



## Effects OF WebQuest Online Learning Strategies on the Narrative Essay Performance of Senior Secondary Students

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### Abstract

*The purpose of this study was to investigate the efficacy of WebQuest online learning strategies on the narrative essay of senior secondary school students. Purposive sampling method was used to select one hundred and twenty (120) students out of four hundred and eighty (480) students from SS11 students of Government Senior Secondary School, Hunkuyi, and Government Senior Secondary School, Bomo. For the collection of data, one hundred and twenty (120) sampled students from GSSSH, YASSSS and GSSSB, GSSSK were given a pre-test in order to ensure homogeneity in their ability level and to find out if they are compatible and comparable. After the pre-test, the entire sixty (60) control students were given the opportunity to continue the conventional class and the entire sixty (60) experimental students were given three weeks preparatory practice of Internet browsing activities which involved searching for information using Google, linking the students to treatment site and exposing them to procedures of using WebQuest before the proper WebQuest treatment. After the preparatory practice, all the sixty experimental students were registered in the programme by the teacher to study narrative essay. The students were given usernames and passwords to login. To establish a cause-and-effect relationship between independent and dependent variable, quasi experimental design was used. For the statistical analysis, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used. The overall study results revealed significant differences between the narrative essay mean performance score of the experimental and control groups. The study proved that use of technology in language learning can lead to greater writing achievement among students. It is, therefore, recommended that at the secondary school level, writing should be emphasized as an act of communication. The students should be given opportunities to share and discuss with other students using modern technologies. Government should provide adequate online learning materials in the Nigerian secondary schools. WebQuest activities should be integrated in the curriculum, relating them to the goals and objectives of the course.*

**Key Words:** WebQuest, Asynchronous, Email, ICT, Narrative essay, Students' performance

### Introduction

In order to meet the target of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Federal Ministry of Education in conjunction with National Communications Commissions (NCC) used Universal Service Provision Fund (USPF) and sponsored School Access Programme (SAP) which provided adequate computers and Internet connectivity to some secondary schools in Nigeria. Training and re-training on how to use the computers were carried out in almost all the secondary schools in Kaduna state, and after the training, customized laptops were issued to the teachers. This project was carried out to

encourage the learners to embrace digital learning. Learners may have access to technology in educational settings in two distinct ways: learning from and learning with technology (Reeves, 1998). While the former implies a relative passivity from the learner, the latter infers an active participation (Hill, Wiley, Miller Nelson, & Han, 2004).

WebQuest as one of online learning tools is selected for this study. This is because in using WebQuest students are allowed to a quest for knowledge online. They are directed to online resources within the context of specific curriculum mission rather than accessing textbook which may be outdated. It exposes the students to a wide range of online resources such as subject experts, directories of information, current news, well edited articles, and different structures of essay writing.

Writing is the most difficult skill among the four language skills which are: listening, speaking, reading and writing (Hoewisch., 2001) Arguably, narrative essay is the most demanding because it always formed part of the external examination such as West African Examination Council (WAEC). Holder (2006) claimed that despite the fact that students are motivated to learn writing, they are still writing with much difficulty, and the achievement is critically low.

In order to improve skills of the students, Lee (2002) suggested that teachers should integrate information technology (IT) into their classes. McCormick (1993) opined that (IT) can assist to diversify, develop and improve the pedagogical relation of teaching and learning. Beebe (2004) added that ICT can be used interchangeably with "Internet". When it comes to using the Internet, there is concern that if students have free access to the Internet; they may stray and access inappropriate materials (Vidoni, 2002). However, WebQuest online learning can effectively address these concerns.

Online learning is considered as instructional environments supported by the internet which comprises a wide variety of programs that use the internet within and beyond school walls to provide access to materials as well as facilitate interaction among teachers and students. Online learning offers the ability to share material in all kinds of formats such as videos, slideshows, word documents and PDFs. Technology provides the learners with the ability to fit learning around their lifestyles, effectively allowing even the busiest person to further a career and gain new qualifications. It has simplified the way of teaching all the subjects.

WebQuests are well structured, well organized, with time efficient tools used by educators to provide the students with a wide array of relevant Internet information that can inspire critical thinking skills. The use of search engines in WebQuests, allow the students to explore issues, find their own answers, and acquire all the necessary skills (Zheng et al., 2007). Thus, the present study is aimed at conducting school-based research in order to establish the efficacy of WebQuest on narrative essay.

