



Effect of Project-Based Instructional Method on Students' Academic Motivation in Narrative Essay Writing in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the effects of project-based instructional method on senior secondary students' motivation in English language narrative essay writing in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State. Two research questions guided the study, while two null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 95% confidence level. The study adopted a quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design. Simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used for the study. The sample size comprised 259 respondents from the population of 6,216. Narrative Essay Writing Motivation Inventory (NEWMI) was the instrument used to elicit data from the respondents. The reliability of the instrument was estimated using Cronbach Alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of .87. The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, while Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses. Results of the study revealed that project-based instructional method had effect on students' motivation in English language narrative essay writing.

Keywords: Instructional method, Motivation, Narrative Essay writing, Project-based.

Introduction

Project-based instructional method is a learner-centred instructional method which has activities like collaboration, research, communication and presentation. These activities help to make learners creative and active in teaching and learning. The Project-based instructional method is considered an alternative to rote memorization or teacher-centred method. It is a type of method where students work together to solve a challenging problem. This method confers on the learners the benefits of greater depth of understanding of concepts, broader knowledge, improved reading and writing skills. Okoye (2016) defines project-based learning as a systematic instructional method that engages students in learning knowledge and skills through an extended inquiry process structured around complex, authentic questions and carefully designed products and tasks. In implementing project-based instructional method in English language narrative essay writing classroom, the focal point of the learning process moves from the teacher to the learner.

Project-based instruction is considered to improve learners' motivation for writing narrative essays. This is an "active" method, so it's easier for students to remember, especially more hands-on information being taught. The choice of teachers in teaching strategies can seriously support and motivate

or at the same time undermine classroom learning. Making the shift away from old-school tactics (or "chalk and talk") toward new ones (project-based learning, for example) can lead to a more enjoyable classroom. Project based instruction is essential when teaching narrative essay in English. This is in line with Isiaka (2013) that the use of the project-based approach can help learning situation become more effective, meaningful and learner centred as this could further lead to students' more motivation in writing narrative essays in English.

Reports of different researches, such as Essien (2018), Stoller (2006), Omeje (2014) and Agboola (2024) indicate that project-based approach has positive influence on the motive of student. This dynamic emphasizes an engaging curriculum that supports learner-driven insights with self-directed, real world projects that ignite motivation. Project Based Learnings emphasis on student-centered education turns classrooms into both places of discovery as the students research important questions, and places of action when they apply what they have learned throughout their learning journey. Through this method, educators help students to cultivate skills that are critical for their development, including teamwork, creativity, critical thinking, time management and the ability to listen and have respect

for others' opinions. This is a good technique to use when teaching students how to write narrative essay because it covers all the steps in the writing process: prewriting/ brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing and publishing.

The facilitation of brainstorming/prewriting helps with generating ideas; deciding on purpose, audience, format, and tone. Drafting is jotting the essay down, knowing you will revise. Revision is the process of tightening and polishing your draft in terms of vocabulary, content, structure, and making needed changes. Editing consists of reviewing for spelling, grammar & mechanical errors, and the final stage is publishing to share the finished essay. Because there are the advantages of project-based learning, the research intends to study effect of project-based learning toward students' motivation in narrative essay and it may be able to increase their academic potential in this field.

Motivation as a psychological variable in school learning according to Skinner (1987) is essential to the operation of organisation and classroom activities. Academic motivation make learners put more effort to study. Maslow (1943) defines motivation as the psychological process that initiates, guides and maintains goal-oriented behaviour. Teachers' choice of instructional method has a tendency to trigger motivation in a learner. David (2015) infers that a project-based instructional method could motivate students to apply their knowledge in a problem solving context. Skinner (1987) notes that motivation in school learning involves arousing, persisting, sustaining and directing desirable behaviour. Motivation, which is one factor that a method of teaching can produce, is the theoretical construct to explain the reason or reasons learners engage in a particular behaviour. Cooper (2011) also explains that when learners participate in activities, they are motivated to complete a task, which is one of the results of project-based instructional method. Many studies such as Nitza and Dorot (2022), Ash (2021), Lu and Yan (2023) and Alheri (2023) have shown that project-based instructional method has positive impact on learners' motivation.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, most English language teachers employed the conventional instructional methods in teaching the students narrative essay writing, this is observed by Arvid and Kusuma (2017). The conventional teaching method like the lecture method may have been the reason for the lack of motivation by the students in learning English narrative essay writing. Conventional teaching

methods are passive in nature. They limit the learners from actively engaging in the teaching and learning process, thereby making them lack motivation to learn narrative essay writing. This is because students learn better when they are actively engaged in the learning process (Ernest, 2021). The decline in the motivation of students in English language narrative essay writing has been of much concern to educationist in Nigeria. Notably, poor instructional method is a factor that could contribute to the low motivation of students in English language narrative essay writing.

