Research Article

UTILIZATION OF DEVELOPED MODULE IN TECHNICAL WRITING

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Ma. Theresa Bringas Nardo[1*]

[1]Tarlac Agricultural University, Philippines

*Corresponding Author, E-mail: mtbnardo@tca.edu.ph

Abstract

The paper presents the importance of using a developed module in Technical Writing in the language classroom to effect autonomous learning among the language learners. This is supported with the scores of the control and experiment groups with 35 students each showing no significant difference in their scores for the regular, assigned and evaluative tasks. Modular instruction is an alternative instructional design that used developed instructional material, a module for Techniques of Technical Writing as the tool for the study which was based on the needs of the students. The research discusses the benefits of using modules for instruction such as the acquisition of a better self-study or learning skills among students. The students engaged themselves in learning concepts presented in the module. They developed a sense of responsibility in accomplishing the tasks provided in the module. With little or no assistance from the teacher, the learners progressed on their own and worked on the activities independently, yielding favorable results both for the control and experiment groups.

Keywords: Learner Autonomy, Modular Instruction, Independent Learning, Personal Pace of Learning

Introduction

The experiential theory of learning advocated by the experientialists made significant contributions in the field of education because they believed that all human beings have a natural desire to learn. Thus, when there is failure to learn, it is not caused by the person's inability to learn, but rather to problems present with the learning situation. It is maintained that experiential learning answers the needs and wants of the learner and involves the learner more to initiate and evaluate himself. With this process, the learner earns long lasting effects of what he actually does. He added that experiential learning is equivalent to personal development and that everybody has an innate tendency to learn. The teacher facilitates the learning process by encouraging the students to do their task, by

clarifying and explaining how things should be done, and organizing learning resources that aid learning. The teacher does not impose his own views on the students.

So that in the writing class, frequent and varied opportunities exist to use the writing process to complete personally relevant and engaging writing tasks, but little time is devoted to teaching important writing skills and strategies, as it is assumed these can be mastered through incidental teaching and learning (Westby & Costlow, 1991). Today, writing skill is the most neglected in language learning leaving the students least able to express their thoughts. In other classrooms, writing instruction or writing activities are not a priority.

Modular Instruction

Instruction takes various forms to get across the goals of teaching. Blended instruction, use of online platforms are among the instructional methodologies that teachers employ. Modules likewise are coming to the fore to address the problem of dearth materials specially for technical writing.

Instructional materials to promote individual and independent learning is important. The traditional teaching method of pure lecture may be replaced by modules for independent study and individualized instruction.

Long before the onset of modules as part of classroom instruction, the development of self-learning materials or resources for modular instruction tends to meet the demand for educational opportunity for students of every background, regardless of their aptitude, intelligence or previous achievement as well as in moral, emotional and personality traits. Individualized instruction is an attempt to provide the optimum learning condition for individual students and situation.

Module is a form of individualized instruction that allows students to use a self-contained package of learning activities. These activities guide learners to know or to be able to do something. Further, a learning module contains activities intended to help students understand certain lessons (Cruickshank et al., 2003).

The module is an innovation among developed and developing countries whose impact is brought by projects on the preparation and use of modules of different offices like the Asia Center of Innovations in Education Innovation. It is an instructional material which possesses the qualities that will make the individual an independent learner, self-pacing and progressing at his own rate, finally giving him the feeling of self-satisfaction, the very essence of modular instruction.

The module has become a teaching strategy which is becoming popular in the school system (Gonzales et al., 2006). It is a self-contained and independent unit of instruction with a primary focus on

a few well-defined objectives. For [3], the module is a set of learning opportunities systematically organized around a well-defined topic which contains the elements of instruction.

Part of using the module is the task of the teacher to provide reasonable feedback, monitor and help the students see that the assigned task is as valuable as other work [1]. When the work is marked conscientiously by the teacher, and is given relevant feedback, the students will find meaning with what they do because they know that their effort is not wasted.

In the region, few researches on the use of modules have yet emerged. Instructional materials that abound are largely on modules and segregated activities for specific lessons. However, the effort of teachers to come up with instructional materials does not stop.

