

The Effectiveness of Dictogloss Strategy in Improving the Writing Skills of First-Year English Students

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the effectiveness of the Dictogloss strategy in improving the writing skills of first-year English students. A quantitative experimental design, specifically a one-group pretest-posttest design, was employed involving 38 first-year students of the Bachelor of Secondary Education Major in English, Section 1C, at Tagoloan Community College during the academic year 2025-2026, selected through purposive sampling. Students' baseline writing skills were measured through a pretest, followed by three intervention sessions using the Dictogloss strategy. Afterward, a posttest was conducted to reassess their writing performance. Data were analyzed using mean, standard deviation, percentage, and paired t-test. Results revealed a significant improvement in students' overall writing skills ($p = 0.001$). While the students' writing mechanics remained consistently strong, content development improved from a mean of 1.95 to 3.00, indicating a moderate enhancement in organizing and elaboration of ideas. These results indicate that the Dictogloss strategy effectively strengthens writing mechanics and supports content development, though higher-order skills may require additional focus.

INTRODUCTION

Writing is considered a universal skill that every student should possess to improve their overall development of communication skills. It is widely used to communicate in day-to-day conversations, especially in a scholarly setting where writing serves as a way to assess how well the students can construct sentences and express their thoughts in a logical manner that makes learning easier. In a broader context, writing serves as a bridge that enables communication beyond national boundaries, facilitating the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and perspectives across cultures and generations (Langaas & Mujtaba, 2023). Beyond the scholarly setting, improving one's writing also creates opportunities for the future. Writing proficiency is essential in fulfilling students' obligations regarding schooling and employment (Jimenez et al., 2024).

However, many students consider writing a difficult task due to reasons such as inadequate vocabulary and difficulty in organizing their thoughts, and challenges in applying proper writing mechanics, including punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. These fundamental elements of writing do not only affect the clarity and coherence of students' work but also play a crucial role in ensuring that ideas are communicated effectively. When students struggle with these mechanics, their intended meaning could be lost or misunderstood, which hinders their ability to perform well in academic tasks and express their thoughts effectively.

Assessing the writing skills of the students is more than just checking their written output but also checking whether the teaching strategy is working and suitable for the learners. There are also external factors that affect the development of students' writing skills, such as lack of motivation and engagement. Writing as a communicative skill is a long-term process that is challenging and requires a lot of effort on the part of both the teacher and the students (Tukhtasinova, 2023). Lestari (2023) said that choosing the right strategy allows both teachers and learners to easily achieve effective learning goals.

There are already many teaching strategies to improve writing skills such as flipped classroom, journaling, and integration of technology-based applications. However, there are still gaps that these strategies could not cover. Some students prefer a peer-to-peer or collaborative approach rather than writing alone, and others find it difficult to learn through applications due to distraction. As Yan Li (2023) emphasized, improving students' writing skills requires instructional strategies that promote collaboration, motivation, and active learner engagement. This opens the discussion for alternative strategies such as dictogloss, which emphasizes collaboration and reconstruction of text as a possible way to address both skill development and learner engagement.

Research suggests that disengaged students often produce lower-quality written work and struggle to improve their writing abilities. Dictogloss is a strategy that involves collaborative teaching and learning where the students listen to a passage, note down key words, and then work together to create a reconstructed version of the text. Through the dictogloss strategy, teachers will be able to foster a more collaborative learning environment, making the students more engaged and motivated to enhance their writing skills. This study evaluated the effectiveness of the dictogloss strategy as a basis for improving students' writing skills, focusing on punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and content. In doing so, the study provides teachers with practical insights into strategies that enhance both proficiency and learner engagement.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed a quantitative quasi-experimental one-group pretest-posttest design to examine the effectiveness of the Dictogloss strategy in improving the writing skills of first-year English students. The study was conducted at Tagoloan Community College, Misamis Oriental, Philippines, and involved 38 first-year Bachelor of Secondary Education major in English students (Section 1C) selected through purposive sampling. Participants were officially enrolled in the class and had no prior experience with the Dictogloss strategy. Students' writing skills were assessed using a modified rubric adapted from Jeanette Martin Miller's Mechanics Rubric, which evaluated punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and content. The rubric underwent expert validation, while the passages used for the pretest, intervention, and posttest were adapted from a CHED-aligned Introduction to Philippine Literature module.

