Using Cooperative Learning Approach to Enhance Writing Skills of Pre-University Students

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji efektivitas penggunaan metode STAD (metode pendekatan belajar kooperatif) untuk meningkatkan kemampuan menulis dan konsep diri enam siswa berprestasi rendah (siswa pra-universitas) dibandingkan dengan pendekatan konvensional. Dengan menggunakan metode *quasi-experimental*, dua kelompok sampel (60 siswa SMA dari dua sekolah) diberikan *pre-test* berupa menulis tiga esai argumentatif serta wawancara untuk mengidentifikasi konsep diri. Selanjutnya, kelompok eksperimen menerima model pembelajaran STAD selama enam minggu berturut-turut. Kedua kelompok sampel diberikan *post-test* yang sama dengan *pre-test*. Tulisan sampel dianalisis dengan menggunakan *t-test* SPSS versi 11.0. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa metode STAD diyakini mampu meningkatkan kemampuan menulis, kecakapan berbahasa, serta penampilan keseluruhan kelompok ekperimen. Penelitian juga menunjukkan adanya peningkatan konsep diri kelompok sampel.

Keywords: *Student Teams Achievement Division* (STAD), pendekatan pembelajaran kooperatif, pengajaran bahasa Inggris, esai argumentatif

Previously, under the National Education System, the English Language, (implemented as a second language in the Malaysian education system), was taught to all students from Year One to Form Five, but not at the Sixth Form (pre-university level). However undergraduates of local public tertiary institutions were required to undergo courses in English Language proficiency as part of their academic programme. This scenario created a gap between the school and university systems.

The introduction of the Malaysian University English Test or MUET, in 1999 as an entry requirement into local universities, was to bridge the gap with respect to the teaching and learning of English as an important second language to consolidate and further enhance the English Language proficiency of sixth form and other pre-university students (Termuzi Haji Abdul Aziz 1999). Its syllabus, designed by the Malaysian Examination Council (1999), is to help students acquire the appropriate level of proficiency necessary to handle academic pursuits at tertiary level by enhancing their communicative competence using the context of tertiary level academic experience and developing students' critical thinking skills through the four language components which are Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing.

The test instruments of the MUET measure and report students' level of proficiency of all the four language components upon which an aggregated score range of zero to three hundred (0 – 300) is obtained to place them according to Proficiency Levels or Bands One to Six (1 – 6). The very good users (260 -300) are placed in Band 6. The good users (220-259) are placed in Band 5. The competent users (180 - 219) are placed in Band 4. The modest users (140 - 179) are placed in Band 3. The limited users (100 - 139) are placed in Band 2 and the extremely limited users (0 – 99) are placed in Band 1.

The Problem

The Writing Test of MUET constitutes 75 marks or 25 percent of the overall 300 marks and consists of two questions. In Question 1, candidates are to write a summary of about 100 words based on a reading text. This question forms 40 percent

of the overall marks for the Writing component. In Question 2, candidates write an essay of not less than 250 words based on a general academic topic. The essay is 60 percent of the overall marks for this component. The time allocated for the Writing Component is 90 minutes of which candidates are advised to spend 40 minutes on the summary and 50 minutes for the essay).

Writing is considered a highly productive skill and arguably the most difficult of the four language skills. The analysis of the MUET results of one of the schools involved in the study from year 2000 to 2004 as shown in Table 1 indicates this.

The main challenge for the English teacher is to prepare students to write the essay (unaided) in 50 minutes partly as a test-taking strategy to meet the requirements of Question 2 of the MUET Writing Test. Thus the researchers believe the main problem here was to gradually raise the students' writing proficiency to a standard needed at tertiary level. Therefore the researchers and teachers need to know the effective method to enhance the students' writing skills.

