

Remedial writing programme for elementary students



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The purpose of this study programme is to determine if students from the elementary level of Hin Hua High School (Chinese Independent School) improved in their ability to write in English after having studied specifically developed curriculum. The 7-hour remedial programme is to be conducted once the academic department releases the final assessment grades. Fifteen students with the lowest score were selected using the criterion method to undergo the remedial programme. The importance of all six major aspects of writing measured in the English Test which comprises mainly punctuation, grammar and usage, sentence structure, strategy, organization, and style. It is believed by attending the remedial programme selected students would be able to show the ability to make and articulate judgments by taking position on an issue or problem. Besides sustaining a position by focusing on the topic throughout the writing. They are also expected to develop a position by presenting support or evidence using specific details and make inferences based on support or evidence. Most importantly, they should be able to organize and present ideas in a logical way by logically grouping and sequencing ideas. Hence communicate clearly by using language effectively and by observing the conventions of standard written English

INTRODUCTION

As a language teacher, I often select writing tasks from language textbooks to help students improve their writing ability. Behaviorists, communicative, cognitive, and discourse theories could influence writing approaches in language textbooks. Each theoretical framework has provided us with a better understanding of the multiple dimensions and purposes of teaching

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writing. A review of the developments in writing pedagogy leads us to conclude that we could teach writing as a means to improve linguistic, rhetorical and communicative competence or as a discovery and cognitive process. The writing tasks that we select from language textbooks and assign to students could reflect one or some of these pedagogical purposes. As teachers, we need to question and understand the pedagogical assumptions of textbook writing tasks so that we can select tasks that will help our students become confident writers and independent thinkers.

Primary students entering the secondary school level (high School) are challenged not only to learn new content in the disciplines but also to communicate this. A significant number of students will not have adequate academic literacy levels to be able to do this successfully (Jones and Bonanno, 1995 (1). Although traditionally students were expected to develop academic literacy skills without any explicit teaching of these skills, schools now recognize the increasingly diverse backgrounds of their student populations and have put in place mechanisms for helping students develop their academic literacy. These have included the establishment of literacy and learning units as well as the requirement for school curricula to address the teaching of writing skills including communication skills.

English Learning Centre of Hin Hua High School Klang, like other literacy and learning units, has been involved in a number of collaborative projects with teachers involved in teaching Junior One to integrate the teaching of communication skills into the curriculum (Webb et al, 1995, Taylor and Drury, 1996). These initiatives have resulted in the development of new teaching materials and approaches as well as new practices of assessment

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and feedback. However, as subject area curricula are being adapted to computer-based forms of learning, it is also necessary to consider how the teaching of communication skills can be integrated into these programs or how the teaching of communication skills can be contextualized within the learning of subject area knowledge. With the current demand for proficiency in English Language great importance has been given to developing programs to instill good writing modes to the elementary learners which aims to help students become successful editors of their own writing.

1. 1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Writing skills have been identified as to improve students' thinking. Moffett and a few others have developed cognitively sequenced curricula for elementary and secondary writing, college composition, when it is sequenced at all, tends to rely on structural or rhetorical arrangements, which are neither sequential nor cumulative. Progressions from word to sentence to paragraph to theme confuse quantitative with qualitative growth, while rhetorical sequences confront students with cognitive problems of different but equal complexity. In short, from a cognitive perspective, most writing instruction in higher education is consistent with that in secondary education: what Stephen Judy described as “ Advanced Hodgepodge” in high school gives way to “ Arrogant Hodgepodge” in college.

A large and growing body of research, however, shows that cognitive development follows a hierarchical sequence of stages and suggests that a curriculum can be sequentially organized to promote cognitive development.

Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives provides some essential connections between the cognitive abilities we expect of college students and a curriculum that can stimulate those abilities. Bloom's Taxonomy is one solution to the cognitive hodgepodge of the writing curriculum. It allows us to sequence instruction and assignments in ways that speak directly to students' developmental needs.

