

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**— Project Writing in Business Courses,
Students' Writing Needs and Faculty Beliefs
about Writing: the Case of St. Mary's College**

By

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**June 2005
AAU
ADDIS ABABA**

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By
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Abstract

In college and university level education writing assignments are commonly used as means to strengthen what has been taught theoretically and foster independent learning. Though the primary concern of major course writing assignments (other than English language assignments) is not improving the students' writing ability, the process students undergo through to complete the assignments help them improve their writing abilities.

Research in the last two decades focused on the analysis of writing assignments which are believed to help students develop multiple skills and knowledge. This research also focused on this important issue which the new Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia has given emphasis. The research tried to see the language and research skills demand the writing assignments may have on business faculty students of the TVET program at St. Mary's College. The attitude of the business faculty regarding writing ability to complete project assignments is also investigated and analyzed. Questionnaires both for teachers and students, interview for teachers and document analysis of the TVET curriculum and assignment handouts were used to obtain data.

It was found out that lack of writing and research skills posed difficulty on students to complete their writing assignments, and they would like their English courses to acquaint them with these skills which they feel lack most. Instructors were also found to consider writing ability as being important in giving feed back and grading the assignments although their effort lacked consistency even within the same departments. Based on the findings suggestions for improvement are forwarded.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Statement of the problem

In colleges and universities writing tasks are common. They are believed to be useful in strengthening what has been taught theoretically, promote autonomous learning and encourage self-discovery, Zhu (2002).

The new TVET program, launched in 2003, has also chosen project-writing assignments as viable means of developing students' creativity and problem solving ability. These assignments are given at the end of each main course study, and hence are believed to strengthen what has been taught theoretically.

While the above assumptions may sound good theoretically, empirical evidence should be sought to prove the claim. Eyob & Bamlaku (2004) also underscore that though there is a good "theoretical optimism" on the whole TVET program based on the experience of other countries, research in the area is needed to prove its practicality and importance.

One angle to see the practicality of project assignments is the language and research skills' demand they may have on the part of the students. Could the language demand be a barrier to complete the assignment? What research or other skills are needed to complete the projects? How are English courses dealing with these language and also research skills' demands? What are faculty beliefs regarding the place of writing in the main courses? Answers to these questions could, in some way, give a picture of how problems associated with project works could be tackled.

1.2 Objectives of the study

The main objective of this research thesis is to investigate and analyze students' project writing assignments in their main courses, their felt needs in writing and the business faculty beliefs about writing ability. More specifically, the research tries to answer the following questions:

- i) What are the objectives of project writing assignments in business courses?
- ii) What kinds of skills are needed to complete the writing assignments?
- iii) What do students feel about the contribution of their English common courses in completing their writing assignments?
- iv) What are business faculty beliefs regarding writing ability in completing writing assignments?
- v) What are students felt language needs to complete their project assignments?

1.3 Significance of the study

This research is mainly believed to be significant in two ways. Firstly, it provides information for colleges implementing the TVET curriculum about the problems associated with project writing. Secondly, it informs the English departments on the adequacy of the existing English courses in solving students writing problems. Hence, the English departments could revise their English courses in light of the findings of this research. Furthermore, the study can serve as a basis for further research in the area.

1.4 Scope of the study

The subjects of this research are second year regular students at St. Mary's College who registered for a 10+3 (diploma study). Of these students, only those who study in the departments of Information Technology, Secretarial Science and Office Management, Marketing and Accounting are chosen.

Although attempt was made to study all kinds of writing assignments given in all the courses, only project writing assignment handouts in main courses given by the business faculty were available in the four departments. Therefore, the research didn't include the writing assignments given in supportive and common courses.

1.5 Limitations of the study

Due to time constraint, document analysis of English courses was not conducted. To find out how often students practice summarizing, paragraph writing, essay writing, etc in the English courses, student questionnaire was used. The researcher feels that document analysis of the courses themselves could yield better results.

At the beginning of the research, sample teachers and students from three private colleges were chosen. Because of lack of cooperation from the other two, only St. Mary's College is taken as a subject.

1.6 Methods of the study

To find out the place of writing in the main courses across the four departments, document analysis of the TVET curricula, assignment handouts and students' written projects were used.

Students' questionnaire was also used to investigate problems associated with project writing, the language practice they had in English courses and their perceived writing needs. Teacher questionnaire was used to investigate faculty beliefs about writing. Interview was also conducted to extract adequate information in this respect.

1.7. Definitions of terms

Project Assignment may have different meanings. In the context of this research, however, it is confined to the kind of writing students produce by collecting data through various techniques to solve the problems of different organizations for which they write the projects.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Related Literature

2.1 English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP)

EAP courses are intended to address the needs of students so that they develop the skills necessary to succeed in the main subject courses. EAP refers to “any English teaching that relates to study purposes” (Dudley-Evans and St John, 1998:34). Close inspection of the other disciplines, therefore, provides useful information for the development or revision of EAP courses. EAP course development, in other words, is closely tied with research in the various “linguistic stylistic and communicative genres of academic disciplines, as well as the specific study skills required for them” (Ibid).

A logical question here is how specific should the teaching of EAP be with respect to other disciplines in which students are expected to perform better. Should EAP courses focus on general study skills, like listening and note taking, writing summaries etc. or should it focus on teaching specific grammar, terminologies, and stylistic expressions etc. of the disciplinary genres? This leads us to the distinctions scholars have made between EGAP and ESAP.

Dudley-Evans and St John (1998:23) forward a distinction between EGAP and ESAP. EGAP focuses on core language skills common to all disciplines. These skills include study activities like listening to lectures, participating in supervisions, tutorials, seminars, reading textbooks and articles, writing essays, dissertations and reports. On the other hand, ESAP focuses on language features that distinguish one discipline from the other.

ESAP teaching makes use of the skills learnt in EGAP to tackle tasks required in students' actual subjects. Therefore, ESAP aims at helping students transfer, for example, skills in writing reports to the writing of actual subject-specific reports.

There are some factors that should be taken into account before deciding whether we should teach ESAP or EGAP courses. Among these factors are the lengths of "each EAP course, target situation, the needs and competence level of the learners etc" (Ibid). Thus during the first semester of university level courses it is possible to concentrate on EGAP, particular skills like scanning and skimming journals and books, understanding lectures, asking questions, using the dictionary, summarizing, revising for exam etc, the next semester could be followed by ESAP- the teaching of more fundamental but "peripheral" skills which help students perform tasks well in discipline-specific courses. These skills are "interpreting graphs, understanding instructions during lab work, understanding library classification systems, designing questionnaires, conducting interviews etc."

2.2 Writing in EAP/ESP Courses

There seems to be a common understanding that teaching writing in EAP/ESP Courses should aim at equipping students with the necessary skills to tackle discipline-specific writing tasks. An understanding of what writing in EAP involves is, therefore, important in this regard. Early works of language analysis for specific purposes focused on register analysis which includes the occurrence of verb forms in scientific English (Swales, 1990). In the past recent there was a tendency to consider writing as an individualized cognitive process. This kind of tendency is believed to lack a very important social dimension (Ibid). Kaller-Cohen and Worfer A. (1987:123) warns that student writings in universities and colleges should not be solely regarded as "individually-oriented, inner-directed" processes but "as much as an acquired response to the discourse conventions which arise from preferred ways of creating and communicating knowledge within the particular communities." These are what Cane and Swain (1980) termed "sociolinguistic" and "discourse competences."

above. The reason is that many academic writing requirements in the disciplines may not be explicitly stated in the curriculum because of which it is difficult for an outsider to describe.

However, determining how much “carry over” has taken place from ESL writing courses to subject-specific writing tasks is very essential for the development of the ESL courses and to address students’ needs. It is also equally important to determine students’ perception of this transfer of skills from ESL writing courses to content courses, Leki and Karson (1994). The endeavor in this respect could yield better results if it is backed up with research.

2.4 A Synthesis of Approaches to the Teaching of Writing in Discipline-Specific Courses

After analysis of the different approaches to writing, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) came up with a synthesis of approaches to the teaching of writing in ESP. According to them the product approach, which involves the presentation of model texts, similar to which another text is to be written, and the process approach, which focuses on the individuals’ thinking and the process of producing a text, combined with a social constructionist approach, which considers writing as an act of socializing with discourse communities, a new ESP writing approach can be achieved. They claim that this new approach combines the strengths of all the three approaches. The stages in their approach are:

- Develop rhetorical awareness by looking at model texts,
- Practice specific genre features, specially moves and writer stance,
- Carry out writing tasks showing awareness of the needs of individual readers and the discourse community and the purpose of the writing, and
- Evaluate the writing through peer review for reformulation (p. 118).

2.5 Faculty Beliefs in Writing in ESP

Identifying faculty beliefs about the place of writing in subject specialty and ESP courses plays a very important role for the development of the courses themselves. A mismatch between faculty beliefs about writing requirements in ESP courses and subject specialty courses can result in a major deficiency in the students' writing ability.

