The Effects of Web-Based Learning on Struggling EFL College Writers
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Abstract:
This study aimed at finding out whether there were significant differences in achievement between English-as-a-foreign-language (EFL) freshman students exposed to traditional in class writing instruction depending on the textbook only, and those exposed to a combination of traditional in-class instruction and Web-based instruction in writing. All students were pretested before instruction and studied the same writing textbook for 12 weeks. In addition, the experimental group of students received online instruction in which they posted their own threads, short paragraphs, stories, or poems on a discussion board. They located information related to themes covered in the book from Internet sites such as Yahoo! Movies and WebMD. They word processed their paragraphs and checked their own spelling using Microsoft Word. At the end of the treatment, both groups were posttested. Results of the paired and independent t tests and Analysis of Covariance are reported.

The purpose of this study was to find out whether the integration of a web-based course in traditional EFL in-class writing instruction would significantly improve the writing skills of low ability EFL college students. It is an example of experimental research because the participants are randomly divided into a control group and an experimental group, the experimental group is exposed to an independent variable (which is manipulated by the researcher) and other relevant variables are controlled, and the effect on one or more dependent variables is observed. The outcome can be measured numerically (test scores) and the researcher compares the pretest results with the posttest results for both groups. Any difference between the two samples is assumed to be a result of the experiment and therefore a cause-effect relationship is demonstrated.

Two large groups of EFL students were compared; a control group (taught using traditional in-class writing instruction based on textbook use only) and an experimental group (taught using a combination of traditional and web-based writing instruction). Both groups were exposed to the same traditional in-class writing instruction (using the same textbook, completing the same quizzes, and completing the same assignments over the same period of time). In addition to the traditional instruction, the experimental group also used a web-based writing course on Blackboard. Prior to instruction, both groups were pretested with an essay-writing task. At the end of the course the two groups took the same posttest as part of a three-hour final exam.

This study found that students in the experimental group who were taught using a combination of web-based and traditional in-class writing instruction scored significantly higher than the control group that was taught using the traditional way using only the textbook. The use of web-based instruction as a supplement to traditional instruction was significantly more effective than traditional instruction alone. Web-based writing instruction proved to be an important factor in enhancing the writing quality of the low-ability EFL students and resulted in a significant improvement in their posttest scores.
"Hear My Voice": Alternative High School Students' Perceptions and Implications for School Change. de la Ossa, Patrice; American Secondary Education, v34 n1 p24-39 Fall 2005 (EJ720387)

Abstract:
As public alternative school enrollments are increasing, educators must understand how new students adjust to and make sense of their alternative school experience. This qualitative study, which has also been turned into a video documentary, was designed to provide insight into why the traditional educational paradigm does not work for all, or even most, students. Eight Puget Sound area public alternative high schools in Washington State participated in focus groups using an Appreciative Inquiry approach to investigate students’ perceptions about learning, knowing, and their school experiences. Findings suggest that students are capable of providing valuable information and feedback about program and policy effects.

The purpose of the study was to examine student perceptions about their alternative public high schools. Such data can have an impact on policy structures related to school reform, and the researcher sought to answer three key questions: 1) how do alternative high schools approach meeting the needs of students? 2) how do alternative high school students perceive their educational experience? and 3) how can alternative high schools impact school reform, including public perceptions?

Eight public alternative high schools in the Puget Sound area participated in the study (a total of 78 students with an average of 8-12 students from each school). Using focus groups, the students’ perceptions and beliefs about their schools were elicited for insight. Areas discussed included school and class size, personal attention, relationships with peers and teachers, and negative public perception. Videotape was used as a means of data analysis and also for dissemination of the findings in a video documentary.

This study not designed to produce universal findings as it was limited in its scope of inquiry. The information gathered was not intended to represent the views of all alternative public high school students, but the study instead assumed that the students have something important to say about their schools and the educational process and that these student views have the potential to enrich discussion about school success and aid school reform.

The aim of this study was to provide an understanding of a social setting (alternative public high schools) as viewed from the perspective of the research participants (students). This is an example of qualitative research because it involves the collection of narrative and visual (videotaped) data and the data is collected from focus groups. There is no cause and effect in this research study; rather, the researcher analyzed the collected data and provided interpretation, and this data was then summarized into narrative form. The participants were purposely selected rather than randomly selected and the data, derived from participants’ perspectives, was descriptively analyzed with text.

