

Effectiveness of Programmed Readings for English Proficiency of First Year College Students

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Abstract

Reports of Grades in English 1 courses from 1995 — 1999 showed an average of 52.39% passing and 47.61% failing. Considering that cause of failure is their deficiency in language and reading skills, an instructional material called programmed reading, was developed to increase the percentage of passing in English 1. This study determined the effectiveness of-programmed reading, to improve the English proficiency of first year college students in Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology (DOSCST), Mati City, Davao Oriental. Using the quasi-experimental design, this was tested in two sections of English 1 (Study and Thinking skills) classes, where one was the experimental group (using the programmed reading) while the other was the control group (not exposed to programmed reading). Pre-test mean scores of the control group and the experimental group showed no difference in their English proficiency skills which implied that both groups were comparable at the start of the experiment. In contrast, post-test scores of the two groups proved significant indicating that the programmed reading significantly improved the performance of the experimental group in English 1. When the mean scores of the pre-test versus the post-test of the control group were tested, it too was found to be significant, which implied that even without the programmed reading, the control group had somehow improved their skills in language and reading but not as high as that of the experimental group. However, the mean scores of the experimental group in the pre-test versus the post-test had increased significantly after being taught using the instruction of the programmed reading materials, as shown in their English 1 final grade. This proved that the language and reading skills of students in the experimental class improved twice as much as of those who were not exposed to the programmed reading instructional material, hence said programmed reading instruction proved to be effective.

Keywords: deficiency, English language proficiency

Introduction

Reading, which is probably one of the most researched topics in education, is the primary function of instruction at the elementary levels. It is believed to support language learning through contextualization and extending vocabulary, creating mental images of correct spelling, providing

models for writing and developing a “feel” for English. However, ERIC Digest (1990) revealed many students reach college with poor reading skills thus, resulting in deficient English language skills and low academic achievement.

In Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology (DOSCST) both English and non-English faculty members observed that many freshmen show poor performances in the use of the English language. The members of the faculty are often confronted with students who cannot formulate simple sentences, who have poor reading comprehension, and who cannot speak English and often switch to the vernacular even in English language classes.

An assessment was done to look into the trend of English 1 (Study and Thinking skills) classes’ passing and failing percentages for the past four years, i.e., 1995—1999. Results showed an average of 52.39% passed while almost half (47.61 %) of the English 1 students failed. These data showed the need to improve or increase the level of proficiency in the English language particularly in language and reading skills among first year college students. The goal was to achieve at least passing average.

An instructional material called Programmed Reading which incorporated the reading and language skills lessons was developed and tested for its effectiveness. Theoretically, Dupuis (1984) stated that reading is closely related to the many cognitive processes or domains including attention, concept-formation, imagery, language, memory and perception from a learning perspective. It is also based on the theory developed by Gagne (1970) on cognitivism which have strongly influenced the development of instructional design. Gagne’s early instructional designs were heavily rooted in the behaviorist psychology paradigm. In 1970, he incorporated cognitivist psychology theories, specifically the information-processing model of cognition. He considered this a major advance in the scientific study of human learning. As Striebel (2002) noted, “Instruction design theories” such as Gagne’s take the cognitivist paradigm which are logical step to further claiming that an instructional plan can generate both appropriate environmental stimuli and instructional interaction, and bring about a change in cognitive structures of the learners”. Hence, with programmed reading as instructional material for English 1 classes, learning of students in language and reading skills may gradually improve.

Result of this research can serve as baseline data in carrying out remedial programs that would enable students to develop their proficiency in the English language; thereby significantly improving the quality of graduates. The development

of an instructional material, particularly for general education courses can also be vital in complying accreditation requirements.

Objectives

This Study sought to know the effectiveness Of Prog rammed Reading materials on the language and reading skills of the first-year college students in DOSCST. Specifically, it determined to know the difference in the pretest mean scores between the control and the experimental group; to know the difference in the mean gain scores between the control and the experimental group; and to know the difference in the final grades of English 1 students in the experimental group and the control group.

