

## ***Effects of 5Es Constructivist Instructional Approach on Students' Performance in English Language Summary Writing in Makurdi, Benue State***

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigated the effects of 5Es constructivist instructional approach on secondary school students' achievement in summary writing. The study adopted the non-equivalent pre-test-post-test control group quasi experimental design. Sample size for the study consisted of 176 SSII students drawn through purposive sampling technique from four co-educational schools in Makurdi Local Government Area. The instrument for data collection was Summary Writing Achievement Test (SWAT) which was validated by three experts. The two research questions were answered using Mean and Standard deviation, while the two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using the Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA). The results showed that 5Es constructivist approach was effective in teaching summary writing. The results also indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students in summary writing. It was recommended that secondary school teachers should use this approach to teach summary writing in secondary schools as an alternative to the conventional approach.*

**Keywords:** Summary, Writing, 5Es, Constructivist, Approach,

### **Introduction**

The English Language is the official medium of communication in Nigeria. It is the language of education, commerce and industry, law, politics and administration. The language is considered very significant in education since education plays a predominant role in the development of the individual and the society. In recognition of the fundamental role English language plays in enhancing educational development in

Nigeria, the Federal Republic of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) made English a compulsory subject at the three levels of education. There is also a policy in Nigeria that students must have a credit pass in English Language before they can secure admission in any tertiary institution. This shows the importance of teaching English in Nigeria, as it gives students permanent literacy and equips them with the basic language skills for effective communication (FRN, 2013).

There are four basic language skills. These are listening, speaking, reading and writing. These skills are all interwoven for effective language use. This is why Ezekoli and Igubor (2016) argue that a deficiency in one of the skills contributes negatively to one's proficiency in another component of the language and eventually the whole language. The fourth and the last of the language skills is writing. A learner's ability in the first three skills culminates in his/her writing proficiency.

Writing is the act of making graphic symbols from oral communication. It is the ability to record thoughts and ideas by using socially acceptable graphic symbols. According to Ifeacho (2017), writing is the creation of meaningful texts such as stories, descriptions, invitations and informative pieces. The ability to put one's thoughts into writing is quite difficult and has to be taught and learnt consciously (Ochogwu & Ukume, 2016). The assumption that school children learn how to write by simply telling them to do so is very wrong. Writing is a higher order skill that needs proper organization, time and practice to achieve success in it.

The objectives for teaching writing skills in primary and secondary schools seem not to be achieved. Researchers have found that students are generally poor in written English (Asokhia, 2009; Ezekoli & Ezenadu, 2013; Ochogwu & Ukume, 2016; Ifeacho, 2017; Ochogwu, 2018). This is further supported by the West African Examination Council's (WAEC) Chief Examiner's report for 2017 and 2018 May/June examinations that students' achievement in English Language and in particular the summary writing was very poor. The report indicated that candidates' main weaknesses were the inclusion of irrelevant and unnecessary details in their answers. The report went further to state that summary writing is a big problem because many of the candidates engage in wholesome lifting of points from the passages thereby losing valuable marks.

In addition, the Chief Examiner's report for May/June (2019) WAEC Examination stated that the summary passage and the questions that followed were very easy to understand. Yet, the achievement of the candidates was very poor. The major weaknesses were the inclusion of irrelevant details and inability to paraphrase. The occurrence of similar mistakes in candidates' summary writing may be traced to insufficient exposure to summary writing skill. Summary writing is an aspect of the English Language (paper I) that takes 30 marks out of 100% in the examination. This implies that the skill occupies a prominent place in the Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE). It is, therefore, unfortunate to note that summary writing is an aspect of the language where students perform dismally.

Summary writing is the act of shortening a passage by writing only the salient points. It is described as bringing out the main ideas in a piece of writing. Ekawat (2010) defines summary writing as a restatement of the important ideas of a text without copying or distorting the original information. Ikonta and Ugbede (2012) also argue that summary writing is an intelligent selection and restating of thoughts, ideas and concepts from an original passage in a way that the important ideas and relevant details are retained and the original length is reduced considerably. This means summary is condensed version of an original text. The summary writer must be able to distinguish between key points and details or examples. It implies that the writer must comprehend the original text well enough so as to pick out the most important ideas without repeating or giving examples. The writer must also be able to use the language well enough to be able to paraphrase instead of using the author's words verbatim.

Summary writing is an exercise in which one is required to reproduce what one has decoded in few of one's own words. It is an integrative task that involves the interplay of two abilities, that is, the ability to understand the main ideas and rhetorical organization of a text, and the ability to compose a succinct and coherent restatement of the author's gist (Kim, 2001). This means summary writing requires advanced comprehension of the passage and the skill to paraphrase too (Ikonta & Maduekwe, 2012). Many reasons have been advanced for students' inability to summarize. The most recurring reason has been that of poor instructional approach. This is confirmed by the West African Examinations Council's (WAEC) Chief Examiner's Report (2017) that listed poor knowledge of the rules of summary writing, inability to paraphrase, inability to construct good sentences and poor instructional approach as causes of students' poor achievement in summary writing.