### **Objective of the Study**

The objective of this study is to find out the difference between the narrative essay mean performance score of students exposed to WebQuest online learning strategies and those not exposed to the treatment.



## **Research Question**

What is the difference between the narrative essay mean performance score of students exposed to WebQuest online learning strategies and those not exposed to the treatment?

## **Hypothesis**

There is no significant difference between the narrative essay mean performance score of students exposed to WebQuest online learning strategies and those not exposed to the treatment.

## **Literature Review**

### **WebQuest and Teaching of Narrative Essay**

Written essay is known as composition especially at the primary and secondary schools. It is putting down one's thought in graphic symbol and pedagogical writing under the guidance of a teacher. Essay writing could be narrative, descriptive, argumentative or expository. This present study is limited to narrative essay. Narrative essay tells a story about a memorable event that happened at a particular time.

The language use in narrative essay tends to contain past tense, sequence connectors, action verbs, adverbs to give clear picture of events, precise tone and figurative language may be used. Narrative essay is written using first person singular (I). However, the third person singular (he/she) can also be used (Catherine, 2012).

To narrate a story in a WebQuest online learning, the students need to tell a story usually about something that happened in such a way that the audience understands and benefits something (Cohen, 1994). Narrative essay relies on concrete, sensory details to convey the points. These details should create a unified, forceful effect, dominant impression and they should include the story convention of plot, including setting and characters, a climax and an ending (Goddard, 2002). The story is presented following a particular structure to ensure that the plot is clear. Just like in the traditional approach, WebQuest online learning strategy follows the three most frequent structures which include Chronological order, Flash back order and Reflective order to teach narrative essay.

In teaching narrative essay through WebQuest online learning, the essay is broken into three main parts which include introduction, body and conclusion by following the links to study the techniques. The subjects are to study the processes carefully and search all the rules of narrative essay using the selected web sites (Goddard, 2002). Young (2000) provided three principles of writing narrative essay: involvement of reader of the story being told, finding a generalization which the story supports and giving carefully selected details to support and explain the story. All these are also found in the WebQuest online learning as arranged in the websites selected.

For teaching the setting, Reynolds (2000) suggests that the narration should be in a specific time and place at the beginning of the story and for characterization. Amztis (1995) & Langan (2001) suggested using three dimensional characters for the protagonist and/or antagonist with introduction containing the setting, characters and opening situation. All of these conventions can

be best taught through interaction and exchange of ideas offered by conferencing where students would deliberate until consensus is reached. Interaction and conferencing are among the strategies proposed in the present study.

Moody (1970) explained that inability of students to manipulate the grammatical structures of the English language with confidence and accuracy affects their narrative skills, even using WebQuest, because they do not have sufficient control patterns of English to be able to write what they want accurately. This encourages abnormalities in the narrative skills and the WebQuest learning strategies take cognizance of it. Many relevant websites are provided for consulting the grammatical structures of English language.

According to Olaofe (2010), sector analysis is designed for writing of English, since second language learners are more concerned with the written system of the language. It provides different mechanisms for generating different kinds of operations on the positions in a sentence layer. Some of these operations include: leaving some positions filled and unfilled to produce varieties, shifting some fillers of a particular positions to different positions that can accommodate such fillers, and postponing some positions by pushing such positions forward for emphatic purposes. These are also some of the components of WebQuest online learning strategies.

The body of literature reviewed above did not particularly address the issue of WebQuest online learning strategies on the written English in the area of narrative essay. This encourages the researcher to carry out this research work by using WebQuest online learning to teach narrative essay. The students are expected to utilize the materials and resources to produce a draft after series of online consultation. Students would be linked to rubric areas to re-order words in sentences and also re-arrange given sentences in paragraph. They would be linked to areas of punctuation marks in order to write good narrative essay.

