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An Evaluation of Educational Values of YouTube Videos for Academic Writing

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Abstract

The aim is to assess the impact of YouTube videos about academic writing and its skills on the writing performance of students. Theoretical perspectives from constructivism and associated learning models are used to inform the purpose of the research. The contextual setting is matriculation students awaiting admission to higher institutions. The population is 40 students belonging to a class aimed at assisting disadvantaged students in their academic writing in Scottsville, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The students are broken into two groups – control/traditional teaching and the treatment/YouTube facilitated groups. Consequently, a dominant qualitative approach is adopted using focus group discussion, interviews and tests to identify underlying patterns, methods and approaches to best fit academic writing guides and videos to improve user experiences of the media for academic writing. The fundamental results show that positive characterisations of user experiences include innovation, surprise, playfulness and stimulation whereas the narratives that are not satisfying are categorised as dissatisfaction, frustration, dissolution, disappointment, anger, confusion and irritation. Ultimately, the major findings of the research have the potential to improve user experiences on the platform by highlighting how and when the positive and negative experiences of users occur and a mapping of the differences in the academic writing performance between the two groups and best practices. Finally, the results have implications for pedagogy - the fitting of YouTube videos to academic writing instruction.

Keywords: YouTube; digital media; informal learning; academic writing; South Africa.

Introduction

Key features of the digital environment demand a set of appropriate skills, acceptability, adaptability, usability, accessibility, and availability. For instance, for teachers, instructors, mentors, tutors, and learners to best tap from the new media to impact knowledge creation, discovery, and use require novel strategies and approaches. Moreover, learning in the digital age is prompted by integration of digital forms into learning (Ifenthaler & Tracey, 2016). The abundance of digital media has flooded classrooms with new tools such as Virtual Worlds (VWs), gaming, social media, m-learning, Webcasts, podcasts and YouTube videos. Surprisingly, one of the challenges is to train instructors and learners with skills to appropriate digital media across multiple disciplines. For example, Bennett, Maton & Kervin (2008) analyze from a historic standpoint the “immersion of young people in digital technologies such as computers, video games, and the Internet.” The immersion landscape presupposes an in-depth and diverse role of digital media in the lives of the youths. Davis (2013) provides evidence of a high rate of adoption and use of digital media by young people. Conole (2015) reports the value of learning experiences with MOOCs as disruptive tools and underlines a need for innovation and new trends to improve learning experiences for users. Likewise, Lai & Hong (2015) state that new digital tools influence the kinds and characteristics of experiences of users since they inform new ways of life, communication, play and learning. The authors identify the themes of user experiences to include loss of a sense of time, difficulties with self-awareness, consciousness and interactivity. Fortunately, Oleson and Hora (2014) and Conole (2015) argue that little empirical work is available in the way users gain knowledge and experience technological tools in the classroom. Thus, the current research aims to improve the existing knowledge in this discipline. Whereas there are reports that little is known in the literature about the experiences of users of new digital media meanwhile, the popularity of the tools continues to explode. Also, Sharma, Lau, Doherty & Harbutt (2015) and Guo, Philip & Rubin (2014) report there has been little evidence on the use of YouTube videos and participatory culture for teaching and experiences of students. Nonetheless, the use of online videos continues to soar. For instance, Oyedemi (2012) and Olasina (2016) illustrate a high rate of use of digital media in Africa despite the challenges of the digital divide, social inequalities, poverty, lack of access and poor digital infrastructure. Real as the claims may seem, there is little evidence of the uptake of educational technologies such as YouTube for academic writing.

Meanwhile, current academic curricula pay a high premium for learning how to write, express, communicate knowledge and to the early exposure of students to academic writing. In fact, academic writing is at the foundation of higher education. The goal of academic writing goes beyond the basic communication of information. Its aim is often to proffer an original thesis or argument either in support or against a particular idea or position. Accordingly, academic writing is demanding. After all, it requires that students understand proper formatting, language, style, grammar, referencing, citations and methods to produce a paper. In other words, learning the skills to writing can only be achieved by concise efforts, training, and experiences. It is assumed that such capacities may develop through the internalization of videos on academic writing for further stimulation of improved presentations.

Unfortunately, academic writing is challenged by myths in second language writing by students often leading to underachievement (Kamhi & Catts, 2013). Writing errors are common in the writing abilities of university students. It is reported that there is a wide gap between teaching and learning often demonstrated in the lack of creativity in the writing of students. As an illustration, Abdulkareem (2013) investigated academic writing in English by postgraduate native Arab speakers from the Arabic world. The methodology involves an identification of language and writing errors reviewed by experts of English. The results underlined endemic problems and poor academic writing performance of the Arabic-speaking students in English. The author concludes by calling for new ways to employ effective teaching approaches to academic writing in a language other than the mother tongue of a student. The current study aims at using the context of non-native English students in South Africa to evaluate the influence of YouTube videos on the academic writing of students. Likewise, Spaul (2013) explains the challenges of good academic writing performance in South Africa from a perspective of apartheid. For instance, disadvantaged students perform woefully academically based on a long abolished racist structure that refuses to come to an end. In fact, black students have dysfunctional literacy skills which present challenges for higher education.

Bharuthram (2012) and Kreek (2015) explain the essentiality of reading and writing to the success of degree program completion in South Africa. Surprisingly, academic writing is a challenge to non-native English students who are from disadvantaged backgrounds and thus exhibit limited skills in reading and academic writing. In fact, the authors provide evidence of higher education institutions in South Africa experiencing students' poor academic performance, flat rates of attrition and throughput, and disastrous academic writing pieces. Fortunately, the managers of primary and higher education and individual universities in South Africa attempt to fight the scourge of unhealthy academic writing by students. For instance, the University of KwaZulu-Natal and more recently, the Durban University of Technology established academic writing divisions and centers to enhance the improvement of academic writing. The facilities have experienced tutors, mentors, and instructors who assist students in their writing. The teachers offer support, advice, companionship to nurture creative and improved writing. Unfortunately, despite the support structures, mentorship and peer assessment aimed at helping students to write better, evidence of positive impact on academic writing performance is not well reported in the literature.

Because of the compelling reasons above, the current research employed an approach using relevant YouTube videos to evaluate their educational value on the academic writing of students. Thus, the purpose of the study is to assess the educational value of YouTube videos for academic writing. After all, new digital media and tools are often used for amplification purposes only (Drijvers, 2015; Hughes, Thomas & Scharber, 2006). Consequently, the study addresses the approaches to orthodox teaching and learning of academic writing and those facilitated by digital media. The aim of the comparison is to highlight potentials of new media for student interactions and learning. The next section presents the critical questions of the study.

Research questions

1. What kinds and characteristics of experiences are present in student interactions with YouTube videos for academic writing?

2. Is there a difference in academic writing performance between the traditional teaching group and the YouTube facilitated group?
3. To what extent can YouTube videos fit into improving academic writing performance?

The following section presents the literature review.

Literature review

The purpose of the section is to provide a context and give an evaluation of research on educational technologies in developing countries in general and educational applications of YouTube videos in particular. In other words, the review covers the description, clarification, summarization of literature in the selected field of study and the choice of theoretical perspectives. Accordingly, the analysis of literature identifies and articulates relationships across existing literature and the field of research.