In teaching summary writing, many teachers adopt the conventional approach where students are asked to read, underline the main ideas in a given passage and may not be allowed to interact with their peers before writing what they have underlined. Aimunmondium (2009) criticizes this approach as one that does not give the expected result in the classroom. A good teaching approach encourages students to synthesize ideas that can be grouped together and expressed in their own words. Considering the importance of summary writing skill to students' achievement in English Language, efforts should be made towards helping students to attain reasonable proficiency in it. This is why there should be a paradigm shift from the ineffective approach of teaching to an approach that could enhance interaction and comprehension in learning. One of such approaches is the 5Es constructivist approach.

Constructivism explains how new knowledge is constructed by human beings through the use of existing knowledge. The constructivist believes that learners actively construct knowledge by interrogating new information and experiences into what they have previously come to understand, revising and reinterpreting old knowledge in order to reconcile it with the new (Obianuju, 2017). All of these take place within the context of

social interaction and agreement (Okoyefi, 2015). Constructivist pedagogy encourages learners' active participation for teaching/learning to be effective.

The 5Es learning approach is a constructivist instructional approach which encourages students' participation in the learning process. This approach was developed by Bybee et al. (2006). The 5Es stand for Engage/Enter, Explore, Explain, Elaborate and Evaluate which are in phases. The approach of the 5Es phases is an instructional model in which learners build or construct new ideas on old ones (Ibrahim, 2015). The effectiveness of the 5Es on students' performance in different school subjects has been established in Reading (Jubran, 2016); Biology (Tambaya, Tanimowo & Bichi, 2017); Essay Writing (Obianuju, 2017); and Physics (Ellah & Achor, 2018).

The phase of "Engage/Enter" is when students' attention is focused on the topic. This is done by the teacher asking questions or explaining a scenario or a demonstration of an event or showing a picture or making a discussion in order to arouse students' interest in the task at hand. The aroused interest leads students to the explore phase. The "Explore" phase is where students carry out activities which consist of data gathering, observation, guessing and testing them to make hypothesis (Wilder & Shuttleworth, 2005). In this phase, students try to solve a given problem by discussing and experimenting in groups. As they interact in their groups, they verbalize their comprehension or demonstrate new skills. They have time to think and generate their own ideas.

The third phase is "Explain." At this phase, a representative in each group explains the results of their work and allows the rest of the class to discuss their findings. The teacher is actively involved at this phase so as to correct misconceptions and provide missing links. The teacher may find it necessary to give formal definitions and scientific explanations if there is the need. The "Elaborate" phase is when students practice their new knowledge, suggest solutions or create new solutions to problems and make decisions or introduce logical implications. Students have the opportunity to use the new learned concept in different situations or to repeat several times the applications of the learned item so as to store in the long-term memory. Finally, the "Evaluate" phase is when the teacher determines if the learner has attained good understanding of the concept. In this phase, assessment is carried out to determine students' comprehension. Students may answer oral questions, summarize what has been learned, and fill out empty maps, engage in cloze exercise (fill blank spaces) and other forms of evaluation.

The 5Es constructivist approach could be an effective strategy for teaching summary writing. This is because summary writing involves stages of critical and cognitive activities that could help learners convey an authors' idea succinctly without changing the central gist. The following steps/activities in a summary class could be achieved through the 5Es approach:

- Students **engage** the reading text as they read and reflect on the topic in groups.
- Students **explore** the passage to identify main ideas by guessing, discussing and suggesting what the author is saying so as to arrive at a solution.

- Students of the different groups **explain** the various suggestions of what the main ideas of the paragraphs/passage could be through their representatives. Teacher notes their answers and corrects where it is necessary.
- Students **elaborate** by re-casting the main ideas of the paragraphs/passage that have been accepted and then eliminate examples, unnecessary words and organize their statements in a coherent manner.
- Finally, teacher **evaluates** students' submission by assessing their answers or summary of the entire passage.

The 5Es constructivist approach emphasizes that knowledge is not a thing that can be given by the teacher in the classroom. Knowledge is rather constructed through active mental process where learners are creators and builders of knowledge and meaning (Sharma & Poonam, 2016). The approach offers flexibility, creativity and motivation for both teachers and students. Uwalaka and Offorma (2015) found that 5Es fosters critical thinking and creates motivated and independent learners. In a similar vein, Achor (2007) reported that the learning style of the constructivist learners is cognitively independent of the teacher, since the learner is self-driven, self-motivating and self-inquisitive.