The point raised by Moody (1970) that inability of students to manipulate the grammatical structures of English language with confidence and accuracy affects their narrative skills is convincing because writing requires mastery of the basic grammatical rules. The WebQuest online learning strategies make provision for learning grammatical accuracy and collaborative work as designed in the study which can boost the students' morale. The present study appreciates the view of Goddard (2002) that learning narrative essay through WebQuest is three stages which include introduction, body and conclusion.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The design adopted for this research is quasi-experimental research design. The design made use of existing classes in a given school not to create classrooms through random selection and random assignment (Campbel& Julian, 1963; Gibbons & Herman, 1997). The study examined the effects of WebQuest online learning strategy on the written English performance of selected Senior School Students.



## **Population**

The population of this study comprised all the 2015/2016 registered SSII students of the seven (7) public senior secondary schools with ICT facilities in Giwa Zone. The schools registered one thousand six hundred and sixty (1660) students with two hundred and forty two (242) computers and online facilities.

## **Sample and Sampling Procedure**

In this study, one group with thirty (30) SSII students out of ten groups with three hundred (300) students of GSSH and one group with thirty (30) students out of six groups with one hundred and eighty (180) students of GSSB. Sixty (60) students formed the experimental and sixty (60) students formed the control group, out of four hundred and eighty (480) students.

## **Instrumentation**

The study utilized both qualitative and quantitative techniques in data collection and analytical procedure. The experimental group were given test I, test II, test III and final post-test. The questions for test, test I, test II, test III and final post-test were of WAEC standard. The instrument used for data collection was narrative essay.

## **Result**

### **Research Question**

What is the difference between the narrative essay mean performance of the students exposed to WebQuest online learning strategies and those not exposed to the treatment?

The scores of the students in the two groups were graded into high, average and low level in order to find out the differences between the written English mean performance score of the students exposed to WebQuest online learning strategies and those not exposed to the treatment. The grading was used to enable the classification of the effect and comparison between the two groups. Table 1.1 below is the total number and percentages for the experimental and control groups.

**Table 1: Total Number and Percentages for the Experimental and Control in Narrative Essay**

EXP	Pretest			Test I			Test II			Test III			Final Test		
	No	L	%	No	L	%	N	L	%	No	L	%	No	L	%
	<b>C</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>%</b>
H	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00
M	60	22	46.7	60	24	40	60	31	51.7	60	52	86.7	60	57	95
L	60	38	63.3	60	36	60	60	29	48.3	60	8	13.3	60	3	5
	<b>O</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>%</b>	
H	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00
M	60	30	50	60	31	51.7	60	37	61.7	60	51	85	60	59	98.3
L	60	30	50	60	29	48.3	60	23	38.3	60	9	15	60	1	1.7
	<b>E</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>%</b>
H	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00
M	60	30	50	60	30	50	60	36	60	60	52	86.7	60	55	91.7
L	60	30	50	60	30	50	60	24	40	60	8	13.3	60	5	8.3
	<b>M</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>%</b>	
H	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00
M	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00
L	60	60	100	60	60	100	60	60	100	60	60	100	60	60	100
<b>CON</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>%</b>
	<b>C</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>%</b>
H	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00
M	60	25	41.7	60	24	40	60	28	53.3	60	29	48.3	60	33	55
L	60	35	58.3	60	36	60	60	32	46.7	60	31	51.7	60	27	45
	<b>O</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>Z</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>%</b>	
H	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00
M	60	35	58.3	60	31	51.7	60	43	71.7	60	37	61.7	60	38	63.3
L	60	25	41.7	60	29	48.3	60	17	28.3	60	23	38.3	60	22	36.7
	<b>E</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>P</b>	<b>R</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>O</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>%</b>
H	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00
M	60	31	51.7	60	24	40	60	19	51.7	60	25	41.7	60	19	48.3
L	60	29	48.3	60	36	60	60	31	48.3	60	35	58.3	60	31	51.7
	<b>M</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>H</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>S</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>%</b>	
H	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00
M	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00	60	00	00
L	60	60	100	60	60	100	60	60	100	60	60	100	60	60	100

Table 1.1 indicates that the performance of the control and experimental groups were at the same level before the treatment. At pretest, the number of experimental group in the low performance level was 38 or 63.3% in content, 30 or 50% in organization, 30 or 50% in expression and mechanics remained 60 or 100%. At test I, the number of experimental group in the low performance level reduced to 36 or 60% in content, 29 or 48.3% in organization, 30 or 50% in expression and mechanics remained 60 or 100%. At test II, the number of experimental group in the low performance level dropped to 29 or 48.3% in content, 23 or 38.3% in organization, 24 or 40% in expression and mechanics remained 60 or 100%. At test III, the number of the experimental group in the low performance level dropped to 8 or 13.3% in content, 9 or 15% in organization, 52 or 86.7% in expression and mechanics remained 60 or 100%. At final post-test, the number of experimental group in the low performance level reduced to 3 or 5% in content, 1 or 1.7% in organization, 8 or 13.3% in expression and mechanics remained 60 or 100%.



