Students' Perceptions of Themselves as Readers and the Concept of Reading

DOI: 10.15804/tner.2015.41.3.07

Abstract
The study was conducted on 122 first-year engineering students at the tertiary level to explore the students' perceptions of themselves as readers and the concept of reading. Data collected by open-ended brainstorming interviews with the students were classified according to the themes and presented in tables. The result of the study demonstrates that most of the students at this level wish to be good readers since they feel that reading improves their personality, word power and employability skills. The presented study aimed at finding the opinions of young adults because in the present age, more emphasis is put on the role of the learner in the language learning process. As language learning is primarily a learner-oriented activity, learners' preferences influence their learning. Interest on the part of the reader plays a vital role in developing the habit of reading. Hence, learners' needs and interests should be taken into consideration for effective learning and teaching to take place. Thus, the study shows that it is appropriate to understand students' conception of reading for promoting their interest in reading and enhancing their reading skills.

Keywords: reading, learners, students' perceptions, academic success.

Introduction
Reading is a skill which enables one to comprehend a message or information. It is a complex activity that involves both perception and thought. Devarajan (1989) defines reading as the art of interpreting printed and written words. Irvin (1998) describes the reading process as “the interaction of what is in the head with what