FEATURES AFFECTING TASK-MOTIVATION IN ENGLISH FOR ACADEMIC PURPOSES ONLINE LEARNING

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ABSTRACT

Motivation has been viewed as one of the most important factors contributing to language learning success. Recent research on situation-specific learning focusing on task-motivation has shown that students' motivations change in different learning situations. This current study looks at the motivational variables affecting students' intrinsic motivation in an English for Academic Purposes (EAP) online learning environment. The primary aim of this study was to validate a survey questionnaire that will be used to measure task-motivation for online courses in an EAP context. In this study, using Self-Determination Theory (SDT) as a framework, the survey questionnaire was developed using the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI) and administered to four EAP online courses to investigate how students' perceived autonomy, competence, relatedness, and task value affected their reported enjoyment and effort. A total of 141 reports were collected and analyzed using multiple regressions. The results showed that autonomy, competence, and task value variables can be used to predict students' enjoyment. However, amongst those four predictors, only task value and relatedness can be used to predict students' effort. This study has implications for future research and for teachers in designing motivating tasks in an online learning environment.

INTRODUCTION

Motivation has been widely accepted as the stimulant that drives people to learn a language, directs and encourages them to expend some effort, and enables them to sustain that effort in order to reach their goals (Gardner, 2001; Gardner & Tremblay, 1994; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). Motivation has been considered as one of the most primary factors in language learning, and that it flows in a dynamic way to capture the continuous interaction between students and the internal and external factors that influence them (Ma, 2009; Julkunen, 2001; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Schumann, 1997).

In the past, research on motivation was dominated by two motivational orientations, namely the integrative and instrumental orientations introduced by Gardner and Lambert (1972). An integrative orientation is associated with a positive attitude toward a target language group and a desire to interact, and even become a part of the group. An instrumental orientation is related to the potential benefits and values of being a target language user, such as obtaining a better job or salary, and meeting a school's course requirements. Later studies on motivation were expanded to include orientations other than the above two that motivate students to learn a language (Noels, 2001; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Crookes & Schmidt, 1991).

Dörnyei (1994) looked at three motivational components in learning situations: course-specific, teacher-specific, and group-specific motivational components. The course-specific motivational component includes the syllabus, teaching materials, teaching methods, and learning tasks incorporated in the class. The teacher-specific motivational components deal with teacher-related factors for example students learn because the teacher adheres to either an authoritarian or democratic teaching style where it creates an autonomy-supportive learning environment. Students also desire to learn when the teacher provides students with a sound model of learning, efficient task presentation, and appropriate feedback. In addition, they are motivated to learn because they want to please their teacher. The last component is a group-specific component that acknowledges that the learning process takes place within a group and therefore the dynamics of the group including group goals, norms, cohesion, and structure, influence students' affect and cognitions.

Motivation in Online Learning

In the last few decades, considerable language learning has shifted to an online setting wherein the learning control is moving toward students' self-regulated learning that requires more of a students' proactive approach (Hodges, 2005). It has gained popularity because it provides learning and teaching with flexibility, using various methods and approaches (Abuseileek, 2007; Hodges, 2005). Online courses have generally been found to be just as effective as their face-to-face counterparts. Artino (2008), Blake, Wilson, Cetto, and Pardo-Ballester (2008), and Ushioda (2005) claimed that there is no significant difference between the two in terms of effectiveness even though some studies reported students demonstrated better performance in online learning (Abuseileek, 2007). Therefore, studies of online courses have

moved beyond group comparison studies to investigating constructs that build a student's success in an online course.

Online learning requires students to be autonomous, self-regulated students who are pro-actively participating in their own learning process. Hodges (2005) argued that students in an online learning environment require stronger self-regulation in order to succeed. When students fail to self-direct their learning, they tend to procrastinate (Ushioda, 2005). In addition, in order to function effectively in an online course, students need to be familiar with the language and the tools used in the course. Unfamiliarity with the online environment creates anxiety and feelings of incompetence that affect students' motivation (Xie et al. 2006; Ushioda, 2005; Chun, 2001). In a study of students' motivation in an online discussion activity, Xie at al. (2006) found that students' motivation declined steadily over time.

An online learning environment is shaped by and in return affects students' motivation in online learning. Ushioda (2005) mentioned that a student's degree of enjoyment, a sense of autonomy, and perceived competence promotes motivation. However, the absence of traditional classroom cues such as direct interaction has been reported to provoke a sense of isolation to students due to the lack of guidance and structure usually provided by the presence of a teacher (Artino, 2008; Hodges, 2005). As a result, frustration, procrastination and inability to self direct learning processes have become critical issues in online learning (Keller, 2008; Ushioda, 2005). Maintaining interaction and communication with teachers and classmates has been deemed very crucial in keeping the students connected with each other and maintaining their motivation (Artino, 2008; Xie et al., 2006; Noels, 2001).

Keller (2008) listed four principles of motivation in the online learning environment that stimulate and sustain students' motivation. These principles are of prime importance considering the physical absence of the teachers. He mentioned that students' motivation to learn is promoted when there is *interest, relevance, expectancy,* and *satisfaction*. Students' interest manifested in their curiosity is aroused when there is a perceived gap in the current knowledge. Students are also motivated when the knowledge to be learned is perceived to be relevant to their goals that range from the desire to pass a course to mastering the language learned. Clear, specific, achievable goals that meet students' needs (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; Oxford & Shearin, 1994) enhance students' engagement in the task because they acknowledge that by achieving these they will be able to satisfy their needs and ipso facto enjoy

the task. Expectancy occurs when students believe that they will be able to succeed. It is related to the amount of effort needed, task difficulty, available guidance, teachers' presentation, and familiarity with the task type. Positive feelings about their learning experiences are crucial for students in order to experience satisfying outcomes and increase their motivation. This satisfaction is obtained when their needs are met.

Xie et al. (2006) found additional factors that are either motivating or demotivating in online discussion activities. Students' motivation increases when they have high computer competency, are familiar with the online learning environment, are given feedback by the teacher, and perceive the topic being discussed as valuable. On the other hand, they are nullified when they do not have enough time to complete the task, when the task is mandatory and hence not of choice, and when they cannot see the value of doing the task.

Considering the nature of an online learning including the physical absence of the teacher, the tasks' design plays an important role in sustaining students' motivation throughout the course because it determines whether teaching and learning will be interesting and motivating for both students and teachers.