Autonomous Learning

Autonomous learning has long been part of a wide range of educational philosophies and has recently been identified in educational policy as crucial to the development of Lifelong Learning in 'the learning society". A psychologist maintains that the ultimate aim of education is for the individual to develop the autonomy of thought to create new, original ideas rather than just recycle old ones. Moreover, autonomy is one of the most fundamental values in modern western culture. As part of the educational aim, the development of autonomy among learners is allowing them develop the kind of persons who can make choices and decisions about the important areas of their lives. Educators believe that autonomy ought to be taken as a highly desirable aim of education. Within pedagogy as discipline, the goals of teacher development are then often formulated in terms that imply familiarity with the concepts of autonomy such as maturity, personal responsibility, self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-determination.

It is further believed that learner autonomy is a dynamic process ready to submit to 'educational interventions' rather than a static product, a state, which is reached. In order to help learners to assume greater control over their own learning it is important to help them become aware of and identify the strategies that they already use or could potentially use. Individual learners differ in their learning habits, interests, needs, and motivation, and develop varying degrees of independence throughout their lives (Tumposky, 1982).

Learner autonomy assumes a more social and political character within critical theory. As learners become aware of the social context in which their learning is embedded and the constraints the latter implies, they gradually become independent. They can be regarded as 'authors of their own worlds'. However, allowing students to be on their own still requires the presence of a teacher to show

the way. In other words, autonomous learning is by no means “teacherless learning.” Teachers have a crucial role to play in launching learners into self-access and in lending them a regular helping hand (Dearden, 1972). Learner autonomy is best achieved when the teacher acts as a facilitator of learning, a counsellor, and as a resource (Voller, 1997).

Learner autonomy does not mean learner isolation. Since learner autonomy focuses attention on individuality and independence, it is sometimes assumed that learners make the best and fastest progress when they work on their own. According to this view, classrooms are a matter of administrative convenience. This, however, is not correct (Voller, 1997).

In the language classroom, it is emphasized that the importance of the teacher in fostering self-direction and autonomy is of prime consideration (Kounin, 1970); he indicated that it is the function of teachers to help learners develop skills and knowledge which will leave them in a position where they can launch towards independent study. Independent study (Cruickshank et al., 2003) is any school-related assignment students do more or less alone. These activities include reading, rehearsing words and writing compositions, among others. Teachers employ this method of teaching to give opportunities for students to rehearse lessons, that they need to think more and need further practicing to attain mastery in a long term. As students stay in the corners of the classroom, they are taught how to learn so that they become independent upon their teachers. The development of sound study skills while in the confines of the classroom will eventually make them independent not only on their studies but even on more complicated things throughout their lives.

However, a linguist claims that autonomous learners are a rarity and that encouraging learners to move towards autonomy is most appropriately carried out in the classroom (Nunan, 2009). The teacher in independent study or autonomous learning is a facilitator of the learning and satisfaction of the students. Monitoring and guiding the students in the process will yield a more beneficial output because when the students are left on their own, they fail to learn and even learn incorrectly.

Few researches about the alternative instructional method on independent study have been done, and such researches [16; 1; 6; 8; 14] point out the impact of independent study in the learning of students. Independent study is introduced as early as elementary such that young learners acquire self-direction as they progress on their own. Moreover, assignments that require independent activity are appropriate and must maintain a level of difficulty that fit the capability of the students (Rosenshine, 1980). With the correct demonstration and explanation from the teacher, the learners (Kounin, 1970) are more likely to be on task during independent study. The challenges posed by the teacher arouse the diligence and creativity of the students.

What lead to a greater impact of independent study as mentioned by several scholars are clarity of purpose, assignment and procedures, good monitoring, and the provision of immediate feedback to learners [6; 8]. With brief but meaningful interaction of the teacher and student during feedback, the students' task on time increased by 10% (Fisher et al., 1980). This shows that the feedback encouraged students to work more conscientiously on the assigned task. It is relevant to note that with the teachers monitoring the progress of students helps the students become successful.

