

WISDOM APPROACH TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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Abstract

This article attempts to propose an approach called a ‘Wisdom Approach’ for English Language Teaching (ELT). The main argument put forward is that a ‘Wisdom Approach’ reflects not only the communicative and instrumental role that language plays but more importantly the wider social and educational role that language plays in our life and education. It concludes by outlining the principles of the Wisdom Approach.

INTRODUCTION

The goal of English language teaching (ELT), as many scholars have pointed out, is to help learners become efficient and competent users of English. In this view, communicative competence is considered to be the major goal of ELT. Communicative competence, according to sociolinguists, (see Canale and Swain 1980; Canale 1983; Gumperz 1981) is made up of linguistic competence, discursal competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Many studies have been conducted, investigating ways of promoting these various types of competence in EFL learners.

This article will argue, however, that just developing students’ communicative competence is not sufficient in ELT and that it is desirable to

help students become not only efficient but also wise users of English.

In accordance with the changing views of the nature and value of language and education, the views of the goal and nature of ELT have also changed in recent years. It is nowadays widely accepted that language is a social product, and that how it is used reflects all aspects of society (see Brumfit 2001). Educationists, on the other hand, emphasize the moral value and social identities associated with language use in society.

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Sternberg (2001), for example, says that “language can be used to better or worse ends” (p. 227), and teachers have responsibilities to help learners to “use their language for good rather than ill” (p. 227). Many scholars and practitioners have also proposed the need to promote students' creative thinking, critical thinking and analytical thinking in ELT programs. The article will explore another important aspect of English language education: the need to help EFL students to become not only creative and critical learners and users of English but also wise and intelligent learners and users of English.

The goal of education

The word “education” came from the Latin word “educare”, which means “to draw out what is within a person” (Bernard and Walter 1999: 352). Many scholars and philosophers argue that education ultimately amounts to an attempt to facilitate the development of human beings; all educational actions presume more or less explicit visions of human flourishing. Teaching well is inseparable from realizing (a particular conception of) the good. For Aristotle (in Mckeon 1941), the most important purpose of education is the formation of an excellent human being. John Dewey (1992) also focused on the shaping of human dispositions, over time, through the cultivation of habit, conduct, and reflective thought and action. For him, education was fundamentally moral and social (Irwin-DeVitis and DeVitis 1998: 269).

The goal of English language teaching (ELT)

“Language is central to education; linguistics is the discipline devoted to the study of language. But the study of language within the educational process takes us far beyond linguistics alone” (Brumfit 2001: 3). Similarly, language teaching requires more than the teaching of language.

According to Stern (1992), there are four main content areas of language teaching:

1. The study of the target language
2. The study of the target culture
3. Communicative activities
4. General language education.

The first two areas imply the systematic study of language and culture, while the third represents a syllabus of global and integrated activities which involve the use of language in its sociocultural context. These three areas focus more on a specific language while the fourth area invites “the learners to take a wider and more detached view of their involvement and to reflect in a generalized way about languages, culture, and learning” (Stern 1992: 103). Language teaching in this sense transfers and reaches beyond a particular language being learnt. Of the four content areas, ‘general language education’ is the most neglected one. A number of language teachers may indeed question its usefulness. Stern, however, believes that the general language education syllabus helps learners to generalize from their experience of the second language to the learning of other languages. The argument for a general language education syllabus links up with another consideration in language pedagogy which arises from our view of language learning. The more learners know about language, culture and language learning, the better they should be able to control the learning process and be responsible for their own development (see Stern 1992: 244-245).

Cook (1983) also points out that there are two levels that need to be considered when arguing what language teaching should be about. At one level, it is “functional” or “communicative” (p. 230). Students are acquiring “a skill they can use outside the classroom” (ibid.). At another level which can be called “educational” (ibid.), we teach people a foreign language to

broaden their horizons. In this view, language teaching encourages the development of students' personalities and potential. Or the goal maybe "cognitive" (ibid.): learning a second language helps students to acquire more diverse ways of thinking, or greater cognitive flexibility. Cook also claims that "any language course reflects one or more of these goals; different goals demand different content" (ibid.).

ELT in many situations has focused mainly on the first level- "functional" or "communicative" (Cook 1983: 230). This focus has been reflected in all the present teaching methods and approaches apart from the 'grammar-translation' method. For instance, in the Direct Method, teachers want students to "learn how to communicate in the target languages" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 28); in the Audio-lingual Method "teachers want their students to be able to use the target language communicatively" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 45); in Desuggestopedia, "teachers hope to accelerate the process by which the students learn to use a foreign language for everyday communication" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 81); in Community Language Learning, "Teachers ... want their students to learn how to use the target language communicatively" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 98).

