

Assessing the Effectiveness of the Module 'Embracing Non-Fiction: Essay Made Easy on the Essay Writing Performance of Grade 10 Learners

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Abstract

This study assessed the effectiveness of the researcher-developed module “Embracing Non-Fiction: Essay Made Easy” in improving the essay writing performance of Grade 10 Leeuwenhoek learners at Dologon National High School during the academic year 2025–2026. Anchored on the Cognitive Process Theory of Writing, Constructivist Learning Theory, and the Input–Process–Output Model, the study used a quasi-experimental pre-test–post-test design with a descriptive component. Thirty Grade 10 learners were included through complete enumeration. The study utilized an essay writing test, the instructional module, a standardized writing rubric, and a perception survey questionnaire. Results showed that before the intervention, most learners were at the Developing level, while after the module implementation, most reached the Proficient level, with some achieving Outstanding performance. The paired sample t-test revealed a significant improvement from the pre-test mean score of 15.07 to the post-test mean score of 18.33, with a mean gain of 3.27 points and a result of $t(29) = 7.53$, $p < 0.001$. Learner perceptions were also highly positive, with most responses marked Agree or Strongly Agree in terms of clarity, usefulness, and engagement. The study concluded that the module effectively improved essay writing performance and recommended its integration or adaptation in Grade 10 English instruction. The study supports SDG 4 – Quality Education by promoting literacy, academic writing competence, and learner-centered instruction. Its sustainability impact lies in strengthening educational and institutional practices through structured, accessible, and context-responsive instructional materials.

Keywords: Academic Writing, Complete Enumeration, Essay Writing Performance, Instructional Module, Learner Perception, Modular Instruction, Non-Fiction Essay Writing, Quality Education

1. Introduction

This study evaluates the effectiveness of the researcher-developed module “Embracing Non-Fiction: Essay Made Easy” in improving the essay writing performance of Grade 10 learners. Essay writing is an essential academic skill that enables learners to think critically, organize ideas logically, and communicate clearly; however, many learners continue to experience difficulties in content development, organization, grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary, which may affect their academic performance and confidence in English language use (Lopres, Placencia, Lopres, & Tidalgo, 2023). In response to these challenges, the study examines whether a structured, learner-friendly instructional module can improve students’ academic or non-fiction essay writing performance and support their engagement in writing instruction.

Essay writing remains a core component of English language instruction because it develops learners’ ability to express ideas in a coherent, organized, and meaningful manner. Despite its importance, many high school students struggle to produce well-structured essays due to weak idea development, poor organization, grammatical errors, limited vocabulary, and difficulty applying mechanics appropriately (Lopres, Placencia, Lopres, & Tidalgo, 2023). These concerns indicate the need for focused instructional support that responds directly to learners’ writing difficulties. To address these needs, the researcher developed the module “Embracing Non-Fiction: Essay Made Easy,” a supplementary instructional material designed for Grade 10 learners. The module provides simplified explanations, structured activities, guided writing tasks, model essays, and step-by-step strategies for writing academic or non-fiction essays. The study therefore seeks to determine whether the module can improve learners’ essay writing performance through pre-test and post-test assessment and whether students perceive the module as clear, useful, and engaging.

The literature emphasizes that essay writing is a complex cognitive activity requiring planning, organization, idea development, language control, and revision. In secondary education, Grade 10 learners are expected to demonstrate proficiency in writing forms such as expository and argumentative essays; however, many students still struggle with coherent idea development and supporting arguments, leading to essays that lack logical flow and clarity (Santos, 2021). Common writing problems include poor grammar, limited vocabulary, weak thesis statements, insufficient supporting

evidence, and difficulty following essay structure, including introductions, transitions, and conclusions (Reyes & Dizon, 2020). Although the Department of Education has established writing competencies for junior high school learners, many students continue to encounter challenges due to differences in language exposure, quality of instruction, and writing practice (DepEd, 2020). Related studies also highlight the value of instructional modules in improving writing performance. Modular instruction provides structured and self-paced learning materials that guide learners through specific writing skills. Bernardo and Castillo (2019) found that learners who used writing modules improved in argument development, idea organization, and application of grammar rules. Writing modules are effective because they use scaffolding, guided practice, model essays, prompts, and checklists that help students monitor and improve their writing. Ramos (2022) emphasized that essay writing modules improved coherence, unity, and logical sequencing among high school learners, while Torres and Medina (2021) noted that modular instruction can strengthen learner autonomy and reduce writing-related anxiety. In the Philippine distance learning context, Lopez and Garcia (2021) found that writing modules served as useful supplementary materials for improving students' composition skills. Learner perception is another important theme in the literature. Positive perceptions of essay writing modules are associated with engagement and motivation. Dela Cruz (2020) reported that students valued modules with clear explanations, step-by-step instructions, and real-life examples because these made writing less intimidating and more manageable. Manalo and Javier (2022) found that the self-paced nature of writing modules helped students revisit concepts and revise their work conveniently, supporting deeper understanding of writing strategies. However, Estrada (2020) noted that some learners experienced difficulty understanding module content without teacher guidance, especially when technical terms were not sufficiently explained. These studies suggest that the clarity, usefulness, and engagement value of modules are important factors in their instructional effectiveness.