Abstract:
This study explores postwar educational reform in Japan from 1945 to 1952 and focuses on issues related to women's higher education. It describes the transformation of the educational system and the effect of the educational reforms of U.S. occupation forces on post-World War II Japan. The basic research design emphasizes narrative historical research supplemented by interpretive approach. Data collection includes books, journal articles, government documents, and newspaper articles about educational policies. A description of the Japanese educational system, especially the hierarchical structure of educational administration, provides the basis for an understanding of the problem of the historical inadequacy of higher education for Japanese women. While the Ministry insisted on the importance of traditional Japanese gender roles, it went on to announce the outline of educational reforms for women in December 1945, and four women were accepted into the University of Tokyo in 1946. In the end, educational policies for women's education were directly related to policies developed for the improvement of women's rights.

This is an example of historical research in that it involves the study and analysis of data about past events and systematically examines these past events to give an account of what has happened. By using sources that are true to the time and analyzing the information, the researcher creates a picture of the past in narrative form. As the data is analyzed, questions arise that must be answered during the course of analysis and interpretation of the evidence. This research can provide important information about the impact of the past and may help to explain present events and anticipate future events.

The focus of this study is on postwar educational reform in Japan from 1945 to 1952, specifically on issues related to women's higher education, and its purpose is to describe the effect of the educational reforms of America's occupation forces on post-World War II Japan. It investigates these effects of democratic reforms on higher education for women, which led to the transformation of the Japanese education system. This provides a basis for the understanding of the problem of historical inadequacy of higher education for Japanese women and shows how these reforms have influenced women's higher education. Data collection included books, journal articles, government documents newspaper articles about educational policy, and historical documents from the National Institute for Educational Reform of Japan.
Student Use of Instructors' Web Sites. Chandler, B and Maddux, C. 
Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International 
Conference (9th, Washington, DC, March 10-14, 1998).

Abstract:
This descriptive research investigated issues relating to college students' use of 
instructor-created World Wide Web sites at the University of Nevada, Reno. 
Points of interest included student use of instructor Web pages and features 
found on a Web page perceived by students as most useful. Student use of 
instructor Web pages was identified by the amount of time students report they 
visit the Web site and their recollection of features found on the Web site. A 
survey consisting of 10 items requiring yes/no, multiple choice, and open-ended 
responses was designed to generate students' perceptions of the Web site in 
terms of ease of use, aesthetic appeal, navigation problems, and usefulness of 
provided information. A total of 249 completed surveys were returned. Results 
indicate that instructors are increasingly taking advantage of the resources made 
available through the Internet and are finding an interest in creating Web sites 
for their classes. Also, students as a whole seem willing and able to use 
instructor-created Web sites. However, actual usage by students still seems 
elusive. Tables show descriptive data of participation, Web site visits by 
department, and survey questions and responses.

This is an example of descriptive research in that it examines a situation as it is 
(without changing or modifying the situation), it is not intended to detect a 
cause/effect relationship, and the outcome data is quantitative. This study used 
a 10 item survey to examine the use of instructors’ class websites by their 
students. Its goal was to see how things presently were in order to make 
improvements in online learning environments. Some issues examined were 
usefulness of the website, which departments visited their instructors websites 
most often, how often was it accessed, what are the most popular items on class 
web pages, and whether or not there was any problems with construction of the 
site or with navigation. By conducting this study it was hoped that improvements 
could be made to the websites that would benefit the students and also 
encourage instructors to take advantage of the internet and learning resources 
that are available through the web.
The Relationship between Forms of Instruction, Achievement and Perceptions of Classroom Climate. Ghaith, Ghazi; Educational Research, v45 n1 p83-93 Spr 2003 (EJ667359)

Abstract:
This study examined the relationship between cooperative, individualistic and competitive forms of instruction, achievement in English as a foreign language (EFL) and perceptions of classroom climate. A total 135 university-bound learners of EFL participated in the study. The participants completed a modified version of the classroom life script and their responses were correlated with achievement. In addition, the participants were divided into high and low cooperation groups and were compared across the variables of achievement and selected aspects of class climate. While the results indicated that cooperative learning is positively correlated with learners' perceptions of fairness of grading, class cohesion and social support, individualistic and competitive instruction were found to be unrelated to any of the aspects of class climate under study. Likewise, the results revealed certain statistically significant differences between the low and high cooperation groups in favour of the latter in their achievement and perceptions of fairness of grading, class cohesion and social support. The results are discussed in light of previous research and recommendations for further research suggested.

This is an example of a correlation research study in that its purpose was to determine if there is a relationship between two or more variables. Unlike experimental research, which involves the manipulation of one or more independent variables to see if the dependent variable is influenced, this correlational research study examines the relationship between variables. The variables in this study were academic achievement and perceptions of classroom climate.

The results were quantifiable and found a moderate positive correlation between cooperative learning and perceptions of grading fairness, class cohesion, and social support. Findings revealed that learners in the high cooperation group achieved better than their counterparts in the low cooperation group in learning EFL for academic purposes. Thus, a relationship was found between high classroom cooperation and high achievement.