Regarding this, Jenkins, et al. (1993:52) state that it is important to determine the attitude of faculty members (in their case engineering) to the role of "writing in the whole program if course for writing and self- help skills are to be developed." They further note that teachers' perception of writing requirements in engineering courses could determine the place of writing in ESP courses. If writing is believed to be less important in the major courses, it is unlikely that writing is emphasized in ESP courses.

It is, therefore, wise to see if faculty beliefs in writing in ESP courses are based on research. Bridgman and Carlson (1983:24), for example, studied the writing needs of entering graduate students in various disciplines and showed a mismatch between writing requirements and the belief of the faculty itself. The faculty believes in the importance of writing skills for professional success after graduation, but the same skill is believed to be unimportant for success in graduate school. Hence, writing tasks for example, thesis and report writing, pose a major "hurdle" for the students because of which the students resort to providing conceptual framework of the thesis or report, whereas the actual writing is done by someone else.

While collaboration between subject teachers and ESP teachers is important in developing ESP materials, how much of the subject knowledge the ESP teachers should have could pose a problem. Johns (1997) advises ESP teachers to consult subject specialists about the articles they choose and learn from their students despite the attitudes of the science faculty towards language and time constraints they face.

Johns (1997) also argues that parallel classes yield better results for students when designing a course. This could mean that students benefit a lot if the faculty's schedule

presents subject specialty courses and ESP courses side by side. In this way, students can make use of their knowledge and skills that they learn from the ESP courses to complete the writing tasks in their subject specialty courses or the vice versa.

2.6 Learners' Needs in EAP/ ESP

Learners' communicative needs in their discipline-specific courses are assumed to be reflected in EAP/ ESP courses. Well thought out and designed EAP/ ESP courses are likely to give learners ample tasks and practices in the skills that they are going to make use of in discipline-specific courses.

According to Jacobson (1986: 173), Learners' needs in EAP have been defined specially "in terms of knowledge and skills needed for communication." Cane and Swain (1980) have termed these skills and knowledge "communicative competence" which contains four components:

- Grammatical Competence: knowledge of the vocabulary, sentence construction, spelling etc. in short knowledge of the code of the language.
- Sociolinguistic Competence: knowledge of appropriateness of meaning and form determined by factors such as topic and status of participants.
- Discourse Competence: knowledge of the way in which grammar and meaning are used to provide coherent and cohesive texts.
- Strategic Competence: knowledge of the way in which language is used to communicate an intended meaning or to compensate for miscommunication.

Jacobson (1986) further notes that there are ample research studies on learners' needs in structural and lexical knowledge to form grammatical competence, for example, (Latore, 1969); on learners' needs of sociolinguistic competence (Munby,1978); on learners'

needs of discourse competence (Swales, 1981) etc. but studies on learners' needs in strategic competence for EAP are scanty.

EAP teachers' assumption of how students need to use the language may have negative effects (Jacobson, 1986). He further explains that teachers need to prepare students to use the language in situations where students are likely to use them, even though this may demand teachers to work in contexts outside their experience.

There could also be a priority of skills needed in EAP. Non-native speakers, for example, need communication skills urgently for their academic career than for their professional career (Huckin and Olsen, 1983). Thus needs analysis for EAP need not only include the kind of communicative competence/s students need most but also determine their priority.

2.7 Learners' Needs in Writing in Discipline-Specific Courses

Hutchinson & Waters (1987:2) emphasize that the main concern of ESP lies on "needs analysis, text analysis, preparing learners to communicate effectively in the tasks prescribed by their study or work situations. "

Many research studies in the area of student writing needs, for example Bridgman and Carlson (1984), Horowitz (1986), Keller-Cohen and Wolf (1987), Zhu (2002) focused on faculty survey of the types of writing assignments and rhetorical skills needed to complete them. There are also research studies conducted to determine faculty reaction to student writing (Jenkins, Jordan and Weiland, 1993; Santos, 1988) and the cognitive operations required of students in completing a writing task (Currie, 1993).

Focus on what the faculty believes about student writing needs may reveal useful information. The information obtained could be crosschecked with the writing skills emphasized in EAP/ESP courses and serve as a basis for EAP/ ESP course material revision or reevaluation. However, we need also to see students' perception of their writing needs.

In this regard, Leki and Karson (1994) emphatically note that writing requirements and needs set by the faculty need to take into account students' perceptions about these requirements and needs. They further elaborate that students' perceptions of their needs could include the importance they would like teachers to attach to error correction (the work of Leki, 1991) and their past and anticipated writing needs (the works of Kroll, 1979; Ostler, 1980).

It is, however, likely that faculty perception of student writing requirements and needs may go against students' perceptions of their writing needs. While a finding of such a mismatch is highly useful for the faculties EAP/ESP course book revision, it should also serve as a basis for further research. Leki and Karson (1994) advise that the nature of this mismatch should closely be looked at without taking the extreme positions that we, teachers, know better what students need, or that our EAP courses should immediately include the expressed desires and needs of our students.

2.8 Learners' Motivation in EAP Materials Preparation

If EAP materials do not consider the question of student motivation, it is unlikely that the material will achieve its intended purpose. Thus, the material should insure that learners are positively motivated in carrying out the language tasks, study the forms of the language itself and appreciate the degree to which subject specificity is dealt with (Toms, 2003)

Various ways of motivating EAP learners are suggested by scholars like Skehan (1982) and others. Dudley-Evans and St John's (1998) suggestion seems to be core in the development of EAP courses. According to them, the first task in this regard should be selecting the appropriate material followed by setting the right task. The "carrier content", a term they used to refer to the input text chosen to perform language activities, should be interesting and motivating to the learners. This could be followed by setting the appropriate language activities to practice within the domain of the input text. A good example the scholars cite to show this is the teaching of the language of comparison for

students of economics using statistical tables. The most “eye catching and motivating” element which is the carrier content is the statistics. The language that students use to make comparison is the “real content”.

On the other hand, Jenkins and Weiland (1993) warns EAP practitioners not to use general English course books in place of subject-specific course of study even in the absence of ready made EAP materials. With respect to this, Toms (2003:2) explains:

A general [English] course book will not, cannot and should not take the place of a syllabus designed to meet the specific needs of specific learners in specific situation. It can ...serve as a source of activities or ideas. To allow it to serve as a de facto syllabus is ...to do students and ourselves [EAP teachers] grave disservice.

From the above quote, we can say that Toms (2003) believes that training students in the specific language skills, within the specific situations is a necessity. On the other hand, other scholars argue that the skills students need to be taught are general and they develop subject-specific skills by themselves.

2.9 Learners’ Fluency in EAP Materials Preparation

Learners’ Fluency should also be taken into account in preparing EAP materials in university-level education. By fluency we mean students’ competence in the perception and production of written and spoken communicative language “as well as the extent to which learners are trained in certain skills relevant in their fields of study” (Toms 2003). Therefore, not only language competence but also students’ special training in subject-specific disciplines, needs to be considered if our EAP material is to be useful.

Among other factors, the number of EAP students in one class need also be considered in construction of lessons. To check the level of fluency before, or in between the EAP course, Toms suggests customized informal tests which will give a true picture of language competence and the degree of subject-related specific skills. It is this picture that should determine practitioners' further action (Ibid).

2.10 Research on Writing Assignment in Discipline-Specific Courses

In her extensive review of research studies in writing in academic contexts, Zhu (2002:111) stresses that writing assignment analysis in academic contexts is “both theoretically and pedagogically motivated.” It is pedagogically motivated in that analysis of the tasks help teachers understand and make use of students' academic writing needs. On the theoretical end, writing researchers “hope to better understand the nature of communicative conventions in different discourse communities as well as student acquisition of those conventions.”

Zue (Ibid) has also discussed that research on writing task analysis has taken three trends of which two are more or less similar. Earlier research works focused on analyzing types of writing assignments across different disciplines. This is what Leki and Karson (1994) called making a “catalogue” of assignments. The methodology used in this survey studies were found to be deficient in that the researchers came with already predetermined categories of writing assignments (essays, reports, book reviews...), whereas the actual assignment types may not be accurately categorized under the already predetermined categories.

The second line of research in writing assignment analysis is reported to be a recent phenomenon. Instead of categorizing assignment types from across the disciplines, one or a few related disciplines are selected for the analysis of the assignments and categorization their types. According to Braine (1995:115), “this shift in focus is based on the assumption that separate disciplines are singular discourse communities with their own writing conventions.

The third line of research in writing in academic contexts examined “the functions of writing, the context for writing, and the role writing plays in helping students learn the discourse practices of the community” (Zhu, 2002:112). Among these research works cited are Berkenkotter, Huckin and Ackerman (1991), Herrington (1985) and Prior (1998). Herrington’s (1985) research, one of the most usually quoted, is conducted on the nature of writing tasks in two chemical engineering classes. He came up with a finding that the two classes, the Lab and Design, served as two different forums in which the writers’ roles, audiences and types of warrants used to claim their support are different.

