Impact of Learning Motivation on University Students’ English Writing Progress by Using MyAccess

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Abstracts

MyAccess is one of the most popular automated essay scoring systems. It is both a writing tool and an essay grader. Students can choose among various essay topics, such as effects of technology, job skills necessary for success, society’s biggest problem, and top vacation place, write as many drafts as they wish, and receive immediate feedback.

The study data comes from the Foreign Language Centers of two universities located in the center of Taiwan. 54 students coming from different departments of 15 universities followed a program fully funded by the Ministry of Education during the summer of 2011. The program lasted four consecutive weeks, with the total curricular time adding up to be 140 hours. During the evening self-study sessions, the students first undertook on-line writing practice individually and then peer-editing, led by teaching assistants.

This research compares students’ motivation with their scores during the one-month training in order to measure the impact of motivation on their progress in writing. Three study cases are presented in more detail: a student with high motivation, with scores progressing significantly; a student with relatively good motivation, but who fails to progress during the training; and a student with lower motivation who regresses during the training.

Keywords: English as a second language; motivation; MyAccess; writing skills.
1. Introduction

In 2011, Taiwan’s Ministry of Education (MOE) funded various intensive English programs (IEPs) aimed at helping students to enhance their academic competitiveness. The present study analyzes the case of 54 students who joined two programs offered by two universities (26 in university 1 and 28 in university 2) in Taichung. The MOE fully funded accommodation, fees of tuition, and meals during the one-month program from August 1st to August 26th, 2011. The total curricular time was 140 hours. Students were instructed by native-English-speaking instructors helped by teaching assistants. Students also used an automated essay scoring (AES) system, My Access, during the training. During the first week, they were invited to submit essays on four pre-selected prompts: (1) Effects of Technology, (2) Job Skills necessary for Success, (3) Society’s Biggest Problem, and (4) Top Vacation Place. Students were supposed to submit all their essays by the end of the program. No limit was fixed to the number of essays students could submit. In the end, the average of drafts submitted was 9.6 (the minimum being 4 and the maximum 32).

The study proposes to concentrate on the impact of students motivation and satisfaction about their progress in writing. Students’ motivation is measured by data coming from questionnaires answered by them every week during the training. Students’ progress is measured by data coming from the scores they received every week after passing standardized English proficiency tests and by the resulting level according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR, 2001). Students were required to have passed level B1 before joining the program. The goal of the IEPs was to help students reach a CEFR B2 level of workplace English skills as measured by Business English Testing Service of Cambridge ESOL (Bulats). This research will first present an overview of the impact of motivation of students’ progress in writing and then analyze in detail three case studies.

Literature review

2.1. Literature related to English writing and MyAccess

Various companies provide nowadays Automated Essay Scoring (AES), that is, computer technology able to grade the written prose (Shermis and Burstein, 2003). Among the most successful AES are Project Essay Grader (PEG), Criterion, MyAccess, and Bayesian Essay Test Scoring System (BETSY) (Rudner and Liang, 2002). MyAccess is the instructional application of IntelliMetric developed by Vantage Learning. The American company founded in 1990 by Peter Murphy was the first to create artificial intelligence-based automated essay scoring, blending artificial intelligence (AI), natural language processing (NLP), and statistical technologies.
Various studies show that *MyAccess* significantly improves student academic achievement (Yang, 2004; Yeh and Yu, 2004a; Yeh and Yu, 2004b; Wang, 2005; Huang, 2006). Elliot (2001) claims that the program has a 99 percent reliability rate. However, some studies highlight inadequacy of scores provided by *MyAccess* (Cheng, 2006; Grimes and Warhauer, 2006; Yang, 2004). One of the flaws of the system would be to favor quantity over quality: long essay tend to obtain a higher score (Cheng, 2006; Herrington, 2011). Ware and Warschauer (2005) notably demonstrate that online automated scoring systems tend to be static models which might discourage creative writing. Creative essays often receive a low score and creative students might feel discouraged and frustrated. Therefore, many scholars insist on the fact that computer-assisted learning programs should be a complement to classroom instruction (Burtstein and Marcu, 2003; Yang, 2004; Oladejo, 2005).

Stern and Solomon (2006) confirmed the study by Connors and Lunsford (1988) which found that spelling errors were the most common form of mark on a paper. They showed that most comments were technical corrections (spelling, grammar, word choice, and missing words); comments addressing paper organization and quality of the ideas contained in it (support/evidence for claims, paper structure/organization, voice, and creativity) were absent. It should be noted that *MyAccess* focuses much more on technical corrections than on organization. According to Cheng (2006), one Taiwanese student who used *MyAccess* was critical of the fact that he was given a high score even though he did not write a conclusion. Some students said that the correction was too “kind” and that they did not feel they deserved a so high score for their drafts.