Materials and Methods

This study was conducted for one semester in the main campus of Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology (DOSCST) in Mati, Davao Oriental.

Sampling was done by random Research Design of the six sections in English 1 handled the study used quasi-experimental by the researcher, employing the lottery design, since the experimental and the method approach. One class was control subjects were naturally grouped. designated as the experimental group and the experimental model or research design another section was the control group. paradigm was:

Control Group	O1	O2
Experimental Group	O3	O4
	X1	

Where:

- = random assignment of subjects
- O1 and O3 = pretest of the control and experimental group
- O2 and O4 = posttest of the control and experimental group
- X1 = experimental treatment
(Programmed Reading Instructional Material)

Research Procedure

Reading selections collected and compiled by the researcher in her many years of teaching were retrieved and sorted based on their interest and readability They were extracted from newspapers, books, and magazines which were a combination of essays of various topics of human interest. These essays included: Picking the medium of instruction (Rama, 1995); has seen the wind? (Quiros, 1995); Amusing rituals abound in Filipino weddings (Anima, 1992); Taming the cellphone (Tan, 2001); V\hat mass media communicate (Laig, 1985); Woman: V\hat what is your role? (Santos, 1992);

The world is ours to keep (Orig, 1995); There lies a nation's strength (David, 1997); The Filipino as a father (de Jesus, 1981); and Balthazar's gift (Latorena, 1953 as cited by Manlapaz, 1996). Each of these reading selections was followed by structural and contextual analyses lessons. One reading article was tackled each week and lessons on grammar and sentence sense constitute the structural analysis for language proficiency, while contextual analysis targeted the reading skills comprehension.

Once produced, this underwent external validation by five English professors, one from University of Southeastern Philippines, one from Ateneo de Davao University, one from University of the Philippines-Mindanao, and two from DOSCST for comments and improvements. These experts rated the 30 lessons in the Programmed Reading Material with a mean rating of four, which was very good in the rating scale of 1 to 5; i.e., 4 as fair and 5 as excellent.

Reliability

A test instrument was developed and being tested for its reliability by administering it to fourth year high school students Of Immaculate Heart of Mary Academy, Matiao National Comprehensive High School, Matiao National High School, and Mati School of Arts and Trade, using Kuder-Richardson Formula 20. Reliability result proved to be 86%.

Validity

The Scores of these high school students during the administered examination were Correlated with their grades in the English subject during the Third Grading period using Criterion-Related Validity; this too manifested 0.74 valid.

The Experiment

Both Groups followed the prescribed syllabus of English 1 course which means they had the same lessons to be covered in the English subject, except for the experimental group which utilized the programmed reading material.

The control group which met 1.5 hour every Tuesdays and Thursdays had only the lessons in English grammar. The experimental group which made use of the Programmed Reading material integrating language and reading skills lessons were met one hour during Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Every Friday, students were given a reading Selection that required them to read during the weekend. This reading selection was tackled on the succeeding week, since lesson on the first meeting of that week would have to be contextual. This was followed by the lessons either on grammar or sentence sense for language skills or comprehension for reading skills or as what was stipulated in the programmed Reading material.

Statistical Computation

Data gathered were scores of the pretest and posttest examinations and the

English 1 final grades of students of 50th the control and the experimental groups. Scores in English 1 final grades were based on the adopted grading system of DOSCST as mandated in its College Code, where 1.0 — 1.25, Excellent; 1.5 — 1.75, Very Good; 2.0 — 2.75, Satisfactory; 3.0, Passing; 4.0, Conditional Failure; 5.0, Failure; and INC is Incomplete. These scores were subjected to the following statistical test:

**t-test for the pretest mean scores of the control and the experimental groups

**t-test for mean gain scores of both the control and the experimental groups

**t-test for the mean scores Of the English i final grades of students in the control and the experimental groups.

The mean gain scores were used to measure the effectiveness of the Programmed Reading material.

