this study only surveyed the student perception, not the educators' perceptions. Research into common educational practices and challenges in the Philippines is limited. Much of the work in the area of participation, student engagement, and WTC is quantitative and takes place in the United States. Additional research into both the student and educator perception is needed to better understand perceptual mismatches.

### **Conclusion**

The growth of English as lingua franca on a global scale, not just within ASEAN, creates a need to blend both proficiency and usage. While not explicit, new professional standards adopted by the Philippines in 2017 included domains that suggest teaching strategies should promote a higher standard of learning and provide safe and fair learning environments to support the "changing character of the 21st century learner" (Department of Education, 2017). The benefit to the Philippines is two-fold. Higher education in the ASEAN region plays a vital role in "creating, disseminating, and applying knowledge" used to train individuals in leadership positions within the region and bring economic opportunity to the area (Umemiya, 2008). Additionally, the Philippines is a place where learners from ASEAN nations come to study English (Ang, 2017). Engaging students through classroom participation requires teachers to design activities as a response to student needs that is also highly influenced by the culture of ASEAN.

Student perceptions of participation in the classroom provide insight into learners' WTC. Kumaravadivelu (1991, p. 107) found "the more we know about the learner's personal approaches and personal concepts, the better and more productive our intervention will be." If learners are unable to participate because of limited opportunities or are unwilling to speak in class because of a fear of failure, then the likelihood that they will engage in the target language outside of the classroom diminishes.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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## **Appendix A**

### **Survey Questions**

#### **Part 1: Demographics**

Circle the response that best describes you.

1. Gender: Male    Female    Prefer not to Respond
2. Year in School: 1<sup>st</sup>    2<sup>nd</sup>    3<sup>rd</sup>    4<sup>th</sup>
3. Age:

#### **Part 2: Perceptions of Participation**

Answer the questions below to the best of your ability.

1. How do you define class participation?
2. What is the role of the teacher in the classroom?
3. How should a teacher encourage student participation in the classroom?
4. How would you describe your role in the classroom?
5. How would you describe the role of your classmates in the classroom?
6. What does effective classroom participation look like?
7. What behavior is unacceptable in the classroom?
8. What do you find to be the benefits of participating in class?
9. What challenges do you face when participating in class?
10. How do you feel about your class participation being graded?