However, the English proficiency of Filipino students is continually declining over the years as shown in the low performance in national assessment in their competency in the use of the English language. Students have great difficulty in expressing their ideas in the classroom and in writing which could also be attributed to the utter neglect of developing the writing competence of the students. Classroom activities are neglected or are not enough to help the students develop their writing competence.

There are teachers' activities outside the school which decrease the quality time for students to learn the language. Various activities and quasi teaching concerns like attendance to seminars, workshops and trainings lessen teachers' time in the classroom. Lessons are not delivered as planned because of interruptions beyond the control of the teacher.

The use of modules is an alternative instructional design for the learning and satisfaction of the students. The students work on their own and the teacher's role is to guide and monitor the progress of the students in doing their individual tasks. With the use of the modules, students work on various activities that are interesting and challenging enough to maintain focus and attention (Cruickshank et al., 2003). Its use encourages independent study. It directs students to practice or rehearse information. To gain mastery of the concepts, exercises are given following the progression of activities from easy to difficult. The arrangement of the exercises as such formalizes the level of difficulty that the learners can perform. Another benefit of using modules for instruction is the acquisition of a better self-study or learning skills among students. Students engage themselves in learning concepts presented in the module. They develop a sense of responsibility in accomplishing the tasks provided in the module. With little or no assistance from the teacher, the learners progress on their own. They are learning how to learn; they are empowered.

The module has become a teaching strategy which is becoming popular in the school system (Gonzales et al., 2006). It is a self-contained and independent unit of instruction with a primary focus on a few well-defined objectives. The module is a set of learning opportunities systematically organized around a well-defined topic which contains the elements of instruction (Calderón et al., 1998).

In the region, few researches on the use of modules have yet emerged. Instructional materials that abound are largely on modules and segregated activities for specific lessons. However, the effort of teachers to come up with instructional materials does not stop. Putting the idea of the use of modules in instruction paves way to developing autonomous learning when the students learn on their own pace with the very least attention from the teacher.

Statement of the Problem

The study was conducted to ascertain the technical writing skills of students. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. How did do the control group and experimental group differ in their performance?
2. How did do the students score in their activities using the module?
3. How did modular instruction enhance autonomous learning?

Methodology

1. Research Design

This study used the descriptive method in determining the effect of the use of modules in the enhancement of learner autonomy. Descriptive research is a type of research that describes a population, situation, or phenomenon that is being studied. In this study, the need for developing modules to address the technical writing difficulties of the students was determined through a survey. Before the development of the modules, a survey on the writing needs of the students was conducted. The results of the needs analysis became the basis of developing the modules. Upon identifying the needs, the lessons were grouped according to content designed for a whole term. The topics were divided into three: overview of technical writing, special techniques in technical writing and writing the research paper. The first set of needs was used in developing the overview of Technical Writing (Module I) as background. The special techniques in technical writing (Module II) Module III was on the fundamentals of research writing needs of the students.

The Technical Writing classes were conducted for both the experiment and control group. The control group used Module II where most of the activities to test learner autonomy was based on. The experiment group was met once a week by the teacher to guide the students or answer the queries of the students about the lessons given. The other class was met regularly as scheduled.

After the semester, when all activities were completed, the researcher marked the items of each task and compared the results derived by each class. The scores of the control and experiment groups in the regular, assigned and evaluative tasks were determined.

2. Population and Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Tarlac Agricultural University. The student-respondents consisted of two groups: the control group and the experimental group with thirty-five (35) students each enrolled in the technical writing course. The control group used the module during the regular class period. On the other hand, the experiment group was met by the teacher once a week to orient and to follow up the progress of the students in their work and to give further instructions as needed.

Results and Discussion

Comparison of Performance of Control and Experimental Groups.