Gender has become a contemporary focus for language researchers because of the influence it exerts on language learning and performance. Gender, according to Carr and Thompson (2014), is a socio-cultural construct of ascribing characters and roles to sex such as male and female. The roles ascribed to different sexes may agree in some societies but may not in others, which could affect learning outcomes. Egbe (2015) found that gender had no significant effect on students' interest and achievement in English Language. However, Ifeicho (2017) established that male students performed better than their female counterparts in essay writing. Other researchers have established significant differences in the achievement of male and female students in English Language (Akabogu & Ajiwoju 2015; Ukume, Agbum & Udu, 2018). Based on these disparities in findings, it seems the exact effect of gender on language is still not clear. There is, therefore, the need for the present study to find out the effect of 5Es constructivist instructional approach and gender on students' performance in summary writing.

### **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose of the study was to determine the effect of 5Es constructivist instructional approach on senior secondary school students' achievement in summary writing. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. verify the mean effect of students taught summary writing using the 5Es constructivist instructional approach and those taught using the conventional approach.
2. determine the mean effect of gender on the performance of students taught using the 5Es constructivist instructional approach in summary writing.

## Research questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the mean performance scores of students taught summary writing using the 5Es constructivist instructional approach and those taught using the conventional approach?
2. What are the performance scores of male and female students taught using the 5Es constructivist instructional approach in summary writing?

## Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance:

**Ho1:** There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught summary writing using the 5Es constructivist instructional approach and those taught using the conventional method.

**Ho2:** There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught using the 5Es constructivist approach in summary writing.

## Methodology

The study adopted a pre-test, post-test non randomized quasi-experimental design. The study was conducted in Education Zone B of Benue State. The population of the study comprised 1,659 Senior Secondary Two (SS2) students in the zone. The sample for this study consists 176 students (79 males and 97 females) drawn from four intact classes in four co-educational schools in Makurdi Local Government area of Benue State using purposive sampling technique.

The instrument for data collection was English Language Summary Writing Achievement Test (ELSWAT). The ELSWAT had two sections, A and B. Section A contained students' bio-data to identify students' gender while section B consisted of a Summary Writing passage. Students were instructed to read the passage and answer questions on it. The pre-test and post-test passages and questions were the same except that the post test questions were reshuffled. The pre-test was administered before the treatment to get the initial baseline data in summary writing. After the pre-test, the research assistants collected the scripts immediately and handed them over to the researchers who marked and recorded the scores for further use during analysis.

The treatment lasted for four weeks; the research assistants started the summary writing instruction using the lesson plans already prepared by the researchers. The specific objectives in the two sets of lesson plans were the same; however, one set of the lesson plan adopted the 5Es constructivist instructional approach, the other adopted the conventional approach. Experimental group was exposed to the treatment using 5Es constructivist instructional approach. After the treatment for the two groups, the post-test was administered immediately after the treatment and this was to determine the effect of 5Es constructivist instructional approach on students' achievements in summary writing. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

## Presentation of results

The results were presented in line with the research questions and hypotheses that guided the study.

**Research Question one:** What are the mean achievement scores of students taught summary writing using the 5Es constructivist instructional approach and those taught using the conventional approach?

**Table 1:** Mean and Standard Deviations of students taught summary writing using the 5Es constructivist instructional approach and those taught using the conventional approach

Treatment	Pre-test			Post-test		
	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	Mean Gain Score
5Es approach	85	4.94	2.26	19.10	3.88	14.16
Conventional approach	91	4.12	2.39	6.29	3.05	2.17

Table 1 shows that the students who were taught summary writing using the 5Es constructivist instructional approach had a pre-test mean of = 4.94 (SD = 2.26) and a post-test mean of 19.10 (SD = 3.88). Those taught using the conventional approach had a pre-test mean of 4.12 (SD = 2.39) and a post-test mean of 6.29 (SD = 3.05). The mean gain scores of 14.16 and 2.17 for the two groups respectively indicated that the students who were taught using the 5Es had higher post-test mean achievement score than those taught using the conventional approach. Post-test standard deviations of 3.88 and 3.05 for the two groups of students respectively indicated that the variation in the individual scores of the students taught using the 5Es is higher than those taught using the conventional approach. This shows a wider spread of the scores of students taught summary writing using the 5Es.

**Ho1:** There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught summary writing using the 5Es constructivist instructional approach and those taught with the conventional approach.

**Table 2:** Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) of the effect of treatment on students' achievement in summary writing

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Approach	7439.353 <sup>a</sup>	4	1859.838	168.933	.000	.798
Intercept	4774.308	1	4774.308	433.660	.000	.717
Pre-test	91.293	1	91.293	8.292	.004	.046
Treatment	6839.011	1	6839.011	621.201	.000	.784
Gender	21.733	1	21.733	1.974	.162	.011
Treatment * Gender	131.023	1	131.023	11.901	.001	.065
Error	1882.596	171	11.009			
Total	36747.000	176				
Corrected Total	9321.949	175				

a. R Squared = .798.