Approaches to language teaching

There are a few teaching approaches which have started considering the other 'educational' level, and a Participatory Approach is one of them. It was not until 1980s that the Participatory Approach was widely discussed in the language teaching literature. In some ways it is similar to a content-based approach in that it begins with content that is meaningful to students and any forms that are worked upon emerge from that content. "What is strikingly different though is the nature of the content. It is not the content of subject matter texts, but rather content that is based on issues of concern

to students" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 150). Fieire and Macedo (1987) claim that "education is meaningful to the extent that it engages learners in reflecting on their relationship to the world they live in and provides them with means to shape their world" (Fieire and Macedo 1987). Therefore, the goal of a Participatory Approach can be seen as very "educational": it aims to "help students to understand the social, historical, or cultural forces that affect their lives, and then to help empower students to take action and make decisions in order to gain control over their lives" (Wallerstein 1983, cited in Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 150).

In fact, it is not only the Participatory Approach, but also other approaches like Communicative Language Learning and Humanistic Approaches (Stevick 1990) that reflect some 'educational' aims. Communicative Language Learning, for example, puts "the most characteristically human emphasis ... on the relationships, not only between sentences and meanings, but also -and more important- between discourse and life. Students are given reasons for communicating, not just instructions on how to communicate should they ever need to" (Stevick 1990: 134). It is unfortunate, however, that many English language teachers have not comprehended the 'educational' essence of these approaches and the implication of these approaches in the language class has only remained at a very superficial stage. As Littlejohn (1997) points out:

For a long time, much of English language teaching has been on the margins of education, indeed, some teachers will actually say that they are only responsible for teaching the language, and not for the general educational development of the student. This, however, is an illusion. Whether we are aware of it or not, students will always learn more in their language classes than just language.

(Littlejohn 1997)

There is no doubt that many people learn English for the pleasure of mastery and because they have a genuine interest in language, or they have “integrative motivation” to learn English for their “personal growth and cultural enrichment” (Gardner and Lambert 1972, cited in Lightbown and Spada 1999: 56). Many others, by contrast, and these include governments, companies, and private educational institutions, recognize that foreign languages represent keys to important doors. In other words, in this view, students only have “instrumental motivation” to learn English for their “more immediate or practical goals” (ibid.).

This ‘instrumental’ view of English makes many of us remain restricted to the temporary benefit of learning and teaching English, neglecting the broader social goals of true language education. English teachers may teach students about English structures and even how to use English communicatively, yet this information alone is not what students will or should learn.

It is clear that there is a gap between the goal of ELT and that of the “mainstream” education, and many English teachers are not aware of this gap, or have ignored the gap. The ‘*Wisdom Approach*’ proposed in this article is intended to be able to bridge the gap between ELT and education.

Towards a Wisdom Approach

The ‘Wisdom Approach’ proposed here is based on Sternberg’s (2001) ‘*The Balance Theory of Wisdom*’. Sternberg defines wisdom as:

The application of tacit as well as explicit knowledge as mediated by values toward the achievement of a *common good* through a balance among (a) intrapersonal, (b) interpersonal, and (c) extrapersonal interests, over the (a) short and (b) long terms,

to achieve a balance among (a) adaptation to existing environments, (b) shaping of existing environments, and (c) selection of new environments.

(Sternberg 2001: 231)

Wisdom is not just any kind of practical intelligence; it is not simply about maximizing one’s own or someone else’s self-interest, but about balancing of various self-interests (intrapersonal) with interests of others (interpersonal) and of other aspects of the context in which one lives (extrapersonal), such as one’s city or country or environment, etc. Sternberg proposes the need to promote students’ wisdom in educational programs. The study will examine the extent to which this can be applied to the field of ELT.