From least to most complex, for writing instruction the taxonomy provides a flexible model of what happens cognitively in the learning process. Bloom described a six-stage sequence: Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis, and Evaluation. (See Figure 1)

Figure 1.0 The flow chart of Bloom's Taxonomy

At each new level, thought processes build on and encompass previous levels. Implicit in this structure is the assumption of an ascending scale of difficulty and comprehensiveness. Thinking at the comprehension level is more demanding than at the knowledge level; cognitive problems requiring synthesis or evaluation encompass all the preceding levels.

A review of Bloom's definitions for each taxonomic level suggests what such a cognitively-based writing course might entail. Although the focus of each level is cognitive, rhetorical issues of audience and purpose are equally appropriate and can be specified for any assignment.

Most of all, the taxonomy allows us to contemplate the value and feasibility of a cognition-based curriculum in writing. Such a curriculum would reflect the hierarchical relations of the various thought processes and would help to control for cognitive complexity in writing and thinking about distorting

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natural discourse. In this form, writing or writing-intensive courses would systematically develop students' thinking skills rather than leaving them to chance or, worse, blunting the writer's still-developing ability to explore and express ideas. In short, a cognition-based curriculum ensures that students participate fully in using writing as a mode of learning.

2. 0 INTENDED PURPOSE

The remedial programme is targeted for the elementary learners who are in the process of upgrading their writing skills to the pre -intermediate level. A total of 15 students are selected from the age group of 13 years old based on the final semester examination results. The examination basically structured in accordance to the textbook currently used in the school curriculum , New Opportunities (Pearson Longman-Cambridge). Basically the (Stiggins to highlight achievement differences between and among students to produce a , 1994). School systems might want to classify students in this way so that they can be enhance their competency level even further. The major reason for using a norm-referenced test (NRT) is to classify students. NRTs are designed on dependable rank order of students across a continuum of achievement from high achievers to low achievers be properly placed in remedial or gifted programs. These types of tests are also used to help teachers select students for different ability level reading or mathematics instructional groups. As the selected students fall under the below average group in Paper 1(Writing Assessment) whereby there are two parts that the had to complete here: SECTION A Notes Expansion and SECTION B Continuous Writing (Choose one topic out of five given) From the academic analysis it was found that majority students failed in Section B where it

consists of 25% of the total marks of 40% of the Writing paper. Thus they are required to attend a 7 hour remedial programme to improve their writing skills by at least 85%.

3. 0 PURPOSE OF REMEDIAL WRITING PROGRAMME

The reasons for the remedial program to be initiated is to better the learners in their writing skills and strengthen it so that they have all capabilities to be promoted to the next level but due to certain minute factors they fail to adhere to the standards of the pre-intermediate level. Thus these students are carefully selected using the criterion method to undergo the 7 hour remedial programme.

In order to drill and motivate these students in the remedial programme an enriching lesson plan is formulated to create a positive outcome at the end of the the 7 hour remedial programme. The purposes for emphasizing writing skills are to produce who can comprehend teaching and learning in a positive mental attributes. There is a wide body of research suggesting that assessing students' written performance is a valuable undertaking. Not only is an instructor able to help a student's progress, but also the instructor can facilitate the learning process and the learning outcomes by being aware of student performance throughout the academic session.

Figure 2. 0: The Purpose for Teaching Writing

Undeniably, 3R skills are important and necessary in daily living. They are also needed to support the development of a knowledge-based economy.

Recognizing these needs, the school has initiated and implemented programmes to identify students who have not mastered the 3Rs. These programmes are designed to specifically address and overcome the inability of students to master the 3Rs. This is in line with the essentialism which instills students with academic knowledge and character development.

Among the programmes that have been implemented in schools are the Early Intervention Reading and Writing Class, Basic Skills for Reading, Writing and Counting Programme and the Literacy and Numeracy Programme at Level One.

