

SIM-Based Learning Modules for English 6

Rowena B. Andaya

Bukal Sur Elementary School, Province of Quezon, Philippines

Author email: rowenab.andaya@deped.gov.ph

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ABSTRACT

The main focus of the study was the development of SIM-Based Learning Modules for English 6. The specific problems dealt with were the level of performance in English of Grade 6 learners for SY 2019-2020 based on the results of the first and second quarterly assessments; challenges encountered by the learners and teachers in the delivery of learning activities; acceptability of the developed Learning Modules as evaluated by the experts. The participants of the study were ten (10) learner participants, and four (4) Grade 6 teachers. Descriptive and Qualitative methods were employed. For data analysis using the Qualitative method, coding, identifying themes, and summarizing were performed. For the Descriptive Method, the weighted mean and simple percentage were utilized. The level of performance of Grade 6 learners in English based on the results of the first and second quarterly assessments were both very low having most of the learners in the Satisfactory and Fairly Satisfactory Levels. The challenges encountered by the learners and teachers in the delivery of learning activities in the subject were the learners' poor vocabulary, misbehavior, absenteeism, lack of textbooks, reading difficulties, and level of time management. SIM-Based Learning Modules for English 6 were created to be used as supplementary materials in teaching English 6. The acceptability of the developed learning modules was guaranteed by the experts and paved its recommendation for utilization as supplementary learning resources.

Keywords: Performance Level; Challenge; Learning Modules; SIM; Acceptability

Introduction

The learners' performance, which is shown in the test scores in every subject area determines whether the day-to-day learning goals are achieved or not. It also shows the ability level of the learners, the teaching skills and strategies used by teachers, and the appropriateness of the learning materials. In learning language, the ability of the teacher should be partnered with adequate and appropriate learners' materials for further practice, especially at the elementary level.

Grade 6 is considered in many education systems as the last year of elementary school. By the time a child reaches this level, he/she is supposed to have attained a certain level of proficiency in the basics of the language (Arimbay, 2016). This is in line with what is stated in K to 12 English Curriculum Guide May 2016, Page 2 of 247, Grade 6 students should be able to construct meanings and communicate them using creative, appropriate, and grammatically correct oral and written language.

For its realization, learning materials play a significant role in the teaching-learning process (Sasmaz-Oren & Ormanci, 2012). These should have appropriate activities for the learners to practice and apply what they learned. These activities should promote critical thinking, and problem-solving skills and make the learners more engaged in their learning and retain more information thus resulting in an improved academic performance. However, in the present situation in public schools, there are instances that these types of activities are not right away provided to the learners due to traffic in the delivery of learners' materials and teachers' guides.

Though DepEd Central had already launched web portals through DepEd Order No. 76, s. 2011 known as the National Adoption and Implementation of Learning Resources Management and Development System (LRMDS) where teachers can download activity sheets and lesson exemplars in English, it did not fully address the needs of the

learners who were performing low in class for them to acquire mastery specifically for the more complex competencies or topics.

In the pursuit to remedy this, the researcher, and her co-Grade 6 teacher in Bukal Sur Elementary School, have been providing their learners with additional activities that are self-made, and they have been sharing them with their co-teachers for utilization in their respective classes. Despite this, as reflected in the school's summary of grades, the Grade 6 learners' level of performance in English had only attained a minimal increase in the first and second quarters of the previous school year, 2018-2019 attaining 55% and 58% Mean Percentage Scores respectively. These results were still far behind the set standard of 75%. One reason for this was the non-consistency of provision of additional activities for deepening and practice due to the overlapping of teachers' duties and school activities.

As the school's English Grade 6 Coordinator, the researcher, who has been teaching for twenty-five years in public schools and is now, in her third year of handling Grade 6 learners intended to address this problem by coming up with a SIM-Based Learning Modules for English 6. These learning modules consist of learning activities focusing on the least mastered competencies to ensure mastery learning and therefore increase the performance level in English of Grade 6 learners.