The aim of a ‘Wisdom Approach’ to ELT is to not only impart language knowledge to learners, but also guide them to think wisely and use language wisely for ‘good rather than ill’ (Sternberg 2001). Moreover, ‘wisdom’ provides a mindful and considered way to translate considered and deliberative values into important judgments (Langer 1997, cited in Sternberg 2001: 237). Nowadays, many popular teaching methods encourage students to master all sorts of thinking skills because “thinking is the most fundamental human skill, and human beings need thinking to make plans, talk, initiatives, solve problems, open up opportunities and design your way forward” (Bora 1995). However, it is important to remember that “thinking without values is aimless (ibid.). In current language teaching approaches, students know how to think, how to solve problems, but the problem is their thinking and their solutions are sometimes incorrect and extreme, and they do not know how to think better. ‘Wisdom’ represents an avenue to creating a better, more harmonious world. In other words, wisdom might bring us a world that would seek to better self and the

conditions of all the people in it. As Brumfit (2001) argues,

Anyone concerned with language is concerned with human behavior. Anyone concerned with human behavior must rejoice and celebrate, empathize and criticize, deplore and oppose, just as much as investigate-for human beings are creative for both good and evil; they identify with communal aspirations which are both constructive and destructive, and they use the power which language gives to dominate as well as to liberate. Amid this welter of conflicting motives and confusing values, language teachers must live-contributing their small offering to world peace and understanding, or (wittingly or unwittingly) to exploring and suffering.

(Brumfit 2001: Xii)

Thus, it is endorsed that all educators need to encourage students not only to recall facts and to think critically or creatively about the content of the subjects they learn, but to think wisely about it, too (see Sternberg 2001; Halpern 2001).

Sketching out a Wisdom Approach to ELT

I noticed that if the profession adapts a Wisdom Approach in some form, it will need to realign the approach to teaching, training, materials production, and language testing over several years. Within the scope of this short article I cannot explore the full ramifications of these changes, but I can indicate in a quite broad way where the priorities will lie, and how that might affect our teaching practice in general.

- The goals of the ‘Wisdom Approach’

According to Sternberg’s balance theory of wisdom, the general aim of the approach is to teach students to think toward the achievement of a common good.

In order to achieve the above aim, students are encouraged to learn to balance competing intrapersonal, interpersonal and extrapersonal interests. That means “in wisdom, one certainly may seek good ends for oneself, but one also seeks common good outcomes for others” (Sternberg 2001: 231). Apart from the three interests, wisdom also involves balancing three possible courses of action in response to this balancing: adaptation of oneself or others to existing environments, shaping of environments to render them more compatible with oneself or others, and selection of new environments. According to Sternberg,

In adaptation, the individual tries to find ways to conform to the existing environment that forms his or her context. Sometimes adaptation is the best course of action under a given set of circumstances. But typically one seeks a balance between adaptation and shaping; realizing that fit to an environment requires not only changing oneself, but changing the environment as well.

(Sternberg 2001: 231)

Moreover, students are encouraged to think dialectically and dialogically. Dialectical thinking involves thinkers in understanding that ideas and the paradigms under which they fall evolve and keep evolving, not only from the past to the present, but from the present to past; dialogical thinking requires that thinkers understand significant problems from multiple points of view and understand how others legitimately could conceive of things in a way that is quite different from one’s own (Hegel 1807/1931, cited in Sternberg 2001: 238).

- **The role of teachers in the 'Wisdom Approach'**

“If wisdom is defined as the application of knowledge to goals that are derived from a balance of self- and other-interests, then there is no reason to believe that wisdom cannot be taught and learned” (Halpern 2001: 255). Teachers, for this reason, should realize that the only way they could develop wisdom in their students would be to serve as role models of wisdom themselves.

Indeed, teachers play a very crucial role in the Wisdom Approach. Just as Hansen (1995, cited in Irwin-DeVitis and DeVitis 1998: 268-269) refers to “the teacher’s influence as particular to the practical ways in which she conducts her practice”, those ways “have to do with the person, his or her characteristic conduct when in the presence of students”. It is not an easy job since “a teacher’s intellectual and moral influence on others can derive as much from an everyday continuity in his or her practice as from heroic efforts” (ibid.).

Apart from the teacher’s influence on learners, teachers are the only ones who try out and check the quality and plausibility of teaching materials. Material designers always pay much attention to their own ideas of teaching, and seldom consider the real teaching situations (sometimes they are unpredictable), so how to apply good teaching ideas and methodologies into the real teaching environments depends on how much teachers comprehend the materials and how deeply teachers explore the essence of materials. For example, based on her own personal experience, Penny Ur talks about the ‘learner-centred’ approach as follows:

I suppose I’m not particularly ‘learner-centered’...I talk quite a lot--but ‘to’, hopefully, not ‘at’ the students...I spend most of the time activating students, but if they

don’t know something, I am usually quite willing to tell them rather than getting them to find out for themselves. And I am the one who decides on the syllabus and materials. All this would be true also of the vast majority of the effective teachers I have observed over the years.

