ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore vocational high school students’ attitudes toward integrating blended learning into situational writing, and the learning effectiveness of that integration. A total of 84 vocational high students were divided into an experimental group and a control group. The experimental group received writing instruction through an online platform, whereas the control group received writing instruction in traditional classrooms. Attitude toward writing and writing performance were assessed before and after the experiment. Also, learning satisfaction survey was conducted afterwards. The findings of this study reveal that results of the post-test total scores and behavior are significantly higher than the pre-test total scores and behavior results for both the experimental and control groups. Particularly, organization, language usage, and the overall performance in the students’ writings are significantly improved. Scores for affection and behavior and total scores for attitude toward writing are significantly higher for the experimental group than for the control group. Both groups show significant satisfaction with the instructional method, interactivity, and total grades.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Instructional Method, Interactivity, Learning Effectiveness, Situational Writing, Vocational High School

INTRODUCTION

Language competence is the basis for acquiring knowledge and is an important tool for communicating with people. In addition to oral expression, language competence includes written expression, which is the act of turning personal thoughts into touching documents using words. Individuals with advanced writing competence are more competitive in advanced studies and in the workplace. However, modern Taiwanese students’ writing level has declined according to some research reports. Students may not be able to comprehend the essence of writing. Thus, how can we enhance students’ writing competence has become an important
issue for language teachers. Management of writing education in Taiwan is the key to obtaining international competitive advantages. Chinese writing was included in the Entrance Examination for Technological and Vocational Education in Taiwan in 2010. Teaching materials for Chinese writing and cram-schools for Chinese writing have become very popular. However, how can vocational high school students’ writing skills be enhanced? Thus, teachers should be able to guide the students to write down their real responses and situational writing can be a suitable for training vocational school students in writing.

Additionally, advanced Information technology changes people’s demands, expectations, and opportunities for education and learning. For instance, in 2005, the Computer Skills Foundation developed “EZ Writing,” which is an online platform that allows students to enhance their writing competence and interact with peers. Online comments receive responses within one day. Blended learning that combines traditional face-to-face instruction and online instruction will become increasingly valued. By incorporating blended learning into situational writing, the teaching and learning transaction will be more efficient (Lou et al., 2012; Shih, 2010; Shih, 2011). Therefore, blended learning, a combination of e-learning and traditional instruction, can be considered a suitable approach for Chinese situational writing instruction in this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Blended Learning

The official website of the New South Wales Department of Education and Training in Australia defines blended learning as follows: “Blended learning is the learning method combining online and face-to-face learning (https://www.det.nsw.edu.au/home/).” Several scholars suggest that blended learning can categorized into three types: a combination of different instructional media (Bersin & Associates, 2003; Singh & Reed, 2001); a combination of different instructional strategies (Driscoll, 2002; House, 2002; Rossett, 2002); and a combination of different instructional environments (Reay, 2001; Rooney, 2003; Ward & LaBranche, 2003; Young, 2002). Blended learning combines online instruction and traditional face-to-face instruction. The two definitions above indicate the importance of instructional media and strategies. This study considers the combination of different instructional environments. Thus, the researchers define blended learning as “the instruction which combines traditional lecture with online learning and other technology.”

“Blended learning” often refers to a course methodology or learning activity that combines online and traditional face-to-face instruction (de Leng, Dolmans, Donkers, Muijtjens, & van der Vleuten, 2010). So and Brush (2008) claimed that blended learning is effective in facilitating online collaborative learning. Additionally, a supportive peer-assisted learning environment with interactive feedback can help learners reflect on their professional and evidence-based practice (Lou et al., 2012; Tan, Ladyshefsky, & Gardner, 2010). According to McCarthy (2010), the benefits of blended learning spaces include face-to-face discussions: “the assessment allowed us to converse with others in class and form connections that developed into friendships.” Blended learning combines the advantages of traditional instruction and online learning. The instructional content is lively and diverse. In addition, blended learning that integrates online and face-to-face instruction could create an effective teaching and learning experience for both instructors and students. It could also enhance students’ motivation to participate actively in class (Chang et al., 2011; Shih, 2010, Shih 2011). Furthermore, Liu, Lee, Huang, and Hsieh (2012) pointed out that students made significant progress on their Chinese essay writing with online interaction writing system whereas the traditional face-to-face instruction did not.
14 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/article/integrating-blended-learning-into-situational-writing-for-vocational-high-school-students/78913

Related Content

Asian American Perspectives on Education and Technology
www.irma-international.org/chapter/asian-american-perspectives-education-technology/38301/

Social Networks in University Classrooms: An Experience of Teaching and Learning with Pre-Service Teachers through Facebook
www.irma-international.org/article/social-networks-in-university-classrooms/117455/

Wired for Learning—Web 2.0 for Teaching and Learning: Trends, Challenges, and Opportunities for Education
Irene Chen and Terry T. Kidd (2010). Handbook of Research on Human Performance and Instructional Technology (pp. 119-130).
www.irma-international.org/chapter/wired-learning-web-teaching-learning/38282/

Starting with the Learner: Designing Learner Engagement into the Curriculum
www.irma-international.org/chapter/starting-with-the-learner/126757/

E-Learning Accessibility Model: A Culture of Collaboration and Outcomes Assessment
www.irma-international.org/article/e-learning-accessibility-model/78909/