Methodology

Research Design

The study employed descriptive and qualitative methods of research. According to Mc Combes (2019), descriptive research aims to accurately and systematically describe the population, situation, or phenomenon that is being studied. Qualitative research, on the other hand, is a type of social science research that collects and works with non-numerical data and that seeks to interpret meaning from these data that help understand social life through the study of targeted populations or places (Crossman, 2020). On the descriptive part, this study focused on the description of the level of performance and development of Strategic Intervention Material. In the qualitative part, focus group discussion was performed to gather data on what types of learning activities were commonly provided by the English Grade 6 teachers to their learners as well as the challenges encountered by both in the delivery of these activities.

Research Locale

The research locale of the current study was the Bukal Sur Elementary School (BSES) in Candelaria West District located at Bukal Sur, Candelaria, Quezon, Philippines. It is one of the three large schools in the district with a total of 179 Grade Six learners in the school year 2019-2020.

Research Participants

The participants for the Focus Group Discussion for Learners were the ten Grade 6 learners. The process of selection was to get two representatives from each of the five sections. On the other hand, the four Grade 6 teachers served as participants in the FGD for Teachers.

Research Instrument

Self-made guide questions for the FGD for both the teachers and learners which were validated by the Grade 6 Chairman underwent pilot testing during the FGD with the five Grade Six learners and two Grade Six teachers were used to collect the data for analysis for the development of objectives and used as basis in deciding what types of activities will be included in the proposed learning modules for English 6. The self-made questionnaire which was also validated by the Grade 6 Chairman and also underwent pilot testing by having one of the validators a respondent, was utilized to determine the acceptability of the developed materials.

Data Gathering Procedure

The permission of the school head was first sought for the conduct of the study which was then followed by the district supervisors. Permission of the learner participants' parents was also requested. The Focus Group Discussion for Learners was conducted on February 24, 2020. It was facilitated by the researcher's adviser, Dr. Bernard C. Lunar with complete attendance of the participants. Before the start of the activity, the facilitator made the participants feel comfortable. The process went smoothly having the interview recorded by the researcher. The FGD for the teachers followed afterwards employing the same process.

Ethical Considerations

Respect for Persons pertains to the full knowledge of the research participants of the current study. Hence, they were provided with all the relevant information. Also, Informed Parental Consent ensured that the parents/ guardians were well aware of the research and permitted their children to participate in the current study. Furthermore, the parents/ guardians, the learner participants, as well as the teacher participants were well-oriented on the research outcomes and their anonymity on the data collected.

Result and Discussion

Learners' Level of Performance in English for the First and Second Quarter

One of the concerns of the study is to find out the level of performance of the Grade 6 learners in English for SY 2019-2020 based on the results of the first and second quarterly assessments. The data showing the level of learners' performance are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1: First quarter performance in English

Descriptor	f	%
Outstanding	19	10.61%
Very Satisfactory	35	19.55%
Satisfactory	65	36.31%
Fairly Satisfactory	56	31.28%
Did Not Meet Expectations	4	2.23%

The table shows the results of the learners' level of performance in the First Quarterly Assessment in English. It could be seen that of the total population of 179 learners, only 19 of them attained the Outstanding level which is only 10.61%; 35 reached the Very Satisfactory level, or 19.55%; the greatest number of learners that is 65 or 36.31% obtained the satisfactory level; followed by the fairly satisfactory level which was obtained by 56 learners or its equivalent of 31.28%; and the least number of 4 or 2.23% did not meet expectations.

The results imply that the learners' level of performance in English 6 in the first quarter was very low because most of them were in the Satisfactory and Fairly Satisfactory Levels, a few did not even meet expectations, and a lesser number achieved the Very Satisfactory and Outstanding Levels. The findings can be attributed to the lack of learners' materials that can be sources of needed activities for further practice of the learners. Most of them did not have mastery in these five competencies in the first quarter: analyzing sound devices; understanding idiomatic expressions; composing sentences using pronouns; composing sentences using modals; and composing sentences using subject-verb agreement. In consonant with this, Chingos and West (2010) asserted that children that had no textbooks or learners' materials achieved significantly lower test scores than those who had textbooks. If the mentioned least learned competencies are addressed through the provision of learning modules, this low performance in the subject could be improved.