(Penny Ur 2001: 8)

Therefore, I believe that the role of teachers is very important in the language classroom.

In the field of ELT, good teachers are no longer the teachers who only have excellent professional knowledge. Good English language teachers should be teachers who “will work to create classrooms that are places where people can think, question, speak, write, read critically, critique freely, work cooperatively, consider the common good, and link consciousness to conduct” (Ayers 1995, cited in Irwin-DeVitis and DeVitis 1998: 270). Furthermore, good teachers not only are able to balance their thinking and views of teaching and learning wisely, but also take responsibility to teach and guide students to learn wise thinking and to use language for good rather than ill.

All in all, English language teachers are both directors and wise helpers of students; and the most important is they are educators. Therefore, teacher development, teacher education, and teacher training are very crucial for ELT.

- **The role of learners in the ‘Wisdom Approach’**

Emphasizing the teacher’s role does not mean neglecting the learner’s role. In the ‘Wisdom Approach’, students will need not only to take a more active role in constructing their learning, but also to take responsibility for their own thinking outcomes. That is to say, students have not achieved or even come close to achieving wisdom

when they merely have constructed their own learning and thinking. Rather, they must be able to construct knowledge not only from their own point of view, but to construct and sometimes reconstruct it from the point of view of others. “Constructionism from only a single point of view can lead to egocentric rather than balanced understanding” (Sternberg 2001: 238).

- The importance of ‘thinking outcomes’ and tacit knowledge’ in the ‘Wisdom Approach’

Before defining the term ‘thinking outcomes’, it is necessary to define the term ‘learning outcomes’ first. A learning outcome is defined as something that students can do now that they could not do previously (Ecclestone 1995, cited in Watson 2002). Thus, learning outcomes can be regarded as changes within a person as a result of a learning experience. Similar to learning outcomes, thinking outcomes focus on the outcomes of thinking, the value of thinking, rather than the process of thinking.

Presently, many ELT approaches have put emphasis on the process rather than the product of learning and thinking. It is widely accepted in the field of ELT that the outcomes of creative, critical, practical thinking are unimportant; the most important is that they are used as tools for learning a language. So it is common and understandable that a parent is quoted as saying: “the education here has really turned my kid into thinkers. They used to come home and quote their teachers. Now they come home and formulate their own ideas” (The American School in Japan, Brochure 1992, cited in Kemp 1994: 246). Many current teaching models merely stop at this stage of enabling students to formulate their own ideas. What are “their own ideas”? Are they good or bad? Are they reasonable or extreme? Many

teachers and parents have ignored these important questions.

In the Wisdom Approach, therefore, ‘thinking outcomes’ play an important role and there is an increased emphasis on critical, creative, and practical thinking, in the service of good ends—“ends that benefit not only the individual doing the thinking but others as well. All of these types of thinking would be valued, not just critical thinking” (Sternberg 2001: 238). Students are also encouraged to think about how almost everything they study might be used for better or worse ends. They need to learn not just the language, but also learn to apply the language they learn with the correct criterion to pursue a common good.

- The role of group work in the ‘Wisdom Approach’

In the Wisdom Approach, group work is necessary in order to encourage balanced thinking. It is known that group work is normally used to offer many opportunities to speak, to offer an embracing affective climate, to promote learner responsibility and autonomy, etc (see Brown 1994). In the ‘Wisdom Approach’, however, the emphasis is different. Group work is used to create opportunities for students to learn how to think from others’ points of view, how to evaluate each other’s thinking outcomes, and how to achieve a balance and a common good.

- Teaching procedures, materials and evaluation in the ‘Wisdom Approach’

According to Sternberg, wisdom is a series of processes that are typically cyclical and can occur in a variety of orders. These processes include:

- a) Recognizing the existence of a problem,
- (b) defining the nature of the problem, (c) representing information about the problem,
- (d) formulating a strategy for solving the

problem, (e) allocating resources to the solution of a problem, (f) monitoring one's solution of the problem, and (g) evaluating feedback regarding that solution.