2.11 Review of local research

Ample research studies have not been conducted on the writing needs of students in private colleges. Specially, writing needs of students and faculty beliefs on TVET programs are almost untouched. This could be because the TVET programs is only two years old and its effect cannot fully be examined within this time.

However Eyob and Bamlaku (2004) tried to assess the strengths and weakness of project assignments conducted at the end of each main course’s theoretical instructions. The methods they used were document analysis, discussions and interviews with department heads. Questionnaires for students were also distributed and analyzed. Their findings indicated that conflict and lack of cohesion among groups producing the same projects, lack of participation by some members of the group , lack of data and cooperation from organizations and lack of checking mechanisms by teachers to screen out who is doing well in group assignments were found to be major problems. The research also revealed that students have positive attitudes towards project assignments and consider them important; however, this research does not address the language and research abilities those project assignment demand of students.

There are few research studies in the area of language needs of college /university students. Moris (1982), for example, tried to assess the communicative needs of AAU students in the natural science, social science, technology, medicine, law, education, pharmacy and library science faculties. All faculty members and students participated in the research. Results from teachers questionnaire analysis showed that the most important skills students need were listening, reading, writing and speaking except for the faculties of law and medicine. Students' questionnaire analysis also showed that the receptive skills are the most frequent skills students used. Speaking (to ask and answer questions) and writing for exams were found to be frequent.

Mekasha (1994) also tried to evaluate the syllabuses of Unity Private Language School in relation to the needs of the learners. He found out that the purpose of learning English in this school is academic or educational, and speaking, listening, writing and reading were the skills students needed in order of importance. Though students had high interest for group and pair work the whole class mode of assessment was frequently used. Grammar teaching was also found to be emphasized in this school.

In the same way, Abiy (1990) tried to investigate and analyze the communicative needs of high school students in Addis Ababa. Listening, reading, writing and speaking were found to be frequently used in that order. This finding is consistent with Moris's (1982) findings.

Solomon (2001) also tried to see the relevance of business English courses at Commercial College of Addis Ababa to the needs of employing organizations. He found out that the actual skill level of graduates was lower than the expectations of employers. Verbal communicative skills, letter and report writing skills, ability to use word processors etc were found to be highly needed.

This research tries to see the language and research skills TVET students at St.Mary's College need to complete the project assignments given at the end of each main course instruction. Faculty beliefs regarding the place of writing ability and students felt writing needs will also be investigated and analyzed.

CHAPTER THREE

Method of the Study

As stated earlier, the objective of this paper is to investigate and analyze the place of writing in business courses in the TVET (diploma) program and the writing needs of the students at St. Mary's College from the point of view of the skills required to complete the assignments in their major courses. In addition to the above questions, attempt has also been made to investigate the beliefs of faculty members regarding writing in the major courses.

The study also tried to see whether the students' English courses addressed the perceived needs of these students or not. However, the researcher doesn't claim to have addressed this question adequately. It's only from the students' perspective that the question is viewed. This line could be taken as a viable area for further and thorough research.

3.1 Research tools

To come up with adequate data to answer the above research questions, it was found necessary to use different research tools. Document analysis, questionnaires both for TVET diploma students and teachers and interviews for teachers were conducted.

3.1.1 Document Analysis

Document analysis is conducted to investigate the place of writing in the TVET (diploma) program and determine the objectives of writing projects in the students' major courses.

The result from this analysis is compared with the writing assignments given by major course instructors to see the match. A close analysis of these assignments is also made to see what particular writing skills they demand of students.

3.1.2 Students' Questionnaire:

This questionnaire is prepared to investigate the perceived writing needs of the students to complete their writing assignments in their major courses. Various questions regarding the importance of writing in college, the students' felt writing needs and the specific feedback they would like to get are designed to achieve the above objective. Though not thoroughly, questions regarding the role of the English common courses in helping them complete the assignments in the major courses are also designed.

The student questionnaire is designed by adapting the research questionnaire used at San Francisco State University to investigate the problem of improving the writing of San Francisco State University students. The actual questionnaire is not directly used because it was not accessible, but it was quite possible to extract the questions from the analysis, which is easily accessible on line.

Prepared questionnaires were distributed to representative samples of TVET program students in four business departments; viz, SSOM (Secretarial Science and Office Management), Mkt Mgt (Marketing Management), Acct (Accounting) and IT(Information Technology) students, all in the 2nd year program.

From a total of 120 questionnaires distributed to students in the four departments, 22 of the 22 from SSOM, 34 of the 34 from Information Technology department, 36 of the 38 from the Mkt Mgt department, and 24 of the 28 from the Acct department were returned and analyzed on department basis.

3.1.3 Teacher's Questionnaire:

Teacher questionnaires are designed to investigate faculty beliefs regarding writing demands in business courses and the specific feedback they provide to their students.

This questionnaire is also designed by adapting the questionnaire used in the above mentioned university. The questions extracted from the analysis of the paper were modified and additional questions were included to address the specific research questions mentioned earlier.

All main business course instructors teaching TVET year I & II students this semester are included in the study. Six instructors from the department of marketing and Information Technology each, five from Secretarial Science and Office Management and four from Accounting participated in the study.

3.1.4 Interview:

One instructor from each department, almost all of them department heads, were interviewed for half an hour or one to reveal what objectives the instructors want to achieve by the writing assignments in the major courses, what particular skills the writing assignments demand of the students and the problems associated with this.

3.2 Sampling Technique:

Out of a total of five hundred and forty-four students in five departments, seventy two students studying law are not included in the research because law is not considered to be a business course. This decision is made based on Zhu's (2002) research on business courses; however, Information Technology courses are considered as business courses and the students and teachers are included in the research. A valid number of sample students (25% of the whole) are taken.

Regarding instructors, all of them are included in the research to maximize the reliability of the research. But it is found necessary to use purposive sampling for interview. Department heads, which are believed to have ample knowledge and experience regarding the TVET program are included.

3.3 Subjects of the study

There are three levels of study in the TVET program. The first group studies in the 10+1 (certificate) level, the second group studies for two years for a 10+2 Certificate and the third group studies for three years for a 10+3 diploma. This research takes the 10+3 diploma students as subjects because they stay in the college for a relatively longer period of time and the importance attached to writing ability may be relatively higher than the other two programs.

Of these TVET students studying for a 10+3 diploma, this year entrants could not be included because they haven't started writing their major project work by the time this research is conducted, and therefore can't provide adequate information in this regard. But second year (10+3) diploma students have already completed their writing projects last year and this year and can provide adequate information. There are no third year diploma students in the TVET program, for the program was launched in 2003 G.C. Therefore, the subjects of this research are 2nd year diploma students in the TVET program studying in the regular division. Sample students and all teachers in the four departments are included in the research.

CHAPTER FOUR

Presentation and Analysis of Results

4.1 Results of Document Analysis

In this subsection TVET curriculum guides from MOE for training of Sales Person (year I), Assistant Sales Supervisor (year II) and Sales Supervisor (year III) in the field of Marketing Management; the training of Computer Operator (year I), IT assistant Technician (year II) and IT Technician (year III) in the field of Information Technology; the training of Junior Secretary (year I), Secretary (year II) and Administrative Secretary (year III) in the field of Secretarial Science and Office Management; the training of Beginner Accountant (year I), Accounting Clerk (year II) and Junior Accountant (year III) in the field of Accounting are studied and analyzed. In addition, project writing handouts given by instructors and students' written projects are analyzed.

4.1.1 Objectives of the TVET Program

The curriculum guide for TVET program states that its major objective is to produce 'Middle level' trainees that can actively participate to solve socio-economic problems of the county.

To achieve the above objective, the courses offered in each of the four fields of training are divided into three. First, there are main courses which focus on practical training of the student to perform effectively in the area of specialization. There is in-school training, project writing and apprenticeship. 70% of the total time is allotted for practical training, whereas 30% of the time is allotted for the pursuit of theoretical knowledge in school. There are also supportive and common courses which aim at developing the theoretical knowledge of the students to effectively perform the training and meet the exit profiles mentioned in each of the above training fields.

4.1.2 Writing in the TVET Program

4.1.2.1 Marketing Department

Year I

The major objective of training Sales Persons (year I, 10+3 students), as stated in the TVET curriculum, is to enable trainees sell goods and services; display, wrap/pack & label items, handle customers, administer sales related records, conduct inventories, demonstrate a professional's behavior etc. The project assignments distributed to students also state the above objectives in addition to the importance, method of writing, time of completion of each phase and the number of trainees that should work in a group.

