
Evaluating the impact of the remedial program in enhancing students' writing skills: A Case study of ENG101 students in the Modern College of Business and Science

Dr. ELHAFIZ MOHAMMED AHMED ELWALY

Assistant Professor

General Education Department

Modern College of Business and Science

Abstract

This paper aimed to evaluate effectiveness of the remedial program implemented to the ENG 101 students at the general education department at the modern college of business and science (academic year 2021 – 2022). The study investigated the results of the program to evaluate its impact in improving the targeted students' academic writing skills. A pre and post program academic writing tests have been implemented to collect and analyze the data for the study to compare the students' results and evaluate the effectiveness of the program. The overall findings of the study show that the program has achieved the objectives and the learning outcomes. Based on the study findings, it is recommended that the program be regularly offered to ENG 101 students in order to improve their academic writing skills as well as bridging the gap between the levels of students.

Keywords: English composition one (ENG 101) Freshman students in General Education Department at the Modern College of Business and Science.

INTRODUCTION:

Remedial programs are a type of instruction used to fill the gap between what students know and what they are expected to know. It is designed in a way that helps students achieve the expected level of competency in certain academic skill. Remedial instruction is designed to support students who fall behind in a certain academic area to reach a desired level. It has become “an indispensable component of tertiary” in even in the education leading countries such as the United States, Canada, or Japan. (Zhang, Shou, and Ishino, 2008, p:331). As higher education institutions are more available to high school graduates, the demand for students' basic academic abilities has been lowered for admission. Accordingly, some students encounter difficulties in some of the academic basic skills as they lack the required knowledge to

manage college-level work. Thus, remedial programs are provided to help those students to recompense the scanty knowledge so that they can improve the skills needed to successfully complete college-level courses and academic programs.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

The modern college is famous for its diversity of students in terms of schooling and cultural backgrounds, as there are students who studied in international schools, where English is the medium of instruction and communication, which makes them distinguished in language competence. There are also students studied in bilingual schools where all scientific subjects are taught in English and the rest of the subjects are in Arabic. English language level of this category is average. The third category is students graduating from government schools, where English language is just a subject among the rest of the subjects that are all taught in the Arabic language. Therefore, English level of these students is lower level than their colleagues. The three groups are subject to the same academic program at the college, making this diversity a challenge for students and professors, especially in the assessment stages because everyone is subject to the same assessment during and at the end of the semester. Consequently, students of the third category grades in all means of assessment (continuous and final exam) are the lowest compared to the grades of the others. This program is designed to help the students of (ENG 101) who need remedial support in the writing skills to attain the desired level. Most of (ENG 101) students find it difficult to communicate through writing, and this is evident in the number of mistakes they make in basics such as grammar and spelling. The performance of those students in the writing tests held online compared to that on on-campus shows a clear difference in the level - most of the grades go down from high or average to very low. This indicates that the students do not rely on their personal abilities in tests held online, as they can overcome contextual errors using technology. On the contrary, the performance of the same students in paper tests held on campus indicates clear contextual problems in writing.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY:

The essentiality of the remedial programs’ evaluation lies in acknowledging the extent of their success in achieving the desired objectives, which contributes to the continuation of their provision and making any required development on them.

OBJECTIVES:

This paper aimed evaluate and acknowledge the extent success of the remedial program implemented to the ENG 101 students at the general education department at the modern college of business and science (academic year 2021 – 2022).

QUESTIONS:

* Did the remedial program enrich the targeted participants' writing skills within a substantive context as opposed to a more abstract approach.

HYPOTHESIS:

* Participants' writing skills performance will improve within a substantive context as opposed to a more abstract approach.

Limits of the study:

This study is limited to ENG 101 students in the general education department at Modern college of business and sciences in the academic year 2021 - 2022, summer semester one.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The diverse nature of the class leads to the mixed performances in assessments. The students who fail to achieve desired proficiency level in English are found to be struggling in academic writing of their courses in general. This explains the importance of remedial teaching and creates the demand for an effective remedial teaching of writing skills Inclusive environments that provide challenging and early intervention can prevent academic failure and alter learning disabilities. The early intervention could be possible if the students' lack of proficiency is detected early. The teacher coping up a mixed class of diverse proficiency levels and the pressure of fulfilling academic demands like syllabus coverage might not be able to slow down the flow of lesson coverage or less proficient students; or the teacher might even overlook the part of the class that is not grasping the knowledge he/she is transmitting (Maheswari, 2081).

As noted by several authors remedial teaching techniques usually differ from other teaching techniques in several aspects. First, the assumption is made that the student has, at an earlier time, been exposed to the material to be learned and for some reason failed to learn the task as expected. Second, the student is older so that he will usually be mentally and physically more mature. Third, the teacher is aware that some diagnosis of the student's strengths and weaknesses needs to be made before instruction can begin. The

literature in the field of writing shows that the teaching of the skills of the writing skills begins in the early school years but remediation for missing skills usually begins at college. Since that the majority of colleges freshmen need writing skills remedial instruction, it is more likely that remedial programs may be possible and needed to be implemented at an earlier time. (Alene,1975).

Broadly, the remedial writing instruction program can be conceptualized as a four-tier model focusing on direct skills-based instruction, based on identified individual skill deficits; teaching the generic structure, semantics, grammar and organization of writing; promoting self-awareness strategies for writing; and use of technology assisted writing procedures. While many institutions offer writing intervention programs; they seldom encompass or provide opportunity by genuinely addressing all these four needed aspects to maximally exploit the true potential of students with such problems. The overall long-term goal for any such program must be to teach the student to internalize what is being taught and reach a level of independent mastery. The locus of control should not and cannot be an externally school or teacher driven, but an internal self-driven student-controlled activity (K, Ranganathan 2013).