Challenges of educational technologies in developing countries

The issues of educational technology in developing countries are well reported in the literature. For instance, Kremer, Brannen & Glennerster (2013) highlight the challenges of the adoption and use of educational technologies in developing countries. Some of the identified issues include diffusion of technology, supplies of computers and efficient use of ICT requiring the availability of equipment and tools, pedagogy issues, accountability, access and quality. Likewise, Bhuasiri *et al.*, (2012) report the problems of innovative technologies in education in developing countries to comprise software licenses, training, maintenance issues, hardware and software costs and learning material development. Because of the broad scope of educational innovation and tools, several studies focused on specific tools. For example, Liyanagunawardena, Williams & Adams (2013) find that MOOCs in a developing country landscape are challenged by insufficient download speeds of Internet connections, language, and computer literacy. The authors call for a better understanding of MOOCs in developing countries. Hajli (2014), Pimmer *et al.* (2014), van Dijk & van Deursen (2014) identify that little is known about the experiences of learners with new digital media in the developing world. Meanwhile, Tarhini, Hone & Liu (2014) concentrate on the issues of theory and practice regarding transformative pedagogical practices and need to develop and execute sound technology educational practice for users in Lebanon. The essential conclusions emphasize the social and individual factors as opposed to technological issues commonly reported in the literature. Finally, educational technologies can be a very broad field covering a variety of tools. Besides, a majority of the reviewed literature either use the lens of faculty or organizational and formal contexts to view educational values of such practices, students' views are not taken into consideration. In other words, some of the essential problems of educational technology include a lack of understanding of user experiences, limited empirical evidence of the effect of new tools on student performance, and an absence of strategies and approaches to best fit digital media to the learning processes of students (Saheb, 2014). Because of these compelling reasons, the current study provides a clear and definite focus on the educational values of the YouTube site in an informal learning context in South Africa.

YouTube videos

YouTube is based on a video sharing platform allowing a customized upload of content by users (Pinto, Almeida & Gonçalves, 2013). Usually, the channel allows for users to keep track and manage a record of users that view the videos. The host of the videos is created by professionals and amateurs. Put simply, YouTube is a modern mass medium commonly used in a new digital age landscape. Cheng, Liu & Dale (2013) give a historical account of the establishment of YouTube in 2005 and the enormity of the bandwidth it consumes. Perhaps, the popularity is based on its facilitation of user-created video content. In fact, more than sixty hours of videos are uploaded by users per minute on the platform (Wang *et al.*, 2013). Even though the channel is limited to the length of videos that can be uploaded, YouTube has a high rate of adoption and use compared to similar online video services such as Vimeo, Hulu host and a host of online video streaming platforms.

Furthermore, little is known about general applications of YouTube videos (Thelwall, Sud & Vis, 2012). There is no clear understanding of the applicability of interactivity standards associated with digital media in the series of steps involved in academic writing. Fortunately, there are calls for new models and approaches to teaching and learning in a digital environment. As an illustration, originators of various models of education have highlighted the importance of collaborative learning tools, the reconstruction of ideas and the co-construction of knowledge. Many of them (models) trace their beginnings to constructivism as a theoretical foundation. In contrast, many theorists have condemned existing approaches to explain digital media facilitated instruction based on theoretical foundations that were born before the digital revolution (Twining *et al.*, 2013; Conole, 2015). In the light of these, one of the goals of the current study is to evaluate approaches to fit educational writing videos on YouTube to improve experiences and performance of academic writing by students.

Whereas Cheng, Liu & Dale (2013) consider videos on the channel as entertainment-based, other researchers categorize the platform as broadly based with potentials for education and life-long learning. In fact, traditional media contents are not new to primary and higher education. However, there is a need to improve knowledge by focusing on the effect of YouTube videos on users and devise strategies to integrate them best to learning.

YouTube videos as educational innovations

Gabarron *et al.* (2013) state the potential of YouTube videos in the context of health promotion and education. Nevertheless, the authors raise safety concerns about the environment of online videos and the volatility of the video sharing service. Likewise, Kay (2012) gives a broad review of research on video podcasts to provide a framework for an educational approach to the new media. The review covered fifty-three articles highlighting the potentials and the problems and methodological concerns related to the research area. The main conclusions of the research show the possibilities of videos to include positive attitudes, learning control, enhanced reading and

study behavior, and the students' improved performance. Unfortunately, the researcher explained some downsides of the integration of videos in the learning process to include reduced class participation, preference for orthodox teaching, and technical problems. Consequently, the author raised methodological issues concerning research in the field. Some of these include limitations of sampling, lack of rigor in the demonstration of statistical conclusions and data quality. In conclusion, Kay (2012) calls for future research to focus on a provision of empirical evidence on the impact of online video and new media, and the need to improve the understanding of user experiences in learning contexts. Meanwhile, Michikyan, Subrahmanyam & Dennis (2015) propose models for the best fitting of social media to academic performance. The authors tested the nature of relations between the use of Facebook and improved academic performance of students. Their results show overwhelming positive influence of the social medium on academic performance suggesting that academic pursuits may determine students' use of social media beyond what is commonly reported. However, the report by Michikyan *et al.* (2015) is limited. For instance, it is lacking in paradigmatic orientation and is the report is not informed by any theoretical perspectives to drive data. Also, the report did not collect data to test the models proposed. Accordingly, the aim of the current study is to add to the pool of knowledge and improve the understanding of best fitting YouTube videos to academic writing performance. The approach of the current study is based on the foundations of methodological and theoretical choices to add breadth and scope to the research. In contrast, Al-Mukhaini, Al-Qayoudhi & Al-Badi (2014) and Kim *et al.* (2014) provide evidence of existing difficulty in the process of fitting the use of technology into the learning experiences of students resulting in a mismatch leading to poor academic performance and additional frustrations for learners. In fact, Sadaf, Newby & Ertmer (2016) and Hew & Brush (2007) shed some light on the fitting of a broad spectrum of Web 2.0 tools to teaching specific subjects in the contexts of teachers and pupils. The current research explores the perspectives of students and further adds breadth by conducting the study using less formal settings. In other words, there is not enough compelling empirical evidence of the effect of new media on student performance. The current research uses the context of students in an informal learning environment empirically to evaluate the effect of YouTube videos on academic writing skills and performance. The choice of methodological framework is informed by the purpose of the study and need to cover the critical questions of the research.

Duncan, Yarwood-Ross & Haigh (2013) explain the importance of video sharing sites and argue that YouTube videos are valuable to practical, medical and clinical science education, and research. The authors report that the videos on YouTube may be used in ways to stimulate student participation to counteract the students' lack of interest often reported in traditional learning. Whereas many authors and the media are over-enthusiastic about the possibilities of new digital media in primary, intermediate, higher education and life-long learning other researchers hint at caution by highlighting the negative impact of YouTube videos and digital media on learning. For example, Tess (2013) warns that social media may negatively affect a student's performance. In fact, the author used structural equation modelling and provides evidence of a significant negative relationship between the use of new media and academic pursuits.

As a matter of fact, Wood *et al.* (2014a) argue that new media and technology including short message service (SMS), instant messaging (IM) and texting, and the use of slangs do not seem to

affect the spelling performance of pupils negatively. However, the researchers report an association between the impact of text messaging and an understanding of grammatical procedures. Ultimately, it appears there are negative implications of the use of instant messaging services on academic writing. After all, some social network platforms require the use of a maximum of 140 characters requiring users apply a shorthand approach. In other words, Wood *et al.* (2012b) emphasize the negative impact of multi-tasking on students who are studying and texting at the same time. The researchers suggest that multi-tasking may be responsible for reduced rates of academic performance. As an illustration, Cingel & Sundar (2012) state negative associations of word adaptations based on text messages to grammar assessment in schools by students. Nevertheless, some researchers argue that text messaging and social media do not hold negative implications for users. Accordingly, arguments and counter-arguments remain over individualistic and competitive learning, as well as orthodoxy thinking versus new digital media in the classrooms (Kivunja, 2015). Consequently, the present research verifies the effects of a YouTube facilitated approach to enhancing students' academic performance. Perhaps, the affordance of digital media such as YouTube videos for academic writing is worth a try.