As observed by West Africa Examination Council Chief Examiners report of (2020), conventional instructional methods of teaching narrative essay writing may be the reason for students' weaknesses in narrative essay writing in exams. These weaknesses in narrative essay writing may be as a result of low motivation to learn narrative essay writing, because of the conventional methods teachers employ. If learners have low motivation, there is every tendency that it will affect them in narrative essay writing exams. It is for this reason that the study focused on examining the effects of project-based instructional method on students' motivation in English language narrative essay writing, as there is assumption that this instructional method could motivate learners to learn narrative essay writing. The problem of this study put in a question form therefore is "what is the effect of project-based instructional method on students' motivation in English language narrative essay writing"?

Purpose of the study

Specifically, "the study sought to determine the mean motivation score of students taught narrative essay writing using project-based instructional method and those taught using lecture method. Find out the mean motivation score of male and female students in narrative essay writing.

Research question

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the mean motivation score of students taught narrative essay writing using project-based instructional method and those taught using lecture method?
2. What is the mean motivation score of male and female students in narrative essay writing?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the mean motivation score of students taught narrative essay writing using project-based

- instructional method and those taught using lecture method.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean motivation score of male and female students in narrative essay writing.

Methodology

The study adopted a quasi-experimental of pretest-posttest research design. The area of the study was Calabar Education Zone of Cross River, State, Nigeria. The sample size for the study comprised 259 respondents from the population of 6,216." Multi-stage random sampling procedure was employed in drawing the sample. Firstly, a random sampling process was used in selecting four Local Government Areas (LGAs) within the zone, constituting 57% of all LGAs. In stage two, two mixed schools were purposively selected from each of the four LGAs selected giving eight schools overall. In each LGA, one school was selected as the intervention school and another control. There were two groups each of one intact class per LGA and grade level choice for the experiment was at SS2. For the measure of motivation to write story in English essay, a writing approach scale which is NEWMI (Narrative Essay Writing Motivation Inventory) derived and developed by the researcher was implemented. The instrument had 15 items to assess students' motivation in writing narrative essays. The four response options were rated in a 4-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, SA = 4 points; Agree, A=3 points; Disagree, D =2points; Strongly Disagree, SD=1 point). This equipment was used to record data from the subjects. The internal consistency of the instrument was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and its value obtained was 0.87.

Results

Table 1

Mean motivation score of students taught narrative essay writing using project-based instructional method and those taught using lecture method.

GROUP		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
PRETEST MOTIVATION	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	119	43.78	4.808	Mean .441
	CONTROL GROUP	140	44.04	5.608	.474
POSTTEST MOTIVATION	EXPERIMENTAL GROUP	119	55.76	2.603	.239
	CONTROL GROUP	140	45.06	6.201	.524

Experimental Procedures

An informed consent to participate was obtained from the schools involved in study. Senior Secondary Two teachers of English language served as research assistants and were given instructions according to their respective groups. The treatment (experimental) and control groups were trained on how to implement a project-based instruction strategy for teaching narrative essay writing and administering pre-test/post-test independently. The control group, in the interim, continued to teach with standard lecture style delivery. All participants performed a pre-test before the intervention and a post-test after the intervention, which was five weeks after. The experimental group was trained according to the project-based approach and the control group learnt through lecture method. Both groups were closely monitored by the researcher at distinct times to take into account the correct following of the experimental procedure by research assistants. The post-test was administered to both groups after the intervention period. Data from the pre- and post-tests were collected, analyzed. After class, the Narrative Essay Writing Motivation Inventory (NEWMI) was scored based on a 4-point Likert rating: 1 = Strongly Agree (SA), 2 = Agree (A), 3 = Disagree (D) and 4 = Strongly Disagree (SD). Finally, the derived scores were used to address research questions and hypotheses of the study.

Method for data analysis

The research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation, while Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypotheses at .05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean motivation score of students taught narrative essay writing using project-based instructional method and those taught using lecture method.

Table 2: Summary of ANCOVA for the mean motivation score of students taught narrative essay writing using project-based instructional method and those taught using lecture method.

Source of Variation	Type 111 Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	10453.005	2	5226.502	436.272*	.000	.773
Intercept	1677.807	1	1677.807	140.052*	.000	.354
Pre-test	3078.098	1	3078.098	256.938*	.000	.501
Group	7602.832	1	7602.832	634.632*	.000	.713
Error	3066.856	256	11.980			
Total	660420.000	259				
Corrected Total	13519.861	258				

* $P < .05$ Critical $F = 3.03$, $df 2, 256$

a. R Squared = .773; Adjusted R Squared = .771

From the Table 2, it can be seen that the calculated F-ratio value of 634.632 is significant with p-value of .000, a value lower than .05. It may also indicate that the two groups' mean motivation scores in narrative essay writing of student were not equivalent when they were taught by project-based instruction and lecture. More precisely, students in the project-based group were more motivated than their counterpart from control group.