Table 2 shows that the 5Es approach had a significant effect on students' achievement in summary writing [ $F(1,171) = 621.201, p = .000$ ]. This implies that the null hypothesis was rejected; meaning that there is a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of students taught summary writing using the 5Es constructivist instructional approach and those taught with the conventional approach, in favour of students taught using the 5Es instructional approach. Besides, the partial Eta Squared value (effect size) of 0.784 shows that the 5Es had high effect on the achievement of students in summary writing.

**Research Question Two:** What are the mean performance scores of male and female students taught using the 5Es constructivist instructional approach in summary writing?

**Table 3:** Mean and Standard Deviations of male and female students in summary writing

Gender	Pre-test			Post-test		Mean Gain Score
	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	$\bar{x}$	SD	
Male	79	4.49	2.38	11.98	8.03	7.49
Female	97	4.53	2.36	12.88	6.65	8.35

Table 3 shows that male students had a pre-test mean score of 4.49 (SD = 2.38) and post-test mean score of 11.98 (SD = 8.03), while female students had a pre-test mean score of 4.53 (SD = 2.36) and post-test mean score of 12.88 (SD = 6.65). The mean gain scores of 7.49 and 8.35 for the male and female students respectively indicated that the female students had higher post-test mean performance score. The Post-test standard deviations of 8.03 and 6.65 for the male and female students respectively indicated that the variation



in the individual performance scores of the male students is higher than that of the female students.

**Ho2:** There is no significant difference in the mean performance scores of male and female students taught using the 5Es constructivist instructional approach in summary writing.

Table 2 reveals that gender had no significant influence on students' achievement in summary writing [ $F(1, 171) = 1.974, p = .162$ ]. Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected; meaning that there is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of male and female students taught using the 5Es constructivist instructional approach in summary writing.

### **Discussion of the findings**

The result of the study indicated that students who were taught summary writing using the 5Es constructivist instructional approach obtained a higher post-test mean performance score than those taught summary writing using the conventional approach. The differences in performance of students in the two groups might be as a result of the type of instructions presented to them. In the 5Es constructivist approach, all learners had equal chances of learning and constructing new knowledge. There was also more interactive exchange of information than just gaining information. The 5Es constructivist approach created opportunities for a deeper understanding for students during the learning process. The activities involved in the approach allowed the students to collaborate and discuss the contents of the text that provided opportunities for students to express themselves freely while teachers act as facilitators.

The finding of this study agrees with that of Uwalaka and Offorma (2015), Jubran (2016), Obianuju (2017), Ifeacho (2017) and Ella and Achor (2018) on effectiveness of the 5Es constructivist instructional approach in teaching school subjects. For instance, Ifeacho (2017) carried out a research on the effect of the 5Es constructivist instructional approach on students' achievement and interest in essay writing. The author revealed that the 5Es constructivist instructional approach led to better performance of students in essay writing than the conventional approach. The significantly enhanced academic performance recorded by students who were taught summary writing with the 5Es constructivist instructional approach could be attributed to the fact that the approach encourages social communication skills as well as collaboration and exchange of ideas. Furthermore, students were allowed to work primarily in groups thereby giving room for active participation in the learning process.

The finding of this study on the performance of male and female students taught summary writing with the 5Es constructivist instructional approach showed that female students achieved slightly higher than their male counterparts, but this was not found to be statistically significant, which implies that both male and female students were at par in their performance in summary writing. The finding of this study disagrees with Ifeacho

(2017) who established that male students performed better than their female counterparts in Essay writing. It also disagrees with the results of Akabogu and Ajiwoju (2015) and Ukume, Agbum and Udu (2018) who also found that male students significantly performed better than their female counterparts in English vocabulary and Essay writing respectively.

However, the result of this study is in agreement with the findings of Egbe (2015) who reported that there was no significant difference in the achievement of male and female students in reading comprehension. The lack of significant difference in the performance of male and female students in the current study may be an indication that this approach of teaching summary writing is not gender prejudiced. Male and female students can always perform well in summary writing class when the appropriate approach is used in teaching them.

### **Conclusion**

The study has established that using the 5Es approach to teach summary writing is effective. The different stages of the 5Es approach actually acted as effective building blocks of social and cognitive interactions that eased learner's difficulties in summary writing. The study has therefore proven that there is a link between 5Es teaching and learning approach and effective summary writing. The study also proved that the 5Es instructional approach is beneficial to both genders.

### **Recommendations**

The study recommended that:

1. English language teachers should use the 5Es teaching and learning approach in summary writing in their classes.
2. In addition, the approach could be used in teaching other aspects of English language like reading comprehension, writing composition and vocabulary development.

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