

**TOPIC: EFFECTS OF PROCESS APPROACH ON SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL
STRUGGLING WRITERS' ACHIEVEMENT IN COMPOSITION WRITING,
PANKSHIN LGA, PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The study examined effects of process approach on senior secondary school struggling writers' achievement in composition writing. Struggling writers are learners with high hopes to overcome challenges in writing composition in spite of the difficulties they are faced with. The process approach is recursive or circular in its nature as it concerns pre-writing activities, especially planning, revising and editing. A true experimental study design was used, with the experimental group receiving treatment while the control group received instruction with the use of traditional instruction. The results of the findings revealed that the experimental group gained higher achievement than the control group, suggesting that the process approach is an effective instructional strategy for improving the writing skills of struggling writers. By implication, teachers should implement the process approach in their writing classes to curtail students' perennial poor performance in composition writing.

Keywords: process approach, struggling writers, composition writing, writing achievement

Introduction

Writing is a means of communication among human beings. Composition as an aspect of writing is a means of communication in the academic settings and in literate professions. Composition writing, within the context of the Nigerian education system, represents a complex and multifaceted approach to written expression that goes beyond mere sentence construction or paragraph development. It encompasses the art and science of organizing thoughts, experiences, and knowledge into coherent written discourse that effectively communicates intended meanings to specific audiences. In the West African educational context, particularly in Nigeria, composition writing serves as a fundamental tool for assessing students' overall language competence and cognitive development.

According to Babajide (2020), composition writing in Nigerian secondary schools manifests in several distinct forms, including narrative, descriptive, argumentative, and expository writing. Each of these forms demands specific skills and approaches that students must master to become proficient writers. The complexity of composition writing involves the intricate integration of multiple language skills, including vocabulary usage, sentence structure manipulation, paragraph development, and overall text organization.

In the context of Plateau State, composition writing takes on additional significance due to the multilingual nature of the region. Students often have to navigate between their mother tongue, Hausa (the regional lingua franca), and English (the language of instruction) while composing written texts). This linguistic complexity adds another level of challenge to the teaching and learning of composition writing in the region. The intricate interplay between these languages often influences students' writing processes, affecting students in general and particularly struggling writers' ability to express their ideas clearly and coherently in English composition.

The process approach emerges as a promising alternative to traditional teaching methods, offers a comprehensive framework for addressing the current challenges in writing instruction. The process approach through its stages has the potential to develop in the struggling writers the skill of editing, idea generation like brainstorming and concept mapping; idea generation which is a process that is used to form new ideas. It enhances students' critical skills in analysing and

organizing points in a logical and coherent manner; organization of properly constructed sentences presents complete ideas or concepts with enough clarity to stand on its own. Sentences serve as the basic units of written communication and the building blocks of a paragraph while paragraphing in composition is a collection of sentences dealing with a single idea which should be unified, coherent, and well-developed. It is expected that one paragraph should lead to another in thoughts and application of punctuation marks.

As a result of students' poor performance in composition writing by struggling writers and other students as a result of inappropriate approaches used by teachers, the study intends to ascertain what effects the utilization of process approach would have on struggling writers' achievement in composition writing in Pankshin Local Government Area, Plateau State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Students in general and struggling writers in particular are supposed to write proficiently because it is an important skill that enables them to express themselves appropriately and effectively. In addition, writing determines students' success to a great extent, in both internal and external examinations. However, most of the students and especially struggling writers do not write competently as they demonstrate poor idea generation and organization, poor sentence construction, and other rubrics of writing. The process approach is quite beneficial to struggling writers because it consist of activities that incorporate writing skills in different steps leading students to become competent writers and that is why this study examined effects of process approach on senior secondary school struggling writers' achievement in composition writing in Pankshin Local Government Area, Plateau State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study:

1. What are the differences between pretest and post-test in idea generation mean scores of students in composition writing in the experimental and control groups?
2. What are the differences between pretest and post-test in idea organization mean scores of students in composition writing in experimental and control groups?
3. What are the differences between pre-test and post-test in sentence construction mean

Literature Review

Composition Writing

The value of writing is undeniably glaring. It is one of the socio-cognitive processes involving the construction and recording of messages on print or paper and some other resources like the computer (Daliawati, 2019). Writing enhances language development. This is because the mental process students have to go through in writing helps in proper building capacity for written text. The practice of writing exercise assists the writer to select and arrange proper words to persuade the reader. It gives learners focus on what they are learning. Aldin, Omer and Hamad (2019) affirm that writing is learnt rather than taught. The learning process gives learners the opportunity to think and consequently provide solutions to issues in writing.