Table 2: Second quarter performance in English

Descriptor	f	%
Outstanding	17	9.50%
Very Satisfactory	29	16.20%
Satisfactory	69	38.55%
Fairly Satisfactory	59	32.96%
Did not Meet Expectations	5	2.79%

Table 2 presents the results of the Second Quarterly Assessment in English 6 indicating a fluctuating pattern. Compared to the results of the first quarter, the Outstanding level was achieved by only 17 learners with a decrease of 2 or 9.50%; the Very Satisfactory Level with 29, having a decrease of 6 or 3.35 %; Satisfactory Level, with 69 having a gained of 4 or 2.23%; Fairly Satisfactory, with 59 gaining an increase of 3 or 1.68%; and Did Not Meet Expectations with 5, having an increase of 1 or 0.56%.

The depicted results denote that the overall level of performance in English of Grade 6 learners for the second quarter is still very low having a decrease of 8 in the Outstanding and Very Satisfactory Levels, an increase of 1 in

those that Did Not Meet Expectations, and an increase of 7 in the Satisfactory and Fairly Satisfactory Levels. These findings can also be attributed to the inadequate supply of learner materials or textbooks. A bigger number of learners did not have mastery in these competencies in the second quarter: inferring the meaning of borrowed words & context-specific terms; gathering information from dictionary and thesaurus; composing sentences using subordinate and coordinate conjunctions; revising writing for clarity; and composing sentences using adverbs of intensity. If the learners are provided with an adequate number of learner materials or textbooks that have these contents, surely, their level of performance in the subject will have significant progress. As cited and emphasized by Fischer et al. (2015) and Atieno (2014), textbooks are very important for student achievement, and they have been proven to be a rather cost-effective way of improving student attainment.

Challenges Encountered by the Teachers and Learners in the Delivery of Learning Activities in English

Seven themes emerged from the conducted Focus Group Discussions for the Grade 6 learners and teachers. All these themes answered the second research question. Each theme is discussed in further detail below.

Theme 1: Poor Vocabulary

Three of the ten learner participants answered that one big challenge that they encountered in their English class was that there were words that were not clear to them. Learner 1 stated “*Hindi po naiintindihan ang sinasabi ng guro.*” Learner 3 replied “*Minsan po ay may mga salitang di naiintindihan.*” Learner 6 also answered “*Hindi po naiintindihan ang sinasabi sa amin.*”

In confirmation to these statements of the learners, one of the four teacher participants said that “*Siguro po ang isang factor na aking naobserve, napakahina po ng kanilang vocabulary skills.*” This was one of the reasons why the learners hesitated to answer, thus preventing them from participating in the class discussion. In the same thought, Rohmatillah (2017) asserted that without learning the vocabulary, communication in a second language becomes harder. Low vocabulary knowledge poses severe problems to its learners which consequently impedes the learning of English (Alqahtani, 2015).

The finding had proven that learners with poor vocabulary showed difficulties in understanding lessons which thereby resulted in low academic performance. This result was significant for the teachers and the researcher to immediately address this concern. It was a great help in the planning of instructions to include vocabulary activities whenever needed.

Theme 2: Poor Reading Comprehension

Three out of the four teacher participants encountered the problem of having learners with poor reading comprehension, the reason why there were times that their classes failed in their formative and summative assessments. Teacher 4 asserted that “*Ano naman po ang mga eskwela ko, nakakabasa. Yon lamang po talagang comprehension ang talagang problema.*” Teacher 3 stated “*Sa klase ko naman po ay medyo mababa rin po yung comprehension ng mga bata.*” Teacher 2 exclaimed “*Kasi pinakamalaking problema talaga ay ang bata. Sa dalawamput anim na taon na naming pagtuturo, nitong taon na dumating ang K-12, humina lalo ang performance ng bata sa comprehension. Mas magaling pa po noong ginagamit naming yung BEC.*”

The study of Perfetti and Stafura (2014) found that deficits in comprehension could result from a variety of sources beyond decoding, inference-making, comprehension monitoring, and others which can therefore result in students’ poor performance. Reading comprehension is indispensable for our student’s academic performance (Elwer, 2014; Al-Jarrah & Ismail, 2018; Afzal, 2019). In confirmation of this, Traore (2020) proved that the poor performance of their 12th Grade students in English is rooted in their poor reading comprehension. This result was of great help to the researcher in considering the inclusion of selections in the learning modules to enhance the learners’ reading comprehension skills.