Students’ motivation is also influenced by teachers’ mastery of the technology. When the instructor appears to be ill at ease with the scoring engine, it affects students’ learning (Caroll et al., 2001). The role of the instructor is to guide students and to provide post-grading consultation to students (Cheng, 2006). In fact, Yang (2004) showed that when the instructor was able to provide assistance and guidance to students, their motivation was significantly higher. Using *MyAccess* can increase teachers’ motivation to teach writing courses in the sense that this type of course is time-consuming and exhausting. Writing classes are very big and improving students’ writing skill involves correcting multiple drafts (Hyland, 2003; Kroll, 2003). Scoring engines can at least correct some of students’ mistakes and ease teachers’ working load; instructors could then focus on logic and organizational aspects more than on vocabulary and grammar. Elliot and Mikulas (2004) showed that *MyAccess* helps students to make better revisions. Montoneri et al. (2012) applied data envelopment analysis (DEA), a robust and reliable quantitative method, to calculate the relative learning efficiency in English writing of university students who completed a one month training using *MyAccess* during the summer of 2011.
3. Methodology

The study uses SPSS to run the data collected during the summer of 2011 in the Foreign Language Centers of two universities located in the center of Taiwan.

3.1. Data source

The two Foreign Language Centers were in charge of planning and offering university-level foreign courses for students attending various universities in the center of Taiwan. The characteristics of the data source and research object are as follows:

1. The summer intensive English program was from August 1st, 2011 to August 26th, 2011.
2. 54 students coming from different departments of 15 universities; 26 followed the training offered by University 1 and 28 by University 2.
3. To be eligible for applying for this intensive English program, university students nationwide must meet requirements of: (a) sophomore or above, (b) non-English major, and (c) English proficiency level of CEFR B1 or above.
4. Students passed three mock tests (one at the end of week 1, one at the end of week 2, and one at the end of week 3).
5. Students passed the real test as the post-test at the end of week 4.
6. All the tests had 110 questions.

3.2. Selected indicators

During the training, students passed exams every week and were asked to answer questionnaires. This study uses some of the data collected to analyze if students’ determination and satisfaction have a significant impact on their scores and CEFR level. Moreover, the indicators are selected only if they are significantly correlated.

1. Student ranking. It represents the rank of students’ average total final scores in their class in academic year 2010, that is, before joining the program: 1. within the top five, 2. front level, 3. before and near middle level, 4. middle level, 5. after and near middle level, 6. low level.
2. Student determination to participate. It represents the level of determination of full participation in the English intensive course at the beginning of the training: 1. extremely low, 2. low, 3. high, 4. extremely high.
3. CEFR level at the end at the start of the program. CEFR level is required to be B1 before joining.
4. The level of confidence to advance your English proficiency one level within a month: 1. extremely low, 2. low, 3. high, 4. extremely high.
5. CEFR level at the end at the end of the program. This indicator show if students have progressed or not to a higher level, that is, at least from B1 to B2 or C1.
6. Satisfaction with the course.
7. Posttest scores (accurate answers / 110 questions). It represents students’ scores at the end of the four weeks program.

3.3. Correlations

We use SPSS to find out if there are significant correlations and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to further investigate significant differences.

3.3.1. Gender

ANOVA table (Table 1) indicates there are no statistically significant differences between male and female for any of the following factors: certificate level at the start of the program, certificate level at the end of the program, first simulated test results, second simulated test results, third simulated test results, and posttest scores.

Table 1. Gender differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Certificate level at the start of the program</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.333</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.333</td>
<td>2.667</td>
<td>.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>6.500</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>.125</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6.833</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate level at the end of the program</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.024</td>
<td>.878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>20.306</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>.390</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20.315</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First simulated test results (accurate answers / 110 questions)</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>20.454</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.454</td>
<td>.183</td>
<td>.671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>5818.583</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>111.896</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5839.037</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second simulated test results (accurate answers / 110 questions)</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1.333</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.333</td>
<td>.022</td>
<td>.882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>3140.667</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>60.397</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Generally speaking, there is no gender bias in this study and gender plays no role in student’s test scores and their perception of the course. However, Table 2 indicates statistically significant difference between student ranking and gender differences (0.022).

Table 2. Gender differences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determined to Participate</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.037</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>.742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>17.611</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>.339</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17.648</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Ranking</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>8.333</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.333</td>
<td>5.579</td>
<td>.022</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>77.667</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1.494</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86.000</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with course</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>.869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>17.472</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>.336</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17.481</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with the final course result</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.333</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.333</td>
<td>.754</td>
<td>.389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>23.000</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>.442</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23.333</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows that the difference between males and female students in their ranking is due to female students’ significantly higher mean than male students. This indicates that female students
ranked significantly higher than male students in this study.