(Sternberg 1985; 1997; 1999, cited in Sternberg 2001: 232)

Many teachers already follow some of these processes, but most of them only follow the first four or five processes, neglecting the last two, especially evaluating students' decision, which often results in the promotion of thinking that is merely critical and not wise. However, in the 'Wisdom Approach', students are also encouraged to monitor their solution based on the balance theory of wisdom, and evaluate their solution as well. Students would be engaged in discussions, project work, and essays that encourage them to discuss what lessons they have learned from these works, and how these lessons can be applied to their own lives and the lives of others. This can be realized through the effective instruction from teachers who use the 'Wisdom Approach'.

Moreover, the application of the 'Wisdom Approach' needs cooperation from the area of language teaching materials. The content of teaching no longer only focuses on the topics of the daily life of people who speak the language. Some teachers also feel that "they can no longer be content to teach language in classrooms ignoring issues in their own and their students' lives outside of the classroom walls" (Larsen-Freeman 2000: 179). Thus, some issues concerning common values are advocated and welcomed, for instance: environmental issues, ethical issues concerning globalization, social issues such as AIDS education, and international education issues such as the universal need for world peace education, etc. Students would need to know not only "the truth...but values. The idea would not be to force-feed a set of values, but to

encourage students reflectively to develop their own values" (Sternberg 2001: 238).

Some effective evaluation measures should be adopted in order to help students to master wise thinking. Students should be taught to be aware of what wise thinking is, and how to balance their thinking. Wise thinking or 'thinking outcomes' should be included as one of the criteria of evaluation in the 'Wisdom Approach' to ELT. Teachers should not correct students' 'thinking outcomes' directly, but indirectly. Students have their own right to compare and make decisions.

- **Humanism and the 'Wisdom Approach'**

The 'Wisdom Approach' proposed in the present study is also different from the Humanistic Approach which has been widely adopted in ELT.

Stevick devotes the second chapter of *Humanism in Language Teaching* (1990) to outlining different uses of the word 'humanism' in works on foreign language learning. He sees the following overlapping emphases:

(H1) Feelings, including both personal emotions and esthetic appreciation. This aspect of humanism tends to reject whatever makes people feel bad, or whatever destroys or forbids esthetic enjoyment.

(H2) Social Relations. This side of humanism encourages friendship and cooperation, and opposes whatever tends to reduce them.

(H3) Responsibility. This aspect accepts the need for public scrutiny, criticism, and correction, and disapproves of whoever or whatever denies their importance.

(H4) Intellect, including knowledge, reason, and understanding. This aspect fights against whatever interferes with the free exercise of the mind, and is suspicious of anything that cannot be tested intellectually.

(H5) Self-actualization, the quest for full realization of one's own deepest true qualities. This aspect believes that since conformity leads to enslavement, the pursuit of uniqueness brings about liberation. (Stevick 1990: 23-24)

Although there are some similarities between the two approaches (e.g. both of them focus on esthetic appreciation as well as social relations in language learning), I think there exist some essential differences between them. Initially, for Moskowitz (1978) who has devoted more pages and more explicit attention than anyone else to the meaning of the term 'humanism' as applied to language teaching, there seems to be two major emphases in 'Humanism'. The first is feeling, "humanistic education ...take into consideration that learning is affected by how students feel about themselves" (Moskowitz 1978, p.12). Moskowitz's second emphasis is on bringing out the uniqueness of each individual. She thinks that one should get in touch with one's 'real-self', the self that underlies surface behavior. "How can I become myself? Am I lining in a way which is deeply satisfying to me, and which truly expresses me?" (p. 13) (emphasis added). We can thus see that Humanism emphasizes a lot on the individualistic goal of personal development, which is more characteristic of Western culture than some other important cultures of the world (see Stevick 1990: 24-25). Another difference is that the final aim of Humanism is to gain self-actualization, whereas the 'Wisdom Approach' aims to gain the achievement of a common good.

Some implications for ELT

Although the majority of teachers and students were aware of some principles of the 'Wisdom Approach', the principles of 'Wisdom

Approach' were rarely reflected in their teaching and learning practice. The focus on a 'common good' and 'thinking outcomes', important features of the 'Wisdom Approach' were neglected in many of the activities conducted in the classroom. I will here make some suggestions on implementing the 'Wisdom Approach' to ELT.

First, teacher training programs for language teachers should raise teachers' awareness of the educational aspect of ELT. Changing teachers' beliefs and raising their awareness are of great importance for implanting a new approach successfully. Teachers have responsibilities to help learners to "use their language for good rather than ill" (Sternberg 2001: 227). Furthermore, good language teachers are no longer the teachers who only have excellent professional knowledge. Good English language teachers should be teachers who "will work to create classrooms that are places where people can think, question, speak, write, read critically, critique freely, work cooperatively, consider the common good, and link consciousness to conduct" (Ayers 1995, cited in Irwin-DeVitis and DeVitis 1998: 270).