METHODOLOGY:

Subject:

To identify ENG101 students who require remedial support, a diagnostic test was administered to ascertain their levels. Moreover, students who have previously failed the course and those who have a GPA of less than 1.5 were also enrolled in the program.

Instrument:

The researcher adopted the pre and posttest comparison methodology to collect the data for this study. Targeted students' scores in the diagnostic test are compared to their scores in one of the continuous assessment writing tasks and the final exam results. Comparing participants scores of the writing tests to their diagnostic test scores enables witnessing whether the remedial program was successful in enriching participant writing skills. In addition, a well-designed diagnostic test along with other writing skills tests can help trainers understand which concepts or competencies were well taught during the program and which ones need additional time or need to be included in future remedial programs.

Procedures:

The comparative method is used to evaluate the program. Targeted students' performance in the diagnostic test is compared to their scores in the first test and the final exam results. By, analyzing and comparing the results of the tests scores, it is hoped that the effectiveness of the program will be revealed. Moreover, the analysis will also clarify the areas that need to be addressed for future implementation of the program.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION:

This chapter discusses and presents the data analysis, interpretation for the analyzed data and test of the results against the hypotheses, questions, and objectives of the study.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DATA:

The designed tests for this study were divided to three main parts. Firstly, the diagnostic test in which students were asked to write a well-designed three hundred words paragraph about their future plans after graduation. This test is given at the beginning of the semester before start implementing the remedial program. The test is given to all ENG 101 students in order to identify students who require remedial support based on poor performance. Grading of the diagnostic test focuses on the areas of weaknesses that students show in their writing to be included in the remedial program. The results of the diagnostic test showed that most of the weaknesses areas of students who showed poor performance poorly, revolves around four main points, which are: contextualism, mechanics, sentence structure and paragraph structure. Due to limited time, the remedial program had been implemented in parallel with other (ENG 101) course, in order to evaluate the progress of the students and the benefits achieved from the remedial program. Secondly, the first writing test (classification essay writing test) which was scheduled at the end of the fourth week after the beginning of the diagnostic test. Students were asked to classify types of reducing stress. The test was given to all ENG 101 students including the targeted ones. The results of this test helped tracking whether the remedial program is improving students writing skills. The third test was the final examination. This test was administered at the end of the semester (week seven) after the end of the remedial program in week six. Students were asked to write an essay suggesting three solutions to tackle the problems associated with poor attendance of classes. Comparing the results of this exam to the results of the first writing test (classification essay writing test) and the results of the diagnostic test will indicate to what extent, the remedial program was

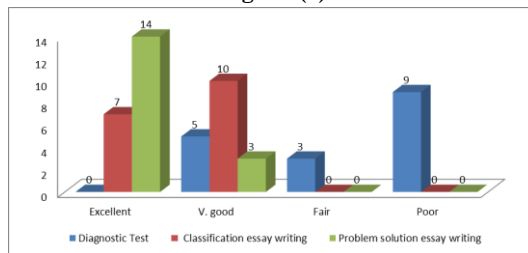
benefitable enough to enhance the efficiency of students in writing skills in general and academic writing in particular.

Table (1): Frequency distribution of the students' tests results

Type of test	level			
	Excellent	V. good	Fair	Poor
Diagnostic Test	0 0.0	5 29.4	3 17.6	9 52.9
Classification essay writing	7 41.2	10 58.8	0 0.0	0 0.0
Problem solution essay writing	14 82.4	3 17.6	0 0.0	0 0.0

Source: The researcher from applied study, 2022

Figure (1)



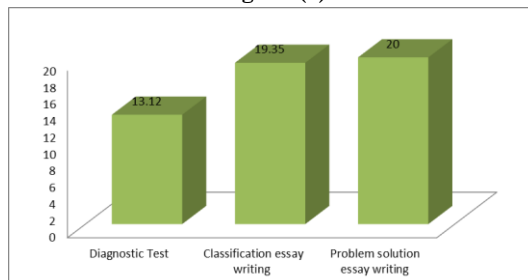
The analysis of the frequency distribution of the students' tests results shows clear improvement in the performance of students in the classification essay writing test and the problem solution essay writing test.

Table no. (2): Analysis of variance for differences between types of tests

Type of test	Mean	Std. Deviation	F-value	P-value
Diagnostic	13.12	2.027	50.471	0.000
Classification essay writing	19.35	2.120		
Problem solution essay writing	20.00	2.120		

Source: The researcher from applied study, 2022

Figure (2)



The table and figure and above show that the P-value of F- test (0.000) is less than significant level (0.05), which indicates the statistical difference between students' performance in the diagnostic Test, the classification essay writing test, and the problem solution essay writing test.

CONCLUSION:

This study intended to investigate whether the remedial program outcome has succeeded to enrich the targeted participants at the modern college of business and science with the writing skills required to study in the college. To answer the question and hypothesis of the study, the experimental methodology was adopted to show if there is a correlation between the students' writing skills before and after the diagnostic test.

The collected data went through different computing processes to analyze and find answers for the study questions and hypotheses. The researcher used the results of the analyzed data and the answers of the hypotheses to interpret the findings and the recommendations of the study.

Results of the tests analysis show a clear improvement in the targeted participants writing skills. The result indicates that the remedial program has achieved its main objective to enrich the targeted participants' writing skills within a substantive context as opposed to a more abstract approach.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Remedial programs should be implemented as a main content of the ENG101course.
- Remedial programs materials should be selected or designed based on the learners' needs.
- Further research on the effectiveness of remedial programs and methods to implement them are required.

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