Task-motivation in Language Learning

As one of the building blocks in instructional learning, task has been used to examine what students are learning in the classroom (Dörnyei, 2002). A task is something that students have to attend to (Julkunen, 2001) such as a question asked by the teacher, an exercise to complete, a problem to solve, an activity to perform, and so forth. Long (1990) distinguished two task types in language learning, *target tasks* and *pedagogic tasks*. Target tasks are the activities that students will eventually do at the university, school, and other educational institutions using the language learned, for example listening to a lecture, writing papers, reading textbooks, and delivering academic presentation. Pedagogic tasks are problem-solving activities that students and teachers are working on in the classroom, such as how to open a bank account, how to ask for a direction, and how to write an invitation letter.

Initially, motivation has been observed as a stable trait where each student carries with them a certain level of motivation to the language learning environment. Since the 1990s research started to use a situation-specific approach by looking at the task to analyze motivation in language learning because it reflects the learning interaction processes in the classroom from a

micro perspective and has been considered as a stronger factor that influences students' tasks performance in relation to their trait motivation (Dörnyei, 2002; Julkunen, 2001; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998). Motivation is also correlated more to task performances rather than to students' long term achievement (Dörnyei, 2002). The term *task-motivation* is used when task characteristics are the focus of attention in motivation. Task-motivation was first researched by Julkunen (1989) who claimed that students' motivation consists of trait motivation and task-specific motivation that determine how far students are devoted to complete a task. It takes into consideration the aspects that influence students' engagement, persistence, performance and working qualities in doing a particular task. Students react uniquely when they are exposed to various language learning situations (Schumann, 1997; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). Different tasks affect motivation in different ways and therefore students' motivation changes in different situations (Ma, 2009; Dörnyei, 2002, Julkunen, 2001; Long, 1990).

Julkunen (1989) listed four characteristics of motivating tasks. He suggested that a task is motivating when students enjoy what they are doing, get carried away, and do not regard it as a required learning activity. A task is also motivating when it stimulates students to communicate using the target language when doing the task. It is motivating when it stimulates students' feeling of competition in completing it. Generally this motivating effect only happens to high achievers who have the opportunity to come out on top in order to satisfy their expectation of success. Finally a motivating task is a task that stimulates students' curiosity, a task that provides a gap between the knowledge that the students currently have and the knowledge to be learned.

In a study with 212 Korean high school students, Ma (2009) found that when presented with tasks that elicit students' autonomy, competence, and relatedness/relationship with other speakers, students performed different levels of task motivation, persistence, and task engagement despite the fact that they have similar level of trait motivation. Xie et al. (2006) found that students' motivation in doing online discussion group activities declined steadily despite the fact that their competence in using computers increased over time and that they became more familiar with the online learning environment. Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) listed motivating tasks as the second motivational strategy that is crucial in classroom application. Nikolov (1999), in a study with Hungarian children, also found that task, in addition to attitude toward the learning context, the teacher, and the material, is one of the most influential factors in

language learning motivation. This makes the task a construct that needs researching in order to observe its influence in students' motivation.

Dörnyei (2002) has identified three steps in the motivational process as it unfolds in real time. First is the *preactional stage* where motivation needs to be generated and later leads to the opting of task goals to be achieved. After goals have been generated, the *actional stage* provides an opportunity for the motivation to be sustained. The final stage is the *postactional stage* in which a task or activity is evaluated to see how things turned out. The result of the final stage will determine the kind of task in which students want to engage in the future. In the educational setting usually students are not in the position to decide which task they want to do. They act on the task assigned to them based on their appraisals toward the task that vary depending on their learning experience (Julkunen, 2001). In a study with a group of 8th graders to find out how the level of task-specific mediates the influence of trait characteristics, Seegers and Boekaertz (1993) found that task-motivation depends partly on trait motivation and partly on the unique way the students perceived the task. Therefore, the second stage plays a very important role where we work on aspects of learning that can maintain and protect students' motivation, since for some language learners the initial motivation to learn does not come from internally and externally generated motivation, but from the success of the actual learning processes.

A task can be intrinsically or extrinsically motivating or both. In general, students' intrinsic motivation tends to fade when they have to comply with extrinsic requirements, such as when they have to complete compulsory assignments or required courses (Dörnyei, 1994; Schmidt & Watanabe, 2001). Some studies also show that intrinsic motivation can be positively influenced by extrinsic motivation, so that when a task is not intrinsically motivating, it needs extrinsic motivational supports (Gagne & Deci, 2005) such as rewards, grades, and a teacher who stimulates students' motivation and promotes an autonomous supportive environment.

Nation (1990) mentioned that the extent to which students are helped determines their learning success. This nurturing can be in the form of providing a topic in which students are familiar with (experience task), allowing them to work in a group when the task is challenging (shared task), providing enough guidance to do the task (guided task), and allowing them to work autonomously (independent task). In addition, a task is helpful when it gives a moderate number of things to think about and at the same time, gives enough time for students to complete the task, and uses normal language activity that enable students to experience success (Oxford & Shearin,

1994; Csikzentmihalyi, 1990; Nation, 1990), wherein they believe that the result of their learning is valuable.

Self-determination Theory

Deci and Ryan (1985) introduced self-determination theory and claimed that motivation has three orientations namely amotivation, extrinsic, and intrinsic. Amotivation takes place when students do not value the activity that they are doing, do not feel competent, and do not think that the activity will benefit them or lead to a desired outcome (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Amotivation also includes a condition where students do a certain activity reluctantly and have no self justification for doing such (Gagne & Deci, 2005).

Extrinsic and intrinsic orientations are distinguished by whether the reward received is external such as receiving good grades or avoiding punishment, or internal, such as enjoyment and satisfaction in doing a certain activity (Dörnyei, 1994). When students are motivated because of a reward or consequences that they will receive for doing or not doing an activity, they are said to be extrinsically motivated.

Deci and Ryan (2000) put extrinsic motivation into four regulations according to their level of orientation toward self-determination. External regulation is the least self-determined extrinsic motivation. Students who are externally regulated are those who do an activity due to an external reward or other considerations. The next level is introjected regulation. Students in this level of extrinsic motivation do not enjoy doing an activity but they have a system of reward and punishment that is internally governed. The third level is identified regulation where students are more self-determined. Students in this level are engaged in an activity because they perceived that the activity is valuable to them. Finally, the most self-determined of extrinsic motivation is integrated regulation. This regulation is performed by students who do not simply do the activity because the social value says it is of value to them, but they do it because they themselves value the activity. This orientation resembles Dörnyei's ideal self (2005) in that all the attributes that one would like to possess can function as a very powerful motivator. It is also very similar to intrinsic motivation, yet at this stage students do not necessarily enjoy doing the tasks. Noels (2001) stated that the last two extrinsic orientations are closely related to intrinsic orientation.