Table 1 Comparison of the performance of students in the assigned tasks

Assigned Tasks	MS C	MS E	MD
TASK 5: Defining words formally using the B+C+A pattern	9.90	8.26	1.637*
TASK 6: Expanding definition	27.00	17.47	9.526*
TASK 9: Sentence combining using the *that/which relative clause*	13.63	9.95	3.686*
TASK 11: Using A = B in informal definitions	11.00	9.05	1.947 ^{ns}
TASK 15: Writing a paragraph using the description that shows process	.53	19.84	8.691*
TASK 18: Stating functions and processes	3.97	9.16	-5.191*
TASK 23: Identifying a process	11.17	24.47	-13.307*
TASK 27: Classification using three grammatical forms	13.00	8.84	4.158*
TASK 29: Classification and Description	14.70	16.00	-1.300 ^{ns}
TASK 31: Writing a paragraph based on a completed table	1.23	1.16	.075 ^{ns}
TASK 35: Arranging contrasting sentences in order	2.23	2.16	.075 ^{ns}
TASK 37: Writing a paragraph of comparison	.20	1.37	-1.168*
TASK 41: Replacing defining and non-defining clause with the *-ing* form of the verb	7.03	8.37	-1.335 ^{ns}
TASK 42: Omitting the verb *to be*	.07	4.53	-4.460*
TASK 43: Omitting the relative pronoun	6.30	5.42	.879^{ns}
Grand Mean	**9.997**	**9.736**	**.22933** ^{ns}

The mean difference of assignments 1, 2 and 5 are significant which means that the students in the control group showed a better performance in the four assignments. That is, they defined words using the B+C+A pattern, and that they expanded the definition. They were able to combine the sentences using the relative pronoun that and which. The control group likewise had written a paragraph using the description that shows process.

Table 1 also shows that the control group got a mean score of 3.97 and the experimental group had 9.16 in Task 18 (Stating Functions and Processes). These scores registered a significant mean difference of -5.191 which means that the students in the experimental group could state functions and processes. The students could recognize the functions provided in definitions and used them to state the functions and processes. The students further know how to rearrange the words such that the terms could be identified by merely analyzing the functions and processes. They could also match the terms that refer to process with their corresponding functions. Task 23 (Identifying a Process), the control had a mean score of 11.17 while the experimental group had 24.47. Statistically, these results registered a significant difference at -13.307. This means that the students in the experimental group were able to identify the processes involved in photosynthesis. They recognized the various steps given for them to use in labeling the stages involved. The process of photosynthesis was completely or almost completely completed. Moreover, besides identifying the stages, the students constructed sentences using the phrases that express process. The last part of the assignment was paragraph construction based on the data given about the process of photosynthesis.

The above results of the performance of the students on describing a process are in consonance with the study conducted (Waguey, 2012) that indicated that the BSF I students of DMMSU La Union could explain a process without committing faulty and dangling modifiers and overstuffing of words. Further, the students used explanations to illustrate, clarify and give details of how something works, how steps of certain process or procedure are implemented. In addition, writing process gives the student a real purpose in writing for an audience.

For Task 27 (Classification Using Three Grammatical Forms), the control group with a mean score of 13.00 and the experimental group of 8.84 revealed a significant difference at 4.158. This means that the students in the control group were able to comprehend the necessary information to complete a table from a given input. The table was not totally filled out and the students got the needed details from the given paragraph. For the students to complete a table, they also had to look closely at the information so that they supply the missing points correctly and accurately.

The control (14.70) and the experiment group (16.00) in Task 29 (Classification and Description) gave no significant difference. This means that the students were able to write a paragraph based on a given table. This also means that the students could write a cohesive paragraph using the information that are presented in the table.

Task 11 (Using A=B in Informal Definition) gave the control (11.00) and the experimental (9.05) and registered a non-significant difference at 1.947. This means that the students were able to define the terms using the A=B pattern and the results were not very far from each other.

Task 35 (Arranging Contrasting Sentences in Order) showed that the control (1.23) and experimental (1.16) did not have a significant difference (.075). This means that the students could arrange contrasting sentences in their proper order. Their ability to recognize contrasting sentences facilitated their ordering of related and contrasting ideas. The use of markers like nevertheless, however, in contrast and other connectives indicating contrast can help the students develop their paragraph of contrast correctly. Result of Task 37 (Writing a Paragraph of Comparison) gave the control group (.20) and the experimental group (1.37) to yield a significant difference (-1.68). It means that the students in the control group did not come up with a paragraph that expressed comparison. Based on the results, some students skipped writing the paragraph of comparison probably because of inadequate information and vocabulary to use in writing the task. The students in the experimental group tried to write a paragraph of comparison but just the same registered a rather low score because some of the respondents in the experimental group also skipped working on the assignment.

