
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Enhancing Students' Writing Competence Using the Process Writing Approach at a Technological University

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| ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to determine the effectiveness of Process Writing Approach in teaching writing skills and enhancing the writing competence of students in a technological university. Two hundred students participated in the study. While one hundred from the school of physical sciences were used as the experimental group, 100 from the school of engineering formed the control group. The study lasted for four weeks. Students underwent eight lessons. A pretest, posttest quasi control group research design was adopted and data was collected through tests scores. Data were analysed using inferential statistics specifically dependent t-test. The one hypothesis that guided the study was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that PWA enhanced students' writing skills as participants who were taught through PWA performed significantly better than those in the control group. Based on this result, it was recommended that teachers should integrate PWA into technological students' writing lessons.

| KEYWORDS

Writing, Writing Skill, Process Writing Approach, Technological University

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

Writing is a crucial language skill which gives learners ample opportunities to convey their thoughts, feelings, ideas and to organize their ideas into convincing arguments. The writing skill plays a pivotal role by facilitating academic success, professional skills and creativity. Moreover, the digital age has not reduced the need for writing since it informs one's behaviour and goes beyond school purposes as different professions require people who can write and communicate effectively (Cadmin, 2019). Thus, in today's academic environment, developing strong writing skills has become a fundamental goal especially in higher education because effective writing is a vital tool for communicating ideas, conveying research findings, and engaging in critical thinking. Besides, writing has increasing significance for students as it represents the main medium they use to do assignments in the different subject areas and to answer examination questions (Sheir, Zahran & Koura, n.d). According to them writing failure for students is more likely to result in educational failure. As Wilson (2018) has noted "excellent writing skills enables learners to communicate their messages with precision, efficiency and accuracy." Also, Laurinavicus (2017) remarks that good writing skills will prevent clogged up miscommunication. However, for many students, writing is burden. Thus, quite a number of undergraduates enter tertiary institutions without adequate writing skills and they often do not improve throughout their university education (Fallah, Wood & Austad, 2006).

At technological universities where the emphasis is often placed on technical knowledge, expertise, and innovation, the importance of cultivating effective writing abilities is sometimes overlooked. Hence, students at technological schools often have challenges when it comes to conveying their ideas effectively in a written form. Such challenges may include difficulty in

conveying their ideas to a wider audience, explaining intricate theories and processes, and organizing their thoughts and presenting them in a coherent manner. Although, these challenges can be attributed to the fact that technological subjects are replete with technical jargons and specialized terminologies, the need for students in any field of study to communicate clearly in writing cannot be over-emphasised. To address these challenges and to enhance students' writing skills, educators have over the years experimented with different pedagogical approaches and strategies. One innovative approach which has recorded positive effects on students' writing skills (see Yacon& Cruz, 2022; Tariq&Qaisar, 2021; Bayat, 2014) is the Process Writing Approach (herein after PWA). The PWA involves a structured method for enhancing writing skills because it focuses on sequential stages of drafting, peer feedback, and revision. This writing teaching approach aligns well with the dynamic nature of the technological fields where clear and precise communication is essential for success. Besides, writing skills can come into a fuller play when writers are made aware of the different types and processes involved in writing (Tariq&Qaisar, 2021). It is against this background that the researchers undertake to carry out a study which seeks to add to research efforts at finding effective pedagogical approaches to improve writing skills of students of technological universities.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Among the four language skills, writing is often assumed to be the most laborious and taxing. It is observed that many students lack the basic writing skills such as the ability to organize ideas effectively and to communicate clearly. Even when writing, some students deviate from the topics so much that the content of their essays do not show knowledge of the topic they are assigned to write. Consequently, several studies have been carried out in search of ways of addressing students' challenges in writing. Previous studies available to the researchers assessed the effects of PWA on middle and high school students in different fields of study. However, there seems to be a dearth of literature on studies that examined the effects of PWA on science and technology undergraduates. It is on this note this paper is designed to determine whether the writing skills of science and technology students would improve through PWA instruction.

