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CRIMINOLOGY STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE USE OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

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Abstract

Using experimental research, this study determined whether different teaching approaches influence students' interest to learn. Specifically, this study examined whether or not using instructional materials could help improve students' performance in Technical Report Writing/Police Report Writing course. This study also aimed to determine whether or not the students' attitude towards police report writing and communication skills through the teaching approach used in this experiment was positive. Forty-six second year Criminology students of SSC-R were the respondents in this study. Thirty-six of them belonged to Section A, and ten of them belonged to Section B. The results showed that although there's a difference in performance between students using instructional materials and students not using instructional materials, the result was insignificant. In addition, the students' attitude toward police report writing and communication skills in both sections was positive and significantly different. The findings of this study provided explanation on the use of instructional materials and the use of different teaching approaches in teaching Technical Report Writing/Police Report Writing to Criminology students.

1. Introduction

Changes in society and workplace have exerted pressure on the educational system. For instance, with increased internationalization, growing knowledge-intensive work, and increasing use of information technology, schools are required to produce graduates who do not only possess relevant knowledge but also interpersonal relations and communication skills, ability to work in various contexts, and information literacy skills (Sakamoto, 1996; Allen, 1996; Burgess, 2000).

In response to this challenge, schools are moving towards a more learner-centered approach to learning since the teacher-centered approach characterized by transmission of information is insufficient to equip students with writing skills.

Facing this issue as a teacher-researcher, I tried using a learner-centered approach with the aim to bring about change to learners who preferred to learn from teachers using a banking approach. It was uneasy to convince students to work independently to learn about writing, or enhance their writing skills. The strategy resulted to learners' negative reactions towards the course. So I tried providing them photocopies of the lessons with examples of the police reports including formats which they needed to learn. Aside from the handouts, I advised them to visit police stations located in their own respective vicinity to see for themselves some actual police correspondence on files as a sort of homework.

As an educator, I believe that instructional materials could help students learn how to write police reports. If the instructional materials are well organized, well-constructed and presented properly a successful teaching-learning can be achieved (2007) cited in (<http://www.jpsimbulan.com/2007/11/03/importance-of-instructional-materials-in-education/>).

There are different types of instructional materials. However, this study focused only on the use of handouts as teaching aids lifted or photocopied from the textbooks which included the lessons and the exercises that students need to learn. This textbook was prescribed by the dean of the College of Criminal Justice of San Sebastian College Recoletos de Cavite, Philippines.

Using experimental research, this study aimed to determine whether different teaching approaches influence students' interest to learn. Specifically, this study examined whether or not using instructional materials could help improve students' performance in Technical Report Writing/Police Report Writing course. This study also investigated whether or not the students'

Attitudes towards police report writing and communication skills through the teaching approach used in this experiment was positive.

Table 1: *Students' Performance in Technical Report Writing/Police Report Writing.*

Group	N	Mean	Std Deviation	T-Value	Tabular t value
Section A	36	82.5556	4.5697	1.18432	2.262
Section B	10	80.5	4.8357		

Table 2: *Students' Attitude towards Technical Report Writing/Police Report Writing.*

Group	N	Mean	Std Deviation	T-Value	Tabular t value
Section A	36	2.5453	0.535910865	2.6958	2.262
Section B	10	4.04	0.414192655		

Table 3: *Students' Attitude towards Communication Skills.*

Group	N	Mean	Std Deviation	T-Value	Tabular t value
Section A	36	2.4271	0.485278259	4.0229	2.262
Section B	10	3	0.374165739		

2. Results and Discussion

In (table 1), the computed t (1.18432) is less than the tabulated t value (2.262). It means

that using instructional materials specifically the teachers' handouts in teaching Technical Report Writing had no significant effect in improving the students' performance in both sections. In other words, it was found out that students could still pass the subject even without using the teacher's handouts.

In (Table 2), the computed t (2.6958) is greater than the tabulated t value (2.262). It means that the students' attitude towards Technical Report Writing in both sections was positive, but significantly different. It could be interpreted that the students in both sections were interested with the subject.