3. 1 Sub-skills of Writing

Besides drilling and enriching the remedial learners with the core writing skills, there are also exposed to the importance of sub-skills in their learning such as:

I Manipulating the script of the language: handwriting, spelling and punctuation.

II Expressing grammatical [syntactic and morphological] relationships at the sentence level

III Expressing information or knowledge in writing:

explicitly

implicitly

IV Enrichment of Vocabulary

PART B

4. 0 Objectives of the 7-hour remedial programme

The main aim in introducing and implementing the remedial programme particularly in the aspect of writing skills is to mainly:

to develop competencies in writing skills among learners

to move from a teacher-centered didactic model to a student-centered constructivist model

to acquire the ability to write in a more clear, concise and acceptable manner

5. 0 Instructional Design : Using the ADDIE Model to Build Writing Competency Among Remedial Learners

Table 2. 0 ADDIE's Model

5. 1 Framework

The generic term for the five-phase instructional design model consisting of Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation. Each step has an outcome that feeds into the next step in the sequence. There are probably over 100+ different variations of the generic ADDIE model.

Instructional design aim for a learner -centered rather than a traditional teacher-centered approach to instruction, so that effective learning can take place. This means that every component of the instruction is governed by the learning outcomes, which have been determined after a thorough analysis of the learners' needs.

This phases sometimes overlap and can be interrelated; however they provide a dynamic, flexible guideline for developing effective and efficient instruction.

Figure 3. 0 Instructional Design: Using the ADDIE Model

5. 2 ADDIE’S Theory

The ADDIE instruction model for this desin is outlined by Smith and Ragan(1995) in their book entitled Instructional design. The focus is n 5 points Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation. From this theory the analysis has proved that there was a need to conduct remedial programme for the elementary low scorers where an oppourtuny was given to learn and develop basic essay writing skills.

6. 0 Remedial Education Programme

In Malaysia, the importance of remedial education gained attention in the 1960s. Results of a pilot project in nine schools between 1967 and 1970 showed a need for remedial education, especially for pupils in rural areas. This paved the way for remedial education programmes in primary schools. The pioneers in the field attended a two-year intensive course on remedial education in the United Kingdom. Subsequently, a national series of seminars and workshops on remedial teaching were organized. With the exception of small schools or under-enrolled schools, every school is allocated one remedial education teacher. At the school level, a Remedial Education Committee is formed, comprising the headmaster, remedial education teacher, class teacher, subject teacher, resource centre coordinator, and other teachers as members.

The introduction of a new curriculum for primary schools in 1983 implied a return to the basics in education. The ultimate goal was to ensure that no pupil is illiterate by the

year 2000. The implementation of the remedial education programme for children in

Primary 1-3 is to ensure that they master the 3Rs. Children who have been recommended for remedial education are required to attend remedial classes. As of 1999, 54, 000 primary school children have undergone the intervention programme.

In addition to improving and enhancing teacher development, the Malaysian government also works towards improving the curriculum at school to meet the changing needs of the economy. During the Fourth Malaysia Plan, the primary school curriculum was revised with the aim of providing and establishing a firm education in reading, writing, and arithmetic. This led to the development of a new curriculum emphasizing the 3Rs. Studies looking at the returns to education in Malaysia have found positive results in those who have had some form of formal education, thereby providing support to the government guidelines on the primary curriculum which emphasizes the acquisition of basic skills. Education in Malaysia , changing very rapidly responding to the emerging focus of lifelong learning; the growing emphasis on learning; as opposed to reaching and the development of the new delivery systems