For the final grades in English 1 of the control and experimental groups, the mean scores were computed to show the difference.

Results and Discussion

This is divided into three (3) subtopics namely: pretest mean scores between the control and the experimental groups; the mean gain scores between the control and the experimental group; and the mean scores in English 1 final grades of students of both the control and the experimental groups.

A. Pretest

These were initial scores of each student before the conduct of the experiment. This determined the level of proficiency of the students in the control and experimental groups in the English language at the start of the experiment. There was no difference in the pretest mean scores between the control and the experimental groups (Table 1). The result of the t-test computation which was 1.019 proved to be not significant. This implies that both groups were comparable and of equal abilities at the start of the experiment.

B. Mean Gain Scores

There was no difference in the mean gain scores of students in the language and reading skills in the control and the experimental groups. This implies that the programmed reading was more effective compared with the control group which did not use the Programmed Reading material. This result supports the Studies Of (Redoblado, i974); (Lladoc, 1976); (Lozano, 1986); and (Paz, 1997); and other researchers conducted by ERIC Digest and the National Center for Literacy Education (NCLE) who had developed instructional materials reinforcing lessons taught to increase level of proficiency of students in the English language.

C. Mean Scores in English 1 final grades of students in the control and the experimental groups.

There is no difference in the English 1 final grade of students in the control and the experimental groups. This implied that English 1 final grades of students in the experimental group is significantly better compared with the English 1 final grades of students in the control group. Hence, Programmed Reading material is highly effective to improve the proficiency of students in language skills and the Comprehension Of students in the reading skills. Villarente (1995) also came out with a similar finding in her study of Remedial Reading to first year high school students. This is further supported by Oxales (1981) which pointed out that reading program should develop among students the habit of reading and positive attitudes towards it. Furthermore, Burt and Peyton (2002) as cited by Jacobus (1991) proved that indeed reading program increases literacy of adult learners.

Table 1: Pretest mean scores, t_{computed} , t_{tabular} , of both the control and then experimental group.

Subject	n	\bar{X}	SD	t_c	$t_{.05}$
Control group	28	32.36	4.47	1.019ns	1.676
Experimental group	26	33.65	4.85		

*ns – Not Significant

Table 2: Mean gain scores, t_{computed} , t_{tabular} of both control and the experimental groups.

Subject	n	\bar{X}	SD	t_c	$t_{.05}$
Control group	28	2.82	3.60	1.69*	1.676
Experimental group	26	4.81	2.77		

*Significant

Table 3: Mean scores in the English 1 final grades, t_{computed} , t_{tabular} of both control and the experimental groups.

Subject	n	\bar{X}	SD	t_c	$t_{.05}$
Control group	28	3.29	0.94	3.648*	1.676
Experimental group	26	2.54	0.49		

*Significant

Summary

1. The pretest mean scores between the control and the experimental groups were not significant implying that both groups had similar proficiency level in language and reading skills at the start of the experiment.
2. The mean Scores of the final grades of students in English 1 was significant which implied that the English 1 final grades of students in the experimental group proved to be significantly better as compared with the English 1 final grades of students in the control group.
3. The mean gain scores of the control and the experimental groups were significant; however, the mean gain scores of the experimental group were highly significant than that of the control group which indicated that the utilization of the Programmed Reading was effective in improving the language and reading skills of the first-year college students.

Recommendations

The effectiveness of the evaluated Programmed Reading instructional materials for English 1 classes is highly recommended to improve the reading and language skills of first year college students in DOSCST. Further, teachers handling other English courses offered in the State College may also develop instructional materials so there Can be a more reinforced lessons in improving the proficiency of students in the English language, specifically the competencies of the four-macro skill, i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Instructors end professors in other subjects should also endeavor to give more reading literatures to their students to develop their interest and inculcate the culture and habit of reading. And lastly, trainings for elementary and high school teachers on strategies in improving teaching efficiency Should also be conducted by the State College regularly to keep them updated on the trends of teaching.

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