1.2 Objective of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the effect of the PWA on students' writing skills in narrative essay.

1.3 Hypothesis

In order to resolve the problem of the study, this hypothesis is formulated.

There are no significant effect of PWA on students' writing achievement in narrative essay.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Process Writing Approach

The PWA often referred to as writer's workshop presents a structured method for improving writing skills because it focuses on step-by-step drafting, peer feedback and revision. PWA treats writing as a process rather than a completed product. It tends to focus on the student, and the teacher only acts as a guide.(Mustofa&Syafi'i, 2019). Talking about writing as a process, Sheir, Zahran& Koura, n.d assert that ideas are generated, put in first draft, organized and arranged in a whole, revised and corrected, and finally written in a final draft. Thus, it would be more accurate to characterize writing as a recursive activity in which the writer moves backward and forward between drafting and revising with stages of re-planning. Many research studies on PWA have been carried out.

Gonzalez (2010) asserts that process writing is all about teaching students meta-cognitive skills that will lead them to improved texts and guiding students to be proficient and competent users of the language by encouraging meaningful communication through written texts. The writer further states that process writing allows teachers to focus their attention on improving students writing activities to assure a meaningful and communicative final product. The process writing provides students with opportunities to analyze their activities with the intention of learning from them.

Brown (2001) remarks that the process writing allows students to manage their own writings by giving them a chance to think as they write, that is, conveying their messages to the readers in written form through the complex writing process; pre-writing, drafting, revising and editing. This approach to writing has positive effects on students since they are creators of language and they need to focus on content message, and their own intrinsic motives. Thus, the language skill of writing is best learnt when learners have their own intrinsic motives (Brown,2001).

Graham and Harris (1997) have stated that the process writing has many potential advantages. In this approach, students are encouraged to plan, draft and revise their writing. Motivation for writing is enhanced as collaboration, personal responsibility, personal attention and a positive learning environment are stressed. The instructions given to students for writing improves their quality of writing (Graham and Haris,1997).

Rusinovci (2015) stresses that the instructor in a process-based approach plays the role of a facilitator and states that writing learnt and not taught. When teaching, the facilitator/instructor draws out the learners' potentials and the process approach is seen as a learner-centred approach. Also, Rusinovci (2005) points out that the process approach emphasizes the importance of a recursive procedure of pre-writing, drafting, evaluating and revising.

Alodwan and Ibnian (2014) have remarked that the process approach to writing enables teachers to focus on the various parts of the writing process and it gives more freedom for students to experiment with their language. Such orientation would help students to develop confidence and establish fluency before they are concerned with a finished product.(Alodwan and Ibnian)

Bayat (2014) states that the process writing approach treats writing as a process, that is, writing is carried out as a process before the written text is completed. Bayat (2011) has discovered in his study entitled effects of the Process Writing Approach on writing success and anxiety' that the Process Writing Approach improves participants' success in written expression and decreased writing anxiety to a statistically significant extent. Thus, the process writing approach affects writing success in a positive and statistically significant way. The study also points out that the likelihood of unsuccessful text production at the end of the writing process decreased considerably. Bayat (2014) remarks that the fact that the primary goal during the process writing approach is communication, students are free to express themselves with the writing approach. Furthermore, since written texts are evaluated several times in the writing process, it gives room for resounding success. (Bayat, 2014)

In the process writing, students engage in activities such as planning/prewriting, composing/drafting, revising/editing. According to Brown (2007) the main purpose of pre-writing activities is to help students to generate ideas through brainstorming. This method will encourage them to write. Godzalez (2010) also states that planning/pre-writing activity motivates learners to consider the purpose of their text and their audience.

The composing/drafting activity makes students to write their first draft. In this stage, students should not expect perfection as the activity is seen as a further means of discovering ideas (Gaber, 2003). Thus, in the drafting stage, students write down their ideas and focus on the content of their writing (Alodwan and Ibman, 2014).