6. 1 The Educational, Philosophical and Psychological foundation

Elementary education shall aim to develop the spiritual, moral, mental and physical capabilities of the child, provide him with experiences in the democratic way of life, and inculcate ideas and attitude necessary for enlightened, patriotic, upright and useful citizenship. To achieve these objectives, elementary education curriculum shall provide for the:

inculcation of spiritual and civic values and the development of a good citizen based on an abiding faith in God and genuine love of country;

training of the young citizen in his rights, duties and responsibilities in a democratic society for active participation, in a progressive and productive home and community life;

development of basic understanding about Malaysian culture, the desirable tradition and virtues of our people as essential requisites in attaining national consciousness and solidarity;

teaching of basic health knowledge and the formation of desirable health habits and practices;

development of functional literacy in English as basic tools for further learning; and

acquisition of fundamental knowledge, attitudes, habits, and skills in science, civics, culture, history, geography, mathematics, arts, and home economics and livelihood education and their intelligent application in appropriate life situations.

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The Elementary Basic Education Curriculum focuses on the tool learning areas for an adequate development of competencies for learning how to learn.

The goal of Instructional design is to support the cognitive processes that result in learning (McGriff). The expected outcome of instructional design is to provide knowledge and skills to people. The three major learning theories are Constructivism, Behaviorism, and Cognitive. Instructional Design is based on constructivist principles. Instructional design is associated with instructional systems development (Leshin et al, 1992). An Instructional System is the “ arrangement of resources and procedures to promote learning” (Berger and Kam).

6. 2 Programme Design: ADDIE Model

ADDIE is a general-purpose model, which can be used to create instructional products and program design. ADDIE is the acronym for Analyze, Design, Develop, Implement and Evaluate and summarizes the five steps in the Instructional Design process. The instructional designer makes decisions critical to ensuring the effectiveness of the educational experience in each phase of the process. In accordance with the process improvement model, the five phases are a “ loop,” with the improvement of learning outcomes as the goal.

Dick and Carey and Kemp (Kemp, et . al, 1998) expanded the ADDIE Model into nine elements. The Dick and Carey Model uses a Reductionist approach in breaking instruction down into smaller segments targeting sub skills. The learner is required to master of sub skills, which are aggregated to achieve

overall skill mastery and learned behavior. It provides a systematic approach to curriculum and program design.

Teaching is essentially a philosophical endeavor and therefore educational activity can be conceived within the context of a philosophy or worldview. The curriculum reflects the art and craft of teaching. Educational technology can provide diversity of thinking regarding curriculum and instruction which would be curriculum theorizing.

6. 2. 1 Analysis

Basically the nature of the students whom the remedial programme to be conducted are students who learn English Language as a second language. They are originally from Chinese speaking families with a minimum exposure to English Language. Due to the expectation of the school and the educational needs in adhering English as one of the core subjects in school these students are required to have in depth knowledge and skill in it. All of them have been educated in the Chinese primary school education system.

Based on the final semester examination results 15 students are selected to undergo remedial programme as they fall in the border line cases . The students acquire poor writing skills, while being able to construct sentences fairly well, they seem to have great difficulty in organizing and developing their ideas into the form of an essay that has an introduction, body and conclusion.

In order to promote these students to the next level that is the pre-intermediate phase from their origin elementary level the English Language

Department found it vital for them to attend a 7-hour remedial programme in <https://assignbuster.com/remedial-writing-programme-for-elementary-students/>

order to find solution to this situation. All of them need to further develop their writing skills in term of cohesion and coherence; time and practice.

6. 2. 2 Design

The main design goal for our programme would be on the cognitive strategies of being able to develop an idea for writing since all of them come from a very similar background and have basic sentence writing skills.

Besides the development of language in the mechanics of sentence construction such as syntax, grammar, structure, etc given priority.

R. Gagne(1965) divided learning into 5 categories: Verbal or declarative knowledge, intellectual skills, cognitive strategies, attitudes and psychomotor skills. The learning goals are also in connection to these categories to try to put educational value behind our goals. At the same time the goal also reflects competences outlines by Benjamin Bloom (Bloom, 1956). These include: Knowledge, Comprehension , Application, Analysis, Synthesis an Evaluation. These give our goals validity whereby competencies are incorporated in bringing about concrete task for learners that we assign in order to achieve their goals. Hence in the evaluation phase, we can use this aspect to find out the validity and the accomplishment of the learners in implementing the programme.