Meanwhile, Guo, Kim & Rubin (2014) provide empirical evidence of student engagement with video materials in informal settings over and above podcasts or pre-recorded classroom lecture. The methodological approach using both quantitative and qualitative data measured the length of time students used watching each video in correlation to the output of assessment. The conclusions recommend a framework to support the appropriation of online video formats for instructors and video producers. As a matter of fact, the current study contributes to a comprehensive framework to include academic writing. After all, an evaluation of the impact of technology on learners and academic performance often does not focus on academic writing per se. Also, previous studies' respondents suffered memory and retrieval bias as they reported past experiences. However, the current research addresses time-dependent concerns of user experiences of YouTube videos in real time on a project.

In fact, many academic institutions use YouTube to record and disseminate course modules for classes with the videos available via the e-learning systems and the Internet. For instance, Jafar (2012) reports that 98% of students used YouTube videos as an online information resource with 86% of students confident that the platform helped their learning of anatomy. Because of the significant findings, the authors conclude that the videos were a useful tool for instruction. Meanwhile, there are reports of continued explosion in the number of users of social and new digital media globally, including Africa because of improved Internet penetration and mobile technology. Surprisingly, the use of new digital media by academics and students for educational purposes remains limited (Lenhart, Madden, Macgill & Smith, 2010; Al-Aufi & Fulton, 2014). Furthermore, Chapman (2015) raises concerns about the best fitting of YouTube videos to academic teaching because of misinformation.

Thelwall, Sud & Vis (2012) report an analysis of large samples of text commentary on YouTube videos. The results shed light on identity patterns of positive and negative comments and a density of discussion in proportion to replies to user comments. This rare user study shows that the highest rates of comments are triggered by themes such as religion and overviews of life, whereas videos

on subjects such as fashion, style, entertainment, and music attracted minimal comments posted. In conclusion, the authors claim a categorization of YouTube users by themes of the videos. Fortunately, Kousha, Thelwall & Abdoli (2012) prove that online videos are applied for teaching, informal scholarly communication and citation in academic journals. The authors' inquiry was to determine the disciplinary scope of the citations of YouTube video. Based on content analysis of a broad array of Scopus publications, the researchers state that the arts and human and social sciences were the most common to have cited YouTube videos. In other words, the most mentioned themes are culture, history, news, politics, and documentaries. The following section presents the theoretical perspectives used to underpin the research.

Constructivist perspective

Several theoretical perspectives and models are applied to explain learning and its approaches. Recently, the emergence of new digital media and technologies continue to stretch the fabrics of theory to fit technologies appropriately to pedagogy. In many ways, most learning models and approaches originate from constructivism. The theory holds that there is a real world that we experience (Duffy & Jonassen, 1992). The interchange of ideas between constructivist learning and the technology of instruction is essential. For instance, Duffy & Jonassen (1992) argue that the value of learning theory rests in the ability to predict the impact of instructional practices on what is learned. Thus, the current research is underpinned by the constructivist perspective to shed new light on opportunities and challenges to the practice of designing instruction for academic writing using YouTube videos. Put simply, the arguments and assumptions of the theory are that meanings are imposed on the world by us and that there are many ways to structure the world. Constructivism suggests there are many meanings and perspectives for events and concepts. In summary, constructivists argue that there is no correct meaning. The theory emphasizes meaning and experience-cognitive experiences in authentic activities. Speed (1991) and Winn (1993) examine the implications of constructivist perspectives for instructional theory and learning practice. The philosophical positions of the theorists provide a justification for the choice of constructivist perspectives to inform the research questions of the current research.

In summary, faculty members need to evolve new approaches not only to engage and motivate learners, but to enhance teaching by using media such as YouTube videos and exploit their viability to supplement traditional learning spaces. Previous studies examined the general role of social media in primary and higher education and the affordances of digital media for student performance.^b It is important to improve the understanding of how YouTube videos can best fit academic writing training in informal learning contexts. It is also critical to employ theoretical perspectives from constructivism and relevant learning models to inform the research and address the research questions of the study. The approach may be vital as most of the previous studies are not underpinned by theoretical frameworks. Ultimately, an understanding of user experiences of YouTube videos for academic writing will be enhanced, and the context of South Africa is used to improve the knowledge of educational values of digital media. Finally, the constructs such as meaning and experience from constructivism are used to guide the design of instrumentation and data based on the methodological choices of the study. The details of the latter are presented next.

Methodology

A pretest and post-test were conducted involving two groups of students. All lesson plans are aligned to standards of core competencies in academic writing. Two experts of academic writing offered critical feedback on the lesson plans, project activities, and blended approach to learning. The two project groups completed the same tests. Because of the purpose and critical questions of the study, a dominant interpretive paradigm is adopted. Accordingly, both qualitative and quantitative approaches are employed to adequately address the purpose of the research. The research design is semi-experimental to highlight the difference in the academic writing between the control/traditional teaching and treatment/YouTube facilitated groups. In fact, a focus group, in-depth interview and tests (quantitative strands) are the data collection methods used to identify underlying experiences, relationships, patterns and explain context-specific issues that are critical to the research. Consider that the students in the traditional teaching and YouTube facilitated groups are both subjected to a focus group and interviews. Ultimately, the themes for the data collection instruments are framed by the critical aspects of academic writing such as grammar, vocabulary, organization, referencing, and group work. The adopted methodological choices are not without criticisms. However, the justification for the use of focus group is based on Mao (2014) providing evidence that it is valuable in studying the use of technology by learners. Furthermore, the in-depth interviews and tests are used to address the context-specific issues raised by the research questions of the study. After all, the individual interviews and focus group discussion provide evidence of ambivalence, inconsistency and conformance (Fielding, 2012). Consequently, the use of multiple methods of data collection particularly in a dominant qualitative study is to complement, validate, draw on the strengths of each tool and add scope and breadth to the research (Kidd & Parshall, 2000). Also, five raters are involved in the assessment design process to underscore objectivity. Ultimately, inter-rater reliability was based on the framework by Miles & Huberman (1994). Because of the growing call for a demonstration of academic rigor in qualitative research, the current study pays attention to analytical precision, data, approaches and the use of content and thematic analysis by Braun & Clarke (2006). The adopted framework for the presentation of the reliability and validity of the data collection tools are guided by Anderson (2010) and Creswell (2013). The guideline provides that procedures to establish the reliability and validity of conclusions are presented alongside the presentation of the results and in-text where relevant, as opposed to dedicating a stand-alone section for that purpose. This is expected to make reading easier. Finally, the following section presents the details of the participants.