Observation is indicated to be the main method of data collection technique. First students are expected to observe how customers are approached, inventories are conducted, goods and facilities are displayed, and dissatisfactions handled and analyze each step by step. After the detailed analysis, they evaluate each step in light of the scientific procedures they have learnt in class. Finally they recommend solutions for the problems they have observed. Therefore, the assignments demand, in addition to note taking and composing abilities, higher cognitive skills like analysis and evaluation the data they have collected.

Main course administration and evaluation is divided into three as stated in the curriculum. During Year I of the program, 108 hours, out of 912 hours, is given to project works. This is almost 12% of the total time. Out of the 66 marks allotted for the main courses, 8 marks go to two projects of two main courses. This constitutes 12.12% of the total mark to evaluate performance in the main courses.(See appendix D)

Year II

As the TVET curriculum guide puts it, at the completion of training as Sales Supervisors (year II) trainees are expected to assist in co-coordinating and conducting all sales related works like supervising sales related activities, assemble sales data, assist to perform bank clearing activities related to import activities, perform market mix activities etc. In addition to the skills required of them when completing year I study, they are also expected to purchase merchandise from the right source by the right price.

To complete the projects, students are expected to observe and describe how the above activities are done at work places, evaluate the whole process in light of effective and scientific procedures and suggest solutions for problems. Ability to write (describe) processes and interactions is essential to complete the projects. Analysis and evaluation of the whole process and application of scientific knowledge and procedures are also important as is the case in the first year.

Of the 897 hours allotted time for the main courses, project writing is given 87 hours. This constitutes 9.5% of the total time. As compared to year I project work time allotment (for two courses), students are given less time in year II, especially considering the number of courses (three course projects). Total mark allotted for project writing is 9.3% out of the total. Again considering the number of projects students write, the mark allotted doesn't seem to be enough.(See appendix E)

Year III

At the completion of year III training as Sales Supervisor, trainees are expected to develop skills of coordination and promotion activities, supervise sales activities, analyze marketing environment and consumer behavior, control customer service activities, collect and organize marketing data for decision. Besides supervision and administration of sales activities, students are expected to do market research. Marketing research course offered this semester is not only highly writing based, but also demands research skills.

Of the total of 937 hours given for apprenticeship, in school training and project writing for five major courses in year III (i.e. Marketing Research, Managing Promotion, Managing Distribution, Managing Sales and Principles of Marketing), 117 hrs, i.e. (12.4 %) of the total time is allotted to project writing. But they constitute only 8 marks value, out of the 67 mark allotted for the major course evaluation. Considering the number of main courses (5), supportive courses (2) and common courses (5), it seems very difficult to say that students can effectively write five projects with the time allotted. Of the total mark allotted for the main courses, only 8, i.e. around 11% is given to the projects, and this doesn't seem to be enough as compared to the previous projects.(See appendix F)

4.1.2.2 Department of Accounting

Year I

As stated in the curriculum, the exit profile (objectives that should be achieved after completing a year of training) for Beginner Accountants is to start accounting system, record business transaction, summarize and complete the accounting cycle, prepare financial statements, perform control assets and liabilities and account for payroll data. These skills are technical that demand the application of accounting concepts and principles and perform mathematical operations, and hence do not seem to demand much composing ability on the part of the students. The curriculum guide itself states that the objective of the writing projects is to develop problem solving skills and creativity.

One particular feature of accounting project writing is that there are on site and off-site phases. During the off-site phase, the students are made to solve problems in order to test how much they comprehended the initial phase of accounting taught theoretically in school. This is done for a hypothetical firm or organization set by the teacher. And the on-site projects are intended to put students in the world of business so that they creatively solve practical problems. This is clearly stated in accounting project handouts.

The projects also state that students are expected to generate a report which includes introduction, historical background of the business, objectives of the business, financial statements, conclusion and recommendations. Hence students need to read, translate and summarize documents, and write reports in order to complete the projects.

Out of a total of 866 hours allotted for the study of main courses, 450 (51.9%) hours is allotted for in school training, 104 hours (12% of the time) is for writing two projects and 312 hours (36% of the time) is for apprenticeship. Out of the 62 marks allotted for all the main courses, 8 marks (12.9% of it) go to projects. The rest 54 goes to continuous, final and apprenticeship evaluation.

Though teachers and also students reported that writing assignments are given in both common and supportive courses, the nature and type of the assignments couldn't be investigated objectively for none of the assignments were available. (See appendix G)

Year II

Four main courses are offered in the second year in order to produce trainees with the rank of Accounting Clerk. As the curriculum guide states, Accounting Clerks are expected to prepare journal vouchers, post journal entries, perform accounting, apply accounting concepts, determine production costs, assist in preparation of different budgets etc.

This year most of the project assignments are done off site. Imaginary organizations with their income and expenses, debts, selling prices, partnership prospects are given. And trainees are asked to solve the problems of the organizations by applying accounting concepts and procedures. There is, however, one on-site project assignment which demands students to translate documents and summarize to write the historical background of an organization, write reports on how the accounting system of the organization works, write conclusions and recommendation. In addition to applying accounting concepts, analyze and evaluate systems of accounting, the assignments demand writing ability.

912 hours is allotted for main course study in this year. Of these, 21 hours (2.3%) of the total time is allotted to project writing. Considering the number of projects (4 in this case), students may face shortage of time to write their projects effectively. Concerning mark allotment, project writing has only 4 marks (6% of the total mark) out of the 66. This kind of allotment may discourage students not to give attention to projects. (See appendix H)

Year III

As the curriculum guide states, the major objective of the training in year III is to produce Junior Accountants who can discharge the following responsibilities: relate revenues, costs and profits; handle financial and tax-related activities; apply computer systems to accounting etc.

The project assignments this semester, according to the instructors, are on-site projects, and when writing the introduction, background and current system of the organization, writing ability is called for. In addition, trainees are expected to interview people, observe processes, translate and summarize documents to collect data. Research ability is also needed

Course administration and Evaluation in year III is the same as those of year I and year II. 570 hours out of 982 is allotted for in school theoretical training of four main courses. 41 marks, i.e. 58.5% go to in school-training. Of the total of 982 hours, 100 hours are allotted for project writing, and of the total of 70 marks allotted for main course evaluation, only 7 marks, (10% of the total) is allotted for project writing. Once again, the time and mark allotted for four main course project writings do not seem to be encouraging. . (See appendix I)

Year II

The objective of the program in year II is not much different from that of year I. At the completion of year II training, students are expected to use manual typewriter to produce Amharic and English documents, use the word processor, handle telephone messages and office records properly.

Most of the project assignments students write this year do not seem to demand much composing ability since the focus is on enabling students copy well-formatted, clear and accurate letters or documents using both the typewriter & the computer in both languages. The focus here is accuracy and speed of typing. This doesn't mean that language ability doesn't help at all. The project assignment on "Accounting for Secretaries" is an off-site project on imaginary organization and do not seem to demand much composing ability.

912 hours of study is recommended by the TVET curriculum guide for training in three main courses, of which 100 hours (almost 11% of the total time) goes to project writing. And of a total of 68 marks allotted for main course evaluation 8 marks (around 11%) goes to project writing. The rest 32 marks go to common and supportive course evaluation. . (See appendix K)

Year III

As stated in the curriculum guide, in the year III program, students are trained for the rank of Administrative Secretary. Duties and responsibilities they are expected to discharge are:

plan and facilitate meetings and conferences, perform the duties of Assistant administrator; organize power point; exchange mail and organize secretarial office environment for pay roll data etc.

The project writing assignments this year, according to the instructors, demand students to gather data through observation and interview, read documents and write conclusions and recommend scientific procedures and techniques that help perform duties and responsibilities in a better way. So, writing ability is highly needed to complete this project. The same is true for “Office Automation” and “PC Trouble Shooting” courses.

Of the total of 762 hours allotted for two main courses, 100 hours (13.1% of the total time) and the same percentage of marks is allotted to project writing. (See appendix L)

4.1.2.4 Information Technology

Year I

After one year training in this department, trainees are expected to be capable of working in the areas of office automation, internet service provision, multimedia and virtual reality modeling and PC maintenance and trouble shooting. Four of the major courses offered this semester are designed to enable trainees to discharge the above responsibilities efficiently.

In order to materialize the above objectives, as it is the case in other departments, much time is allotted to practical tasks through project writing and apprenticeship training. Before the practical tasks, intensive in-school training through theoretical teaching and laboratory training is given under the supervision of instructors.

Of the 967 hours allotted for four main courses, project writing is allotted 155 hours (16% of the total). This shows that high emphasis is given to project writing for IT courses than for courses in other departments. Of the 70 marks allotted for four main courses 12(17.1% of the total) goes for project writing.

Analysis of the project assignments reveal that students are expected to write a full background history and current system of documentation a certain organization uses.

prepare efficient data base, payroll system etc using their computer skills. To complete the projects students need to analyze documents of the organization, interview workers, read and summarize down loaded information and use them in their projects. These tasks are indicated in the project handouts.