The most motivated orientation is intrinsic motivation. Students are said to be intrinsically motivated when there is an enjoyment or interest in doing the task involved. This enjoyment is

developed when they feel competent in doing activities in which they have autonomy to choose. Students are intrinsically motivated when they develop knowledge and satisfy their curiosity (intrinsic-knowledge), manage to do difficult activities and in return gain mastery of the language (intrinsic-accomplishment), and experience the aesthetics of the language (intrinsic-stimulation).

Deci and Ryan (1985) describe intrinsic motivation as the drive to learn a second language wherein students find enjoyment in using the language. According to Csikzentmihalyi (1990), enjoyment takes place when expectations are met. In addition, learning can be made enjoyable and motivating as well as demotivating (Julkunen, 2001) depending on the design, content and format of the tasks, regardless of the environment. Csikzentmihalyi (1990, p. 49) made a list of characteristics of tasks that provide enjoyment to students. He stated that a task is enjoyable when it allows students enough time to complete it, gives them opportunity to concentrate on it (also in Nation, 1990) and perform the task seriously without any frustration or anxiety, gives them the autonomy to control the task, and provides a clear goal and immediate feedback. It also promotes students' self confidence and lowers time-awareness. Oxford and Shearin (1994) also emphasized the importance of an enjoyable learning situation in maintaining students' motivation.

In a study with Thai students in order to review how the level of challenge and skills affect students' motivation, Schmidt and Savage (1992) found that students are intrinsically motivated when the task is *sanuk*, meaning that it is fun, relaxing, and performed together with other people. In addition, Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) suggested that, in order to create stimulating and enjoyable learning, teachers are to provide students with tasks that are interesting and have the power to break the monotony of learning. This can be done by varying the presentation style, learning materials, teaching format and activity sequence.

The Self-determination Theory addresses the issue of students' personal initiative, perseverance and adaptive skills in learning. Students' perspective of themselves and how they strategize their learning behavior is a crucial factor in learning achievement. When self-determined, students show their initiative in learning as an action done to fulfill one's needs without any feeling of being coerced. The fulfillment of students' needs help them to behave in a self-motivated manner (Deci & Ryan, 1985). The self-determination theory postulated three psychological needs, namely *autonomy*, *competence,* and *relatedness.* When people's sense of

autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met, they will feel psychologically satisfied (Gagne & Deci, 2005; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, Oxford & Shearin, 1994). This satisfaction in return will encourage people to carry out the tasks and increase their self-determination, engagement, and persistence in the learning experience.

Autonomy. Ushioda (2001) claimed that autonomy is the need to feel volitional. It is the state in which students perceive themselves as having some choices in doing a certain task including a choice not to do the task. Autonomy is one of the metacognitive elements that are needed in motivational behavior when learning. It is an attitude towards learning where students are responsible for their own learning. It has been closely tied with the fulfillment of one's needs that creates intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Dickinson (1995) argued that it leads to a better and more effective achievement. Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) listed promoting students' autonomy as one of the Ten Commandment that teachers have to keep in mind in enhancing students' motivation.

Dickinson (1995) stated that students who are autonomous will be responsible for their learning, able to control it, and attribute success and failure to their own effort and strategies. More freedom also provides students with more opportunity to express their ideas that goes toward enhancing students' learning achievement (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011; Xie et al., 2006; Dörnyei, 1994, Oxford & Shearin, 1994). It also endorses independent learning when students are to work on their own without any planned help, having in mind that they have developed some proficiency in the language and possess some helpful learning strategies.

Teachers play an important role in creating an autonomy supportive learning environment that enhances students' performance and persistence in learning (Vansteenkiste et al., 2006; Julkunen, 2001). In a study with Finnish school students, Julkunen (2001) found that students are more motivated when given an open task where they can explore various possible answers. Given that there is no definite one correct answer, students from all levels of proficiency feel more comfortable in completing the open task. Yet, the degree of autonomy has to be adjusted properly and given in the right amount. In online learning, procrastination seems to be one of the major issues when students are given too much autonomy (Ushioda, 2005) and students may also consider that the teacher is not serious or competent enough to teach (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2011, p. 183) and therefore they allow the students free reign.

The correct amount of autonomy gives students enjoyment and thus intrinsic motivation. When given freedom to choose their activities, students prefer to pick and work on optimally challenging activities (Deci & Ryan, 1985) that are not too easy or too difficult. The perceived competence gained from completing this activity affects students' intrinsic motivation.

Competence. Competence is a measure of the ability to perform a task. Students' competence is developed from their experience in meeting and interacting with other people. In relation to the expansion of motivational constructs, competence has been seen as a construct that affects students' motivation (Julkunen, 2001; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; Oxford & Shearin, 1994) because it keeps students focused on their task and endorses them to persist and develop learning strategies to complete it. This situation happens when the task is optimally challenging because even though students perceive themselves as competent but if the task is not challenging enough, they will not be intrinsically motivated (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Deci and Ryan (2004) stated that the need for competence leads students to seek challenges that are optimal to their capacities and be persistent in maintaining those capacities throughout the tasks. Level of task difficulty affects students' perceived competence. When a task is too difficult, students will feel frustrated and feel incompetent. On the other hand, when a task is too easy, students will lose interest and easily become bored. The level of task difficulty that slightly increases every time students do a task displays a more stable intrinsic motivation compared to that when the difficulty level remains constant. This increment keeps the challenge optimal for students and therefore maintains their intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

In online learning, in addition to language competence, students' competence in operating the computer and the technology used to complete the task also determines their task-motivation (Xie, et al., 2006). Students feel anxious when they encounter technical problems when doing the task assigned to them considering the fact that they also have a deadline to meet for that task. Incompetence in dealing with technical difficulties decreases their intrinsic motivation in doing the task. Simultaneously, the opportunity to get connected with their teacher or other classmates in order to seek help with some challenges that they encounter might help reduce their anxiety and hence increase their motivation.