Locally, the study focuses on Grade 10 Leeuwenhoek learners of Dologon National High School, where students experience challenges in organizing ideas, applying grammar and vocabulary, and developing coherent arguments in essay writing. The school context provides a practical setting for testing a teacher-developed intervention that responds to actual classroom needs. Nationally, the study is situated within the Philippine basic education system and the Grade 10 English curriculum. The Department of Education has identified writing competencies for junior high school learners, yet students' achievement of these competencies remains affected by differences in instructional support, language exposure, and opportunities for writing practice (DepEd, 2020). The Philippine shift toward modular learning also reinforces the relevance of supplementary writing modules, particularly as tools for strengthening composition skills (Lopez and Garcia, 2021). The provided content does not present a detailed global context. However, the study's focus on essay writing as an academic and real-world communication skill connects with broader educational concerns on literacy, learner-centered instruction, and writing competence.

This study is grounded in the Cognitive Process Theory of Writing by Linda Flower and John R. Hayes (1981) and the Constructivist Learning Theory by Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. The Cognitive Process Theory of Writing views writing as a problem-solving activity involving planning, translating, and reviewing. According to Flower and Hayes, writing is not a linear process but a recursive activity in which writers continuously evaluate and revise their work. The module "Embracing Non-Fiction: Essay Made Easy" aligns with this theory because it provides structured opportunities for learners to generate ideas, plan essays, draft content, and revise through guided activities. The Constructivist Learning Theory supports the use of scaffolded instruction, particularly through Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In this study, the module functions as a scaffold by offering step-by-step guidance and activities suited to learners' current writing skill levels. Learners construct knowledge through active engagement, independent practice, and meaningful learning tasks embedded in the instructional module. Conceptually, the study is anchored on the Input–Process–Output (IPO) Model. The input includes the learners' profile, their essay writing difficulties, the researcher-developed module, and the assessment tools. The process involves pre-testing, module implementation, post-testing, and perception surveying. The expected output includes improved essay writing performance, significant pre-test and post-test results, and positive learner perception. This framework illustrates how identified writing challenges are addressed through a structured instructional intervention to produce measurable academic improvement.

The reviewed literature shows that many Grade 10 learners experience persistent difficulties in essay writing, particularly in coherence, organization, grammar, vocabulary, thesis development, and supporting evidence (Santos, 2021; Reyes & Dizon, 2020). Although instructional modules have been found useful in improving writing skills (Bernardo and Castillo, 2019; Ramos, 2022; Torres & Medina, 2021; Lopez and Garcia, 2021), the effectiveness of the specific module "Embracing Non-Fiction: Essay Made Easy" among Grade 10 learners of Dologon National High School has not yet been established. Thus, this study is necessary to determine whether the module can improve learners' essay writing performance and whether students perceive it as clear, useful, and engaging. The study addresses a practical instructional gap by evaluating a context-specific, teacher-developed module intended to support Grade 10 learners in academic or non-fiction essay writing.

The study is most directly aligned with SDG 4 – Quality Education because it focuses on improving learners’ writing performance through structured, learner-centered instructional support. By evaluating the effectiveness of a module designed to improve essay writing skills, the study contributes to efforts to strengthen literacy, academic communication, and classroom-based learning outcomes. The study may also support educational sustainability by providing evidence on how supplementary instructional materials can address learning gaps in English writing. Since the module is designed for Grade 10 learners in a public secondary school context, its findings may help teachers, curriculum developers, and school administrators improve writing instruction and integrate skill-based materials into classroom practice.