Participants

A total of forty participants were recruited from over a hundred matriculated students who recently completed their high school education and are awaiting university admission. The implication is that twenty respondents belong to each of the two teams of participants regarding the traditional teaching and YouTube facilitated groups. The students belong to a community service initiative to help train poor students. The aim of the cohort is to improve the academic writing of students in Scottsville, Pietermaritzburg, Province of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The facility is equipped with trained tutors and instructors who are postgraduate students who assist students in improving their writing skills, oral and slide presentations, reading, reporting, and review of the literature capabilities. The participants are drawn from a larger pool of students who attend the free writing

classes holding in the form of workshops. The criteria for selection include regular attendance, commitment, and basic proficiency in English. It was after the exploratory analysis that twenty students each were retained respectively for the control and test group and for the YouTube groups. Each team is made up of eleven females. The control and test groups are made up of nine males each. All the students have no basic experience to moderate skills of ICT use and only five are familiar with the use of Virtual Worlds (VWs) such as Second Life, Active Worlds, IMVU, World of Warcraft, and multiplayer online games. Exploratory data collection shows that twenty-one of the participants have accounts on social media and have viewed YouTube videos for entertainment, social engagements and religion. They access the platform's videos mostly on their mobile devices, in public cafes, at school, and on friends' devices and church devices. Four respondents indicate using YouTube videos to learn how to keep the pacifier in a baby's mouth and learning how to drive a car. Finally, twenty-one students have used social and new digital media in school related activities in their primary education. Ten participants share their experiences of updating live videos of violent protests, events in the church, dance parties, and rugby matches onto online platforms of news channels. Finally, the age range of all the participants was 19-24 years, and seven of them work part-time. It is typical for a study that is predominantly qualitative to have a sample size between 5 and 20 (Petty, Thomson & Stew, 2012). Whereas a sample size of forty is considered large for qualitative research, a quantitative approach will find forty as inadequate. Consequently, forty is retained to meet the requirements of the quantitative strand; this is further justified by Antenos-Conforti (2009), Holotescu & Grosseck (2009) and Ebner *et al.* (2010) who have used sample sizes ranging from 10-50 with success in a related IS research. The control group was taught using conventional strategies such as marker boards, program outline, guide, classroom teaching, handouts, and assignments. The framework that guided both groups was based on the academic writing curriculum at the writing center of a South African University. The framework emphasizes the following: grammar, vocabulary, organization, referencing, pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading and group assignment writing. Meanwhile, the test or YouTube group's education used strictly learning techniques facilitated solely by selected YouTube videos including YouTube Edu for ten weeks. The framework that guided the selection of YouTube videos is provided by Kousha, Thelwall & Abdoli (2012) and Guo, Kim & Rubin (2014) and it met the requirements for the academic writing curriculum stipulated by the academic writing center framing the instructions for the two groups. After that, the selected videos are presented to two experts who are managers of academic writing divisions at two South African universities. The selection criteria were to eliminate misinformation and to establish accuracy. After all, Internet resources should be evaluated for their educational values and authenticity. Meanwhile, class outline and activities for the control group included instruction on grammar, vocabulary, organization, referencing, pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading. Also, tutors used lesson notes, textbook reading lists and handouts. The class lessons span a period of ten weeks.

Results

The research procedures involved meetings and discussions with tutors and instructors engaged by the researcher to serve as observers and moderators to enhance an understanding of the overriding purpose of the study and to address the critical questions of the research. Meanwhile, the academic writing tutors and mentors are PhD candidates and experienced moderators and observers. Consider that the study is drawn from a larger project to employ the context of South Africa to

explore user behavior in virtual environments. After all, some of the wider objectives of the project have been published in journals elsewhere. Accordingly, the 10- week time span guided the lesson plans and class activities for the two groups. Each of the class sessions lasted an hour and held at least twice in a week. In other words, the groups had the same instructional goals of improved academic writing performance. Meanwhile, the non-formal learning space coupled with deliberate efforts was a setting for exciting mood, risk-free domain, flexibility for students to choose their writing topics compatible with participants' interests and to self-regulate. From the get-go, the test group was facilitated after traditional teaching by academic writing videos on YouTube in week one onwards. Also, the two groups were subjected to pretest and post-test analysis. The exploratory study informed the selection of forty students split into the groups based on exploratory data and willingness to participate. The exploration was done through interviews to examine student behavior in the world of social and digital media, and how and why the students use the tools. The exploratory data collection helped to identify particular media used, frequency and purpose of use. Also, the exploration contributed to determining the common barriers, past experiences, and factors that discourage/encourage the use of digital media. Also, the two groups were subjected to pretest and post-test analysis. The pretest involved two experts measuring and evaluating the validity and effectiveness of the questions to guide the focus group and interview sessions. The focus group discussion held once for the two groups while the in-depth interviews lasted approximately 20 minutes each for participants. The fall outs from the focus group meeting informed the questions for the interviews. In fact, based on the briefings and meetings held with tutors, moderators and reviewers a sample size for the in-depth interviews for the two groups was drawn. Finally, the post-interviews were held at the end of the ten weeks of classes. Quantitative data were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 24. The research questions guide the presentation of the next section.

Experiences of YouTube videos for academic writing

Narrative analysis of experiences of the use of academic writing YouTube videos is conducted to address the first research question.

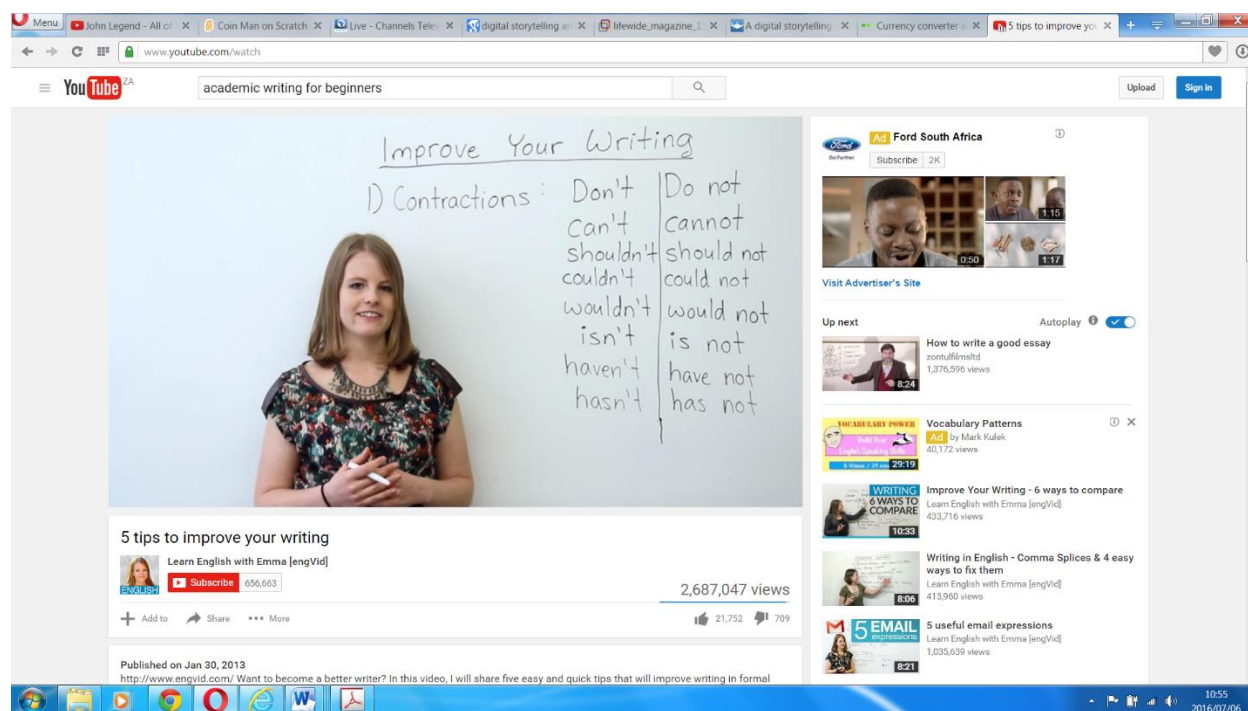


Figure 1: Illustration of one of the videos used to facilitate academic writing group

The student sessions facilitated with YouTube videos involved asking participants to report their experiences. The narratives extended beyond class sessions to cover self-use of the videos outside of class. The Web link to relevant videos was made available to the students. Some of the significant statements of the test group captured are presented below:

"I identify videos with relevant academic writing subjects from the recommended feature on the YouTube home page."