Relatedness. Deci and Ryan (2002) stated that the aspect of relatedness plays a more distal role in the promotion of intrinsic motivation compared to autonomy and competence. Relatedness is not a mere need to get help in order to reach one's goal. It is a tendency to get

securely connected to others and to belong to a larger community in order to be allied or close to those significant others, such as the teacher and classmates, and share mutual goals. This is similar to Gardner and Lambert's integrative orientation in which learners are motivated to learn a language in order to get connected to the target language community even to the point where they become a part of it (1972). Students are motivated when they can develop a trustful and sound relationship with others wherein their needs of belonging are satisfied (Oxford & Shearin, 1994; Dörnyei & Csizér 1998) and being related to other people is one of the sources of enjoyable experiences (Csikzentmihalyi; 1990). Dörnyei (2002) found that task-motivation is co-constructed by the task participants. It means the degree to which students interact and become connected to each other when completing a certain task will in turn influence their motivation.

In their study, Xie et al. (2006) found that when students were able to interact with their peers in an online discussion activity, their motivation increases. Julkunen (2001) also found that a cooperative situation was more motivating for students with different levels of competence. With the absence of traditional classroom's interactions, students in online learning depend on their interaction with other students and their teacher in order to keep themselves motivated. Artino (2008) stated that sending frequent emails and providing task feedback have become ways to maintain communication with students in online learning in order to keep in touch with them. In addition, he also mentioned that tasks that require students to work collaboratively with other students promote students' motivation. This shows that students are motivated when their need to be attached to a group is satisfied.

Task value. Students' perceived task value/usefulness increases students' motivation (Artino, 2008; Xie et al., 2006; Schmidt & Watanabe, 2001; Dörnyei & Csizér, 1998; Tremblay & Gardner, 1995; Dörnyei, 1994; Oxford & Shearin, 1994). If students cannot perceive any value in their performance, their motivation decreases. Students perceive purposeful and task oriented activities accompanied by appropriate facilitation as more valuable (Xie et al., 2006).

Kasser (2002) claimed that perceived value emerges from personal 'self' that needs something. When they see the characteristics of what they need in something, they automatically value it. Therefore, when students can have their needs met by tackling a task, they will value it. Students' perception of the value of the task will direct their actions in achieving that perceived value. In online learning, perceived task value is positively related to a students' self-regulation, feelings of satisfaction, future enrolment decision and thus their motivation (Artino, 2008). This

value may reflect either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. Kasser (2002) said that intrinsic value experience is more effective than extrinsic value. When they cannot find the value intrinsically, they need extrinsic motivation to give them extrinsic value.

Objectives and Hypotheses

The present study investigated the relevance of students' perceived autonomy, relatedness, competence, and task value when completing tasks in order to observe their association to students' enjoyment and effort in an EAP online learning environment. The results of this investigation were used to validate the survey questionnaire that was used for this study. Based on the literatures, two research questions were formulated namely: (a) Are students' perceived autonomy, competence, relatedness, and task value good indicators of students' enjoyment in online learning tasks?, and (b) Are students' perceived autonomy, competence, relatedness, and task value sound indicators of students' effort in online learning tasks? In order to respond to these questions, two hypotheses were proposed: (a) Students' perceived autonomy, competence, relatedness, and task value predict students' reported enjoyment in online learning tasks, and (b) students' perceived autonomy, competence, relatedness, and task value predict students' reported effort in online learning tasks.

METHOD

Participants

A total of 142 questionnaires were collected from students enrolled in four EAP online courses at a university in Hawaii. These students, whose native languages were not English and whose TOEFL scores were below 600 on a paper based test, were required to take the course in order to receive English instruction to facilitate their academic studies. They had an option to take either the face-to-face or the online courses. The students completed the survey voluntarily and anonymously.

Using Long's (1990) definition of a *task*, in this study students were asked to do target tasks (see Appendix 2) wherein students were asked to complete tasks related to the real tasks that they will confront in their academic life. These tasks were done between weeks 5-8 of the semester. Each task included detail information about what to do, how and where to submit the task in the

course's website, and also the date the task was due. There were two kinds of tasks, weekly tasks where students were given some instructions on what to do in a particular week, and a project in which the students were allowed free reign to design their own project with a primary goal to improve their English skills.

Measures

Motivation was measured by a modified version of Deci and Ryan's Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (IMI) (http://www.psych.rochester.edu/SDT/measures/IMI_description.php) that was previously developed by McAuley, Duncan, and Tammen (1987). The instrument used was an online survey that consisted of 30 items of six point Likert scales and was modified to address students' participation in completing the tasks in online learning in this study (see Appendix 1). The 30 questions included five questions measuring reported enjoyment of the tasks in the online courses, five measuring reported effort in completing the tasks and 20 measuring feelings of self-determination in terms of students' perceived autonomy, relatedness, and competence in regard to the tasks and perceived task value. In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, two questions measuring relatedness were deleted. At the end of the survey, one open-ended question was asked to elicit students' suggestion on how to improve the tasks in order to make them more motivating.

Procedure

This study was to validate the survey questionnaire on motivational features that affect students' task-motivation in online courses and was adopted as part of a standard practice in the studied language institution where the students had to fill out the survey each time they completed a task. An online survey was distributed during week 5 to week 8 of the semester.

Data from 142 questionnaires were analyzed to investigate which combination of the four predictor variables best predicted the two outcome variables, i.e., students' enjoyment and effort. These four predictor variables were: autonomy, competence, and relatedness referring to the self-determination scores in the intrinsic motivation scale, and task value. However, one data set was deleted due to a major missing data error. Students' responses to the open-ended question were reviewed to develop themes on how to make online tasks more motivating from the students' point of view and to confirm the literature review.

The data was analyzed to establish the reliability of each scale in the instrument. They were autonomy, competence, relatedness, task value, enjoyment, and effort. After that a multiple-regression analysis was used to analyze the data. The outcome variables were analyzed in two separate regressions. The first regression was done to see the relationship between the four predictors and the students' enjoyment. The second regression was to observe the relationship between the same four predictors and the students' effort in the online courses. A stepwise method was applied in order to select the predictor that best predicted the outcome variable by first selecting a predictor that had the highest simple correlation with the outcome variable. The method then added one at a time, any other variable that met the criterion for inclusion ($\alpha < 0.05$). The results of the multiple regressions were discussed and implications for future research were suggested.

RESULTS

All of the six categories were tested for their reliability and it was found that one scale of the predictor variables, relatedness, was unreliable. Thus, relatedness was reanalyzed in order to filter items that measured relatedness. Its reliability was achieved after deleting two unreliable items from the scale.

In Table 1, the results showed that the overall variables were very reliable ($\alpha = 0.873$). Amongst the six scales, task value showed the strongest reliability ($\alpha = 0.833$) and relatedness is the least reliable ($\alpha = 0.592$).