Table 3. Gender and ranking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Mean</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>1.128</td>
<td>.188</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>4.99</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.396</td>
<td>.329</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>1.274</td>
<td>.173</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>4.68</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Haahr (2005) notably analyzed gender differences in the acquisition of basic skills and on the performance of different education systems in providing gender equality. Females achieved significantly higher average scores in reading than males in all the 27 OECD countries studied. Males performed somewhat better in some countries in science and mathematics. The findings of this study confirm the previous study (Haahr, 2005) with regard to gender differences and average score.

3.3.2. Training location

Table 4 shows that there is no significant difference between the two training locations in student confidence in advancing their English ability (3.08 and 3.11). This indicates that the groups were originally homogenous and there are no antecedent variables. Because students are from two different universities, it is possible that their English level or their confidence in learning English be different. Table 4 indicates that students were originally homogenous.

Table 4. Training location and confidence in advancement during the course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Groups</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.012</td>
<td>.044</td>
<td>.835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>14.525</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>.279</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14.537</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>.279</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Davis’ (1983) conventions for interpreting correlation associations, .70–1.0 = very strong association, .50–.69 = substantial association, .30–.49 = moderate association, .10–.29 = low association and .01–.09 = negligible association.

Table 5 indicates that there is a positive and moderate correlation between the determination to participate in the training and confidence in advancement during the courses.
Table 5. Determination to participate and confidence in advancement during the course

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Determined to Participate</th>
<th>Advance Confidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determined to Participate</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation 1.000</td>
<td>.526**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>54.000</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 shows that there are significant differences between the two training locations and student’s satisfaction. However, there are no significant differences between the locations for test scores and certificates. Students in university 2 are more satisfied with courses, teaching, administrative staff, TA counseling, and overall satisfaction. But, students in university 1 are more satisfied with self satisfaction, with improvement, and about final course result.

If they wish to offer the training again, both universities will have to reflect on these results. Probably for psychological reasons, such as atmosphere during the training, personal relationship with the teachers, teaching assistants, and staff, students seem to be more satisfied with university 2, which means that university 1 should improve communication skill. However university 2 should improve teaching material, content, and teaching skill as satisfaction with the final course result is lower.

Table 6. Training location and satisfaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Ranking</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.020</td>
<td>.888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>85.967</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1.653</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>86.000</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with course</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>8.149</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.149</td>
<td>45.406</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>9.332</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>.179</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>17.481</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with Teaching</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>20.972</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20.972</td>
<td>125.701</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>8.676</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>.167</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29.648</td>
<td>53</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction with</td>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>12.393</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.393</td>
<td>28.252</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Within Groups    Total
22.810     52 .439
35.204     53

SATISFACTION WITH TA COUNSELING

Within Groups    Total
2.804     52 .260
13.511     53
16.315

TOTAL SATISFACTION

Within Groups    Total
9.036     52 .161
8.390     53
17.426

SELF SATISFACTION WITH THE IMPROVEMENT

Within Groups    Total
2.476     52 .401
20.857     53
23.333

SATISFACTION WITH THE FINAL COURSE RESULT

Within Groups    Total
2.770     52 .395
20.563     53
23.333

CERTIFICATE LEVEL AT THE START OF THE PROGRAM

Within Groups    Total
.015     52 .131
6.819     53
6.833

CERTIFICATE LEVEL AT THE END OF THE PROGRAM

Within Groups    Total
.254     52 .386
20.060     53
20.315

Findings and Discussions

The empirical study illustrates the fact that a relatively small number of students progressed significantly during the training.

4.1. Overview

How many students progressed? How many regressed? It appears that only 18 students on 54 obtained a higher CEF certificate level at the end of the program. Seven of these students answered at the end that they were very satisfied (5/5) and 11 that they were satisfied (4/5). Nine of these students who progressed were males and 9 were females. Surprisingly, only 4 of these students wrote
a number of drafts higher than the average of 9.6, which would mean that writing many drafts is not necessarily synonym with progress. Obviously, quality of the drafts is more important than quantity. Ten of the students who progressed were trained at university 1 and 8 at university 2.

Five students regressed and had a lower certificate level at the end of the training, 2 trained at university 1 and 3 at university 2. As for the other students, that is, the majority (31), they had the same certificate level at the beginning and at the end of the program.

4.2. Study cases

**Study case 1:** Student with high motivation, with scores progressing significantly

Student 20 came from university 2 and was trained at the foreign language center of university 1. She was a female junior student who had a quite high motivation at the beginning of the program (level of determination of full participation in the English intensive course: high; level of confidence to advance your English proficiency one level within a month: high). She wrote a higher number of drafts than the average (9.6): 14, including 3 on Effects of Technology, 5 on Job Skills necessary for Success, 3 on Society’s Biggest Problem, and 3 on Top Vacation Place. Her certificate level was B1 at the beginning and B2 at the end of the training, as her scores progressed from 46/100 to 57/100. Student 20 end self-satisfaction was very high (superior to 90%). She was also very satisfied with the course content (4/5).