Task 41 (Replacing Defining and Non-defining Clause with the –ing Form of the Verb) gave the control a mean score of 7.03 while the experimental had 8.37 which was not significant (-1.335). This implies that the students replaced the defining and non-defining relative clause with the –ing form of the verb.

Task 42 (Omitting the verb to be) gave the control group (.07) and the experimental group (4.53) yielded a significant difference at -4.460. This implies that the control group did not recognize the verb to be in the sentences while the experimental group were able to rewrite the sentences omitting the verb to be.

Task 43 (Omitting the Relative Pronoun), the control (6.30) and the experimental (5.42) yielded no significance at 8.79. This means that the students omitted the relative pronouns in the sentences.

The grand mean of the control (13.37) and the experiment (21.14) did not register a significant difference at .22933 which means that the students performed almost equally in the tasks that they were

given to work on individually. However, for the assigned tasks, the control group performed better than the experimental group.

According to Rothwell et al. (1998) assignments or contract learning is necessary to support instruction. Contract learning is "an alternative way of structuring a learning experience: it replaces a content plan with a process plan. Instead of specifying how a body of content will be transmitted (content plan), it specifies how a body will be acquired by the learner (process plan)".

A learning contract should specify five things: 1) the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that should be acquired by the learner, 2) the learning resources and strategies, 3) the target date for the accomplishment, 4) the evident to show that the objectives have been accomplished, and 5) the manner how the evidence will be judged or validated.

Assignments that require independent activity are appropriate and must maintain a level of difficulty that fit the capability of the students (Rosenshine, 1980). With the correct demonstration and explanation from the teacher, the learners (Nunan, 2009) are more likely to be on task during independent study. The challenges posed by the teacher arouse the diligence and creativity of the students. With brief but meaningful interaction of the teacher and student during feedback, the students' task on time increased by 10% (Kounin, 1970). This shows that the feedback encouraged students to work more conscientiously on the assigned task. It is relevant to note that with the teachers monitoring the progress of students helps the students become successful. Part of using the module is the task of the teacher to provide reasonable feedback, monitor and help the students see that the assigned task is as valuable as other work (Anderson, 1995).

Performance of Students in the Evaluative

Tasks/Summary Check

This portion presents the results of the performance of the students on the 6 evaluative tasks (ET) intended to test the students' understanding of the lesson. A summary check for all the lessons was prepared after each lesson.

Performance of the Control Group in the Evaluative Tasks.

Table 2 displays the performance of the control group in the evaluative tasks and summary check. For Summary Check with 69 items, the control obtained a mean score of 37.90. This result shows that the students had answered only almost half of the items correctly in the summary check.

Table 2 Performance of the control students of evaluative tasks and summary check

Evaluative Tasks and Summary Check	MS C
Summary Check	37.90
Evaluative Task 4 - Definition and Classification	25.53
Evaluative Task 5 - Definition, Comparison and Contrast	13.23
Evaluative Task 1 - Formal Definitions	11.23
Evaluative Task 2 - Informal Definitions	2.20
Evaluative Task 6 - Defining and Non-defining Relative Clauses	1.80
Evaluative Task 3 - Description of a Process	1.73
Grand Mean	**13.37**

ET 4 (Definition and Classification) which had 70 items registered a mean score of 25.53. The result shows that the students had defined and classified the terms under ET 4 which focused on definition and classification. However, the mean scores show that the students had not answered the items on definition and classification perfectly. Not all the students filled out the boxes that pertained to the classification of the items that was given in the input. Some failed to enumerate the items required in the evaluative task. In ET 5 (Definition, Comparison and Contrast) with a total of 33 items got a mean score of 13.23 which shows that the students had worked on them partially. The score shows that the items on comparison and contrast were not correctly provided even if the input was available. The students did not recognize the characteristics belonging to the items compared.

In ET 1 (Formal Definitions) with 38 items, the mean score was 11.23. The result reveals that the students defined words formally. It means further that the control students were able to define the words that were given in the evaluative task.