Table 1
Reliability Statistics for the Outcome and Predictor Variables

	α	N
Autonomy, Competence, Relatedness, Task value, Enjoyment, & Effort	0.873	28
Outcome Variable		
Enjoyment	0.822	5
Effort	0.809	5
Predictor Variable		
Autonomy	0.622	5
Competence	0.622	5
Relatedness	0.592	3
Task value	0.833	5

Descriptive statistics are shown in Table 2. Based on the descriptive analysis, students reported that, when completing the tasks, they felt autonomous, competent as well as related to the teacher and their classmates. They also perceived the tasks as valuable. In addition, students reported that they enjoyed doing the tasks and devoted a lot of effort to complete them. All of the means of these variables were significant as they exceeded the mid-point of three. Students reported that the effort they expended ($M = 4.52$) and the degree of enjoyment ($M = 3.84$) in completing the tasks in this online environment were significantly high. They also reported that the tasks that they did were of high value for them ($M = 4.39$). Despite the nature of an online learning environment, often characterized as offering insufficient support for relatedness, the students' ratings of relatedness ($M = 3.99$) was perceived as higher than their autonomy ($M = 3.25$).

Table 2

Descriptive Statistic Information of Task-motivation Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	N
outcome variables			
Enjoyment	3.84	1.10	141
Effort	4.52	1.00	141
predictor variables			
Autonomy	3.25	0.90	141
Competence	3.94	0.77	141
Relatedness	3.99	0.75	141
Task value	4.39	1.07	141

The correlation coefficients between the predictor variables in Table 3 showed that all of them were significantly but not highly correlated except for students' perceived autonomy and relatedness ($r = 0.05$). The largest correlation was between task value and competence ($r = 0.37$) and the smallest correlation was between autonomy and relatedness. The correlation coefficients between the outcome variables, enjoyment and effort showed that they were significantly but not highly correlated.

Table 3
Simple Correlation between the Task-motivation Predictor and Outcome Variables

	Autonomy	Competence	Relatedness	Task value	Enjoyment	Effort
Autonomy	1.00					
Competence	0.18*	1.00				
Relatedness	0.05	0.24*	1.00			
Task value	0.27*	0.37*	0.21*	1.00		
Enjoyment	-	-	-	-	1.00	
Effort	-	-	-	-	0.37*	1.00

*significant at $\alpha < 0.05$

Students' Enjoyment

As shown in Table 4, the results of the simple correlation between the four independent variables with enjoyment showed that only autonomy, competence and task value were significantly correlated to students' level of enjoyment. Among the four variables, autonomy ($r = 0.55$) showed the largest correlation to students' enjoyment and relatedness showed the smallest ($r = 0.19$).

Table 4
Correlation Coefficients between the Predictor Variables (Autonomy, Competence and Task value) and Enjoyment as the Outcome Variable

	Enjoyment
Autonomy	0.55*
Task value	0.46*
Competence	0.44*
Relatedness	0.20

*significant at $p < 0.05$

Based on the regression analysis in Table 5 between the four predictor variable and enjoyment as the outcome variable, it was found that only autonomy ($b = 0.52$), competence ($b = 0.38$), and task value ($b = 0.25$) were significantly related to enjoyment. Relatedness was not significantly related to enjoyment. Thus, relatedness was deleted from this model. The variance inflation factor of the autonomy, task value, and competence showed that these three predictors had a strong linear relationship with each other. Thus these were sound predictors for students' enjoyment in EAP online course.

Table 5
Regression Coefficient and Variance Inflation Factor of the Four Predictor Variables
(Autonomy, Competence, Relatedness, and Task Value) and Enjoyment.

	B	VIF
Autonomy	0.52*	1.09
Competence	0.38*	1.17
Task value	0.25*	1.22
Relatedness	0.09	

*significant at p< 0.05

The stepwise analysis in Table 6 showed that autonomy had the strongest effect on enjoyment. About one third of the variation in the enjoyment was attributed to this variable ($R^2 = 0.30$). The next most prominent effect was that competence accounted for the additional of 11% of the variation ($R^2 = 0.41$) and task value that accounted for 5% of the variance in the enjoyment scores ($R^2 = 0.46$). The total scores of these three predictors put together predicted 46% of students' enjoyment in performing tasks in this online learning environment.

Table 6
Result from the Stepwise Analysis with Enjoyment as the Outcome Variable

Model	R^2
1. Autonomy	0.30
2. Autonomy, Competence	0.41
3. Autonomy, Competence, Task value	0.46

Students' Effort

The results of the simple correlation between the four independent variables and students' effort in Table 7 showed that competence ($r = 0.35$), relatedness ($r = 0.30$), and task value ($r = 0.67$) were significantly correlated to students' effort. Students' autonomy was not significantly correlated to the expended effort ($r = 0.11$). Students' perceived task value was more strongly correlated to students' reported effort ($r = 0.67$) than it was to students' reported enjoyment in task completion.

Table 7

Correlation Coefficients Between the Predictor Variables (Autonomy, Competence, Relatedness, and Task value) and Effort as the Outcome Variable

	Effort
Task value	0.67*
Competence	0.35*
Relatedness	0.30*
Autonomy	0.11

*significant at $\alpha < 0.05$

Based on the regression analysis with effort as the outcome variable, it was found that only task value and relatedness were related to students' effort (Table 8). The regression coefficient showed that only task value ($b = 0.59$) and relatedness ($b = 0.13$) were significantly related to effort. Autonomy and competence were not significantly related to effort. Thus, autonomy and competence were excluded from this model. The variance inflation factor of the task value and relatedness showed that these two predictors had a strong linear relationship with each other. Therefore, these were sound predictors for students' effort in this EAP online course.

Table 8

Regression Coefficient and Variance Inflation Factor of the Four Predictor Variables (Autonomy, Competence, Relatedness, and Task Value) and Effort.

	B	**VIF**
Task value		1.07
	0.59*	
Relatedness		1.07
	0.13*	
Autonomy	-	
	0.61	
Competence		
	0.90	

*significant at $p < 0.05$

Based on the stepwise method analysis, only two predictor variables were eventually selected to predict student' expended effort in completing tasks in online learning, they were task value and relatedness (Table 9). In the first model, task value was selected as a predictor because it had the strongest correlation to students' effort ($r = 0.67$). The result of the analysis showed that task value predicted 45% of students' efforts. The remaining three predictor variables were assessed to investigate their regression coefficient toward effort. The result showed that only relatedness significantly predicted students' effort, while autonomy ($b = -0.61$) and competence ($r = 0.90$) did not significantly predict students' efforts. A combination of task value and relatedness predicted 49 % of students' expended effort.

