

THE EFFECTS OF CONCEPT MAPPING ON MATRICULATION STUDENTS' ESSAY WRITING PERFORMANCE

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Abstract

This study investigated the effectiveness of the concept mapping technique on the factual essay writing performance of fifty Malaysian University English Test (MUET) candidates in a matriculation centre in Perak, Malaysia. MUET is a national English Language examination compulsory for all matriculating and diploma students who wish to enrol in first degree programmes in Malaysian universities. This paper examined the participants' perception on the effectiveness of this concept mapping technique used as a tool to enhance their writing organisational skills in factual essays. Writing is one of the four language components being tested in this test. To determine the effectiveness of the tool, a pre- and a post-test on a test item with similar features and rubrics were conducted prior to and after the lessons respectively. In addition, a 20-item survey questionnaire with 8-point scale adapted from Puteri Zarina (2004; 2014) was administered in this study to identify the students' perception in the effectiveness of the tool in their learning process. The test results showed that students who were taught using the concept maps performed better in the construction of topic sentences than those in the control group who were taught using the listing technique as a form of advance organiser. The survey results also showed that the students generally agreed that the use of concept map as an advance organiser in the lessons had indeed helped them in the construction of clear topic sentences in their factual essays. The findings suggested that more studies could be conducted on the effectiveness of concept maps in helping students achieve better performance in other language skills.

Keywords: concept map, advance organiser, MUET essay, topic sentences, matriculation