Projects on internet service are also analyzed .It was observed that besides applying basic skills to manipulate internet services, students are expected to gather information about the history of internet services and its current status in Ethiopia , summarize them and include in their projects. Reading, summarizing and composing abilities are highly needed to complete the projects. Data gathering skills are also highly needed (See appendix M)

Year II

The objective of the program this year is to produce IT assistant technicians capable of handling activities in the area of web page authoring, basic computer programming and PC maintenance and trouble shooting.

To achieve the above objectives, a total of 962 hours is allotted for three main course training. 150 hours (15% of the total time) is given to project writing. As compared to the time allotment for project writings in other departments, Information Technology writing projects are allotted much time. This could be due to the amount of time and effort needed to write the projects and prepare application on the computer. The mark allotted for project writing assignments is also higher than the marks allotted for project writings in other departments. Of the 70 marks allotted for 3 main course studies, 12 marks (17.1% of the total marks) go to project writing. This shows that project work is highly believed to play an important role in the training of efficient IT assistant technicians.

The project assignments this year also demand different skills. Students are expected to gather data on the system an organization uses (through interview, observation, and document analysis.), the status of the computers in the organization etc and write them in their projects. They are also expected to write the objectives, importance, scope, the methodology, and recommendation etc of their projects. Reading, summarizing, composing and data collection skills are highly needed, in addition to analysis, application and evaluation skills.(See appendix N)

Year III

As stated in the curriculum guide the main objective of year III training in the department of IT is to produce qualified and capable information technology technicians. Hence, trainees are expected to handle office automation, internet service provision activities, web page authoring, computer programming, PC maintenance and trouble shooting, database management and computer networking.

Most of the objectives mentioned in year III program are already mentioned in year I and year II curriculum guides. This means that students are expected to add new knowledge and develop skills to what they already have. New knowledge and skills they are expected to add include data base management and computer networking. The nature of the projects and the language demand is not that much different from the previous projects they write.

For three main course study and training 992 hours is allotted, of which project writing is allotted 150 hours (15%); and of a total of the 70 marks, 14.2% goes to project writing evaluation. We can say that project writing assignments in the department of IT are given ample time and more percentage value than assignments in other departments, and this could be because many of the courses are skill based and much practice is needed. (See appendix O)

4.2 Results of Student Questionnaire Analysis

Table 1: Students' perception about the important of writing for success

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Note at all	0	0	0	0	1	4.5	0	0
Not much important	0	0	1	4.2	1	4.5	0	0
Important	12	33.3	9	37.5	5	22.7	14	41.2
Very important	24	66.7	14	58.3	15	68.2	20	58.8
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

As shown in the table, almost all the students in the department of Marketing Management, Accounting, Secretarial Science and Office Management and Information Technology believe that writing (composing) ability is necessary to succeed in college. Students also believe in the importance of writing to succeed in major courses (assignment writing included) and to get good grades in final exams (see appendix A). Since the majority of them believe in the importance of writing ability in their course of stay in the college, there is no need to change their attitude towards writing.

Table 2: Students' perception about the importance of writing ability at work place

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Note at all	0	0	1	4.2	0	0	0	0
Not much important	5	13.9	3	12.5	1	4.5	1	2.9
Important	10	27.8	5	20.8	1	4.5	9	26.5
Very important	21	58.3	15	62.5	20	90.9	24	70.6
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

In the same way, the majority of the students in the four departments think that writing ability is important at work place. Especially Secretarial Science & Office Management students (90% of them) strongly believe that writing ability is very important. These students are expected to write many letters & memos at work places. According to their instructors, editing ability is very relevant to them. However at the level of Administrative Secretary, they might be expected to write letters, memos etc by themselves.

students feel insecure about their grammar even after taking two English common courses. This implies that attention should be given to how and in what intensity grammar lessons are presented and practiced in these departments.

Table 5: Students' felt vocabulary problems in completing assignments

Items	<i>Marketin</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
No problem at all	2	5.6	3	12.5	2	9.1	1	2.9
A few problems	14	38.9	8	33.3	4	18.2	10	29.4
Some problems	12	33.3	8	33.3	8	36.4	15	44.1
Major problems	8	22.2	5	20.8	8	36.4	8	23.5
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

Regarding vocabulary usage almost the same number (55%) of marketing and accounting students each reported to have some or major problems in writing their assignments. The figure rises to 72% in SSOM department, half of which feel that they have major problems. Once again more than 1/3 of the students in SSOM feel insecure regarding their vocabulary knowledge after taking two English courses. IT students (67.6% of them) feel to have a problem, out of which around 1/4 of the sample reported to have a major problem. As compared to grammar, vocabulary is found to be the area in which many students across the departments feel to have a problem.

Table 6: Students' felt mechanics problems in completing assignments

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
No problem at all	2	5.6	4	16.7	7	31.8	1	2.9
A few problems	17	47.2	7	29.2	8	36.4	16	47.1
Some problems	12	33.3	11	45.8	4	18.2	14	41.2
Major problems	5	13.9	2	8.3	3	13.6	3	8.8
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

In the department of Marketing, 47% of the students reported to have problems in mechanics to complete the assignments, the majority reporting to have some problems which affect their writing. Similarly (54.1%) of accounting students reported to have mechanics problems, the majority reporting to have some problems which affect their writing. SSOM students also claimed to have good ability in mechanics, whereas half of IT students reported that they have some or major problems, the majority reporting to have some problems.

Table 7: Students' felt organization problems in completing assignments

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
No problem at all	4	11.1	3	12.5	1	4.5	3	8.8
A few problems	11	30.6	8	33.3	9	40.9	13	38.2
Some problems	17	47.2	12	50	8	36.4	17	50.0
Major problems	4	11.1	1	4.2	4	18.2	1	2.9
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

Once again about half of the students across the departments, except SSOM, feel that they have some problems in organizing their ideas into paragraphs or essays while writing their assignments. The majority of the rest of the students reported that they have no or insignificant problem. The skill of organizing ideas in a logical order is very important in writing reports or projects of more than a page, and almost half of students do not seem to be very confident with their ability in this respect.

Table 8: Students' felt content problems in writing assignments

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
No problem at all	8	22.2	4	16.7	1	4.5	3	8.8
A few problems	7	19.4	9	37.5	11	50.0	15	44.1
Some problems	15	41.7	10	41.7	6	27.3	15	44.1
Major problems	6	16.7	11	42	4	18.2	1	2.9
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

This table indicates whether the student's knowledge of the subject matter interferes with completing their writing assignments. Accounting students (58.4% of them) reported that they have some or major problems. Almost equal number of Accounting (45.9%) and SSOM (45.5%) and IT (46.9%) students reported to have some or major problems of content knowledge that affect their writing. The other half of the students think that lack of content knowledge doesn't significantly affect their writing. If almost half of the students feel unconfident about their knowledge of the subject matter, it is unlikely that either the teachers or the students believe that the writing students produce is substantive.

Table 9: Students' felt problems on the use of data collection skills to complete writing assignments

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
No problem at all	7	9.4	3	12.5	3	13.6	8	23.5
A few problems	11	30.6	7	29.2	5	22.7	12	35.3
Some problems	10	27.8	9	37.5	8	36.4	13	38.2
Major problems	8	22.2	5	20.8	6	27.3	1	2.9
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

As shown in the table, half of the students in Marketing, 58.3% of the students in Accounting and 63.7% of them in SSOM departments have some or major problems in using data collection skills to obtain appropriate data to write their project paper. Such problems could include writing good questionnaires, preparing interview questions & conducting them, analyzing documents etc. Only a few of the students across the departments reported to have no problem at all. However, the majority of the students in Marketing department (58.8%) reported that they have no or little problem in this regard.

Table 10: Students' felt Problems on summarizing documents to complete assignments

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
No problem at all	9	25.0	1	4.2	7	31.8	4	11.8
A few problems	7	19.4	13	54.2	7	31.8	12	35.3
Some problems	19	52.8	6	25.0	5	22.7	16	47.1
Major problems	1	2.8	4	16.7	3	13.6	2	5.9
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

Around half of the students in Marketing and IT departments admit that they have some problems in summarizing documents. The rest of the students in these departments believe that summarizing is not a skill that poses them a great difficulty in writing their assignments. On the other hand, 41.7% and 36.1% of the students in accounting and SSOM departments reported to have a problem in summarizing texts. Like the other skills discussed earlier, not a few of the students across the departments seem to have a problem and may face difficulty when summarizing documents of organizations to include in their projects.

Table 11: Students' felt problems on translating documents to complete assignments

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
No problem at all	6	16.7	3	12.5	5	22.7	3	8.8
A few problems	10	27.8	6	25	7	31.8	15	44.1
Some problems	16	44.4	9	37.5	6	27.3	12	35.3
Major problems	4	11.1	6	25	4	18.2	4	11.8
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

While writing assignments/ projects, students may need to translate documents from Amharic into English. This is so when they write the history and current status of the organizations or companies on which their project is based. The skill of translation becomes important here.