Byrne (1988) argues that writing is difficult because of psychological, linguistic and cognitive problems that students undergo. The actual writing test requires them to write individually and independently unlike in the writing class where interaction and immediate feedback are available. In addition, it is also stressful to write the essay

Table 1: Analysis of the MUET Component papers from December 2000 to December 2004 of candidates from one of the schools involved in the study in Sungai Petani, Kedah Darul Aman (Source: Unit Penilaian dan Peperiksaan)

ANALYSIS OF THE MUET COMPONENT PAPERS DECEMBER 2000

PAPER	NO OF CANDIDATES	BAND 6		BAND 5		BAND 4		BAND 3		BAND 2		BAND 1	
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
LISTENING	173	55	31.8	85	49.1	21	12.1	12	6.9	-	-	-	-
SPEAKING	173	5	2.9	31	127.9	48	27.7	54	31.2	32	18.5	3	1.7
READING	173	17	9.8	45	26.0	72	41.6	36	20.8	3	1.7	-	-
WRITING	**173**	-	-	3	1.7	18	10.4	69	39.9	73	42.2	10	5.8

ANALYSIS OF THE MUET COMPONENT PAPERS DECEMBER 2001

PAPER	NO OF CANDIDATES	BAND 6		BAND 5		BAND 4		BAND 3		BAND 2		BAND 1	
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
LISTENING	144	4	2.8	14	9.7	57	39.6	43	29.9	26	18.1	-	-
SPEAKING	144	2	1.4	15	10.4	70	48.6	35	24.3	19	13.2	3	2.1
READING	144	6	4.2	30	20.8	52	36.1	42	29.2	14	9.7	-	-
WRITING	**144**	-	-	1	0.7	22	15.3	42	29.2	74	51.4	5	3.5

ANALYSIS OF THE MUET COMPONENT PAPERS DECEMBER 2002

PAPER	NO OF CANDIDATES	BAND 6		BAND 5		BAND 4		BAND 3		BAND 2		BAND 1	
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
LISTENING	174	13	7.5	54	31.0	73	42.0	27	15.5	7	4.0	-	-
SPEAKING	174	6	3.4	27	15.5	68	39.1	52	29.9	17	9.8	4	2.3
READING	174	2	1.1	17	9.8	81	46.6	57	32.8	17	9.8	-	-
WRITING	**174**	-	-	-	-	19	10.9	70	40.2	79	45.4	6	3.4

ANALYSIS OF THE MUET COMPONENT PAPERS DECEMBER 2003

PAPER	NO OF CANDIDATES	BAND 6		BAND 5		BAND 4		BAND 3		BAND 2		BAND 1	
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
LISTENING	77	2	2.6	16	20.8	32	41.6	21	27.3	5	6.5	1	1.3
SPEAKING	77	3	3.9	21	27.3	21	27.3	21	27.3	11	14.3	-	-
READING	77	1	1.3	10	13.0	41	53.2	20	26.0	5	6.5	-	-
WRITING	**77**	-	-	-	-	17	22.1	35	45.5	25	32.5	-	-

ANALYSIS OF THE MUET COMPONENT PAPERS DECEMBER 2004

PAPER	NO OF CANDIDATES	BAND 6		BAND 5		BAND 4		BAND 3		BAND 2		BAND 1	
		NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
LISTENING	36	5	13.9	8	22.2	17	47.2	5	13.9	1	2.8	-	-
SPEAKING	36	1	2.8	3	8.3	8	22.2	15	41.7	9	25.0	-	-
READING	36	1	2.8	9	25.0	17	47.2	7	19.4	2	5.6	-	-
WRITING	**36**	-	-	-	-	8	22.2	22	61.1	6	16.7	-	-

within a specified time of 50 minutes, a test-taking strategy rarely practised in class except during tests or examinations. Bryne (1988) also stresses that in writing, students have to keep the channel of communication open through their own efforts to ensure that both cohesion and coherence are present. Bryne (1988) explains content as what the writer has to say. Students have to learn how to organise their ideas in such a way so as to be easily understood by the reader (in this case the examiner) who is neither present nor known to the writer.