ET 2 (Informal Definitions) with 20 items, the control got 2.20. The students in the control group did not define the words informally good enough.

The result of ET 6 (Defining and Non-defining Relative Clauses) which had 17 items had a mean score of 1.80. The result means that the control did not recognize the defining and non-defining relative clauses in the evaluation items for the task.

ET 3 (Description of a Process) which had 24 items got 1.73. The result signifies that the students had not fully described a process as required in the evaluative task for process description.

The result is supported by the 2002 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) writing examination which measured the writing skills of 4th, 8th, and 12th graders in the United States. It was found that only 22%to 26 % of students scored at the proficient level across the three grades and very

few were found to write at the advanced level. Worse, alarmingly high proportions of students were found to be below the basic level (Persky et al., 2003). Furthermore, a recent study of the NAEP reports that only about one-fifth of students write adequately and most students have difficulty organizing their thoughts coherently in writing and cannot express themselves well enough to ensure that their writing will accomplish the intended purpose (Applebee et al., 1986).

The table further reveals that the most difficult evaluative tasks for the control were ET 2 (Informal Definitions) (2.20), ET 6 (Defining and Non-defining Relative Clauses) (1.80), and ET 3 (Description of a Process) (1.71). The results show that the students in the control had trouble in placing the elements of definition in the proper order based on the pattern used for informal definition. Most of the students defined the given terms using the formal definition pattern. Their consciousness on definition was pinned on the manner formal definition is carried out. The students got low in Defining and Non-defining Relative Clauses because they were not able to identify the structure in the sentences. They failed to differentiate the two because the clauses were almost the same in form but vary in function. Besides, the examples that were given may not have been enough for the students to understand. ET 3 (Description of a Process) got the lowest mean score because the students had not written a paragraph that described a process. This is attributed to the lack of exposure of the students regarding process description and their lack of vocabulary to put their ideas together. In summary, these difficult evaluative tasks show that the lessons on these topics were not clearly understood by the students. The overall performance was 13.37.

The low results of the evaluative tasks by the control group conforms to the belief (Nunan, 2009) that producing a written output for second language learners is probably the most difficult thing to do particularly for the students who go to higher learning institutions and study in a language that is foreign to them.

Experiential learning answers the needs and wants of the learner and involve the learner more to initiate and evaluate himself. With this process, the learner earns long lasting effects of what he actually does. He added that experiential learning is equivalent to personal development and that everybody has an innate tendency to learn. The teacher facilitates the learning process by encouraging the students to do their task, by clarifying how things should be done, and organizing learning resources that aid learning. The teacher does not impose his own vies to the students.

Performance of the Experimental Group in the Evaluative Tasks.

Table 3 displays the performance of the experimental group on the evaluative tasks and summary check of Module II with an overall mean of 21.14. For Summary Check with 69 items, the students got a mean score of 44.84.

ET 4 (Definition and Classification) which had 70 items, the experimental got a mean score of 38.74. The result shows that the students had defined and classified the terms under evaluative task 4 which focused on definition and classification. Few of the students got high scores in the summary check which shows that the students had not remembered the lessons well. For ET 5 (Definition, Comparison and Contrast) with a total of 33 items, a mean score of 20.89 was obtained which shows that the students had answered the items on ET 5. The students filled out the table that required the characteristics of the items that were compared. The input was used to refer to the needed data.

Table 3 Performance of the experimental students of evaluative tasks and summary check

Evaluative Tasks and Summary Check	MS E
Summary Check	
Evaluative Task 4 - Definition and Classification	44.84
Evaluative Task 5 - Definition, Comparison and Contrast	38.74
Evaluative Task 1 - Formal Definitions	20.89
Evaluative Task 2 - Informal Definitions	17.00
Evaluative Task 6 - Defining and Non-defining Relative Clauses	13.47
Evaluative Task 3 - Description of a Process	9.21
Grand Mean	**21.14**

With a previous lesson on completing the data of a table from an input, the students were able to perform the task according to the pattern given.