Learning Goals and Type of Learning

OBJECTIVE

STANDARD

GAGNE’S DOMAIN

BLOOM’S TAXANOMY

Learners will identify an essay topic and 3 sub-topics

Criteria established by Hin Hua High School, English Language Department

Cognitive strategies

Synthesis

Learners will be able to write a 3 paragraph essay with an introduction, 2 sub topics to include their opinions, ideas and conclusion

Criteria established by Hin Hua High School, English Language Department

Declaration

Knowledge

Intellectual Skills

Synthesis

Evaluation

Application

Learners will be able to use the library and Handouts to research printed information on their topics

Criteria established by Hin Hua High School, English Language Department

Procedural knowledge (declaration knowledge)

Knowledge

Learners will be able to use proper mechanics of grammar syntax

Criteria established by Hin Hua High School, English Language Department

Intellectual Skills

Application

Learners will be able to present their topics in class

Criteria established by Hin Hua High School, English Language Department

Declaration knowledge

Comprehension

Table 3. 0 Learning Goals and Type of Learning

6. 2. 3 Development

In order to establish a approachable remedial programme for the elementary learners , we English teachers have developed a remedial programme which will undertake a 7 hour learning process. The teachers from the same level

have brainstormed and come up with a course content for the 7-hour teaching and learning programme.

The teachers from the same teaching level are the best person to create the lesson as they deal with the same competency level of students all the time and are considered experts in their area. Besides this, they will be able to make the printed and computer materials and added step of getting the right content for the level. On top of that since they have already been teaching in the same scope so they will be undoubtedly familiar in the process of teaching and guiding the learners in order to make the remedial programme a success.

6. 2. 3.(1) Procedure

The remedial programme would be in the English medium since the main objective is to improve writing skills among elementary learners.

The programme consists of 6 regular sessions and followed by a review and a test day. Each hour is scheduled to be conducted for 60 minutes

*****Details on the whole programme given on Part D**

6. 2. 4 Implementation

Further to the development to the development the teachers would be equipped with intact course content for the programme. The module would be prepared in balance with the time frame allotted for the programme. Any teacher who is selected for this task should be ready to undertake the teaching process based on the scheme that has been prepared.

All 15 students will be instructed to attend the programme for 7 hours.

These are the various aspects of implementation emphasized in the learning process:

Table 4.0 Learning Process Implementation

6.2.5 Evaluation

The evaluation phase consists of two parts: formative and summative.

Formative evaluation is present in each stage of the ADDIE process.

Summative evaluation consists of tests designed for domain specific criterion-related referenced items and providing opportunities for feedback from the users.

Primarily the evaluation is done in two parts. The first phase will be the evaluation of student work based on the objectives in the “ Learning goals and type of learning” listed above. Students will be rated by their teacher based on the A, B, C, F criteria set by the English Department. An A is excellent work, B is average, and C will mean student needs improvement. An F would mean that student failed the writing assessment with below 60% of mark. Students will be evaluated at each stage of the course. The department will use this evaluation in order to find out how they might need to modify the programme in the future.

A summative evaluation will be conducted as outlined by Smith and Ragan(1999, p. 352). Those authors explain that in order to evaluate the effectiveness, appeal, and efficiency of instruction, a collection, analysis and summary of data on students is essential.

In our designed programme an exam is built to assess students of their mastery on the abilities taught during the programme. Students are to show their capabilities in their understanding and knowledge taught to them by completing the set of homework targeted to them. Students will be graded on from 1 to 5 for their abilities in each of the following sections:

Student name

Student able to choose a topic n sub-topics

Student able to use handouts information

Student able to complete the essay

Score dated from 1 to 5

1 : poor

2 : Able to understand the writing concept with some guidance

3 : Able to complete the task with help and support

4 : Able to understand the concept and complete the task individually

A pre-test and post-test can measure how well learners achieved the learning objectives. However, it usually takes more time and effort to measure

things such as whether the learners will use their training. This evaluation phase

can extend for months.