Theme 3: Learners’ Misbehavior

Two of the learner participants answered that another reason that hindered them from actively participating during the conduct of their English class was that they were getting disturbed by their seatmates, while others were not focused and kept themselves busy in doing other things. This misbehavior of learners was confirmed by one of the teacher participants. When asked this question “*Bakit kaya sa palagay ninyo ay hindi kayo masyadong active sa English? Minsan lang kayo ganado, may mga pagkakataon na kayo ay tinatamad. Bakit kaya?*”, Learner 1 replied “*Dinadaldal po ng katabi.*”, while Learner 4 answered “*Ang iba po ay hindi nakikinig at gumagawa po ng assignments sa ibang subjects.*” This misbehaviors were confirmed by the one of the teacher respondents (Teacher 4) saying “*Minsan, eh ako na ang nalabas sa classroom. Talagang nadating nga po pala sa gayon na ang bata ang magkokontrol at hindi ka papakingan.*”

The learners’ class participation was easily affected by the misbehavior of their peers. Learners’ misbehavior serves as a big distraction in the teaching-learning process. This is similar to what the study of Castle (2011) proved that classrooms with misbehaving students are likely to be characterized by distractions that inhibit children’s capacity to regulate their attention and to persist through difficult tasks. This finding was significant in designing the layout of

the modules adopting the Strategic Intervention Material's format as well as in the preparation of fun and exciting activities that can catch the learners' attention and focus. This way, misbehavior among them will be addressed and mastery learning will be achieved.

Theme 4: Absenteeism

In addition to the challenges that were encountered by some Grade 6 learners was that some learners found it hard to understand what the teachers were explaining due to absenteeism. Some learners had a hard time to participate in the learning activities. When asked "*Bakit sa palagay ninyo ay nahihirapan ang ibang kaklase ninyo sa English?*" Learner 5 replied "*Hindi po naiintindihan ang sinasabi ng teacher. Hindi po sila sanay at laging absent po.*"

This conforms to what had been stated by Epstein and Sheldon (2002), that students with absenteeism miss opportunities to learn the material that enables them to succeed later in school and fall behind their classmates in academic achievement. This finding was also considered in the adoption of SIM's format and on the preparation of fun and exciting activities. If learners enjoy what they are doing in school, this will motivate them to come to school regularly.

Theme 5: Lack of Textbooks

Another challenge that hampered the learners from being active during class discussion was the lack of k-12 textbooks in English. When asked "*Tig-iisa ba kayo ng libro?*", Learner 6 answered "*Hindi po.*"; Learner 10 exclaimed "*Iisa lamang po, tapos ay ipinapasulat.*"; Learner 9 stated "*Iisa lamang po ang libro namin.*" This was confirmed by Teacher 4 saying "*Wala pa ngang libro, tapos magche-change na naman.*". It was reaffirmed by another statement of Teacher 2 exclaiming "*Kulang po talaga ang aming resources.*" According to the learners, they were also using textbooks from the old curriculum which were limited in number.

A lack of books translates into an inability of the students to perform learning tasks in the classroom and even at home. In this regard, Horsley and Sikorova (2014) state that nowadays, although the role of textbooks is changing, they still play an important role in the transmission of knowledge for they serve mainly as tools in enabling it. As cited by Knight (2013), textbooks still play a significant role in supporting student learning. Along with this concern, textbooks have been frequently used as teachers' support in developing students' learning outcomes (Fasso et al., 2014). With this in mind, the researcher was prompted to develop learning modules to supplement this need of the teachers and learners. These modules could be of great help to address this concern and thereby increase the performance level of Grade 6 learners in English.

Theme 6: Reading Difficulties

Another great challenge that had been encountered by the Grade 6 teachers was the fact that all four sections excluding the pilot section had learners with reading difficulties. Among these were the Specific Word Reading Difficulties or the Non-Readers who have problems related specifically to reading words, Specific Reading Comprehension Difficulties characterized by poor reading comprehension despite at least average word-reading skills, and Mixed Reading Difficulties which have a combination of weaknesses in word-reading skills and core comprehension areas. The presence of these difficulties among learners were supported by their responses when asked by the FGD facilitator "*Bakit sa palagay nyo ay nahihirapan ang mga kaklase nyo sa English?*", Learner 2 replied "*Yong iba po ay hindi nakakabasa.*"; Learner 4 answered "*Ang amin po ay anim*"; Learner 6 "*Ang amin po ay lima.*"; Learner 8 stated "*Slow reader lang po ako.*" On the other hand, when teachers were given this question "*So, kanina po, nabanggit nila na some of them have classmates that are non-readers and slow readers, marami po ba sa inyong klase ang ganon?*" Teacher 2 replied "*Ano naman po sila, nakakabasa naman po. Yun lamang po talagang comprehension ang problema.*"; Teacher 3 explained "*Sa klase ko naman po ay medyo mababa yong comprehension din po, lalo na po pag nagkaroon ng combination letters, hindi na po nila kayang basahin.*" According to them, these had an impact on their classes' performances.