Writing is used in social communication. It allows persons to relate beyond the immediate environment. Hanapi (2019) declares that writing is more than a means of communicating with one another but it is also a means of expressing emotional ideas. It treats emotional stress because as writers express the upheaval that is mostly affecting their lives, they become happier and less negative than prior to their writing experience. Also, writing leads to improvement in physical health. This is experimentally conducted when Smith (2020) observed asthmatic and arthritic patients who were assigned to write about their either stressful events or emotionally neutral topics. After the study, asthmatic patients improved in language function but the other group showed no change. Writing lightens the mind of any human being who is depressed by events. Through writing, long-term and short memories are stored. Writing provides permanent record of information, beliefs, arguments and theories. The experiences of the past are connected to the future through writing. Writing clarifies and gives evidences to arguments and issues relating to human beings and environment. Writing gives satisfaction and captures the interests of the audience. Also, writing can foster students' vocabulary, spelling, grammar and punctuation use.

The process approach through its stages has the potential to develop in the struggling writers the skill of editing, idea generation like brainstorming and concept mapping; idea generation which is a process that is used to form new ideas. It enhances students' critical skills in analysing and organizing points in a logical and coherent manner; organization of properly

constructed sentences presents complete ideas or concepts with enough clarity to stand on its own. Sentences serve as the basic units of written communication and the building blocks of a paragraph while paragraphing in composition is a collection of sentences dealing with a single idea which should be unified, coherent, and well-developed. It is expected that one paragraph should lead to another in thoughts and application of punctuation marks.

Struggling Writers; struggling writers are learners with high hopes to overcome challenges in writing composition in spite of the difficulties they are faced with. Fareed, Bilal and Ashraf (2016), it is common to see these struggling writers committing all manners of errors in writing. It does not mean that they will not get it. Some problems originate from both teachers and students. Most of the students find it difficult to generate ideas and when they do, to organize such thoughts is another problem. They find it difficult to paraphrase or summarize information gotten from different materials. Others are having limited period for writing instruction, students' negative attitudes towards writing, transfer of first language to English composition. Moreover, Fareed, Bilal and Ashraf stress that teachers on their part lack the appropriate pedagogical approach to teach writing. They lack the ability to relate and motivate students. They also lack the time to give feedback, probably because of the large class and inadequate time.

The process Approach; the process approach has been accepted more than the traditional product approach, even though the process approach is fraught with varied controversies such as lack of definite acceptable definition. But it is certain that the process approach has intervention of pre-writing, drafting, editing and the usual feedback (Anyebe 2019). The process approach has moved away from the tradition of giving topics and waiting for the final products from the learners. There is really no best way of teaching writing. It depends on the context; nonetheless, selecting the right approach for the students is necessary because it will definitely determine the success of the learners in writing. It is also pertinent to identify different skills and activities that will evoke creativity in the learners. In the process approach, the ability of the learners to think has been emphasized because they have the opportunity to identify a topic and brainstorm on related points; after which they engage in proper planning and organizing of the points. The first draft is also important because it is a point of direction to subsequent drafts. In the process approach, it is obvious that learners undergo series of drafts; therefore, it is necessary to prepare learners towards enduring in the process as problem solvers. Another vital activity in the process

approach is the teacher's intervention in form of feedback. The feedback encompasses effective comments as directives for students to revise and edit their work in more effective ways.

Alostath (2021) posits that the writer is always confronted with the issues of putting down thoughts; hence, writers should see writing as a process because it helps them endure in organizing their thoughts and ideas. This further enhances the right selection of words, phrases, sentences and idiomatic expression. Also, the correct tenses are selected and references are made where appropriate; and as soon as the topic is identified, the whole work seems easier. Some crucial steps in the writing process include; planning, introduction, development of theme, further development of subthemes and conclusion. At whatever level of teaching writing, introducing the process approach is vital at the primary and secondary schools level. The teaching involves the use of the process approach which has five basic steps: organizing the classroom, selecting topics, modelling writing, revising and publishing. Having looked at the views of different authors, it is pertinent to note that, there is no specific process but all teaching of writing depends on the context

Methodology

Population; the population of the study includes all the 221 senior secondary two students from public secondary schools in Pankshin North Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Sample; The sample for the study comprised 100 students from two school senior secondary schools in Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Instrument for Data Collection; the instrument used for data collection was Composition Writing Achievement Test (CWAT).

Results

Answering of Research Questions

Research Question One

What are the differences between the pre-test and post-test in idea generation achievement mean scores of students in composition writing in the experimental and control groups?