Table 9
Result from the Stepwise Method with Effort as the Outcome Variable

Model	R^2
1. Task value	0.45
2. Task value, Relatedness	0.49

Open-ended Question

From the 35 responses received on the question of "How can we make this task better and more motivating for students?" 10 responses stated that attributing clear purpose and value to the task would motivate students to tackle the task even though sometimes they felt that the task was difficult and boring. In addition, the task would be perceived as more valuable if it was designed to fit students' needs in learning the language.

Nine other open-ended questions stated that the task would be more motivating if students were given more opportunity to interact and get connected with their classmates. According to the findings, allowing students to do several activities such as commenting on the postings of their classmates, conducting more discussions and debates over some topics would motivate them more. The next major suggestions on how to improve the task were to provide worthwhile examples for students and give fewer assignments with more time to complete them. The remainder of the responses ranged from giving more autonomy to students to choose their own reading materials, giving more relevant practices, making sure that students are familiar with the technology used to complete the task, giving clear instruction, to providing extra credits.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to validate the survey questionnaire by investigating the relationship between students' self-determination, perceived task value and their intrinsic motivation as well as the amount of effort expanded in completing the tasks. In order to achieve this, two hypotheses were proposed to answer the two research questions.

The first hypothesis was that autonomy, competence, relatedness, and task value predict students' reported enjoyment in online learning tasks. The results showed that autonomy, competence, and task value were good indicators to predict students' enjoyment with autonomy as the strongest predictor of enjoyment. This suggested that when students felt more autonomous and competent, they would enjoy performing the tasks. In addition, when the task is perceived as

valuable, it also promoted and maintained students' enjoyment. The combination of the three predictor variables accounted for 46% and thus best predicted students' enjoyment in completing tasks in online courses. These findings supported the SDT hypothesis (Deci & Ryan, 2001; Deci & Ryan, 1985) that when people are allowed an appropriate amount of autonomy and feel competent they will be intrinsically motivated. Students will also be intrinsically motivated if they perceived a task as valuable. These findings also confirmed several studies on students' competence and autonomy that affect students' intrinsic motivation (Keller, 2008; Xie, et al., 2006; Ushioda, 2005; Chun, 2001). Moreover, people will be intrinsically motivated when their needs are satisfied wherein they are benefitting from doing something that they perceive as valuable.

Among the four predictor variables, autonomy was most highly related to students' enjoyment in doing the task. Considering that students enrolled in online courses might be heavy scheduled students, it is predictable that students would enjoy doing a task that allows them to be more autonomous. Moreover, this study suggested that students who feel autonomous in doing a task were more likely to feel competent and value the task more than those who were feeling less autonomous. Therefore, the teacher plays a crucial role in designing tasks in online courses as they are expected to design tasks that are autonomy supportive in order to lead students to a point wherein they become intrinsically motivated.

The second hypothesis was that students' perceived autonomy, competence, relatedness, and task value predict students' reported effort in online learning. The results showed that only the task value and relatedness served as good predictors for students' effort in completing tasks in online learning.

The students' effort is very important for students' success in an online learning (Hodges, 2005). Ability to manage their effort and self-regulate themselves has become a critical issue in online learning (Keller, 2008; Ushioda, 2005). Even though in online learning students are expected to utilize a high degree of autonomy and effort in order to be successful, in these findings the students' effort was not related to their autonomy. A possible explanation might be the fact that these EAP courses are compulsory and that each task contributes to the students' final grades of their course. Therefore, students apply much effort in doing a task regardless of their autonomy.

Task value was deemed highly associated both to students' enjoyment and effort in online learning. This result was predictable because when students' perceive a task as valuable they will enjoy the task and expend more effort to complete whatever is before them (Keller, 2008; Xie et al., 2006). They understand that by completing the task they will be able to achieve the value offered by the respective task and eventually achieve satisfaction. Students' responses for the open-ended question also confirmed this finding wherein students suggested that online courses provide the students with more valuable tasks.

These findings also confirmed previous researches that relatedness enables the students to avoid the feeling of isolation (Artino, 2008; Xie et al., 2006; Noels, 2001). When students can be connected to the other members of the course and possibly be helped whenever they encounter problems in completing tasks, they might be more motivated and might expend necessary effort to complete the tasks.

The results of the open-ended question suggested that students will be very motivated when they perform tasks that are of value to them. This finding showed that students will be more motivated when they know that by doing the tasks they might achieve what they perceive as valuable. This achievement satisfies their needs and eventually brings enjoyment. In addition, students are motivated when they can be connected to their teacher and classmates while doing the tasks. This connection enables students to feel they belong to the group and possibly be assisted when they encounter some problems. The rest of the responses were related to students' competence and autonomy wherein students expected to be provided with worthwhile examples and allowed more time in order to be motivated in completing the tasks.

The study also found that enjoyment was significantly but not highly correlated to effort. This might suggest that even though these two outcome variables were correlated they were differentially affected by the predictor variables.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to validate a survey questionnaire that assesses the features of a task that affect students' enjoyment and effort in completing tasks in an EAP online learning environment. A modified Deci and Ryan's Intrinsic Motivation Inventory questionnaire measuring students' perceived autonomy, competence, relatedness, and task value was utilized.

A multiple regressions analysis using stepwise method was conducted in order to arrive at variables that best predict students' enjoyment and effort. The result confirmed that in an EAP online learning environment, the students' perceived autonomy, competence and task value can be used to predict students' enjoyment. Task value and relatedness can be used as indicators for measuring students' effort in online learning. In addition, enjoyment and effort were correlated but they were differentially affected by the predictor variables. Thus they have to be measured separately.

The findings have several implications for online learning. First, autonomy is the strongest predictor of students' enjoyment and it is positively correlated to students' competence and task value. Therefore, in order to stimulate and maintain students' intrinsic motivation in EAP online learning, teachers play a vitally crucial role in designing autonomous supportive tasks so that they allow students to be more autonomous and eventually feel competent and be able to value the tasks more. When students feel autonomous, competent and are able to value the tasks they will enjoy the task more. In addition, task value and relatedness were the predictors of the amount of effort that students will expend in order to complete the tasks. Since in an online learning environment students are required to be self-regulated in order to be successful, task value that elicits students' effort are worth considering when designing such tasks.