"Based on the links to academic writing videos provided by tutors, YouTube offers suggestions of similar videos that I can view."

"I use YouTube to view work and general study-related activities."

"I find it difficult to download and save videos on the platform."

"Acquiring South African content and information on academic writing videos is hard."

"I like to explore the YouTube environment for academic writing videos."

"I think YouTube is for socials, arts and entertainment."

"I just play around and often see videos that are not academic writing based."

“YouTube videos helped my understanding of formats of written assignments, structural and technical formatting of my assignments.”

“The videos positively influenced my experiences.”

“The exposure to YouTube for teaching and understanding academic writing seem like an unfamiliar terrain.”

“The YouTube video activities are critical for my academic writing.”

“The videos often offer me crucial information that helps me to write better.”

“I often suffer malfunction of video, missing a video or some other technical problem when I try to access YouTube on my phone at home.”

“From watching the videos, the strategies of academic writing such as paraphrasing and mind mapping are clear to me.”

Meanwhile, the research exploited group dynamics to highlight the differences between group and individual interviews conducted, and how these impacts the analysis and guide the interpretation of focus group data. Several critics of qualitative methods have demanded a demonstration of rigor to ensure data quality and validity of conclusions (Toomela, 2011). As a result, practical steps are taken such as conducting and analyzing the focus group, recruitment of participants, logistics and making sense out of data. For instance, environmental conditions are made convenient for the test group to find the YouTube videos for academic writing to be stimulating. Also, the discourse in the session of the focus group and interviews depended on moderator/interviewer skills leading to casual conversations. The researcher and assistants were at the focus group meeting and interviews for the corresponding groups. The participants are well known to the researcher and associates who are tutors and mentors of the academic writing cohort. In other words, the recruitment procedure and familiarity with respondents' characteristics and a high emotional stake on academic writing skills were an advantage. For instance, during the focus group session, there were agreements and disagreements on the satisfying and unsatisfying experiences using the prescribed YouTube videos for academic writing. In fact, the mixed experiences are critical moments that influence the nature and content of responses. Unfortunately, the experiences involved negotiation, criticisms, commiseration and modification. Fortunately, the mixture of experiences was subjected to group moderation, structuring and the design of interview guides to ensure data analysis and conclusions are sound. Also, peer reviewer comments were solicited after the briefings and meetings held by the researcher, assistants, and tutors. Specific analytical approaches were used to increase confidence in focus group data and involve a theoretical understanding of user behavior in the application of YouTube videos for academic writing.

As an illustration, the analysis of interaction in focus discussion shows some of the following: shared language on the integration of YouTube videos to academic writing, emerging data on user issues taken for granted with the use of new media and user myths and beliefs about YouTube

videos. The analysis reveals arguments and feedback from participants on the use of educational videos and highlights their best practices. Finally, the observation of the voice tone, emotional engagement, and body language of participants about the discussion around the adoption and the use of YouTube videos for academic writing are included in the analysis. The coding procedure involved the organization of data to enhance analysis and interpretation. In fact, data are fractured by working on the transcript to identify the kinds and characteristics of user experiences with the application of YouTube videos for academic writing. For instance, user experiences are tracked from the start to the end through the transcript using marker pens. Accordingly, user experiences are coded or labeled based on a spectrum of dimensions such as practices, learning activities, characteristics of experiences and related YouTube videos for academic writing features, emotions evoked, unsatisfying and satisfying experiences. The focus discussion and interviews were conducted after the 10-week long exercises in academic writing. The following quotes are drawn from the transcript of the discussion session for the YouTube group. The quotes are in the context of the research question 1.

Moderator: (in response to a general discussion on what it is like to view academic writing videos on YouTube)

Fantasy1: *“I am fascinated by the fact that the videos are not only recreational and entertaining to follow, but everything felt relaxed, informal and enjoyable.”*

Moderator: (as the group proceeds with participant discussion on their experiences, other responses include the following: -)

Day1: *“I would describe my experience as interesting.”*

Moderator: (specifically which aspects were interesting and which ones were not?)

Moderator: (experiences from other participants....)

Flower1: *“Apart from the remarkable but reinforcing experience of learning academic writing through the videos is the rather big surprise of a ‘subscribe’ feature on YouTube that enables notifications of new videos from content creators. I think during one of our last classes the tutor demonstrated in class how to get up to date using the subscriber notification alert by email and mobile devices.”*

Flower2: *“It is satisfying to view the accredited videos as they help to resound the key topics learned from the academic writing classes and guidelines from the tutors.”*

Moonlighting1: *“I find the selected videos introduced by the tutors very easy to understand and interact with more so as we had received foundational classroom teaching on the basics of an excellent essay and grammar.”*

Moonlighting2: *“I was able to understand better the information the tutor provided in class and the feedback from a previous assignment only after replaying the YouTube videos over and over.”*

Bunny1: *“My experiences with the YouTube videos are meaningful as new ways to learning academic writing skills and enhance improvements.”*

Bunny2: *“I was able to identify that viewing the videos before writing my draft assignments improved my academic writing performance.”*

Rainfall1: *“Mine is a feeling of power over my writing as a result of the YouTube tool to access educational information.”*

Winter1: *“My experience is shaped by the promise of availability of the YouTube videos 24/7, and this is useful as I can learn even when I am mobile.”*

Flower3: *“I prefer to write the draft of my assignments, pause, view videos relevant to the lesson’s topic, reflect on the videos and afterwards review, modify and refine my writing.”*

Summer1: *“I observe that the tutors emphasize that academic writing is a process involving pre-writing, drafting, revising and a whole lot more. Surprisingly, the videos highlight a process as fundamental to successful academic writing performance.”*

Moderator: (in what specific tasks have you had the experiences that you share?)

Summer2: *“My observation is that the YouTube videos help more with pre-writing activities, specifically, influencing my thinking, brainstorming, and broad pre-writing strategies.”*

Grassland1: *“I eagerly long for the tutors to send links to YouTube videos.”*

Moderator: (why so?)

Grassland2: *“I guess I am fond of sharing my views of the videos with peers and tutors.”*

Airforce1: *“The videos are not easy to forget. Besides, I can always go back to see them online if I did not download them.”*

The analysis of the illustration and the review reports of meeting, briefings and observations by the researcher and assistants show the characteristics of satisfying experiences and related YouTube videos’ features. Indeed, the group discussion was critical to the bond and exchange of stories of participant experiences. The interactions were coded for all the members to formulate the following themes. For instance, the analysis of satisfying themes from the narratives above mentioned demonstrates substantial and practical experiences. In fact, distinct experiences have their characterizations as fascination, surprising and entertaining, as well as social. In other cases, some of the narratives provide broad interest in new media, innovations, new ideas and approaches. Fortunately, the features of some of the experiences show positive surprise, attitudes and

perceptions, playfulness and stimulation. The in-depth analysis of the interview and focus discussion data above, shows users view the application of videos as efficient and empowering. The significant statements show broad interests towards engaging YouTube videos in improving their performance of academic writing. In other words, the efficiency spans from memory retention and 24/7 availability of the videos. The key results suggest high perceptions of ease of use and usefulness of the videos to improved academic writing performance. After all, the value of the videos is narrow to specific content such as pre-writing procedures and features such as subscriber notification and comments that users post. The narratives suggest that the YouTube videos complement traditional teaching. The in-depth analysis shows that the satisfying experiences result from positive emotions and high arousal associated with an urge to play, to explore and interact with the selected YouTube videos. The significant excerpts support an argument that students establish a view that the videos may be most useful after the foundations of academic writing are traditionally taught by tutors in class and by reading handouts. Also, a few of the key narratives highlight social contexts. For example, subscription to features and services, posting/reading comments on the platform, online interaction with other users and evidence of collaboration.