Evaluative Task 1 (ET 1) (Formal Definitions) with 38 items for the experimental was 17.00. The result reveals that the students defined words formally although not all of them got good scores. It means further that the students were able to define the words that were given in the evaluative task using the A+B = C pattern.

For ET 2 (Informal Definitions) that had 20 items, the students got 13.47 as shown in Table 3. The students in the experimental group lacked the skill in defining the words informally. Some of the did not use the pattern A=B or A=C correctly. Some of them forgot the A=C pattern because the A=B pattern was more familiar to most of the students.

Table 4 also displays the result of ET 6 (Defining and Non-defining Relative Clauses) which had 17 items got 9.21 which reveals that the experimental group recognized the defining and non-defining relative clauses in the evaluation items for the ET 6.

ET 3 (Description of a Process) which had 24 items got 3.83. The result signifies that the students had not fully transposed the active sentences to passive to describe the process that was involved in the evaluative task. The students did not write a paragraph that made use of the sentences in the passive voice. Likewise, the terms that were given were not completely defined even if the terms and the process involved were provided. The result shows that students had difficulty in the use of the passive to be used for description. Likewise, majority of students go through their academic years without acquiring much knowledge in performing writing tasks. The resulting lack of skills accompanies them throughout their academic lives, constantly serving as a cause of dissatisfaction both for them and their tutors or professors.

The table further reveals that the three most difficult evaluative tasks for the experimental were ET 2 (Informal Definitions) (13.47), ET 6 (Defining and Non-defining Relative Clauses) (9.21), and ET 3 (Description of a Process) (3.83).

The results reveal that the students in the experimental had difficulty in performing the evaluative tasks. This shows that the lessons on these topics were not clearly understood by the students.

Comparison of Performance of the Control and Experimental Groups.

Table 4 shows the comparison of performance of the control and experimental groups in the evaluative tasks. For ET 1 (Formal Definitions), the control group got 11.23 while the experimental group got a mean score of 17.00. The results had a mean difference of -5.767 which is not significant. The result conveys that although the score of the experimental group is higher than the control, the difference is not significant which means that the students in the control and experimental groups can define technical terms formally.

ET 2 (Informal Definitions), the control (2.20) and the experimental (13.47) registered a significant difference at -11.274. This reveals that the control group hardly identified the correct way of defining technical terms informally. They failed to properly use the A=B and A=C patterns. In the module, the terms, genus and differentia were explained, however, the results showed that the control failed to recognize the distinction between the three elements of definitions.

Table 4 Comparison of the students' performance in evaluative tasks and summary check

Evaluative Tasks/Summary Check	MS C	MS E	MD
Evaluative Task 1 - Formal Definitions	11.2	17.0	-5.767^{ns}
Evaluative Task 2 - Informal Definitions	2.20	13.4	-11.274*
Evaluative Task 3 - Description of a Process	1.73	3.83	1.898^{ns}
Evaluative Task 4 - Definition and Classification	25.53	8.74	-13.204*
Evaluative Task 5 - Definition, Comparison and Contrast	13.23	20.89	-7.661*
Evaluative Task 6 - Defining and Non-defining Relative Clauses	1.80	9.21	-7.711*
Summary Check	37.90	44.84	-6.942^{ns}
Grand Mean	**13.37**	**21.14**	**7.765 NS**

Legend: MS – Mean Score; MD – Mean Difference; C- Control; ^{ns} – Not Significant; E – Experimental; * – Significant

In Description of a Process (ET 3), the control got a mean score of 1.73 and the experimental group earned 3.63. The mean difference of the two is not significant at -1.898. The result shows that the students could barely describe a process as shown in the scores that they got. The students had not fully identified the stages of a cycle, and the procedure in completing various stages in the process. This means that the students had not arranged ideas and presented such ideas in a logical manner. The study of Waguey (2012) proves the findings of this study that students had difficulty in describing a process. In her study, it was found that the BSF students of DMMSU La Union could write an explanation of a process independently without much support or guidance from their peers or teachers. This is explained by learner autonomy (Dearden, 1972) that the change of experience from the teacher to the learner introduces a radical change in the age-old distribution of power and authority in the traditional classroom. When learners are allowed to detach themselves from strict classroom situations, they can develop their critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action capacities and they truly become autonomous learners who are expected to assume greater responsibility for and take charge of their own learning.