However, typically, student 20 seemed to be very unhappy about the personnel as she gave a 5, that is, “extremely low”, to the teaching, staff, and TA counseling. It appears that the case of this student is very common: many students had a quite high motivation, were satisfied with their progress in writing, obtained higher scores, wrote many drafts, but were very unsatisfied of all the people involved in the training. The quality of the training and the competence of the personnel are not involved, but there was obviously a problem of atmosphere and communication during the one month program.

**Study case 2:** Student with relatively good motivation, but who fails to progress during the training

Student 10 also came from university 2 and was trained at the foreign language center of university 1. She was a female senior student who had a good motivation at the beginning of the training (level of determination of full participation in the English intensive course: very high; level of confidence to advance your English proficiency one level within a month: high). However, her level remained B1 at the end and her scores went down from 57/100 to 48/100. She relatively regressed. Probably one of the reasons is because she wrote only 5 drafts in one month: 2 on Effects of Technology, 1 on Job Skills necessary for Success, 1 on Society’s Biggest Problem, and 1 on Top Vacation Place.
That is, less than the average of 9.6.

Her satisfaction concerning the training, course content, teaching, TA counseling, administrative staff, satisfaction with overall activities, and even self-evaluation were very low at the end of the program. Student 10 was very clearly disappointed. Her score for the second week exam was significantly lower: 48/100. It is quite disturbing that students who received so much support from teachers, assistants, staff, and who had access for free to a very expensive online scoring engine did not seem to appreciate it and lost motivation in a matter of days.

**Study case 3:** Student with lower determination, regressing during the training

Student 44 had a relatively lower determination at the beginning of the program (3; more students have 4). She was a senior female student from university 1. She gave a lower evaluation of the course content (3.14/5) and of the administrative management (3.5/5). She seemed to be a little more satisfied of the teaching by the teachers during the training (4/5). Student 44 wrote a low number of drafts during the one-month program: only four, the minimum, just one draft per prompt. It shows on her scores: she obtained only 38/100 at the end of the first week, then 30/100, 38/100, and finally 31/100 at the end of the last week.

As a result, her CEFR level went down from B1 to A2. Her end self satisfaction was 3/5, that is, in the group 50-69%. As a comparison, 38 students on 54 had an end self satisfaction of 2/5, that is, 70-89%, and only three students have 3/5. She expected, according to the questionnaire she filled, to remain a senior students after the program, that is, not to become a graduate student. This student’s determination was not particularly low at the beginning. It appears she got disappointed with the courses and the way the training was managed. She lost motivation and did not take advantage of using *MyAccess* to make progress in writing (only four students wrote 4 drafts; the average is 9.6).

**Conclusion**

The paper uses SPSS to measure the impact of students’ motivation and satisfaction on their progress in writing. Correlations and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) show that there are no statistically significant differences between male and female for any of the following factors: certificate level at the start of the program, certificate level at the end of the program, first simulated test results, second simulated test results, third simulated test results, and posttest scores. Moreover, there is no gender bias in this study and gender plays no role in student’s test scores and their perception of the course. There is no significant difference between the two training locations in student confidence in advancing their English ability, indicating that the groups were originally homogenous. There are significant differences between the two training locations and student’s satisfaction. However, there are no significant differences between the locations for test scores and certificates.
Relatively few students took advantage of using MyAccess during the 1 month program to make progress; the average of drafts written is 9.6 (between 4 and 32). The empirical study illustrates the fact that only 18 students progressed significantly during the training, 5 regressed and 31, the majority, did not improve in scores and certificate level. Actually, even the students who progressed wrote a quite small number of drafts.

Almost all the students were satisfied with course content, but it seems that students were less satisfied with teaching, with TA counseling, and administrative staff in university 1; however, there were more satisfied with their progress at the end of the program. Training was paid by MOE, but still students decided to apply during the summer vacation and most of them had high determination. Probably the program was too short to make significant progress in writing. That is why a relatively low number of students were able to move on from B1 level to B2 or higher. The two universities and the MOE should reflect on the fact that 36 students on 54 did not progress or even regressed after so much money and effort were spent to implement this training.

**Future directions**

The training was fully paid by MOE, but if results are disappointing, the ministry will probably have to rethink its policy. The two universities, the two foreign language centers, and the personnel involved should reflect on these results and find ways to improve the training. More studies should analyze in detail the use of automated scoring engines in Taiwan, the impact of motivation and determination on writing progress, and the influence of communication skill.

**References**