New issues that emerge from the data reveal in few explicit statements on matters such as viewing of the videos repeatedly and obsessive use even though the students still attended physical classes. The element of surprise underlines that respondents find the videos relevant and useful for their academic writing needs whereas many think the videos are purely for entertainment. The not so satisfying experiences are presented next.

About experiences characterized as not so satisfying were some narratives in the analysis. Narratives that were not satisfying experiences are categorized as the following: dissatisfaction, frustration, dissolution, disappointment, anger, confusion, and irritation. These originated from respondents not finding selected videos, missing videos, failure to meet expectations, technical issues – video not playing well, limited access to the internet (data related), and reduced display on mobile phones. Some significant narratives are given below:

Sunshine1: *“Access to the videos outside of class is challenging as I do not have data to browse on my phone.”*

Moderator: (remember that internet access is provided in the classroom and tutors share the information on how to save to your devices content that has a “download” or similar link displayed by the platform)

Sunshine2: *“In many cases half way through the download process, it stops and sometimes when I am successful, I am unable to play the downloaded video as my device either does not have enough memory space or app to play the files, disappointing.”*

Moderator: (cuts in, YouTube has Terms of Service, remember, and such ethics should not be broken)

Pond1: *“Over 80% of attempts to view the videos outside of the class are usually problematic and unsatisfactory due to network related problems either on my device or GSM service provider.”*

Pond2: *“The screen of my mobile device is smashed and terrible to view the diagrammatic representations on the marker boards presented in the videos and many times the audio only does not suffice when I see YouTube resources at home.”*

Moderator: (do you have difficulty listening to the videos? Tell us more about your experiences)

Station2: *“I know one or two videos presented at earlier classes were in the context of South Africa and the rest of Africa but what I am saying is that why do we not have more content close to our environment?”*

Station3: *“I will relate more with contents of the videos if closer to the South African life.”*

From the reports of the not so satisfying experiences, they seem to be very similar and demonstrate grades of dissatisfaction. Many of the experiences are a result of technical factors and shortcomings. The next section presents the analysis for research question 2.

Difference in academic writing performance between traditional and the YouTube facilitated groups

The second research question aims to observe differences in the academic writing performance between the control group that received regular training in academic writing and their counterparts whose training included facilitation by selected YouTube videos. Also, qualitative and quantitative analysis methods are used to address this research question. Consider that the traditional mode of instruction classes involved lessons from tutors, paper-based assignments, handouts and a tutorial discussion. On the other hand, the test group, also, was facilitated using selected YouTube videos in and out of class. In other words, the latter group had to combine viewing of videos, post comments online, complete video related assignments, focus group discussion and interviews.

A set of essay writing tests was developed by the researcher based on the project's lesson plans and reviewed by two experts in the academic writing division of a South African university. Besides, an expert in evaluation and measurement examined the essay criteria checklist for technical and content consistency and validity. In fact, the composition criteria list focused on grammar, vocabulary, organization, referencing, and group writing based on the framework provided by Dempsey, PytlikZillig & Bruning (2009) and Knoch (2009). The entire essay writing tests are 100 marks. The two groups completed the same lesson plans, a period of classes and assignments, and tests (see methodology section). For instance, the procedure for both groups at the 10th week involved being asked to write 500 and 1000-word essays. Individually, the essays are evaluated for correct expression, use of words, illustration and examples to support a position or an argument, proper use of grammar, vocabulary, use of words, appropriate use of citation, and referencing. Also, the students were expected to compare and contrast, synthesize, organize, and present coherent essays.

The evaluation of the compositions was done by the tutors, rated and reviewed independently for each group by two experts of academic writing using a structure criteria checklist. In fact, measuring essay assessment involved rater reliability of the vital decisions made by the essay writers. Thus, raters ($n=5$) who evaluated the essays are experts of academic writing. The students who wrote the essays in control ($n=20$) and the test groups ($n=20$) to test their writing skills were compared. The measurement results show 1000 ((5 raters x 20 essay papers) x 10 independent sessions) for each group. In other words, the ratio of agreement among raters had to be significant to the number of raters who agree as per each criterion/total number of evaluators. Accordingly, the evaluators are subjected to standardized open-ended interviews by the researcher. For instance, some of the question stems are the following: What do you think of the assessments that you made based on the essay criteria checklist? What are some of the recognized assumptions? What is your evaluation of the arguments? The answers to these questions show the reflections and interpretations of the evaluators based on the adopted rating process.

Meanwhile, the approved procedure involved each student's essay to be assigned a random code for each rating, based on the pseudo names of the respondents. Emphasis is placed on the differences in the scores based on the traditional academic writing class and the group facilitated by YouTube videos. Consequently, a process of person-to-rater-essay was conducted to minimize the variation of marks scored due to potential effects of person and evaluator. Ultimately, the rating process was deemed consistent and valid based on Miles & Huberman (1994).

The summary statistics in Table 1 describe the means, standard deviation and adjusted means of the three tests for the two groups. Both groups show improvement on the post-test when compared with pre-test scores. The statistics in Table 1 suggest that the academic writing group that was facilitated in class (and outside of class) by YouTube videos performed better (mean values of 57.14 and 73.56).

Table 1: Summary statistics of academic writing tests

Sub- total score	(20) Traditional teaching group					YouTube video facilitated group				
	Pre-test		Post-test			Pre-test		Post-test		
	M	SD	M	SD	Adj.M	M	SD	M	SD	Adj.M
Grammar	8.12	2.81	10.28	3.10	9.98	14.71	4.11	20.51	3.91	19.88
Vocabulary	9.92	3.09	10.55	5.02	12.01	14.10	6.23	16.51	3.12	14.77
Organization	12.37	4.91	9.88	4.07	11.38	12.56	6.01	16.10	5.92	16.17
Referencing	8.92	3.22	10.49	2.18	6.79	9.72	4.33	10.11	3.99	9.90
Writing	3.77	2.09	4.01	2.19	1.10	6.05	4.19	10.33	3.55	9.72
Total (%)	43.10	8.01	45.21	9.77	40.09	57.14	14.31	73.56	13.41	70.71

The mean scores of the YouTube facilitated group are more than that of the traditional teaching. The results suggest that the YouTube facilitated group outperformed the traditional class based on the criteria for assessment. Next, Table 2 presents the results of the inferential statistics used to identify the difference between the research groups in the test.

Table 2: Summary ANCOVA table for academic writing performance

SV	SS'	Df	MS'	F	p
Pretest (writing)	775.91	1.00	775.91	58.1/0	.00*
Between (group)	858.48	1.00	858.48	18.31	.00*
Within (error)	2383.74	37.00	23.81		
Total	68466.00	40.00			
Corrected total	6751.60	39.00			
*p<.05.					