The revising/editing stage allows learners to review their write-ups. In this stage, learners should check their spellings, punctuations, expression and grammatical discrepancies. Thus, in the revising stage students clarify their meanings and refine ideas.

Some scholars have also stated that the process writing has a lot of limitations. Horowitz (1986) states that the process approach to writing is not realistic because it lays a lot of emphasis on multiple drafts which may not be suitable for academic examination. Also, Graham (2011) stresses that enough attention is not devoted to mastering foundational skills such as spelling, handwriting and sentence construction. Charney (1998) has accused the writing approach as being scientific, anti-feminist and failing to resist dominant ideologies. However, scholars have indicated that process writing is still very relevant and effective in many fields including writing instructions for adults, and for professional communication (Penrose & Sitko, 1993, Schriver, 2012).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study employed an experimental, pre-test and post-test design to examine the effect of the process writing approach on students.

3.2 Study Sample

Two hundred students from Federal University of Technology participated in the study. They were drawn from the fields of physical sciences (100 students) and engineering (100 students). Students from each field formed two classes of 50 students each. Thereafter, two classes were randomly designated the experimental groups and two the control groups.

3.3 Instrument

The instrument used for data collection was test scores. Three validated narrative essay topics were given to participants to write on.

3.4 Procedure

The researchers carried out the study in three phases and it lasted for four weeks.

First Phase: Administration of Pretest

The validated essay topics (three narrative) were given to participants in both the experimental and control groups to write an essay of about 350 words on one topic.

Second Phase: Administration of Treatment to the Experimental Group

This lasted for four weeks during which the use PWA was employed to teach the experimental group.

Third Phase: Administration of Posttest

At the end of the four weeks of treatment, the test was re-administered on the participants in all the groups as posttest after two days of the teaching. All together 173 students took the posttest. The researchers marked the pretest and posttest scripts with the marking guide collectively prepared. Grading was based on these components: content, organization, expression, and mechanics.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

The data for the study were analysed using inferential statistics specifically dependent t-test.

The hypothesis tested in this study was that there will be no significant difference in the writing achievement scores of experimental and control groups.

To test the hypothesis, the dependent t-test was employed to find out if the treatment (PWA) improved the writing skills of participants.

First, a paired sample analysis was carried out to determine the content validity of the pretest and posttest tests. The result is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Paired Sample showing Relationship between Pretest and Posttest Tests

Groups	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Correlation	Correlation (p. value)
Experimental Pretest	26.4409	93	9.56495	0.99184	0.687	0.000
Experimental Posttest	29.8602	93	7.96813	0.82626		
Control Pretest	22.3500	80	10.42283	1.16531	0.792	0.000
Control Posttest	23.3875	80	10.00569	1.11867		

The paired sample statistics in Table 1 show that the mean score for the experimental group increased from 26.44 in the pre-test to 29.86 in the post-test, based on a sample of 93 participants. The standard deviation decreased slightly from 9.56 to 7.97, with the standard error of the mean reducing from 0.99 to 0.83. The correlation between the pre-test and post-test scores in the experimental group is 0.687, with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a statistically significant relationship between the two tests.

In the control group, the mean score increased from 22.35 in the pre-test to 23.39 in the post-test, based on a sample of 80 participants. The standard deviation decreased slightly from 10.42 to 10.01, with the standard error of the mean reducing from 1.17 to 1.12. The correlation between the pre-test and post-test scores in the control group is 0.792, with a p-value of 0.000, indicating a statistically significant relationship between the two tests.