According to Wong (1999), the general objective of the MUET writing syllabus is to enable students to write various types of texts related to their academic pursuits such as essays, reports, term papers and summaries. Students therefore, have to master a range of skills underlying the different academic writing tasks to enable them to write effectively.

One of the most important of these skills is the ability to write grammatically correct sentences, that is, sentences with the correct tense, agreement, word form, article, preposition and other aspects of grammar (language ability). This accuracy of language is related to the aspect of mechanics, such as the use of correct spelling, capitalization and punctuation.

In addition to being accurate in the language, the syllabus specifies that students develop the ability to generate and develop ideas for writing. This involves having to come up with a thesis statement, to support it with relevant details, and to use certain structures or discourse markers to make the parts of the text cohere or hold together (Nesamalar et al 1995).

Bryne (1988) also insists that writing has to be learned through a process of instruction which allows students to master the written form of the language. Students also need to differentiate between speaking and writing because certain structures which are less used in speech are however important for effective communication in

writing. Most importantly, the MUET candidates are also obliged to write because failure to do so will affect the cumulative score which determines the overall grade or Band for the candidate.

Writing is also the most difficult skill to teach. Ur (1996) argues that one of the problems in teaching writing is to be able to maintain a fair balance between content (what we need to write about/task fulfillment) and form (the appropriate and accurate use of language/language proficiency) when teachers attempt to define what they want and what they need to assess. Ur (1996), opines that this "fair balance" is to some extent determined by the teacher's own particular teaching situation and beliefs. Over the years many approaches, methods and techniques have been introduced in the learning and teaching of writing of a second language. Some have been successful to a certain extent in in certain situations with certain students. The researchers were interested to know whether the STAD method can help students maintain the balance between task fulfillment and language proficiency. If so, then the STAD (Student Teams-Achievement Divisions) method, for the teaching of writing skills should also have an effect not only on the overall performance (writing) but also the self-concept of the students towards writing skills.

The Cooperative Approach and the STAD Method

According to Sharan (1999) the cooperative approach provides students the opportunity to work in small groups and it is this that helps to improve their achievement. Studies done by Jacob et al. (1998) also lend support that the cooperative method apart from improving achievement levels raised the students' self-concept. Similarly, studies done by Slavin (1990) and Miller (1989) also prove that the cooperative approach improves students' academic performance and social skills.

In addition, studies done locally in Malaysia prove that the cooperative method helps students

improve in their studies (Chong Lai Guan, 1995; Goh Boon Kun, 1998; Norijah Mohamad,1997; Meriam Ismail 1995; Nor Azizah Salleh and Jamilah Karim, 1992; Zakaria Kassim, 2003; Sri Rengan 2004; and Kumar 2004). The Cooperative method actually integrates activities that promote mastery learning, the application of the theory of multiple intelligences, the building of thinking skills and strengthening of students' social skills. We believe that the STAD method, one of the many methods of cooperative learning, if well-planned and executed will be able to help students master writing skills.

Applying the STAD Method in the Essay-Writing Class

To ensure success of a teaching and learning session, the lesson plan and the manner in which the steps are executed will determine the outcome. The steps of the STAD method to be implemented in this study were as follows:

i) Teacher explains the objectives of the lesson for that day.

ii) Students work in heterogeneous groups (predetermined).

iii) Students receive their assignments (essay titles) from the teachers.

iv) Each group then initiates discussion among its members and proceeds to prepare the draft of given topic.

v) The teacher assumes the role of facilitator.

vi) The teacher constantly observes that the five basic elements of the Cooperative Approach, that is, positive reliance on each other, individual responsibility, face to face interaction, group effort in writing and editing the essay and use of social skills are adhered to.

vii) A presentation of the group's essay is done.

viii) Evaluation is done by the teacher and other groups.

ix) A spontaneous quiz is conducted. All groups are involved. (Questions based on the task and language proficiency).

x) The group's scores are added to the score for the essay.

xi) Teacher will comment on the best group followed by recognition and reward.

xii) The best essay will be publicized on the notice board.