Reading is a must for learning. Reading is important because it develops the learners' thoughts and endless knowledge and allows them to improve their communication and language skills. Having these types of learners in their respective classes hampers them in achieving their everyday learning goals in the subject. How can these learners interact or contribute to the discussion or group activity if they don't even know how to read or have difficulties in reading? As used by Karanja (2015), the reading process involves visual motor skills and the perception of the symbols by the brain. It is generally broken down into two components: reading the words or decoding and understanding what is read or comprehension. Considering the reading difficulties that some of these Grade 6 learners have, the use of simple words and short selections was included in the learning modules. This way, these can also be utilized by them which can thereby address their reading difficulties.

Theme 7: Level of Time Management

Another challenge that the teachers encountered in the conduct of their English class was lack of time management. According Teacher 1 "*Ang oras po namin ay 7:30-8:20, pero ang isa pong reality na nae-experience po namin ay*

yong amin pong flag ceremony ay napo-prolong at umaabot hanggang minsan po ay quarter to 8:00, so ang oras po ay nakukuha ng flag ceremony.” It was seconded by Teacher 4 saying “*Opo, dapat ay nakakpag-start na.*” Time management plays a vital role in improving learners’ academic performance and achievements. Sufficient time should be allotted to the conduct of lessons for the smooth flow of the teaching-learning process. Some educational researchers have given increased attention to time variables that are related to school learning. It has been documented that when learning time is held constant and adhered to, achievement among learners is carried out successfully. As found out by Lavy (2015), instructional time has a positive and significant effect on the test scores of the learners. In addition, (Mandel & Sussmuth, 2011) prove that instructional time is positively related to student performance. This result was regarded in preparing activities and assessments that were included in the learning modules. They were made suited to the allotted time for each competency.

SIM-Based Learning Modules

The developed research outputs “SIM-Based Learning Modules for English 6” were based on the results of the First and Second Quarterly Assessments of SY 2019-2020. These were prepared to serve as supplementary materials in addressing the identified 5 least learned competencies for each quarter. The materials aim to improve the Grade 6 learners’ performance in English.

For the content basis, the learner respondents were interviewed through a focus group discussion wherein their requests as well as the learners’ different abilities were considered. Each material is intended to make the learners acquire mastery of the least learned competencies in the first and second quarters.

Each of the materials has 7 parts namely: Title Card, which contains the title creatively designed followed by the citing of objectives and name of the writer; second, Guide Card, which contains a letter to the learners on how to use the module and what they are expected of after completing the module, and explicit discussion of the concept/lesson; third, Activity Card, which provides several activities for mastery; fourth, Assessment Card, with two or three assessments to assess if the learners truly mastered the competency; fifth, Enrichment Card which provides additional exercises for further practice; sixth is the Answer Card, with a list of answer keys for each activity in the module; and finally, the Reference Card, with a list of references.

Level of Acceptability of the Developed SIM-Based Learning Modules

The Learning Modules’ level of acceptability was determined by the School Principal, Master Teacher in charge of curriculum, and Grade 6 Chairman evaluating the different aspects as to the consistency of the objectives, content and layout, suitability of approach, and level of difficulty. The result of the evaluation is hereby presented.