The adjusted R-squared of .771 denotes that 77.1% of variance in students' motivation is accounted for by the predictors, with pre-test score

included as a covariate and treatment method. This would give 22.9% of the variation being due to other factors not included in the study. The results show that, controlling by all the other variables, the treatment (post-test) in this group has an Eta-Squared of 71.30% and The pre-test was 50.1%. As can be seen from Table 2, the estimated marginal means indicated that students in the experimental group (Mean = 55.76) were more motivated than those in the control group (Mean = 45.06) after receiving intervention, providing support for the significant effect.

Research Question 2

What is the mean motivation score of male and female students in narrative essay writing?

Table 3: Summary of descriptive statistics for the mean motivation score of male and female students in narrative essay writing.

Group	Gender	N	Mean	SD
Experimental Group	Male	54	56.20	2.39
	Female	65	55.40	2.73
	Total	119	55.76	2.60
Control Group	Male	63	45.65	5.91
	Female	77	44.57	6.43
	Total	140	45.06	6.20
Total	Male	117	50.52	7.01
	Female	142	49.53	7.41
	Total	259	49.98	7.24

Results in Table 3 further means that 22.9% of the variation (1-R squared) can be attributed to the power of variables extraneous to the study. Results of Eta-Squared show that when the effect of all other

variables is not considered, the effect size of interaction (group & gender) was 0%, while that of the pre-test was 50%. The estimated marginal means in Table 3 show that male students in the treatment

group (Mean=56.20) became slightly more motivated in narrative essay writing than their female counterparts (Mean=55.40).

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean motivation score of male and female students in narrative essay writing.

Table 4: Summary of ANCOVA for mean motivation score of male and female students in narrative essay writing.

Source of Variation	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Eta Squared
Corrected Model	10474.502	4	2618.625	218.408	.000	.775
Intercept	1694.125	1	1694.125	141.299	.000	.357
Pre-test	3040.175	1	3040.175	253.568	.000	.500
Group	7531.367	1	7531.367	628.158	.000	.712
Gender	21.474	1	21.474	1.791	.182	.007
Group*gender	.046	1	.046	.004	.951	.000
Error	3045.354	254	11.990			
Total	660420.000	259				
Corrected Total	13519.861	258				

* $P > .05$ Critical $F = 2.39$, $df_4, 254$

a. R Squared = .775; Adjusted R Squared = .771

Results of analysis in table 4 show that the calculated F-ratio of 0.004 for the interaction of project-based instruction (group) and gender is not significant at .05. Since .951 is greater than .05, it means that there is no significant effect of project-based instructional method on male and female students' motivation in English language narrative essay writing. That is, gender did not interact with the treatment to cause significant variation on the students' motivation towards narrative essay writing. The adjusted R square of .771 indicates that 77.1% of the variation in students' motivation about its means is explained by the power of the predictors (pre-test used as covariate, the treatment used as group & gender).

Discussion

The study generally investigated the effect of project-based instructional method on the motivation of students taught narrative essay writing and those taught using lecture method. The results show an interesting impact of project-based instruction on students' motivation in narrative essay writing in English. In particular, we observed a significant difference in motivation between students who studied using the project-based approach and those based on lecture method, where students from the former group had a higher level of motivation. These findings are in line with the results of Burcu and Ozlem (2018), Hassan (2017) and Nitza and Dorota (2022) which revealed that project-based teaching

method has positively affected students' motivation to learn.

As far as the effect of using project-based instruction on male and female students with respect to their motivation in writing narrative essays, it was not found to have a significant effect. This indicates that the factors of gender together with instructional method did not lead to significant differences in motivation towards writing narrative text in English among students. These results are consistent with those of Attah and Ita (2017), and Okeke (2015) who found out that gender had no significant influence on students' motivation.

Implication of the study

Following the findings, the implications primarily relate to students and teachers. The implication of the findings to the students is that "there may be increase in the motivation of students in English language narrative essay writing, if they are taught with the project-based instructional method. To the teachers, they may adopt project-based instructional method when teaching English language narrative essay writing, hence project-based instructional method motivates learners to learn narrative essay writing. To this effect, teachers therefore need to improve and update their skills in project-based instructional method. This could be done through participation in conferences, workshops and seminars.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are made;

Project-based instructional method motivates students in English language narrative essay writing, more than the lecture method. The motivation from the project-based instructional method could be attributed to the engaging activities like collaboration, presentation and research, which are inherent in the project-based instructional method. With these activities, learners become active in teaching and learning, thereby having motivation to complete the task in narrative essay writing. Furthermore, Gender and project-based instructional method did not interact to cause effect on students' motivation in English language narrative essay writing. This implies that the hypotheses raised for gender and project-based instructional method were rejected.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made; Project-based instructional method should be adopted by English language teachers in the delivery of English language narrative essay writing. Curriculum developers should include the project-based instructional method in the curriculum for teachers to use in teaching English language narrative essay writing. Textbook writers should include project-based activities in the textbooks." Education and school authorities should organise workshops to sensitize the teachers on the importance of the project-based instructional method.

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