Objectives and Hypotheses of the Study

The study aims are to identify the effects of using the STAD method on the written performance of a group of Lower Six students and to ascertain whether the STAD method has the ability to enhance the self-concept of the students towards writing skills. The study also tested the following null hypotheses:

1. There is no significant difference between the mean score of the control group and the experimental group for the task fulfillment

2. There is no significant difference between the mean score of the control group and the experimental group for language proficiency.

3. There is no significant difference of the overall performance of the control group and the experimental group for the writing skills.

4. There is no significance difference in the change of self-concept of the control group and the experimental group towards writing skills.

Method

This study employs a quasi-experimental method where the Experimental Group was taught essay writing skills using the STAD method for the duration of six weeks. The Control Group was taught for the same period of time but instead uses the conventional method.

The STAD Method or (Student Teams Achievement Divisions) introduced by Slavin (1978), is an approach that is more student-centred. The teacher acts as the facilitator. In this method, students are divided into groups of mixed-ability, sex and background. They discuss amongst the group members working together to complete the task given by the teacher. Students exchange ideas and opinions and learn cooperatively from each other.

The conventional method is more teacher-centred. It refers to teaching that is teacher-focused based on the teacher's explanation normally with the use of the chalkboard. The method involves a class discussion focusing on the topic and the main points. In this method, students are generally concerned with improving their own grade, and goals are individualistic rather than group-wide.

60 Lower Six students from two secondary schools, (School A and School B) from Sungai

Petani, Kedah were used as the sample. The Experimental Group and the Control Group consisted of 30 students each (all taking the MUET in their respective schools). The subjects for the Experimental and Control Groups were chosen from different schools to eliminate any influence of the teaching methodology of one group onto the other.

The independent variables in this study (IV) were the subjects of the Experimental and Control groups.

The dependent variables (DV) in this study are as follows:

i) The overall performance for essay writing (task fulfillment and language proficiency – marks combined)

ii) performance for task fulfillment only

iii) performance for language proficiency only

iv) score for self-concept (based on the questionnaire)

The instruments used to gather data in this study were

i) Pre Test and Post-Test

ii) Questionnaire on self-concept (given during the Pre Test and Post Test)

The questionnaire on self-concept (15 items- an adaptation of Fitts' (1964), was prepared by the researchers. The four-point Likert's Scale with a range of 1 – 4 was used. 4 points were awarded for an answer of total agreement and 1 point for total disagreement for the items that were positive. The reverse was applied for items that were negative.

The researchers used three argumentative essay questions to determine the students' level of essay writing skills. Both the group subjects wrote the three Pre Test essays and the three similar Post Test essays. The Pre Test was conducted in the first week whilst the Post Test was done in the eight week.

The essay questions used for the Pre and Post Tests were verified by two senior MUET teachers to determine their validity. These teachers have more than 10 years of teaching experience and have been preparing students for the MUET for six years. They have no connection whatsoever with the subjects of both the groups. Their main purpose was to make sure that the instruments were worded correctly and appropriately.

A pilot test on 50 Lower Six students from a school with similar characteristics as the sample was conducted prior to the actual study to check for reliability of the Pre Test and Post Test essay questions and the contents of the questionnaire used in this study. The findings of the pilot test also revealed that the students had no difficulty understanding the instructions and requirements of the Pre Test and Post Test. The students also found that the time allocated to answer the paper was sufficient.

Using the SPSS 11.0, the reliability of the questionnaire was tested. The reliability coefficient applied was Cronbach's Alpha. This returned a value for alpha which was 0.7558 proving that the instrument to measure self-concept had a high reliability.