Very few of the students across the departments, except SSOM, reported that they have no such problem at all. 27.8% and 25% of the students in Marketing and Accounting respectively, 31.8% and 44.1% in SSOM & IT departments respectively reported to have few problems. However, over half of the students in Marketing (55.5%) and Acct (62.5%) believe that they have some or major problems in translating documents. Around 46% of the students in IT & SSOM departments also reported to have the same problem. It can be said that not a few of the students across the departments feel insecure in their ability to translate documents from Amharic to English or the vice-versa, and hence doubt the accuracy of the information in their writing.

Table: 12 Students' use of multiple drafts to complete writing assignments

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	3	8.3	4	16.7	4	18.2	3	8.8
Occasionally	15	41.7	7	29.2	11	50	11	32.4
Often	8	22.2	11	45.8	7	31.8	12	35.3
Very often	10	27.8	2	8.3	0	0	8	23.5
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

Half of the students in Marketing, 45.9% in Accounting 68.2% in SSOM and 41.2% in IT departments reported that they never or occasionally use multiple drafts when writing their assignments. As shown in the table, few of the students in Marketing, Accounting and IT departments used multiple drafts often or very often. No student in the department of SSOM uses multiple drafts very often.

A good way of producing effective writing as suggested by many scholars like White (1980), Raimes (1983), Hedge (1988) is to use multiple drafts. However, many Business students at St. Mary's College seem to have ignored or are unaware of this, and failed to use one important technique to avoid many errors in their writing. It is not surprising that their writing may have lots of problems.

Table 13: Students' habit of showing their writing to their friends

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	3	8.3	3	12.5	4	18.2	5	14.7
Occasionally	20	55.6	10	41.7	6	27.3	11	32.4
Often	9	25.0	10	41.7	8	36.4	15	44.1
Very often	4	11.1	1	4.2	4	18.2	3	8.8
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

Slightly over half of the students in the department of IT and SSOM frequently show their writing to their friends to see if it is clear. 36.1% of the students in Marketing and 45.9% in SSOM departments reported to have the same habit. The rest of the students in these departments show their writing to their friends. On the other hand, only 36.1% of the students in the department of Marketing, 45.9% in Accounting reported that they show their writing to their friends for correction. On the whole, peer correction habit is not satisfactorily practiced by the students across the departments. As many scholars like Byrne (1988) advise peer correction for content and language could be more effective than any other kind of feedback, and many students (63.9%) from Marketing, 54.2% from Accounting, 45.5 from SSOM and 47.1% from IT departments do not seem to practice peer correction.

Table 14: Students' habit of showing their writing to an instructor

Items	Marketing		Accounting		Secretarial		Information	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	5	13.9	6	25	6	27.3	5	14.7
Occasionally	16	44.4	8	33.3	6	27.3	17	50
Often	12	33.3	5	20.8	7	31.8	11	32.4
Very often	3	8.3	5	20.8	3	13.6	1	2.9
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

Exactly 41.6% of the students in Marketing and Accounting departments each seek their instructors' help often or very often to improve their writing. 45.4% of SSOM students reported to have the same habit, but the figure drops to 35.3% in the case of IT students. The majority of the students reported that they occasionally or never seek their instructors help to improve their writing. Analysis of the open ended questionnaires reveals that students shun away from asking questions and explanations because they feel that repeated visit may annoy instructors.

Table 15: Response on the frequency with which students receive feedback

Items	Marketing		Accounting		Secretarial		Information	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	10	27	2	8.3	5	22.7	12	35.3
Occasionally	15	41.7	15	62.5	8	36.4	10	29.4
Often	9	25.0	3	12.5	7	31.8	8	23.5
Very often	2	5.6	4	16.7	2	9.1	4	11.8
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

According to the students' response, instructors' feedback on grammar and to students' writing is uneven. This may imply inconsistency regarding feedback given to students even in the same department. In the department of Marketing, for example, 27% of the students reported that their teachers never gave them feedback on grammar, whereas 5.6% of them reported to have received feedback very often.

Table 16: Response on the frequency with which students receive feedback on vocabulary

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	14	38.9	1	4.2	5	22.7	11	32.4
Occasionally	14	38.9	11	45.8	6	27.3	12	35.3
Often	8	22.2	9	37.5	9	40.9	7	20.6
Very often	0	0	3	12.5	2	9.1	4	11.8
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

In the same way, students' response to the frequency of vocabulary feedback they receive also shows inconsistency. On the whole, instructors attempt to give feedback on grammar is, though inconsistent, very much encouraged.

Table 17: Response on the frequency with which students receive feedback on organization

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	6	16.7	4	16.6	7	31.8	8	23.5
Occasionally	11	30.6	7	29.2	7	31.8	15	44.1
Often	15	41.7	13	54.2	8	36.4	7	20.6
Very often	4	11.1	0	0	0	0	4	11.8
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

Over half of the students in the department of Marketing reported to have received organization feedback often or very often. As shown in the document analysis, the nature of most of their project writing demands them to write paragraphs pages after pages, and feedback on the organization of their writing seems very important. However, 47.3% of them reported that the feedback they receive on the organization of ideas in their writing is not as frequent as expected.

Although many of the writing projects in the department of Accounting are number and table dominated, 54.2% of the students reported that they received feedback on organization often. As the document analysis shows, students of accounting write paragraphs or more in the introduction of their project, background history and current situation of the organization they are writing projects on. Instructors give feedback on organization of ideas on such projects. On the other hand, the majority of SSOM and IT students reported that they occasionally or never receive feedback on organization.

Table 18: Response on the frequency with which students receive feedback on content

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	5	13.9	6	25.0	5	22.7	8	23.5
Occasionally	13	36.1	7	29.2	6	27.3	11	32.4
Often	10	27.8	8	33.3	7	31.8	13	38.2
Very often	8	22.2	3	12.5	4	18.2	2	5.9
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

Half of the students across the departments reported that the feedback they receive on content is occasional or they never receive such feedback at all. As the curriculum states, the major objective of project writing is to strengthen what has been taught theoretically, and help students develop their problem solving ability and creativity. Feedback on content is, therefore, expected to be given often or very often for the majority of the students across the departments, except for most of the writing projects given to SSOM students. For such students, as discussed in the document analysis part, most project writing assignments focus on the speed, accuracy and formal correctness of different letter and memo writings.

Table 19: Response on the frequency with which students receive feedback on the format of their paper

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	4	11.1	3	12.5	7	31.8	9	26.5
Occasionally	16	44.4	11	45.8	4	18.2	14	41.2
Often	11	30.6	6	25.0	6	27.3	9	26.5
Very often	5	13.9	4	16.7	5	22.7	2	5.9
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

The table shows that most of the students across the departments receive feedback occasionally or never. It's only 50% of the students in the department of SSOM that reported that they receive feedback on format often or very often. Taking into account the kind of letters, memos and other office related writings they undertake, the majority of them should have received such feedback often or very often.

Table20: The frequency with which students would like to get feedback on grammar

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	11	30.6	3	12.5	7	31.8	5	14.7
Occasionally	11	30.6	7	29.2	1	4.5	15	44.1
Often	5	13.9	11	45.8	6	27.3	7	20.6
Very often	9	25.0	3	12.5	8	36.4	7	20.6
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

The majority of the students in Marketing (67.2%) and IT (58.8%) departments reported that they do not need much feedback on grammar for their writing assignments. On the other hand, 63.7% of the students from SSOM and 58.3% from Accounting departments would like grammar feedback often or very often. Since language ability especially grammar, is important to write or edit different letters, SSOM students' interest on grammar is justifiable.

Table 21: The frequency with which students would like to get feedback on vocabulary

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	8	22.2	2	8.3	3	13.6	3	8.8
Occasionally	17	47.2	8	33.3	8	36.4	12	35.3
Often	5	13.9	12	50.0	4	18.2	12	35.3
Very often	6	16.7	2	8.3	7	31.8	7	20.6
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

In the same way around half of the students across the departments (except in Marketing) reported that they would like vocabulary feedback often or very often. The same is true regarding feedback on mechanics. Only most of Marketing students seem to be confident in their writing and would like the feedback occasionally or never.

Table 22: The frequency with which students would like to get feedback on organization

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	6	16.7	5	20.8	5	22.7	5	14.7
Occasionally	11	30.6	4	16.7	4	18.2	12	35.3
Often	10	27.8	12	50	9	40.9	13	38.2
Very often	9	25.0	3	12.5	4	18.2	4	11.8
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

The majority of the students in Accounting and SSOM, 52.8% in Marketing and 50% in IT reported that they would like to get feedback on the organization of their writing from their major course instructors often or very often. The rest of them do not seem to need much feedback on organization. Only a few of the students reported that they never need such a feedback. Once again, this may imply the students' interest to improve their language and write better.

