The Impact of Blended Learning on Developing the students' Writing Skills and the Perception of Instructors and Students: Hawassa University in Focus

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Abstract : This study was conducted at Hawassa University (HwU) in the Southern Nation Nationalities Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS) of Ethiopia. The prime concern of this study was to examine the writing performances of experimental and control group students, perception of experimental group students, and subject instructors. The course was blended learning (BL). Blended learning is a hybrid of classroom and on-line learning. Participants were eighty students from the School of Computer Science. Forty students attended the BL delivery involved using Face-to-Face (FTF) and campus-based online instruction. All instructors, fifty, of School of Language and Communication Studies along with 10 FGD members participated in the study. The experimental group went to the computer lab two times a week for four months, March-June, 2012, using the local area network (LAN), and software (MOODLE) writing program. On the other hand, the control group, forty students, took the FTF writing course five times a week for four months in similar academic calendar. The three instruments, the attitude questionnaire, tests and FGD were designed to identify views of students, instructors, and FGD participants on BL. At the end of the study, students' final course scores were evaluated. Data were analyzed using independent samples t-tests. A statistically, significant difference was found between the FTF and BL (p<0.05). The analysis showed that the BL group was more successful than the conventional group. Besides, both instructors and students had positive attitude towards BL. The final section of the thesis showed the potential benefits and challenges, considering the pedagogical implications for the BL, and recommended possible avenues for further works.

Keywords : blended learning, computer attitudes, computer usefulness, computer liking, computer confidence, computer phobia

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