Procedure of the Research

The duration of this experiment was eight weeks. An allocation of four periods per week was used for the study in the schools concerned. In the first week both groups were given three essay questions as part of the Pre Test to answer. After the Pre Test, the subjects from the Experimental and Control Groups were given a questionnaire each to determine their level of self-concept. Treatment began from the second to the seventh week with the subjects of the Experimental Group being taught using the STAD method. However, the subjects of the Control Group were taught using the conventional approach for the same period. On the eight week the subjects of the Experimental Group and the Control Group were given the Post Test (the same three essay questions followed by the questionnaire).

Data Analysis

All data collected for purpose of this study was processed using the 'Statistical Package for The Social Sciences' (SPSS) Windows version 11.0. The t-test (for independent samples) was done to study the effects of using the STAD method and the conventional method on every dependent variable.

Findings and Discussions

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between the mean score of the control group and the experimental group for the task fulfillment

Outline of a Lesson Plan to Teach Essay-Writing using the STAD Method
WEEK 1 Lesson One (80 minutes)

STEPS	ACTIVITIES
Set Induction (5 minutes)	1. Teacher shows a PowerPoint presentation of pictures related to the essay title and invites students to comment on them.
Step I (10 minutes)	1. Teacher introduces the objectives for the day's lesson. 2. Teacher explains the importance of communicating effectively through essay writing focusing the task fulfillment and language proficiency. 3. Students are encouraged to pay close attention to both aspects in the process of writing the essay. 4. Formation of groups which are heterogeneous. Teacher stresses that in the process of essay-writing, each member should practice five basic elements of cooperative learning, that is: i) positive inter-dependence ii) individual responsibility iii) face to face interaction iv) social skills v) group effort in writing the essay
Step II (10 minutes) **Drafting the essay**	1. Students receive the assignment from the teacher (essay title). 2. Students refer to material they have brought with them. 3. Students discuss in their respective groups and draft the outline of the essay.
Step III (8 minutes) **Introduction**	1. Each group discusses and writes out the introduction. 2. Whilst writing the essay, students are reminded of the STAD. 3. Teacher moves from one group to another as facilitator. 4. Teacher makes sure that every student is involved in the discussion and writing of the essay.
Step IV (8 minutes) **Expanding the first point**	1. Students discuss and write out the first point and proceed to expand upon it and provide examples. 2. Whilst expanding the first point, students are reminded of STAD.
Step V (10 minutes) **Expanding the second point**	1. Group members are reminded that a good essay will enable the group to score high marks. 2. Students discuss and expand the second with good explanation and suitable examples. 3. Students also check and edit their work and adhere to the aspects of STAD.
Step VI (14 minutes) **Group presentation**	1. Group representative presents the prepared part of the essay. 2. Teacher and students evaluate the part that is presented.
Step VII (10 minute) **Quiz on task fulfillment and language proficiency**	1. Teacher puts forward five quiz questions (one question per group) spontaneously. 2. Every group member participates actively as it will determine the success of the group. 3. Teacher and students note down the marks scored by each group. 4. Teacher and students total up the marks scored for the presentation of the essay and the quiz. 5. Teacher announces the winning group and praises the group. 6. The best essay is put up on the board.
Conclusion (5 minutes)	1. The class representative is asked to summarise and comment on the lesson for the day.

WEEK 1 Lesson Two (80 minutes)