The study consisted of three phases: pretest, intervention, and posttest. Students completed a pretest by reading a passage and writing a 100–120-word summary. The intervention comprised three Dictogloss sessions conducted three days apart, with each session following four stages: preparation, dictation, group reconstruction, and comparison with feedback. After the intervention, students completed a posttest using the same procedure as the pretest. All written outputs were evaluated by the same researcher using the modified rubric to ensure scoring consistency. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to describe students' writing performance, while a paired-samples t-test determined significant differences between the pretest and posttest scores at the 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that the participants exhibited a strong baseline writing skills prior to the implementation of the Dictogloss Strategy. Capitalization ($M = 8.37$) and spelling ($M = 8.50$) both attained Advanced proficiency, indicating that the participants had already developed a high degree of accuracy in applying fundamental writing conventions. Likewise, punctuation ($M = 7.53$) was classified as Proficient, reflecting satisfactory command of punctuation despite the presence of occasional inconsistencies. In contrast, content obtained the lowest mean score ($M = 3.00$) and was rated as Developing, indicating that the participants experienced greater difficulty constructing, organizing, and elaborating ideas within their written compositions than applying mechanical conventions.

The pre-test results demonstrate that the participants possessed adequate foundational writing competence, particularly in the mechanical dimensions of writing. However, the comparatively lower performance in content suggests that the participants encountered challenges in higher-order writing processes, including idea development, organization, and written elaboration. This disparity reflects the multidimensional nature of writing proficiency, wherein mastery of language conventions does not necessarily translate into the ability to produce coherent and well-developed compositions. Similar findings were reported by Nur'ainy et al. (2023), who observed that learners generally achieve higher levels of performance in writing mechanics than in content development because higher-order composing processes require greater cognitive engagement. Likewise, Ghosh and Sen (2023) argued that while explicit instruction and repeated practice facilitate the acquisition of grammatical and mechanical accuracy, the development of content demands sustained opportunities for critical thinking, organization of ideas, and meaningful written expression. Collectively, these findings indicate that although the participants demonstrated satisfactory command of writing conventions prior to the intervention, content development remained the primary instructional need.

Following the implementation of the Dictogloss Strategy, improvements were evident across all assessed writing components. Capitalization increased from 8.37 to 8.61, while spelling improved marginally from 8.50 to 8.55 with both components maintaining an Advanced level of proficiency. Punctuation also demonstrated measurable improvement, increasing from Proficient ($M = 7.53$) to Advanced ($M = 8.21$). The most substantial improvement, however, was observed in content, which progressed from the Developing to the Proficient level, with the mean score increasing from 3.00 to 5.61. This improvement suggests that the intervention contributed more substantially to the development of higher-order writing skills than to writing mechanics, which had already demonstrated relatively high levels of performance during the pretest.

The pattern of improvement observed across the four writing components highlights the instructional value of the Dictogloss Strategy in supporting both linguistic accuracy and idea development. While improvement in capitalization and spelling may be attributed to the participants' already high baseline performance, the marked improvement in punctuation and, more importantly, in content indicates that the collaborative reconstruction process extended beyond reinforcing mechanical accuracy. The strategy required learners to listen attentively, identify essential information, negotiate meaning with peers, and reconstruct the text collectively, thereby engaging them in cognitive processes fundamental to effective writing. Through these interactions, learners were encouraged not only to attend to linguistic form but also to organize information and refine the coherence of their written output. These findings support previous studies reporting that Dictogloss facilitates writing development by promoting collaborative dialogue, metalinguistic awareness, and meaningful engagement with language throughout the writing process.

The paired t-test results further confirmed the effectiveness of the Dictogloss strategy by revealing a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores ($p = .001$). The rejection of the null hypothesis indicates that the improvement in students' writing

performance was statistically significant following the implementation of the Dictogloss Strategy. Although the participants demonstrated satisfactory writing competence prior to the intervention, the findings indicate that the Dictogloss Strategy produced measurable improvements across all writing components, with the greatest improvement occurring in content development. These findings indicate that the Dictogloss Strategy was effective in improving the writing skills of first-year English students, particularly in writing mechanics.

Exhaustive Discussions

The findings of this study found that the Dictogloss Strategy was an effective instructional approach for enhancing the writing skills of first-year English students at Tagoloan Community College. The improvement in students' writing performance indicates that the strategy successfully strengthened both their command of writing conventions and their ability to organize and elaborate ideas into coherent written compositions. The collaborative activities embedded in the strategy encouraged active participation, meaningful interaction, and reflective learning that enabled students to refine their writing through shared discussion and text reconstruction. Overall, the findings suggest that the Dictogloss Strategy is an effective as a pedagogical approach to writing instruction and highlight its potential to promote meaningful improvements in students' writing performance in tertiary English language classrooms.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Dictogloss Strategy is an effective instructional intervention for enhancing the writing skills of first-year English major students by promoting collaborative learning and active engagement throughout the writing process. These findings support the principles of Collaborative Learning Theory, which emphasize that social interaction and shared learning experiences facilitate meaningful knowledge construction and improve writing performance. Overall, the study affirms that integrating the Dictogloss Strategy into writing instruction provides a learner-centred approach that enhances students' writing skills while fostering collaboration, engagement, and meaningful learning.

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