At pretest, the number of control group in the low performance level was 35 or 58.3% in content, 25 or 41.7% in organization, 29 or 48.3% in expression and mechanics remained 600 or 100%. At test I, the number of control group in the low performance level reduced to 36 or 60% in content, 29 or 48.3% in organization and 36 or 60% in expression while mechanics remained 60 or 100%. At test II, the number of control group in the low performance level dropped to 32 or 46.7% in content, 17 or 28.3% in organization, 31 or 48.3% in expression and mechanics remained 60 or 100%. At test III, the number of control group in the low performance level dropped to 31 or 51.7% in content, 25 or 38.3% in organization but increased 35 or 58.3% in expression and mechanics remained 60 or 100%. At final post-test, the number of control group in the low performance level reduced to 27 or 45% in content, 22 or 36.7% in organization, 31 or 51.7% in expression and mechanics remained 60 or 100%.

This happened after exposure to activities such as vocabulary development, spelling, idiomatic expressions and use of punctuation marks. There was no such improvement among the students that were not exposed to the treatment in all the stages. This clearly revealed the efficacy of the WOLS on the narrative essay of SSII students. Below is a table of number of errors committed in narrative essay:

**Table 1.2: Presents the Overall Errors Committed By the Students in Narrative Essay**

<b>Experimental Group</b>	<b>Errors Committed</b>	<b>Test I</b>	<b>Test II</b>	<b>Test III</b>	<b>Final Test</b>
	Spellings	202	156	135	75
	Concords	59	54	40	31
	Determiners	41	39	30	20
	Capitalization	42	41	30	21
	Wrong syllabication	50	40	42	20
	Incomplete thought	54	41	40	30
	Tenses	112	80	72	40
	Repetitions	25	20	19	10
	Pluralism	24	21	15	11
	Comma	35	31	25	12
	Full-stop	31	20	26	9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>503</b>	<b>474</b>	<b>279</b>
<b>Control Group</b>	<b>Errors Committed</b>	<b>Test I</b>	<b>Test II</b>	<b>Test III</b>	<b>Final Test</b>
	Spellings	210	200	201	180
	Concords	58	57	56	56
	Determiners	43	37	38	30
	Capitalization	51	50	50	50
	Wrong syllabication	41	40	39	39
	Incomplete thought	15	16	17	16
	Tenses	111	111	98	81
	Repetitions	28	27	27	27
	Pluralism	25	21	25	20
	Comma	39	40	40	40
	Full-stop	40	39	30	30
	<b>Total</b>	<b>661</b>	<b>638</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>569</b>

Table 1.2 clearly showed that at test1, the experimental group had 675 as total errors committed and 661 as total errors committed by the control group. At test2, the total errors of the experimental group reduced to 503 and the total errors of the control group reduced to 638. At test3, the total errors of the experimental group reduced to 474 while the total errors of the control group reduced to 605. At the final test, the total errors of the experimental control drastically reduced to 279 but the total errors of the control group reduced to 569 only.

### Research Findings

To analyze the data of the present study, different types of statistical techniques were used. These include Mean, Standard deviation and one-way ANCOVA test. The findings are present in tables below:

**Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations and Std. Error Mean of the Experimental and Control**

Status	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Content	Control	60	3.50	.701	.091
	Experimental	60	4.93	.954	.123
Organization	Control	60	3.75	.751	.097
	Experimental	60	4.95	.811	.105
Expression	Control	60	6.23	1.609	.208
	Experimental	60	8.92	1.406	.181
Mechanics	Control	60	.67	.510	.066
	Experimental	60	1.00	.759	.098
Total	Control	60	14.28	1.795	.232
	Experimental	60	19.82	2.296	.296

This result revealed that the students exposed to WOLS were significantly better in their performance than those not exposed to the treatment. The content of the written English of the experimental students significantly increased after the exposure to the treatment. This is indicated by 4.93 mean score of the experimental group and 3.50 for the control group. In organization of the written English, the mean score of the experimental remained as 4.95 while the control group had 3.75. The mean score of expression of the written English of the experimental group was 8.92 and 6.23 for control group. In the aspect of mechanics of the written English, the mean score of the experimental group was 1.00 and the control group was .67. The total mean score of the experimental group stood as 19.82 and the control remained as 14.28. By these observations, the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the narrative essay mean performance score of those exposed to WebQuest online learning strategies and those not exposed to the treatment is therefore rejected.