Table 1

Pre-Test and Post-Test of Idea Generation Achievement Mean Scores of SS2 Students in Composition Writing in the Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean		\bar{x} Difference
	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Gain	
Experimental	12	5.83	1.99	11.58	2.19	5.75	3.83
Control	12	5.91	1.56	7.83	1.11	1.92	

Table 1 shows the mean scores of idea generation of SS2 students in Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria. The experimental group obtained a mean score of 5.83 with a standard deviation of 1.99 at pre-test. At post-test, a mean score of 11.58 was obtained with a standard deviation of 2.19 and a mean gain of 5.75 was obtained. This implies that there is an improvement in idea generation of SS II students after treatment. In the control group a mean score of 5.91 was obtained with a standard deviation of 1.56 at pre-test, while at post-test a mean score of 7.83 was obtained with a standard deviation of 1.56. A mean gain 1.92 was obtained. From the summary of analysis after treatment, it then means that SS2 students in the experimental group had a higher idea generation mean score after exposure to process approach as against those in the control group who were not given treatment, with a mean difference of 3.83. This implies that process approach increase students' achievement in idea generation mean score in composition writing.

Research Question two

What are the differences between the pre-test and post-test in idea organization achievement mean scores of students in composition writing in the experimental and control groups?

Table 2

Pre-Test and Post-Test Idea Organization Mean Scores of SS2 Students in Composition Writing in the Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean		\bar{x} Difference
	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Gain	
Experimental	12	5.75	2.13	12.50	2.27	6.75	3.66
Control	12	5.16	2.82	8.25	1.35	3.09	

Table 2 shows the mean scores of idea organization achievement of SS2 students in Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria. The experimental group obtained a mean score of 5.75 with a standard deviation of 2.13 at pre-test. At post-test, a mean score of 12.50 was obtained with a standard deviation of 2.27. A mean gain of 6.75 was obtained. This implies that there is an improvement in idea organization of SS2 students after treatment. In the control group a mean score of 5.16 was obtained with a standard deviation of 2.82 at pre-test, while at post-test a mean score of 8.25 was obtained with a standard deviation of 1.35 and a mean gain of 3.09 was obtained. It then means that SS2 students in the experimental group had a higher idea organization mean score after exposure to process approach as against those in the control group who were not given treatment, with a mean difference of 3.66. This implies that process approach increase idea organization in composition writing. The improvement in the experimental group suggests that the process approach is a powerful pedagogical tool for developing students' idea organization in composition writing.

Research Question three

What are the differences between the pre-test and post-test in sentence construction achievement mean scores of students in composition writing in the experimental and control groups?

Table 3

Pre-Test and Post-Test Sentence Construction Mean Scores of SS2 Students in Composition Writing in the Experimental and Control Groups

Group	Pre-test		Post-test		Mean		\bar{x} Difference
	N	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Gain	
Experimental	12	4.75	2.73	13.08	1.72	8.33	5.75
Control	12	4.83	2.82	7.41	1.50	2.58	

Table 3 shows the mean scores of sentence construction achievement of SS2 students in Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria. The experimental group obtained a mean score of 4.75 with a standard deviation of 2.73 at pre-test. At post-test, a mean score of 13.08 was obtained with a standard deviation of 1.72 and a mean gain of 8.33 was obtained. This implies that there is an improvement in sentence construction of SS 2 students after treatment. In the control group a mean score of 4.83 was obtained with a standard deviation of 2.83 at pre-test, while at post-test a mean score of 7.41 was obtained with a standard deviation of 1.50 and a mean gain of 2.58 was obtained. It then means that SS2 students in the experimental group had a higher sentence construction mean score after exposure to process approach as against those in the control group who were not given treatment, with a mean difference of 5.75. This implies that process approach increase students' sentence construction in composition writing.

Summary of Findings

The findings from the study shows that:

The process approach is effective in changing the composition writing of SS2 students positively. This was indicated in the result that majority of students in the experimental group had positive idea generation towards composition writing in the post-test as against the control group.

The process approach was found to be effective in improving the idea organisation of SS2 students as indicated in the post-test result that there is significant difference between the idea generation of students in the experimental and control groups.

The process approach is effective in improving students' sentence construction in the experimental group. The result indicated that the sentence construction mean scores of students was significant in composition writing.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made

1. Teachers should implement the use of the process approach in teaching composition writing while they follow the steps, prewriting, revising and editing
2. Instructors should provide scaffolding as support to struggling writers while breaking down the writing process into smaller writing task
3. Students should develop positive writing habits like generating ideas, organizing thoughts, drafting and revising when composing written texts
4. Students should use writing resources such as writing guides, online tutorials or writing centres
5. Curriculum planners should incorporate process approach as content in teaching writing at all school levels because it enhances writing competence in learners
6. Schools should organize conferences, workshops, seminars to expose teachers to the current global teaching approaches and methods that will enhance students' writing

Conclusion

The process approach and its impact is evident from the analysis of results. It motivates learners' interest, particularly struggling writers' ability to compose written texts because of its nature of exposing students to writing activities in steps, pre-writing, revising and editing as they treat their writing skills, idea generation, organizing, sentence construction, paragraph development and punctuation marks. The process approach is student-centred as is obtained in the twenty first century teaching and learning. The teacher engages in scaffolding, guides and facilitates learning activities. Teachers are urged to implement it in teaching composition writing to address the perennial poor performance in English Language.

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