Upon completion of the programme the students' feedback will be collected to further gauge the success of the programme. Questions are also answered on a scale of 1 to 5. 1 is low and 5 is high. The standard questions constructed are as below:

Were you satisfied with the content of this course?

Were you able to understand the teacher's explanation?

Were you able to put into practice elements that you learnt?

Did you find the course interesting?

On a scale of 1 to 5, what is your general feeling about the course?

PART C

7.0 REVIEWER'S COMMENTS

Below is the summary of the feedback received from two of the Senior Teachers from the English Language Department of Hin Hua High School regarding the 7hour remedial programme on writing skills.

Reviewer 1: Mdm Annaletchumy Reviewer 2: Ms Sastina

The strengths and weaknesses of the newly developed Remedial Programme for Elementary Students

Strengths

1. Learning by actively participating in group discussion

2. Encouraging students to construct their own ideas and knowledge of the topic
3. Student-centered rather than teacher or subject-centered
4. Teaching aid contributed to student's visualization on the topic given
5. Suitable to student's development level
6. Group work enables students to self – express, to be self-confident and self-awareness
7. Encourage teacher to develop student's creative thinking abilities
8. Emphasizing the concept of group work and peer evaluation where no student is left behind
9. Encouraging the co-operation among students and teacher positively
10. Enables student to have a positive mindset in creative writing

Weaknesses

1. Unsuitability of activities for crowded room
2. Lack of materials used as aid for pre-writing task
3. Lack of teacher's evaluation on the first phase of writing

4. Certain task may take more time than the planned time

5. Peer evaluation on writing inappropriate approach for elementary learners

8. 0 Summary of Review

Summarized below are some of the accomplishments and challenges I personally went through in construction the remedial programme:

8. 1 Strengths

8. 1. 1 Improved students attitude and motivation

Students are mentally prepared to participate in the programme because students agree to a particular pace, workload, and learning environment from the beginning.

8. 1. 2 Creating Learning Communities:

Classes function as teach communities both teacher and their students benefit - in both social and academic areas - from working with each other over a entire programme.

8. 1. 3 Eliminating Stigma of Dependency:

The concept group work and peer evaluation removed the stigma of being too dependent on the teacher Writing materials.

8. 2 Weaknesses

8. 2. 1 Students participation

Some learners will not contribute in due to the lack of interest or proficiency

8. 2. 2 Stipulated Time

The period allotted might not be sufficient for certain task. Thus this will delay or sometimes interrupt the whole programme structure.

8. 2. 3 Genuinely in peer marking

Some learners will not adhere by the rules set in peer marking when it comes to

assessment. Favoritisms and self -centered will influence the observation

9. 0 Conclusion

It is expected that by attending this model of English remedial instruction it will be beneficial to low English achievers. Students will gain substantially in grammar and vocabulary and they will also gradually improve in their overall English competence. Based on the comments from the reviewers it can be concluded that learners will be effectively improve their English writing skills through the prepared course module for the remedial programme. A well-designed course will definitely give them encouragement and support to elevate their English proficiency and be prepared for the next level , pre=intermediate.

10.0 PART D

7 HOUR LESSON PLAN REMEDIAL PROGRAMME – ENGLISH LANGUAGE

**LEVEL: ELEMENTARY LENGTH: 420m LESSON
TYPE: WRITING SKILLS**

Aim: by the end of my lesson, students will be able to write a full-length essay on Endangered Species and improve their approach of writing strategies.

Subsidiary aim: students will be able to improve their use of linking words in controlled and less controlled writing activities on Endangered Species

Evidence: (How will I know I have achieved the aim?)

Students will be able to complete gist and short writing strat