To prove beyond reasonable doubt that this remarkable improvement was as a result of the exposure to WOLS, ANCOVA analysis for the differences in post-test mean scores tests was also conducted.



**Table 1. 4: ANCOVA analysis for the differences in post-test mean scores of contents, organization, expression and mechanical accuracy of narrative essay between experimental and control groups**

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1.255 <sup>a</sup>	6	0.209	0.822	0.555
Intercept	10.244	1	10.244	40.271	0.000
HIGH	0.304	1	0.304	1.193	0.277
MIDDLE	0.112	1	0.112	0.441	0.508
LOW	1.245	1	1.245	4.895	0.029
STATUS	5.263	3	5.088	5.211	0.379
Error	28.745	113	0.254		
Total	300.000	120			
Corrected Total	30.000	119			

Table 2 indicates that the (F) value was (5.2) and it was significant value at the level (.037). From this finding obtained, it could be said that there is a clear difference between the experimental and control group. This could be based on the number of paragraphs in the experimental group that could not be found in the control group. There was also a difference in spelling of words and also the use of punctuations. It is observed that the sentences of the experimental group seemed to be better than the control group. Below is a table of strategies that led to the improvement

**Table 1.5: WebQuest Online Strategies That Led to the Improvement of the Experimental Group in Essay Writing**

Essay Writing	WebQuest Online Strategies	Effects on Essay Writing
	Collaboration	Collaboration with teacher and pairs online
	Group editing	Checking for accuracy, and redrafting of ideas to avoid unnecessary errors
	Interaction	Interaction between teacher and students
	Self-editing	Individual checking of spellings, punctuations and grammatical errors
	Conferencing	
	Brainstorming	Outlining, thinking and organization of ideas
	Crafting	Intra-sentential flow of ideas
	Reviewing	Final revision before posting
	Re-structuring	Logical presentation of sentence and ordering of document based on central idea and sentence
	Planning	Logical manipulation of ideas through insertion, deletion and organization
	Sentence combining	Logical transition of ideas and development of paragraphs

## **Discussion**

The present study investigated the effect of WOLS on narrative essay performance of selected senior secondary school students in Giwa Zone. It was obvious that WebQuest strategies involved scaffolding, brainstorming, team work, independent learning, autonomy and support which can be an important issue for explaining the significant improvement of writing skills. A significant difference existed in the written English mean performance score in narrative essay of the students exposed to the treatment and those not exposed. Although, the essay of the students before the treatments was full of errors such as non-fluency of ideas, lack of logical sequencing, inconsistency of tenses and no mastery of sentence construction. The students' performance remarkably improved as a result of the treatment such as conferencing, clustering, role play, drafting, editing, and sequential arrangement of events. The findings of this study is consistent with Hassenien (2006) who claimed that WebQuest model can improve students' writing performance. The findings also, corroborate with Vidoni & Maddox (2002) who claimed that implementation of technology can simplify ways of seeking knowledge for students in an interesting manner.

## **Conclusion**

As a result of the findings obtained in this study, it could be adjudged that WebQuest online learning is effective for enhancing narrative essay performance of senior secondary school students. The room created for interaction between the learner and the learning materials in the electronic environment without the teacher is an evidence of the improvement. The study concluded that WebQuest online learning strategies is effective in the aspect of teaching and learning English narrative essay.

## **Recommendations**

In the light of the findings of the present study, the following recommendations are made:

1. At the secondary school level, writing should be emphasized as an act of communication. The students should be given opportunities to share and discuss with other students using modern technologies.
2. Government should provide adequate online learning materials in the Nigerian secondary schools.
3. WebQuest activities should be integrated in the curriculum, relating them to the goals and objectives of the course.



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