Second, it is crucial that teachers conduct needs analysis at the beginning of the semester in order to have a bench-mark of what the students need and their level of language proficiency. Thus teachers can use the guidance generated from the responses to design task materials that harmonize students' needs and levels, and that are not boring or frustrating. When students are doing tasks that they regard as relevant, they may highly value them. A tasks value affects students' enjoyment and motivates them to expend some effort to complete the tasks.

Finally, since an online learning environment is characterized by the absence of direct guidance from teachers, students are prone to see their motivation decline. Students' motivation declines when they do not receive adequate assistance to deal with the problems in completing a task. Therefore, it is vitally crucial that online teachers provide more than enough assistance to the students. Providing simple and clear instructions might prevent students from frustration and confusion that could decrease their motivation. Moreover, teachers' availability in terms of responding to students' emails and questions regarding the tasks, and providing timely positive

feedback are very helpful in keeping the students feeling competent and performing to the point of being able to complete the tasks competently.

To follow up these findings and more fully understand the potential tasks' features that increase students' task motivation, several suggestions are proposed. First, reconsidering that relatedness was found to be the least reliable measurement of task motivation in this study despite the fact that it is one of the three components of self-determination theory a factor analysis needs to be conducted to investigate whether relatedness should be considered as an independent variable predicting students' enjoyment and effort in EAP online learning. Moreover, the items in relatedness scale need reviewing in order to improve the reliability of the scale so that they can best measure relatedness in observing task motivation in EAP online course.

Considering the limited time of the study, future studies using the developed instrument and models in this study to explore the dynamic of students' motivation after doing a task can be performed to generate significant features of tasks that are motivating for students in EAP online courses. In addition, a further study to investigate the unique features of task motivation in different curricula areas might be helpful for teachers to develop motivating tasks that are more focused to and appropriate for different curricula areas.

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Riana Helen Agnesia

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Appendix 1

1. Autonomy
- If it were up to me whether or not to do this task, I would still have done it. 21
- I believe I had some choice about doing this task. 5
- I did this task because I wanted to. 25
- I did this task because it was required. (Reverse Code) - 27
- I didn't really have a choice about doing this task. (Reverse Code) - 26

2. Competence
- This was a task that I could do very well. 30
- I felt competent doing this task. 10
- I am satisfied with my performance at this task. 20
- I couldn't do this task very well. (Reverse Code) - 29
- I wish I could have done this task better. (Reverse Code) - 24

3. Relatedness
- I was able to communicate by giving feedback and comments to my classmates' posting. 2 *
- When I had a problem doing this task, I was able to ask the instructor for help. 16
- I got enough help from the teacher to do this task. 17
- I felt really distant from my classmates. (Reverse Code) – 11
- I prefer tasks that let me interact more with other students. (Reverse Code) – 14*

4. Task value/Usefulness
- I think this task was important for me. 28
- This task helps me to do academic activities in my field. 19
- This task helped me to improve my Academic English skills. 22
- Doing this task is a waste of time. (Reverse Code) - 23
- I thought this task was not useful. (Reverse Code) - 18

5. Intrinsic Motivation (Enjoyment/Interest)
- I enjoyed doing this task. 15
- I find this task interesting. 1
- This task was fun. 13
- This was a boring task. (Reverse Code) - 7
- I didn't enjoy this task because it was too difficult. (Reverse Code) - 4

6. Effort/Importance
- I put a lot of effort into finishing this task. 9
- I tried to get more information and help in order to be able to do this task. 12
- I did my best to finish this task.
- I didn't try very hard to do this task. (Reverse Code) - 3
- I didn't do put much effort into this task. (Reverse Code) - 6

Please answer this question briefly:
How can we make this task better and more motivating for students?

_____
_____
_____

Notes: * the items were deleted to achieve reliability.

Appendix 2

Self Selected Listening & Speaking Project (SSLSP)

Instructions:

What you will do for the project largely depends on your own listening and speaking needs. You will design a project, monitor your progress over the semester and evaluate your project at the end of the semester.

1. Identify your listening and speaking needs. These tasks include, but not limited to:
- Comprehending academic lectures,
- Participating in class discussion,
- Raising and answering questions in class,
- Doing group work,
- Giving oral presentations,
- Comprehending daily conversations,
- Conversing with others in daily life,
- Comprehending English at work, comprehending TV or radio programs, etc.
2. Write a project plan that you want to do. Your project plan should include a clear goal statement and detailed action plan.
3. Throughout the semester you will carry out the project plan. You can adjust and modify your project plan if necessary. You will submit progress report every two weeks. They should include a section on your reflections on:
- what you have been doing well
- how well you do the project plan
- how what you are doing is helping to achieve the project plan.
4. At the end of the semester you will do self-evaluation of your project and your progress. Answer these questions:
- How well the whole project went
- How well you have achieved the goals you set for yourself and why
- What this project meant to you in terms of language learning

Group Discussion

Instruction:

You will do a group discussion where you will act as the leader of the discussion. Here's what you have to do:

1. Form a group discussion.
- Find two or three (2 or 3) people who will become your group members. They can be your classmates, your roommates, your college friends, your family members, etc.
- Make an appointment with them to do the group discussion. You will audio record this discussion so make sure you meet in a quiet place and have appropriate audio recorder. Test the recorder first to make sure every body's voice can be recorded properly.
- The discussion will last for 10-15 minutes.
2. Choose a Video
- Before the discussion meeting, go to this sites and pick a video that you find most interesting:
  http://bigthink.com/
  http://www.ted.com/

- You will use the topic of this video for your discussion, so make sure it is something that your members find interesting and understand as well.
- Send the link of the video to your group members prior to the discussion time so they can pre-watch it and get a glimpse of idea of what they are going to talk about during the discussion.
3. During the Discussion Group
- You will play the video to the group. After that start the discussion (this time you start recording your discussion for 10-15 minutes) by introducing your topic briefly to the audience.
- After that make sure each members of the group will talk and contribute to the discussion. Pay attention to each group member and give response (gestures, voice of agreement, etc.) to their comments. If one group members stay silent, invite him/her to the discussion by asking:
  "What do you think?"
  "Do you agree with this opinion?"
  "What is your opinion about this?" etc.
- Prepare some questions to give to the members of the group in case the discussion is stuck. However, you don't need to use this if the discussion is running smoothly.
- End the discussion by summarizing what you have talked about in the discussion.