STEPS	ACTIVITIES
Set Induction (5 minutes)	1. Teacher continues the PowerPoint presentation to trigger the students' background knowledge and refresh their thoughts.
Step I (10 minutes)	1. Teacher explains the objectives of the lesson, that is, students are required to complete writing the essay they began writing the day before. 2. Students are encouraged to pay attention to aspects of task fulfillment and language proficiency in the process of writing out the essay as this will determine the quality of the group's essay. 3. Formation of heterogeneous groups.
Step II (10 minutes)	1. Students continue the assignment of the previous week (essay writing). 2. Teacher stresses that in the process of writing the essay, every member of the group should cooperate and help each other in the group and be actively involved in the process. 3. Students discuss and expand the third point with explanations and examples. 4. Whilst expanding the points, students are reminded of task fulfillment and language proficiency.
Step III (8 minutes) **Conclusion**	1. Each group discusses the conclusion. 2. Whilst concluding the essay, students are reminded of task fulfillment and language proficiency. 3. Teacher moves from one group to another and acts as facilitator. 4. Teacher also makes sure that all members of the group participate in the discussions in the process of writing the essay.
Step IV (8 minutes)	1. Students continue to work on the essay.
Step V (8 minutes) **Editing**	1. Students in every group check and edit the essay, working in a collaborative manner whilst adhering to aspects of task fulfilment and language proficiency.
Step VI (16 minutes) **Group Presentation**	1. The group representative presents the whole essay that has been completed. 2. Teacher and students evaluate the essay that is presented.
Step VII (10 minutes) **Quiz**	1. Based on the essay that is presented, the teacher asks five quiz questions (one question per team) spontaneously. 2. Every group member participates actively because the score will determine the group success. 3. Teacher and students take down the scores obtained by the groups. 4. Teacher and students total up the scores obtained from the presentation of the essay and the quiz. 5. Teacher announces the winning team and praises the team. 6. The best essay is put up on the board.
Conclusion (5 minutes)	1. The class representative is asked to summarise and comment on the whole lesson for the day.

Table 2a: Comparison of Mean Scores for Task Fulfillment for Essay Writing Skills in the Pre Test

Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Experimental	30	47.63	14.19	3.33	.974	58	.334
Control	30	44.30	12.23				

Level of significance is at p<0.05

Table 2a shows the mean scores of the Experimental and Control Groups in the Pre Test. The mean score of the Experimental Group was 47.63, whilst the mean score for the Control Group was 44.30. The t-test for the Pre Test shows no significant difference between the mean score of the Experimental Group and the mean score of the Control Group for task fulfillment. (t = 0.974, df = 58, p = 0.334).

Table 2b: Comparison of Mean Scores for Task Fulfillment for Essay Writing skills in the Post Test

Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Experimental	30	53.83	14.69	7.00	2.096	58	.040
Control	30	46.83	10.89				

**Level of significance is at p<0.05

Table 2b clarifies the mean scores for task fulfillment in the Post Test for the Experimental and Control Groups. The findings show the mean score of the Experimental Group to be 53.83 whilst for the Control Group it was 46.83. The t-test results show a significant difference between the mean scores of the Experimental and Control Groups for task fulfillment, (t = 2.096, df = 58, p = 0.040). Therefore, null hypothesis 1, is rejected. The findings show that the systematically planned STAD method has helped the subjects of the Experimental Group to score higher on task fulfillment compared to the Control Group taught with the conventional approach.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean score of the control group and the experimental group for language proficiency.

Table 3a: Comparison of Mean Scores for Language Proficiency in the Pre Test

Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Experimental	30	41.23	15.22	5.46	1.586	58	.118
Control	30	35.76	11.15				

Level of significance is at p<0.05

Table 3a, explains the mean scores of the Experimental and Control Groups where language competency for the Pre Test is concerned. The mean score for the Experimental Group is 41.23, whilst the mean score for the Control Group is 35.76. The t-test reveals that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the Experimental and Control Groups for language competency, (t = 1.586, df = 58, p = 0.118).

Table 3b: Comparison of Mean Scores for Language Proficiency for Essay Writing Skills in the Post Test

Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Experimental	30	48.36	15.37	8.76	2.654	58	.010
Control	30	39.60	9.54				

**Level of significance is at p<0.05

With reference to Table 3b, it shows that the mean score for Language competency of the Experimental Group is higher than that of the Control Group. The mean score of the Experimental Group is 48.36 whilst that of the Control group is 39.60. The t-test shows that there is significant difference between the means of the Experimental and Control Groups for Language Competency, (t = 2.654, df = 58, p = 0.010). Therefore, null hypothesis 2 is rejected. This proves that the teaching based on the systematically planned STAD method was able to help the subjects of the Experimental Group to achieve higher and significant scores for Language Competency compared with the Control Group which relied on the conventional approach.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference of the overall performance of the control group and the experimental group for the writing skills.