Table 23: The frequency with which students would like to get feedback on content

Items	Marketing		Accounting		Secretarial		Information	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	3	8.3	4	16.7	4	18.2	4	11.8
Occasionally	11	30.6	5	20.8	5	22.7	8	23.5
Often	14	38.9	11	45.8	10	45.5	12	35.3
Very often	8	22.2	4	16.7	3	13.6	9	26.5
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

As it is expected, the majority of the students across the departments would like to get content feedback often or very often. Only very few of the students would not like to get feedback on content.

Table 24: The frequency with which students would like to get feedback on data collection techniques

Items	Marketing		Accounting		Secretarial		Information	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	6	16.7	1	4.2	3	13.6	4	11.8
Occasionally	9	25.0	6	25	8	36.4	8	23.5
Often	11	30.6	12	50	3	13.6	17	50
Very often	10	27.8	5	20.8	8	36.4	5	14.7
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

Half of IT and SSOM, 70% of Accounting and 58.4% of Marketing students reported that they would like to get feedback on the kind of data collection technique they have used often or very often. The majority of the rest of the students would like to get such

feedback occasionally. Many of the course projects demand students to use different data collection techniques, and the data they gather depends greatly on their ability to use the techniques effectively. Feedback on techniques of data collection seems very important and students seem to be aware of this fact.

Table 25: Students' evaluation of the feedback they receive from major course instructors in improving their writing

Items	Marketing		Accounting		Secretarial		Information	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Not useful at all	2	5.6	0	0	5	22.7	0	0
Some what useful	3	8.3	6	25	5	22.7	2	5.9
Useful	17	47.2	10	41.7	6	27.3	16	47.1
Very useful	14	38.9	8	33.3	6	27.3	16	47.1
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

A great majority of the students across the departments, and (54.6%) of SSOM students reported that they have found the feedback they receive from their instructors useful or very useful in improving their writing. We can say that instructors' occasional comments on language can create a sense of improvement on the part of the student.

Table 26: Did the writing assignments help you

		Marketing		Accounting		SSOM		IT	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Learn the contents of the courses better	Yes	35	97.2	22	91.7	20	90.9	31	91.2
	Do not know	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	No	1	2.8	2	8.3	2	9.1	3	8.8
	Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100
Write better	Yes	32	88.9	18	75	20	90.9	30	88.2
	Do not know	1	22.8	2	8.3	2	9.1	0	0
	No	3	8.3	4	16.7	0	0	4	11.8
	Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

The great majority of the students in all the departments also reported that the writing projects and assignments helped them learn the contents of the course better, and improved their overall writing ability. We can say that students believe that project assignments are useful for them.

Table 27: Students' response on the frequency of sentence level practice in English common courses

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	2	5.6	6	25	5	22.7	1	2.9
Occasionally	11	30.6	11	45.8	4	18.2	16	47
Often	12	33.3	6	25	4	18.2	7	20.6
Very often	11	30.6	1	4.2	9	40.9	9	26.5
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	97

Though all the students in the four departments take the same English courses, their responses showed great variation. The variation is also apparent among students in the same department. For example, 47.1% of IT students say that they practiced sentence writing often or very often. On the other hand, the rest of the students consider sentence level practice is infrequent. 63.9% of Marketing and 59.1% of SSOM students practice sentence level writing often or very often, whereas only 29.9% of accounting students answered the same way.

Table 28: Students' response on the frequency of paragraph level practice in English common courses

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	1	2.8	3	16.7	3	13.6	6	17.6
Occasionally	9	25.0	1	4.7	6	27.3	6	17.6
Often	15	41.7	10	41.7	6	27.3	13	38.2
Very often	11	30.6	10	41.7	7	31.8	8	23.5
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	33	97.1

Again variation of responses is observed regarding the above question. However, the great majority of Marketing (72.3%) and Accounting (83.4%) of the students reported that they practice paragraph writing often or very often. Around 60% of SSOM & IT students reported the same. Much practice on paragraph writing in English common courses could help students write better in project writing assignments in major course.

Students' response to the frequency of practice on note-taking, summarizing, and essay writing are also inconsistent even within the same department (See appendix B). The inconsistency could occur because of the emphasis different English course instructors may place on the above practices in the classroom despite the same textbooks they use. However, this needs further investigation.

Table 29: Response on the usefulness of English courses to write the major course assignments better

Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Not at all	0	0	0	0	1	4.5	1	2.9
Not much	12	33.3	10	41.7	1	4.5	7	20.6
Much	11	30.6	8	33.3	8	36.4	8	23.5
Very much	13	36.1	6	25	12	54.6	18	52.9
Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

The majority of the students in all the departments believe that their English courses helped them very much to write their major course projects/assignments. Students seem to have benefited or believe that they have benefited from the English common courses.

The great majority of the students across the departments reported that they would like their English courses to acquaint them with the skills of data collection. As shown in the document analysis, these students go to different organizations, collect information through interview, document analysis, observation etc right from the first year of their study. They are not trained how to collect data through different means or do their English courses deal with this. This may cause them difficulty to complete their writing assignments. Their response also shows that they need the skills of data collection very much.

4.3 Results of Teacher Questionnaire and Interview Analysis

Instructors in the department of Marketing, Accounting, SSOM and IT were given questionnaires to see the place of writing in their respective departments and their beliefs regarding writing.

Almost all instructors across the departments responded that they give writing assignments in the major courses in addition to the project writings. Marketing department members reported that they give business report writing, summarizing documents and library research assignments. This was also confirmed by students' response. Accounting students reported that they give different assignments from texts and reference books that do not demand composing ability. SSOM instructors also reported that the other assignments they give to their students do not demand much composing ability. IT instructors also gave writing assignments, which mostly demand the ability to summarize down loaded information and report writing etc.

Most of the instructors across the departments also reported that they assigned 15% - 20% mark for such assignments. Some of the assignments are ungraded. However, variation among instructors in the same departments, for example marketing, IT, and accounting regarding mark allotment for writing assignments was observed. The smallest range indicated in the department of marketing was 5% - 10%, whereas the largest range was 20% - 35%. This shows that instructors in the same department do not have a fixed mark allotted for writing assignment.

Table 34: The importance of writing ability for success in exams

Item	Mkt		Acct.		SSOM		IT	
	F	%	F	0%	0F	%	F	%
Not at all	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Not much important	4	66.66	2	50	0	0	3	50
Important	0	0	1	25	2	40	1	16.66
Very important	2	33.33	1	25	3	60	2	33.33
Total	6	100	4	100	5	100	6	100

Many instructors, except those in the department of SSOM, do not seem to believe in the importance of composing or writing ability to succeed in exams. The same instructors, as shown in the previous table responded that writing ability is important to succeed in college in general and to write the assignments. This could be because instructors tend to ignore composing ability in marking subjective questions that are answered under exam situation or no or few subjective questions appear in the exams. In this respect, during interview, one instructor from the Marketing department responded in the following way:

Most of the questions that appear in our exams are either multiple choice, matching or true/false types. These do not need writing ability. Even the questions that are answered by writing paragraphs are fact based. I don't think it is fair to consider writing ability here, because they answer questions under exam situations. We focus on the facts. But if the language problem is grave and affects the answer we inevitably punish that.

Yet, other instructors, even those in the same department consider writing ability as being important in marking exams.

Table 39: Teachers' view of students' problems on organization

Item	Mkt		Acct.		SSOM		IT	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
No problem at all	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A few problems	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	16.66
Some problems	3	50	2	50	2	33.33	2	33.33
Major problems	3	50	2	50	4	66.66	3	50
Total	6	100	4	100	6	100	6	100

In the same way, half of the instructors in Marketing, Accounting and IT departments reported that their students have major problems in the organization of their writing. The rest of the instructors, except one in the department of IT, reported that their problem is some although they affect the students' writings. This could show that instructors are not happy about the way students organize their writings.

Table 40: Teachers' view of students' problems on content

Item	Mkt		Acct.		SSOM		IT	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
No problem at all	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A few problems	5	83.33	0	0	1	20	3	50
Some problems	1	16.66	3	75	2	40	2	33.33
Major problems	0	0	1	25	2	40	1	16.66
Total	6	100	4	100	5	100	6	100

Except the majority (83.33%) of Marketing instructors and half of IT instructors, others do not seem to appreciate the content knowledge of their students reflected in the project writing assignments.

Table 41: Teachers' view on student's problems in using appropriate means of data collection techniques

Item	Mkt		Acct.		SSOM		IT	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
No problem at all	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A few problems	3	50	0	0	1	20	0	0
Some problems	3	50	0	0	1	20	2	33.33
Major problems	0	0	4	100	3	60	4	66.66
Total	6	100	4	100	5	100	6	100

Only half of the instructors in the department of Marketing believe that their students have a few problems in the use of appropriate data collection techniques. The rest of the instructors across the departments indicated that students have some or major problems which are observed to affect their writing.