In (table 3), the computed t (4.0229) is greater than the tabulated t value (2.262). It means that the students' attitude towards communication skills was also positive, yet significantly different. It only showed that students in both sections were motivated to learn about police report writing, and enhance or improve their communication skills.

3. Methodology

Research Design – This study examined the influence of instructional materials on students' performance and attitude. Specifically, this study examined whether: 1.) Instructional materials could influence students' performance differently. 2.) Instructional materials could influence students' attitude differently. This study scrutinized these issues by way of experimental procedures and post experimental setting.

Participants – Forty-six Criminology students enrolled in Technical Report Writing in SSC-R were chosen as the participants in this study. These students were chosen since they were required to take Technical Report Writing as part of their requirement to complete their degree. These participants came from two sections; Section A and Section B, taking EN3C2 “ Technical Report Writing” on second semester of SY 2010-2011.

Experimental Design – The research instrument consisted of materials related to Technical Report Writing/Police Report Writing subject. The materials covered the EN3C2 syllabus designed by the instructor under the supervision of the Communication Arts Department Head of the College of Arts and Sciences of SSC-R. The syllabus consisted of topics such as the meaning of police report writing, its significance or reasons for writing police reports, criteria and procedures in writing police reports, and the prescribed formats used in writing police

reports in the Philippine setting.

The students of the two sections were categorized into two groups. The first group of students, Section A, consisted of 36 students taught using instructional materials or handouts provided by the teacher. The second group of students, Section B, consisted of 10 students taught without being provided with copies of handouts. The two sections were taught by the same teacher.

Post Experimental Questionnaire – The post experimental questionnaire was designed by the teacher-researcher. It consisted of two parts. Part one was based on students' attitude toward police report writing. This part had 10 items testing how students feel about the subject, how interesting was the subject for them, and how they tried to meet the requirement of the course. Part two had 10 items testing students' attitude towards communication skills which included writing and speaking skills. In this part, respondents' confidence level in writing significant reports or police reports was determined. The participants needed to accomplish part one and part two on a 5-point scale of which 5 means "Strongly Agree" and 1 means "Strongly Disagree".

Experimental Procedures – was conducted within six weeks of which the first five weeks was spent for the lessons and the remaining week was spent for the preliminary examination. Both sections were not informed about the intention of the teacher to do the research. Section A students were provided with handouts to assist them in learning the course. Section B students were not provided with handouts, yet, the teacher-researcher did not explain the reasons to them. On the 6th week prior to the preliminary examination, both sections were asked to complete the post experimental questionnaire.

Dependent Measure – To determine students' performance, their scores in preliminary examination on Technical Report Writing/Police Report Writing were used. The scores were determined by checking the respondents' answers in the test (Bricker & Nehmer, 1995; Donn & Grabski, 2000). These scores become the dependent measure for the students' performance.

4. Conclusion

It was therefore concluded that instructional materials specifically the teacher's handouts had insignificant effect on the students' performance in Technical Report Writing/Police Report

writing in both sections.

Based on the prelim grades of the students, 9 out of 10 students in Section B, passed and only one of them failed. Then 36 students of Section A, passed. None of them failed. It only emphasized that even if the target respondents in Section B were not provided with handouts, 95% of them still managed to pass, or performed well.

Moreover, based on the data gathered using the post experimental questionnaire, it revealed that students' attitude towards the subject and communication skills in both sections was positive though it was significantly different. In other words, the students had the interest to learn the subject.

It was also determined that students had self-motivation in learning police report writing, and in improving their communications skills.

5. Recommendation

Based on the outcome of this study, the researcher came up with the following suggestions:

- A follow up study is needed to be conducted using another batch of Criminology students who take up Technical Report Writing to determine whether or not their performance is significantly affected by the instructional materials used.
- The teacher teaching the subject is encouraged to consider the students' ability and attitude toward the subject to decide whether or not instructional materials are still needed to aid the students in learning the subject.
- The teacher in-charged should improve teaching strategies to continuously encourage students to have positive attitude towards Technical Report Writing.

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