Table 4a: Comparison of Mean Scores for Overall Achievement for Essay Writing Skills in the Pre Test

Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Experimental	30	88.86	29.05	8.80	1.296	58	.200
Control	30	80.06	23.19				

Level of significance is at p<0.05

Table 4a shows the mean scores of the Experimental and Control Groups for overall achievement in the Pre Test. The mean score for the Experimental Group was 88.86 whilst the Control Group had a mean score of 80.06. The t-test finding show that there is no significant difference between the mean scores of the Experimental and Control Groups for overall achievement in the Pre Test, (t = 1.296, df = 58, p = 0.200).

Table 4b: Comparison of Mean Scores for Overall Achievement for Essay Writing skills in the Post Test

Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Experimental	30	102.20	29.77	15.76	2.405	58	.019
Control	30	86.43	20.07				

**Level of significance is at p<0.05

Table 4b, shows the mean scores for overall achievement for the Experimental and Control Groups in the Post Test. The findings indicate that the mean score for the Experimental Group is 102.20 whilst that of the Control Group is 86.43. The t-test clearly indicates that there is a significant difference between the mean scores of the Experimental and Control Groups for overall achievement, (t = 2.405, df = 58, p = 0.019). Therefore, null hypothesis 3 is rejected. This finding shows that systematically planned teaching and learning based on the STAD method allowed the subjects of the Experimental Group to obtain higher and significant scores for overall achievement compared with the subjects who were taught using the conventional approach.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significance difference in the change of self-concept of the control group and the experimental group towards writing skills.

Table 5a: Comparison of Mean Scores for the Level of Self Concept of subjects of the Experimental and Control Groups Before Teaching was Carried Out

Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Experimental	30	44.20	4.26	1.06	0.990	58	.326
Control	30	43.13	4.08				

Level of significance is at p<0.05

Table 5a shows the mean scores of the Experimental and Control Groups for the level of Self-Concept before any teaching was carried out. The mean score for the Experimental Group for self-concept in the Pre Test was 44.20 whilst the Control Group scored 43.13. The t-test results indicate that there was no significant difference between the mean scores of the Experimental and Control Groups for self-concept, ($t = 0.990$, df = 58, $p = 0.326$).

Table 5b: Comparison of Mean Scores for the Level of Self-Concept of subjects of the Experimental and Control Groups After Teaching was Carried Out

Group	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value
Experimental	30	53.06	2.01	14.86	18.894	58	.000**
Control	30	38.20	3.80				

**Level of significance is at p<0.05

Table 5b shows the mean scores for the level of self-concept for the respective groups after teaching using the STAD method for the Experimental Group and conventional approach for the Control Group was carried out. The Experimental Group recorded a mean score of 53.06 whilst the Control Group scored 38.20. The t-test run to test the null hypothesis revealed that there was significant difference between the means of the Experimental Group and the Control Group for the level of Self-Concept, ($t = 18.894$, df = 58, $p = 0.000$). Therefore the null hypothesis 4 is rejected. This concludes that the teaching based on the systematically planned STAD method has helped the subjects of the Experimental Group to obtain higher and more significant scores for Self-Concept compared to the Control Group.

Conclusion

This is a case study conducted through quasi-experimental approach. This is the case of experimenting with a particular method of teaching writing skills to expedite its acquisition. It is also the case for using the STAD Method. In this case the experiment of using STAD Method seems to produce better result than the conventional method. The data obtained showed encouraging results which should be useful for more research to be conducted on a bigger scale. Nonetheless, more need to be done before we can be certain of the soundness of the STAD Method. In the meantime at least it proves that teachers should not persist with methods that do not work but be open and ready to adapt and adopt the methods which emphasize more student-centeredness.

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