The students' competence on sentence emphasis conveys that they could write balanced sentences and they could emphasize their point either at the beginning or at the end of their sentences. Definition and Classification (ET 4), the control recorded a mean score of 25.53 and the experimental 38.74. The results posted a significant difference at 13.204 which showed that the students in the control group could not define technical terms as well as classify the parts of given terms. The students lacked comprehension and analytical skills with regard to the parts and classification of the parts.

As regards the Definition, Comparison and Contrast (ET 5), results revealed a significant difference at -7.661. The control group got a mean score of 13.23 and the experimental got 20.89. The result shows that the students in the control group had difficulty in identifying the contrasting and similar features of the given terms. This further signifies that the similarities and differences of objects and concepts were not clear to them. Moreover, the students failed to identify the more specific characteristics of objects showing similarities as well as differences.

In ET 6 (Defining and Non-defining Relative Clauses) yielded for the control group had a mean score of 1.50 and the experimental group 9.21. Statistically, the mean difference at -7.711 is significant. This means that the students in the control group did not distinguish the defining relative clause from the non-defining relative clause which the experimental group had done.

The performance of the students in the six lessons was summed up in the summary check with 69 items. The control group got a mean score of 37.90 and the experimental group got 44.84. Statistical results show a mean difference of -6.942 which is not significant. This implies that the students understood the lessons.

For the evaluative tasks results, a grand mean for the control (13.37) and the experimental (21.14) registered a mean difference of 7.765 which is not significant. The result means that the performance of the two groups in the evaluative tasks are almost the same although the experimental group got a slightly higher mean score. Further, the results revealed that the students garnered favorable results on the evaluation of formal definitions, informal definitions, description of a process, definition and non-defining relative clauses. The results of the exercises had no significant difference with a mean difference of .02275 which signifies that the exercises in Module II developed comprehension and tested knowledge of main ideas, details and sequence of ideas.

Summary of Findings

The following were the salient findings of the study:

1. The performance of the students in both groups was assessed in terms of 3 types of tasks: regular, assigned and evaluative tasks. The control got 8.38 in the regular tasks while the experiment got 10.37.

2. For the assigned tasks, the control got 9.99 while the experimental got 9.73, and for the evaluative tasks, the control got 13.37 while the experimental group got 21.14. Statistical analysis showed no significant difference in the performance of both the control and experimental groups.

3. The results of the performance convey that the modules helped develop autonomous learning among the control group.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are derived:

1. Carefully prepared modules for students to use can aid to meet varied language learning needs of students.

2. The development of the writing skills of second language learners has become the focus of teachers who have seen the need to strengthen the writing for academic purposes.

3. The use of modules fosters learner autonomy among students, because its use develops self-confidence specifically when the students do not need major supervision from the teachers.

4. Students scored favorably on the items given in the modules and this conveys that the students can do tasks on their own because guided writing provides them a series of questions to answer to come up with sentences and paragraph. In order that the students could write, the teacher gives vocabulary to use.

5. The performance of the experimental and control group in the regular tasks, assigned tasks and evaluative tasks did not register a significant difference, which implies that the modules can be used by the students without much intervention by the teacher. That is, the modules provide what learners must do and how to do the tasks.

Recommendations

Based on the results and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are given:

1. The performance of the students on the use of the module can be conducted regularly.

2. While the use of modules for instruction develops independent learning, it is recommended that during the implementation phase of the module, strengths and weaknesses be identified. That is, in lessons/tasks where students did not quite do well, more exercises or activities be developed.

3. The regular, assigned and evaluative tasks may be updated and be reviewed to improve the content of the modules. Emphasis be given to assigned tasks since student output depends on how well these tasks are to be accomplished; to test student knowledge and application of skills, paragraph development, one-on-one questioning of students, questionnaire to measure how well the students has improved his values, among others.

4. It is recommended that teachers conduct relative researches on module preparation to include areas such as the use of rubrics to evaluate the outputs, to include content teachers to validate the inputs on various areas, and to increase the number of participants or respondents.

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