The study contributes primarily to educational and institutional sustainability. It supports educational sustainability by addressing writing difficulties that affect learners’ academic performance, confidence, and ability to communicate effectively. It also supports institutional sustainability by providing school administrators, English teachers, and curriculum developers with evidence on the usefulness of structured modules as supplementary instructional materials. The study further contributes to socio-academic development because essay writing strengthens critical thinking, organization of ideas, clarity of expression, and academic communication. These competencies are useful not only in English classes but also across disciplines where learners are expected to explain concepts, defend ideas, and communicate knowledge effectively. Therefore, the study has practical relevance to multidisciplinary learning by showing how targeted writing intervention can support broader academic development.

2. Material and methods

2.1 Research Design

The study employed a quasi-experimental research design using a pre-test–post-test approach to determine the effectiveness of the module “Embracing Non-Fiction: Essay Made Easy” in improving students’ essay writing performance. It also used a descriptive component to gather students’ perceptions of the module in terms of clarity, usefulness, and engagement.

2.2 Locale of the Study

The study was conducted at Dologon National High School, a public secondary school located in Barangay Dologon, Maramag, Bukidnon, Philippines. The school operates under the Department of Education (DepEd) Division of Bukidnon, Region X – Northern Mindanao, and offers complete secondary education from Grades 7 to 12 under the K to 12 Basic Education Curriculum. For School Year 2025–2026, the school had an estimated enrollment of more than 1,627 students, including around 214 Grade 10 learners. The school was selected because of its accessibility to the researcher and the observed need for intervention in essay writing instruction, particularly in relation to students’ difficulties in organizing ideas, using appropriate grammar and vocabulary, and developing coherent arguments.

2.3 Respondents of the Study

The respondents were 30 Grade 10 Leeuwenhoek students of Dologon National High School for the academic year 2025–2026. They were selected as the target participants because they were the designated recipients of the researcher-developed module and were exposed to the same English curriculum and writing requirements. Their shared academic context made them appropriate participants for evaluating the effectiveness of the module in improving essay writing performance.

2.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

The study used complete enumeration sampling, where all members of the defined population were included as participants. Since the Grade 10 Leeuwenhoek section consisted of only 30 students, the researcher included the entire group to obtain comprehensive data from the target learners. This approach minimized sampling bias and allowed consistent analysis because all participants received the same instruction, completed the pre-test and post-test, and answered the perception survey.

2.5 Research Instrument

The study used three main research instruments: an essay writing test, the instructional module, and a perception survey questionnaire. The pre-test required students to write Essay #1 on the topic “My Hero,” while the post-test required them to write Essay #2 on “The Importance of Education.” Both writing outputs were assessed using a standardized rubric based on content, organization, grammar and mechanics, and coherence. The central instructional material was the researcher-developed module titled “Embracing Non-Fiction: Essay Made Easy.” It contained structured lessons, model essays, guided writing tasks, and practice activities designed to improve idea development, organization, and language use. The module was aligned with Grade 10 English learning competencies set by the Department of Education and was implemented for two weeks during regular English classes. The perception survey questionnaire was used to gather learners’ feedback on the module. It included demographic questions and 15 Likert-scale items grouped into three dimensions: clarity, usefulness, and engagement. The responses were used to assess students’ perceived effectiveness of the module and identify possible areas for improvement.

2.6 Data Gathering Procedure

The data gathering procedure was conducted in four stages. First, the pre-test was administered to determine the learners' baseline essay writing performance. Students wrote an essay based on a given prompt, and their outputs were evaluated using the standardized rubric. Second, the module was implemented for two weeks during English classes, where learners completed guided lessons, structured exercises, and essay writing activities. Third, a post-test was administered after the intervention using a comparable writing task, and the same rubric was used to ensure consistency in assessment. Finally, the perception survey was distributed and collected in class to gather students' feedback on the module.

2.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The study used both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques. Descriptive statistics, specifically mean and standard deviation, were used to summarize the results of the pre-test, post-test, and perception survey. A paired sample t-test was used to determine whether there was a statistically significant difference between students' essay writing performance before and after the module implementation. This test was appropriate because it compared the performance of the same group of students at two different points in time. Qualitative responses from the survey were coded, categorized, and analyzed for recurring themes and patterns to provide additional insight into students' experiences with the module.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

The study followed standard ethical guidelines to protect the rights and welfare of the participants. Before data collection, the researcher submitted a formal request to the school head of Dologon National High School and secured approval to conduct the study. Participants and their parents or guardians were given informed consent forms explaining the purpose, procedures, voluntary nature of participation, and confidentiality measures. Students were informed that they could withdraw at any time without consequence. All collected data were treated with strict confidentiality, used only for academic purposes, and reported without disclosing identifiable information.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Main Findings on Essay Writing Performance and Module Perception