Short Individual Presentation

Instructions:

- Using what you have learned about how to deliver a presentation so far, please make a short presentation (3 minutes long) and video tape it. If you are using your digital camera to video tape your presentation, please set it to VGA mode so the file is not too big.
- Before videotaping it, please practice it a couple of times either:
- In front of the mirror,
- In front of your friends and get feedback from them,
- In your private room, etc.
- After you feel comfortable with your presentation practice, deliver your presentation and video tape it. Pay attention to your:
  Voice volume
  Intonation,
  Speech clarity,
  Eye contact – you can pretend you are talking to a real audience, or pretend that your camera is your audience,
  Gesture,
  Presentation Organization, etc.

Academic Interest Area Reading Project (AIARP)

Instructions:

1. Finding Academic Interest Area
- Find an academic interest area that you enjoy and in which you do well.
- Narrow down your academic interest area and focus on the topic you want to learn more about.
2. Searching and Making a Reference List
- Launch a search to find relevant articles.

- Decide which articles or book chapters to read and compile a list. There is no page limit.
- Supplement your reference list with three additional articles you might want to read some time later after the semester ends.

3. Before Getting to the Details

- Think about your background knowledge of the topic
- Use the preview reading strategy to get an overview of the entire article
- Read the abstract first
- Go through the introduction and conclusion
- Pose some guide questions such as:
  Why is the author interested in this topic?
  What is the purpose of this writing?
  What research issues are raised?
  What suggestions or proposals are made in the conclusion?
  Are the results or the conclusion convincing? If so, why?
  Does it really interest you? If so, why?
  What could you learn from this reading? Etc.

4. While Reading

- You might encounter some technical words commonly used in the field. Underline those words or write them down in the margin of the article.
- You can use all kinds of reading strategies here. Choose those strategies with which you feel most comfortable and that you think are most efficient.
- Explore some potential answers to the guide questions you raised earlier.

5. After Reading

- Look up the words you recorded in a dictionary. If necessary, you might want to use the field-specific dictionary, which is actually recommended by the instructor. Make a vocabulary list with words and their definitions.
- Finalize the answers to your guide questions.
- Make a summary of the article.
- List the reading strategies you used while reading.
- Consider what you learned from this reading.
- Reflect on how this reading helps you to understand and expand on the regular content in your academic area of interest.

6. What to Submit:

- Reference list
- Vocabulary list (Include word items and their definitions)
- Summary
- List of reading strategies
- Your guide questions and answers
- Brief descriptions of the ideas about what you learned from this reading and how this reading helps you to understand and expand on the regular content in your academic area of interest.

Reading Circle Guidelines

Throughout semester you will gather with your "reading circle" group to critically read and discuss 3-4 page articles (single-spaced) either online discussion or face-to-face discussion.

The group leader for the week is responsible for:
1. Researching and selecting an appropriate 3-4 page reading – academic topics
2. Preparing a vocabulary list of at least 10 difficult words/phrases from the article, underlining and boldfacing the selected words in the article, providing an appropriate definition, stating the part of speech (e.g., noun, verb, adjective, adverb), and providing your own example sentence using the word.
3. Designing at least 3 comprehension and 3 discussion questions to facilitate the reading circle in-class discussion. The comprehension questions should ask questions about important and/or difficult concepts or facts presented in the article. The discussion questions should take ideas presented in the article and connect them your and your group members' own lives. The goal of these questions is to have members express their opinions, relevant experiences, etc.
4. To find a good and interesting article for Reading Circle, you can start searching possible articles. Once you narrow down your articles and topics, please check with me about the article itself before you develop further discussion questions and vocabulary list. I want to communicate with you to see whether the articles will be appropriate for the class.

During the week that you are the reading circle leader, I will post your materials on the course website. Your group members will read the material and post answers to the questions. Then each group member (including the leader) will post two more comments in response to the other member's posts.

Convention Analysis Project

The Convention Analysis Project (CAP) is a primary research project that you will conduct over the course of the semester. The CAP is designed to help you determine what constitutes "good" academic writing in your particular field. To complete the project, you will need to investigate, collect, and analyze *models of writing* as well as *information about writing* from a variety of sources. The writing conventions you uncover from your analyses should then be discussed with a senior classmate, advisor, and/or professor. As a culmination of the CAP, you will submit a final paper in which you present the major findings of your research and which will serve as a preliminary "guidebook" to writing in your field. There are a number of stages to the entire project (see below for a brief outline of each one). More detailed information – including due dates for each part – will be provided in separate handouts.

Writing Workshop

In this writing Workshop, I have attached a data in a different sheet. I will assign a peer as your partner. By Thursday, you are supposed to write a data commentary of the attached data in a MS word file and send that to your assigned partner. When you send the email to your partner, cc me as a recipient. You will interpret the data commentary and send your data interpretation to your respective pairs by Thursday. Then after your read your partner's data commentary, you are supposed to comment on that and provide peer feedback, and send back by Saturday evening. Use MS Word's track changes, and comment tools to provide feedback. Please follow the guidelines that I am sending you for peer feedbacks. You don't have to write more than a page to do that. Read the chapter thoroughly and highlight pertinent information in the data. Do not just repeat what the statistics says; and also interpret the data to make meaning out of it.

Argumentative Essay Instructions

The basic purpose of this paper is to work on developing a thoughtful opinion on an issue relevant to you. You will need to decide on the topic that you want to discuss, and then decide on a more specific thesis statement within that topic.

In your paper:

1. Include a thesis statement that explains your response to the topic--<u>how</u> you respond and <u>why</u> you respond this way. Forming your thesis statement is probably the most important part of writing this paper. If you form a good, specific, strong thesis, it will make the rest of your job much, much easier.
2. Provide evidence from your library sources (quotations, paraphrases, and/or summaries) to explain your position.
3. Analyze the evidence that you provide. Why should this evidence convince the reader?
4. Respond to potential counter-arguments and other points of view using library sources where possible.
5. Provide in-text citations and a bibliography in APA or MLA format.
6. You must cite at least 3 sources in your paper.

Weekly Writing Exercise (An example from Week 6)

1. Write a mini-essay which argues a frivolous thesis. Remember, a thesis is a specific, arguable point. Some examples might be: "The Rolling Stones are a better rock group than The Beatles", "microwave popcorn is the greatest invention of all time", or "juggling lessons should be mandatory for all elementary school children". Remember to include a title. Be creative but also be aware of how you argue and what points you use to support that argument.
2. Take about 30 minutes to write, and be sure to save a copy of your writing on your computer.