Table 3: In terms of suitability of objectives

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. Meet the defined needs.	4	Strongly Agree
2. Purpose has been made clear to all the users.	4	Strongly Agree
3. Give a clear account of the target goals.	4	Strongly Agree
4. Plainly relate the aims to the purpose of being used as self-directed materials.	4	Strongly Agree
5. Relate the purpose to the objectives	4	Strongly Agree
Overall mean	4	Strongly Agree

It is significant to note that all the respondent evaluators strongly agree to five out of five statements. The results may be because the materials’ objectives are well-defined, clear, and appropriate to the target goals. Generally, the respondents marked the instructional materials with a weighted arithmetic mean of 4 characterized as Strongly Agree. This means that they consider the objectives of the materials extremely suitable for improving the performance level in English of Grade 6 learners.

Table 4: In terms of content and layout

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. Content is directly relevant to the objectives.	4	Strongly Agree
2. Contents have been arranged in a logical sequence of learning.	4	Strongly Agree
3. Form a series of logical steps in the learning sequences.	4	Strongly Agree
4. Activities are appropriate for their content and objectives.	4	Strongly Agree
5. Use a font size of texts that are readable and appropriately used in each material.	4	Strongly Agree
Overall mean	4	Strongly Agree

Table 4 summarizes the mean ratings given by the respondents who evaluated the content and layout of the SIMs. It is also significant to note that a mean rating of 4 was obtained by the materials as to the content and layout. It appears that the content and layout of the instructional materials have been arranged in a logical sequence of learning. There is continuity of learning in the materials.

Table 5: In terms of suitability of approach

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. Provide discussion in an explicit way for quick understanding of the concept.	4	Strongly Agree
2. Use the appropriate form for each item suited for the objective it is intended to assess.	4	Strongly Agree
3. Use wordings appropriate for each item suited for the objective it is intended to assess.	4	Strongly Agree
4. Provide enrichment activities for further learning	4	Strongly Agree
5. Provide answer keys that give correct responses for the exercises.	4	Strongly Agree
Overall mean	4	Strongly Agree

Table 5 reveals that all the respondents strongly agree with the explicit way of discussion that is provided in each material for the learners' quick understanding of the concepts which appears to be very acceptable having a mean of 4. The form and wordings used are consistent with the skills or competencies to be developed also receiving a mean of 4. The table also shows that the enrichment activities provided in the materials are suited to further student's learning with a mean score of 4. The table also depicts that the answer keys contain correct responses which can be used by learners to determine their learnings.

The weighted arithmetic means of 4 connotes that the approach of the Learning Modules is very suitable to the level of the learners.

Table 6: In terms of level of difficulty

Statements	Mean	Interpretation
1. Provide instructions that are clear and easy to follow.	4	Strongly Agree
2. Provide comprehensive discussion taking into consideration the ability of diverse learners.	3.67	Strongly Agree
3. Integrate poem reading whenever appropriate.	4	Strongly Agree
4. Provide a series of activities that are appropriate following the levels of difficulty.	3.33	Agree
5. Present a well-organized layout of the pages making the whole SIM-Based Learning Modules appear interesting and easy to use.	4	Strongly Agree
Overall mean	3.8	Strongly Agree

It can be seen from the table that the five criteria concerning the level of difficulty of the content of the Learning Modules are interpreted as Strongly Agree. Of these five criteria, the respondents agreed that the explanations conveyed a clear idea as proven by a 3.8 weighted arithmetic mean which means that the developed materials are suited to address the needs of the learners for these materials appear interesting, easy to use, with clear and easy to follow instructions, provide comprehensive discussion and series of activities following the levels of difficulty.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Most of the Grade VI learners in Bukal Sur Elementary School did not master some competencies in the First and Second Quarterly Assessments, the reason why their performance level for the two quarters was very low. Most of them were in the Satisfactory and Fairly Satisfactory Levels.
2. In the delivery of learning activities, the teachers and learners both encountered several challenges that hampered the achievement of teaching and learning goals. Learners' poor vocabulary, misbehavior, absenteeism, insufficient

textbooks, and the level of time management of the teachers contributed to the low performance level of Grade 6 learners in English.

3. SIM-Based Learning Modules for English 6 were developed based on the results of the first and 2nd quarterly assessments and learners' responses in the conducted FGD. Hence, these modules can be used as supplementary materials in teaching the contained lessons/competencies for these quarters.

4. The developed SIM-Based Learning Modules for English 6 as assessed by the experts, are very significant for the Grade 6 learners to acquire mastery in the identified competencies that can thereby increase their level of performance in the subject.

Contributions of Authors

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares that she has no conflict of interest.

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