The analysis of covariance in Table 2 was conducted to compare the academic writing test results between the YouTube facilitated and traditional teaching groups. Prior to this, the impact of pretest differences on the results was eliminated. In-depth analysis reveals that the YouTube group performed better on the average in the 20 marks awarded while learning the following writing skills - grammar, vocabulary, organization, referencing, and overall writing (including group assignment). The results from the ANCOVA show a significant difference in the total scores for the academic writing tests between the two research groups. For instance, $F(1, 40) = 18.31$, $p = .00$, partial = .11 (see Table 2 for details). The reasons for the improved performance of the video group informed the choice of post-test interviews.

The purpose of the interviews was to understand the students' point of views and unfold their experiences of YouTube videos for academic writing. In fact, meanings are drawn from the critical statements after which coding into categories to reflect an exhaustive description was undertaken. The adopted procedure ensured the coding was submitted to a reviewer to compare with the original to check data consistency and to validate the authenticity. Some of the original statements from further qualitative analysis informed the formulation of meanings which are below:

Table 3: Formulated meanings based on significant statements (YouTube facilitated group)

Original statements	Formulated meanings
<i>"My improved writing is helped by my initiating an outline to guide how I organize and present my essay. The tutors emphasized the role of an outline in class teaching. Also, they provided sample topics with similar shape themes. However, the videos used in class elaborated on sample sketches by providing links exclusive to subjects earlier presented by the tutors."</i>	Participant appreciates and identifies an attempt to select videos carefully to correspond with class teaching for seamless integration to take place

<i>“Even though the use of media seemed like an additional burden initially, the time and effort that I put in have been worth it. When I received my marked essays and comments, I was proud of my improvements and the entire project was worth my while.”</i>	Participant sees a correlation between time spent on the videos and potential to improve academic writing performance
<i>“The presentation style of the videos follows a path or method and is done in a series that highlight crucial steps in the writing process. Remember that the length of the videos is short hence only the key aspects are mentioned based on the expert skills of the video presenters. Similarly, my essay writing practice attempts to follow a series of steps and organization.”</i>	Participant identifies and evaluates a learning approach based on a series of videos that highlight core steps of the writing process that the respondent translates into actual writing
<i>“The videos create a platform for discussion of examples, illustrations and other content with tutors and fellow students on a scale that is different from the regular class teaching.”</i>	Recognition of enhanced student-tutor and student-student interactions based on the videos
<i>“The videos even help improve my reading, spelling and pronunciation of words that hitherto I was unfamiliar with.”</i>	Participant identifies the YouTube video as reading and pronunciation tools
<i>“Regardless of what my overall scores are, the various videos have increased my motivation and interest to seek actively to improve my understanding of grammar, vocabulary and sentence structuring.”</i>	Academic writing videos support student’s motivation, interest, and understanding of steps in writing
<i>“The video sessions continue to attract my regular attendance and participation in class compared to the regular meetings without the videos.”</i>	The videos offer a platform for class participation

Meanwhile, there is evidence of improved academic writing performance and a deeper understanding of the writing process by the traditional teaching facilitated group. Whereas the YouTube team used a focus group discussion and a limited number of interviews, the traditional teaching led group was subjected to interviews only. Some of the critical statements from the interview are below:

“This is my first experience with informal education, and it has opened me up to new writing skills especially that I must organize my thoughts better before I start to write. The writing sessions have improved my skills.”

“The weeks of lessons on brainstorming and outlining are applicable even in my social conversation with peers and other contacts and the feedback is encouraging, to say the least.”

“Academic writing is tight and has a set of rules and procedures but often I already know what I want, and I can start writing.”

“I strongly agree that the academic writing classes helped me to write my essays better.”

“I am a lot more confident about my academic writing abilities and able to organize my thoughts and writing for better reading by my graders.”

“The height of the classes for me was the last week of lessons where samples of essays were presented, and we were able to read some of the review comments of the tutors and gain feedback in a shared and relaxed learning space.”

“Academic writing is sophisticated, but I learned from the open consideration of sample essays of peers and the class reviews tremendously improved my understanding of core principles and my writing abilities.”

Although data collection focused on the students exclusively, for the purpose of equivalence to manage better the flow of multiple tutors, moderators, observers and reviewers, these support personnel appraised the contents and categorized codes. Thus, the support staff, based on their review work, examination of records, observation of project participants and several meetings, can validate several statements the respondents made. Some of the summaries of the support staff are the following:

“Academic writing is an instructional strategy for helping the participants to organize their thoughts and improve on writing. Even though this is an informal learning environment, it was not easy for this team of young men and women, but week after week, they gave their best. The progress is demonstrated in the essay scores. The two teams made a lot of achievement but the YouTube group to a larger degree.”

“The post-test session held for the traditional teaching group provided a platform for respondents to review and comment on another’s essays. Interestingly, respondents were able to identify mistakes and underline perceived problems of non-native English speakers.”

“A pre-selection of YouTube videos on academic writing made content and connections relevant to academic writing content areas for the test group, meeting students’ needs.”

The following section presents an analysis of the results regarding the research question 3.

Fitting YouTube videos into academic writing instruction

The aim of the research question 3 is to identify a framework to best support good practice of YouTube videos to improve academic writing performance. The main findings support the growing role of informal learning that offers a more balanced mix of learning content. The following tables indicate the process of theme construction by an integration of multiple formulated meanings and clusters of themes.

Table 4: Theme one (Reactions)

Formulated meanings	Theme clusters	Emergent theme
Some participants fear the YouTube videos are an added burden	Fear of additional stress	Disruptive tendencies
Initial fears about continued access to the videos	Anxiety over access to digital media	Accessibility issues
Majority of participants in test group feel motivated and interested in exploring and engaging digital media for academic writing	Motivation and interest	24/7 access to videos
Users access links to the videos outside class hours on their mobile devices	Continues engagement	

Table 5: Theme two (relevance)

Formulated meanings	Theme clusters	Emergent theme
Participants are familiar with the viral nature of YouTube video and digital media culture for entertainment and social purposes	Popularity of YouTube videos	YouTube is a popular culture
Participants are aware that the content of the selected videos tallies with lesson outline	Awareness of efforts targeted at complementing class teaching with videos	Relevance
A good number of members recognize that digital media have educational value	Realization of media content of YouTube videos for academic writing	Recognition
Even though some participants had used limited media and e-learning resources in their primary education, use of YouTube video resources was new	New experience	

Table 6: Theme three (Interactivity)

Formulated meanings	Theme clusters	Emergent theme
Even though participants use a selected list of videos, they often pay attention to features such as “like”, “dislike”, “number of viewers” and read/post “comments” on YouTube in addition to videos	Engagement and interaction with other users	Interactivity and social networking

Table 7: Theme 4 (Memory retention)

Formulated meanings	Theme clusters	Emergent theme
Participants repeatedly watch selected videos in private spaces	Affordances of YouTube videos	Affordances – access 24/7, informal
Respondents preferred playing back the videos when they got stuck on their essay rather than go through class notes and handouts	Without reliance on natural memory	Retention activities

Some of the significant observations and comments made by the support staff based on the project are the following:

“Academic writing based YouTube videos relate students to learning content in a way that they are used to inculcating instruction.”

“The video selection criteria included technical evaluation, recentness, content categorization and classification and the video reduction procedure assisted the respondents to see the connection between class lessons and those based on the new media.”

“A careful pre-selection of videos increased the focus on concepts that can be used in all content areas of academic writing.”