Secondly, developing appropriate materials is another important way of implanting the 'Wisdom Approach' to ELT. Topics and activities could be designed in order to promote students' awareness of universal values or a common good. Activities could be designed, and students could be encouraged to use language not only to achieve an instrumental purpose but also to achieve a common good. One English classroom activity example will be discussed in Appendix.

Finally, in order to implement a new approach successfully, we also need the institutional support. In recent years, English has been widely accepted as a lingua franca, which "can free up valuable teaching time for more general language awareness" (Seidlhofer 2005). Therefore, it is important to find ways of raising awareness of educational institutions and authorities who are in

charge of educational policy and language planning.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the ‘Wisdom Approach’ proposed in this article is not a completely innovative teaching approach. The approach shares many similarities with many other teaching approaches to ELT. The most salient difference between the ‘Wisdom Approach’ and other teaching approaches, however, is that this approach focuses on both realistic and visionary teaching models. It sheds light on the social role of language teaching and language education for a long term. Moreover, this teaching approach enables language educators to become more aware of their responsibilities: not only in terms of transmitting language knowledge, but also helping to transform the students-helping to shape their minds and thoughts in a positive and balanced way.

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Appendix

English classroom activity: Problem-Solving Activity

Level: intermediate level

Time: 60 minutes

Objectives:

- 1) To develop student's speaking skills
- 2) To develop student's analytical thinking
- 3) To help students think towards a common good

Resources:

Website news (Egyptian Ferry Disaster)

Procedures:

Step 1: distribute the handouts of the news to each student

Step 2: ask students to read the news individually (5 minutes)

Step 3: divide class into groups of 3

Step 4: present the problem through PowerPoint (OHP or Boardwork): (5 minutes)
Suppose

a) You and your friends are on board
b) you are the first to know that the ship is on fire

c) you and your friends find there are not enough rafts available on the ship

Step 5: ask students to make a decision between the following two situations and state their reasons (20 minutes)

a) Take one raft and leave the ship without noticing other passengers-you and your friends will be safe, but more people, therefore, will die in the fire

b) Warn the other passengers about the fire in order to save more lives-more people, therefore, will be saved, but you might lose your own lives because of the lack of rafts.

Step 6: ask students to present their ideas. (10 minutes)

Step 7: make a conclusion and evaluate students' thinking outcomes:

Which decision is more positive and why?

What other better solutions they can come out with?

- The teacher needs to point out that people can do better and make a positive decision if we put ourselves in other people's shoes. Apart from thinking from other people's points of view, the teacher also needs to encourage students to do analytical thinking: analyze the situation and come out with a more effective solution to save more people's lives without losing their own lives. (10 minutes).

Step 8: ask students to think more similar examples in their personal lives and think how to balance their solutions to make them more effective and wiser. (10 minutes)

Commentary on the application of wisdom approach in this activity:

1) *The objective of this activity* is to encourage students to balance competing intrapersonal, interpersonal and extrapersonal interests. Apart from the three interests, students are also encouraged to think analytically by applying their bravery, knowledge, intelligence; etc. (see step 1-authentic material, step 2 and step 7)

The role of teachers is especially important in this activity. Teacher is both a director and wise helper of students; therefore, teacher serves a role model of wisdom, which will help and influence students to make a more positive decision (step 7).

The students in this activity need not only to take a more active role in constructing their learning, but also to take responsibility for their own thinking outcomes. They must be able to construct knowledge not only from their own point of view, but to construct and sometimes reconstruct it from the point of view of others (Step 4, step 5, and step 6).

The 'thinking outcomes' are discussed and evaluated by the teacher. Students are encouraged to think critically, analytically, ethically and especially wisely (step 7)

2) Step 7 is the essence of the whole activity. The teacher should be able to have a good understanding and is able to judge the solutions, especially, the teacher should guide students to come out with the most effective and wise solution; ethical solution is not the only focus.

3) The teacher can adapt the activity time according to the real situation. For instance, the teacher can pre-teach some issue-related vocabulary that students would need for the lesson if the class time is longer or the teacher can ask students to consider step 8 as their homework if the class time is shorter.