Furthermore, to determine the differences/similarities between the experimental and control groups, a pairwise comparison for the pretest and posttest scores was computed. Results are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Pairwise Comparisons

Dependent variable	Group membership	Group membership	Mean difference	Standard Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval for Difference	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Pretest	Experimental	Control	4.091*	1.520	.008	1.090	7.092
	Control	Experimental	-4.091*	1.520	.008	-7.292	-1.090
Posttest	Experimental	Control	6.473*	1.367	.000	3.774	9.172
	Control	Experimental	-6.473*	1.367	.000	-9.172	-3.774

For the pre-test scores, the mean difference between the experimental group and the control group is 4.091, with a standard error of 1.520. This difference is statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.008. The 95% confidence interval for this difference ranges from 1.090 to 7.092, indicating that the experimental group had significantly higher pre-test scores compared to the

control group. For the post-test scores, the mean difference between the experimental group and the control group is 6.473, with a standard error of 1.367. This difference is also statistically significant, with a p-value of 0.000. The 95% confidence interval for this difference ranges from 3.774 to 9.172, showing that the experimental group had significantly higher post-test scores compared to the control group.

The negative mean differences (e.g., -4.091 for pre-test and -6.473 for post-test) simply reflect the comparison in the opposite direction (control group compared to experimental group) and confirm the same significant differences.

Table 3: Summary of Dependent t-test showing effect of PWA on Students' Writing test Scores

Groups	Paired differences					T	df	Sig.(2 tailed)
	Mean	Std. deviation	Std. Error	95% confidence interval				
				Lower	Upper			
Experimental: Pretest & Posttest	-3.41935	7.08538	0.73472	-4.87857	-1.96014	-4.654	92	0.000
Control: Pretest & Posttest	-1.03750	6.59774	0.73765	-2.50576	0.43076	-1.406	79	0.163

Table 3 presents the results of the paired (dependent) t-test for both the experimental and control groups. For the experimental group, the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test scores is -3.42, with a standard deviation of 7.09 and a standard error of 0.73. The 95% confidence interval for the difference ranges from -4.88 to -1.96. The t-value is -4.654, with 92 degrees of freedom, and the p-value is 0.000, indicating a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores for the experimental group. This means that the teaching method used for the experimental group significantly improved the participants' test scores.

In contrast, for the control group, the mean difference between the pre-test and post-test scores is -1.04, with a standard deviation of 6.60 and a standard error of 0.74. The 95% confidence interval for the difference ranges from -2.51 to 0.43. The t-value is -1.406, with 79 degrees of freedom, and the p-value is 0.163. This result indicates no statistically significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores for the control group. This means that the teaching method used for the control group did not significantly improve test scores of the participants.

5. Discussion

The thrust of this paper was enhancing students' writing competence using process writing. It sought to examine the effect of the PWA on students' writing skills in narrative essay. The findings presented in Table 1 show that the mean score for the experimental group increased from 26:44 in the pretest to 21.86 in the post-test. This means that the teaching method used for the experimental group significantly improved the participants' test scores.

The experimental group has significantly higher post test scores to the control group. One of the possible explanations for this improvement is the use of the PWA in teaching the experimental group. Therefore this approach has significantly enhanced the students' English writing skills.

The results obtained in the study is similar to Rahman, Apriyanti and Ramandan (2024) who in a study of implementing PWA to improve EFL students' writing performance discovered that the it has the potential for improving students' essay writing skills but the students have to adhere to the prescribed procedural models for PWA.

Furthermore, the result obtained in this study is consistent with Matinez, Lopez-Diaz and Perez (2020) who reported that process writing is essential to students' writing skills development. The researchers stressed that PWA gives students the opportunity to develop stronger writing skills which result in more organised and structural paragraphs.

In the same vein, Tariq Ali and Khan (2021) have stated that explicit teaching on process writing helps students in producing quality writing. In their study of developing learners' writing skills through process writing approach, they found that students' writing has been significantly improved. Also Vega & Pinzor (2020) also discovered that the process based approach to writing makes students feel confident about writing and also contributes to the students' self efficiency in writing skills.

6. Conclusion

The study revealed that process writing can enhance students' writing competence. The approach facilitates writing by assisting students in their writing skills through the steps involved in the writing process. Based on these, there is the need to sustain students' interest and competence in writing through PWA. Instructors should adopt this approach in the teaching and learning process in writing to enhance students' writing skills.

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