“Based on the focus discussion, YouTube videos on academic writing may be an alternative assessment technique with students.”

“Students view, comment and share videos on academic writing topics.”

“By drawing on videos that elaborate on skills and illustrations of academic writing, organization of thoughts and methodical presentation of arguments and summaries, YouTube can incorporate learning activity in schools.”

“Making YouTube video contents and connections relevant to academic writing activities, learning objectives, class debates and discussions assist the learners by bringing purpose and meanings to instruction.”

Discussion of results

The purpose of the section is to summarize the major findings and their implications. Accordingly, the discussion is presented based on the research questions of the study.

The kinds and characteristics of experiences of student interactions with YouTube videos for academic writing provide insights into differences of experiences regarding ways users engage technology. Indeed, some of the accounts highlighted are strategic to the fitting of educational videos on YouTube to learning and instruction. In other words, the assessment of the dynamics of user experiences can inform the use of other digital formats and technologies for formal and informal learning in multiple contexts. In short, the less satisfying encounters such as disappointment or fear of additional burden leading to frustration can be associated with lack of Internet access, bandwidth challenges, device issues, missing or unavailable files, poor network services and copyright limitations on YouTube. Surprisingly, the results show limited resistance to the exploration of YouTube site for academic writing education. Ultimately, the reported contextual issues underline the need for improved understanding of terms, copyright and fair use laws regarding the educational content of YouTube videos. In addition, others reporting negative experiences offer a lever for a need to further understanding that should not be ignored or overlooked. As expected, the scope of positive experience narratives includes awareness, efficiency, team/collaborative learning. Also, anecdotes involved fun, exciting, fascination, improved understanding of learning content, and appropriation of videos for pre-writing activities. Therefore, YouTube videos as educational tools improve the experiences of communication between teachers and students and among students. As a matter of fact, many of the satisfying encounters are underlined by the affordances of the new media. Sundar & Limperos (2013) propose a shaping of user needs based on affordances of media technology that enables users to individualize and personalize learning to construct meaning. In contrast, Fox & Moreland (2015) state that affordances influence both positive and negative experiences of technology whereas users often do not anticipate negative encounters. Thus, the current research underlines the apparent contradictions of participants between satisfying and less satisfying experiences of YouTube videos for academic writing performance. And whereas user experiences are mixed and diverse, the respondents are aware of the educational values of the videos. Consider that for the rates of rich user experiences of the educational benefits of the content of YouTube to increase, evaluation of the content must be conducted. It introduces the issue of trustworthiness of the substance of the media. Adverse experiences of users such as disappointments, dislikes, and barriers enrich the debates around a negative link between YouTube videos and entertainment and viewing the videos for educational purposes. The broad experiences of the users help inform the design of future applications to meet expectations and requirements and have the potential to impact the issues of digital divide and emerging digital differentiation models.

Thus, the results are crucial to an understanding of the design of interfaces to elicit positive emotional experiences, self-actualization and significant reduction of anxiety from users. Both

the satisfying and not satisfying narratives seem easy for the respondents to remember further supporting them as personal and cultural experiences. Fortunately, Karapanos (2013) highlights the essentiality of an experience framework on the role and diversity as they inform broad perspectives of individual experiences with a product, in this case, YouTube videos. The implications of the results of the current study on user experience studies and frameworks are that the diversity of the narratives calls for new reflection regarding potential expectations of users of YouTube videos for academic performance. Also, an understanding of user experiences is essential because of links to the perceptions of new media and the importance of direct experience for reflection.

The significant results of the difference in academic writing performance of the two groups show that the YouTube facilitated group performed better compared to the traditional learning technique group. The fundamental findings suggest that the digital media provided engagement and motivation. The video sessions afforded the participants the opportunity to have team discussions on the content in class and via comment features on YouTube. Additionally, the findings provide evidence of improved students' retention as a result of playback of videos. The implications are that these were valuable and productive resulting in improved academic writing performance. Also, the high expectations expressed by the users of the videos for academic writing imply design considerations in the future to address the desires of users. The differences that technology supported learning bring must always be evaluated even for slight changes. As expected, an increase in the use of digital media raises concerns about equal access for all students to meet learning needs. The new data that emerge in this regard suggest that academic writing videos on YouTube relevant to South African contexts may be deemed exceptionally valuable to the users (Olasina & Mutula, 2015). Likewise, Talley & Scherer (2013) provide empirical evidence of improved performance by psychology students with exposure to online videos to self-explain learning content using their words in a study among African- Americans.

Finally, best practices to fit academic writing videos on the YouTube site show that factors such as reactions, relevance, interactivity, memory retention, and pre-selection/evaluation of credible videos are important. In other words, some of the affordances of the YouTube platform for education may be fundamental to the development of transformative technology pedagogies. The key results indicate that the choice of YouTube videos to learn academic writing by students may be on an individual basis, careful monitoring, and ultimately, an excellent structured curriculum. Based on the results, the current study recommends that for success to be achieved the use of online videos for academic writing should be implemented after instructors and administrators have received professional development. The implication of the results for mentors and teachers is that they may now play multiple roles as facilitator, teacher and learners interchangeably in the emerging digital media culture. A careful analysis of the results reveals that as a consequence of the ease of the YouTube facilitated sessions (ability to playback videos), the reduction of instructor intervention increased student autonomy and aided improved writing performance of the students. Consequently, instrumental YouTube video interventions may be most appropriate for individual or collaborative writing assignments, homework, and pedagogical writing practices. The current research focused specifically on YouTube videos and their integration into different contents of academic writing based on sound and flexible pedagogical methods and practices. Emerging data from the study show that selected videos concentrated on each of the five core academic writing themes to promote the performance of students. It is important to highlight that the videos generated comments, discussions, and debates among the users in a way that suggest these contributed to improved

writing performance. The analysis of the learning trend of YouTube videos suggests a practice where users can access wider networks of experts and peers to foster new media literacies that improve knowledge. Voogt *et al.* (2013) recommend an integration of 21st-century skills in curriculum and assessment, a presence of strategies to adopt innovative teaching and learning practices and sufficient teacher training for transformative technology pedagogy.

Conclusion

There is little doubt that the YouTube site is one of the mediums of the moment. Although music and entertainment make the technology accessible, given that the videos are limited in length and give their messages as efficiently as possible, they constitute a framework for education and learning in a new digital age. The achievement of educational values of videos on YouTube may vary based on instructional content. Meanwhile, the evaluation of the dynamics of user experiences is revealing to help address negative experiences and maximize the affordances of the YouTube site for academic reasons. YouTube videos can facilitate improved performance in academic writing by adding new elements to the traditional learning techniques. Educators may leverage on student created videos and interchanges to inform collaborative learning culture and research in a developing country context. The present research helps gain a deeper understanding of students' experiences with YouTube videos while learning specific writing skills such as grammar, vocabulary, organization, referencing, and collaborative writing by exploring broad themes based on the focus group and interview data and the writing process. Future studies can enhance on the generalization of the results by using larger sample sizes and older and mature students. There is a need for more studies on the nature and process of collaborative writing and the perceptions of students. Ultimately, the participation of the YouTube group provides a framework of integration of videos to academic writing that sheds new light on how the students interacted with the selected videos and other users in diverse ways. The current study is limited in some ways. For instance, participants are self-selected and do not represent a broad and dispersed population. Also, limited data collection tools have been used, whereas the use of ethnographic methods, and quantitative approaches may have added breadth and scope to the study.

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