3.1.1 Pre-Test Essay Writing Performance

Before the implementation of the module, most Grade 10 learners demonstrated moderate writing performance. The majority, or 56.7%, were classified under the Developing level, while 33.3% were at the Beginning level. Only 10% reached the Proficient level, and no learners were categorized under Needs Improvement or Poor. These results indicate that prior to the intervention, most learners had limited proficiency in essay writing. Their performance suggests difficulty in organizing ideas, developing content, and presenting essays with sufficient structure, clarity, and coherence. This supports the need for a focused instructional material that could guide learners in improving their academic or non-fiction essay writing skills.

3.1.2 Post-Test Essay Writing Performance

After using the module, learners showed clear improvement in essay writing performance. Most students, or 83.3%, reached the Proficient level, while 6.7% achieved the Outstanding level. Only 10% remained in the Developing level, and none were classified under Beginning or lower categories. These findings show that the module helped improve the learners' essay writing performance. The movement from Beginning and Developing levels toward Proficient and Outstanding levels suggests that the module supported students in producing essays with better structure, clarity, organization, grammar, mechanics, and coherence. This indicates that the instructional intervention was effective in addressing the learners' writing difficulties.

3.1.3 Learner Perceptions of the Module

The students' perception of the module was highly positive. Out of 300 total responses, 57.3% were marked Agree, 39.3% were marked Strongly Agree, and only 3.3% were Neutral. No responses were recorded under disagreement categories. These results suggest that learners found the module clear, useful, and engaging. The high percentage of Agree and Strongly Agree responses indicates that the instructional material was acceptable to the students and aligned with their learning needs. The positive feedback also supports the idea that learner-friendly and structured modules can encourage participation and confidence in essay writing.

3.1.4 Significant Difference in Essay Writing Performance

The paired sample t-test showed a statistically significant improvement in the learners' essay writing performance after using the module. The pre-test mean score was 15.07, while the post-test mean score increased to 18.33, showing a mean gain of 3.27 points. The statistical result, $t(29) = 7.53$, $p < 0.001$, indicates that the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores was significant. Since the p-value was lower than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there

was a significant difference in the essay writing performance of students before and after using the module “Embracing Non-Fiction: Essay Made Easy.” The result confirms that the module developed by the teacher-researcher had a positive and significant effect on the essay writing skills of Grade 10 Leeuwenhoek students.

3.2 Overall Discussion of Findings

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the module “Embracing Non-Fiction: Essay Made Easy” was effective in improving the essay writing performance of Grade 10 learners. The increase in post-test scores, the shift toward higher performance levels, and the statistically significant test result all point to meaningful learning gains after the intervention. The positive perception results further strengthen the effectiveness of the module. Since learners rated the module favorably in terms of clarity, usefulness, and engagement, the findings suggest that the instructional material was not only effective in improving performance but also acceptable and beneficial from the learners’ perspective. Thus, the module may serve as a practical supplementary tool for enhancing academic or non-fiction essay writing among Grade 10 learners.

4. Conclusion & Recommendations

The study concluded that the module “Embracing Non-Fiction: Essay Made Easy” effectively improved the essay writing performance of Grade 10 learners, as shown by the shift from lower pre-test performance levels to mostly proficient and outstanding post-test results. The significant increase in scores confirmed that the module had a positive effect on students’ writing skills, while the highly favorable learner perceptions indicated that the material was clear, useful, engaging, and supportive of essay writing development.

The study recommends integrating the module or similar writing modules into Grade 10 English instruction, with guided implementation to support learners who need additional assistance. School administrators are encouraged to promote instructional modules as supplementary materials and provide teacher training on modular instruction and assessment, while future researchers may conduct follow-up studies on long-term retention, other grade levels, different essay types, and deeper learner experiences through qualitative methods.

The study was limited to Grade 10 students from one selected secondary school during the academic year 2025–2026 and focused only on academic or non-fiction essay writing. It did not cover other writing genres such as creative or technical writing, and it examined only short-term learning gains during the module implementation period, not long-term retention or transfer of writing skills.

Compliance with ethical standards

This study complied with institutional ethical standards and was conducted after securing permission from the school head of Dologon National High School. Informed consent was obtained from the participants and their parents or guardians, participation was voluntary, and all data were treated with confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes. The authors acknowledge the support of the school and participants, declare no conflict of interest, and accept full responsibility for the authorship, originality, and copyright of the study.

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