Instructors' interview analysis shows that students face many problems in this area mainly for two reasons- inability to design appropriate data collection instruments (structured interview questions, observation checklists, questionnaires etc) and lack of know-how regarding document analysis and lack of co-operation from organizations which students write their project assignments on. An instructor from Marketing department said that:

The main data collection instruments our students use are interviews and observation. However, they do not know how to interview or observe systematically. Almost all of the students do not use questionnaires to collect data because they don't know how to do it. They wait for individuals (in an organization) for days to interview, which could have easily been done through a questionnaire. We feel that students should have the skills of data collection techniques, but we don't teach them that for lack of time. We hope the English department will do something in the future

Table 42: The frequency with which teachers consider composing ability in grading the writing assignments

Item	Mkt		Acct.		SSOM		IT	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	1	16.66	0	0	1	20	1	16.66
Occasionally	2	33.33	4	100	1	20	2	33.33
Often	3	50	0	0	3	60	3	50
Very often	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	6	100	4	100	5	100	6	100

have provided grammar feedback either occasionally or often. Only one instructor from Accounting and another from IT department responded to have not given such feedback at all. On the whole, we can say that instructors try to indicate students' problem areas even though their primary concern is not language. The same is true regarding vocabulary and mechanics. The way the instructors give feedback, however, as also seen from student questionnaire analysis, is not consistent even in the same departments.

Table 44: The frequency with which teachers provide feedback on organization

Item	Mkt		Acct.		SSOM		IT	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occasionally	2	33.33	1	25	1	20	2	33.33
Often	3	50	3	75	1	20	4	66.66
V. Often	1	16.66	0	10	3	60	0	0
Total	6	100	4	100	5	100	6	100

As shown in the table, the majority of the instructors reported that they provide feedback on the organization of student writings often or very often. The students themselves also confirm this response. Once again this shows that instructors are willing to go extra miles to help students improve their writing. However, the response of IT & SSOM instructors regarding organization feedback contradicts with that of the students'. Sample corrected project writing analysis do not support teachers' claim.

Table 45: The frequency with which teachers provide feedback on content

Item	Mkt		Acct.		SSOM		IT	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Occasionally	0	0	0	0	1	20	0	0
Often	3	50	0	0	1	20	1	16.66
V. Often	3	50	4	100	3	60	5	83.33
Total	6	100	4	100	5	100	6	100

As it is expected almost all instructors across the departments responded that they provide feedback on content often or very often.

Table 46: The frequency with which teachers provide feedback on data collection techniques

Item	Mkt		Acct.		SSOM		IT	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Never	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	16.66
Occasionally	2	33.33	1	25	1	20	3	50
Often	2	33.33	3	75	1	20	2	33.33
V. Often	2	33.33	0	0	3	60	0	0
Total	6	100	4	100	5	100	6	100

The majority of the instructors, except those in the department of IT, responded that they provide feedback often or very often. As one instructor admitted during interview, general guides on how to write the projects are given orally either in the office or in class. How to collect the data they need is made clear, in most cases, when students come to them for advice; otherwise there is a tendency to assume that everything is going on well. On the other hand, student questionnaire analysis revealed that half or over half of the students have major or average problems in using appropriate data collection instruments and would like such feedback from their major course instructors. Some students across the departments also indicated that they feel uneasy to go to the instructors' office frequently for guidance and advice. There seems to be a gap between the instructors and the students regarding guidance on data collection techniques.

Table 47: Teachers' view on the usefulness of the writing assignments

	Items	Mkt.		Acct.		SSOM		IT	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
to learn the contents of the course better	Yes	6	100	4	100	5	100	6	100
	No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	6	100	4	100	5	100	6	100
to improve Students' writing ability	Yes	6	100	4	100	5	100	6	100
	No	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	6	100	4	100	5	100	6	100

All the instructors in the four departments seem to appreciate the role project writing assignments play in helping students learn the contents of the course and improve their writing ability. During the interview session with instructors, other advantages of the projects were also indicated.

We have found the project writing assignments useful in many ways. Students get the chance to see what they learnt theoretically implemented practically. They won't be strange when they get employed in similar organizations. They also develop their analytic, evaluative and problem solving skills. Moreover, they will have the chance to develop team spirit & cooperative learning. Many of our students have also improved their writing ability, and are now more careful of their writing than they were last year. However, they still need to improve more.

However, instructors also reveal that there are problems associated with project writing. In projects written in groups, there could be the possibility of laying the burden on one or two responsible and hardworking students. (This is also consistent with Eyob and Bamlak's finding (2004)). Or someone out of the group could do the actual writing. According to an instructor in the department of IT:

It is difficult to assume all students in a group work with same sense of responsibility. Since grading is the same for all members in a group, some students try to pass in the shadows of the hardworking students. To avoid such cheating, we make the group leaders report about the progress, of the project and the participation of each member. Finally, each group member is made to present his/her share of work in the project. But we must say that this is very tiresome and also time consuming for the instructor.

All the instructors in the four departments seem to appreciate the role project writing assignments play in helping students learn the contents of the course and improve their writing ability. During the interview session with instructors, other advantages of the projects were also indicated.

We have found the project writing assignments useful in many ways. Students get the chance to see what they learnt theoretically implemented practically. They won't be strange when they get employed in similar organizations. They also develop their analytic, evaluative and problem solving skills. Moreover, they will have the chance to develop team spirit & cooperative learning. Many of our students have also improved their writing ability, and are now more careful of their writing than they were last year. However, they still need to improve more.

However, instructors also reveal that there are problems associated with project writing. In projects written in groups, there could be the possibility of laying the burden on one or two responsible and hardworking students. (This is also consistent with Eyob and Bamlak's finding (2004)). Or someone out of the group could do the actual writing. According to an instructor in the department of IT:

It is difficult to assume all students in a group work with same sense of responsibility. Since grading is the same for all members in a group, some students try to pass in the shadows of the hardworking students. To avoid such cheating, we make the group leaders report about the progress, of the project and the participation of each member. Finally, each group member is made to present his/her share of work in the project. But we must say that this is very tiresome and also time consuming for the instructor.

Table 48: Teachers' view on the extent to which the following departments have the responsibility to improve students' writing ability

Department of	Items	Mkt.		Acct.		SSOM		IT	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
English	Not at all	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	to a less extent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	to a great extent	3	50	0	0	0	0	2	33.33
	to a very great extent	3	50	4	100	5	100	4	66.66
Total		6	100	4	100	5	100	6	100
Your own department	Not at all	0	0	3	75	0	0	3	50
	to less extent	2	33.33	0	0	0	0	3	50
	to a great extent	2	33.33	1	25	3	60	0	0
	to a very great extent	2	33.33	0	0	2	40	0	0
Total		6	100	4	100	5	100	6	100

As the above table shows all instructors believe that the English department has much responsibility of improving students' writing ability. However, these instructors believe that their own department, except the majority of the instructors in the department of accounting, has also the same responsibility. This is inconsistent with the finding of the research conducted at San Francisco State University. In the same university, instructors indicated that departments other than the English department do not have to worry that much regarding language problem of students. From teacher interview analysis it was found out that our students have very little practice in their high school education and their language problem can't be curbed within a short time by a single department.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary

The document analysis of the TVET curriculum guide and project handouts revealed that writing project assignments are believed to develop students' creativity and problem solving ability by exposing them to the real world of work.

Most of the project writing assignments are allotted ample time and mark. Yet, in some cases excess time for in-school training and less time for project writing is given. During the third year of study in marketing, for example, students are expected to write five projects but only 12.4 percent of the total time and eleven percent of the total mark is allotted for this purpose. During the second year of study, accounting students are expected to write four projects, but only 2.3 percent of the total time and 6 percent of the total marks is allotted for project writing.

Analysis of most project assignment handouts showed that students need to interview people, observe processes; read, translate and summarize documents in order to get reliable information for their projects. The language demand is, therefore, high.

Analysis of students' questionnaire also revealed that students believe in the importance of writing ability to complete writing assignments and to succeed in exams. Teachers, on the other hand, believe that writing ability is not a determining factor to succeed in exams.

A discrepancy is revealed between students' perception of their writing ability and instructors' judgments. The majority of the students across the department consider themselves 'good' or 'very good' writers, whereas instructors rate the majority of them either 'poor' or 'very poor'. From randomly selected student project papers it can be seen that students' perception of their writing ability is exaggerated.

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Grammar, vocabulary, mechanics etc. problems were reported to have repeatedly been observed in the project writings. Students' responses across the departments were inconsistent. Organization and content problems were also reported to have been observed in the students' writings. More than half of the students across the departments believe that they have either some or major problems that affect their writing. Teachers believe that it is the majority that has some or major problems on organization.

Students' habit of using multiple drafts and showing their writings to friends is not satisfactory. Many students reported to have used the above techniques often or very often. An equal number of students have also reported to have used the techniques never or occasionally.

Except marketing and half of IT instructors, the rest do not seem to appreciate the content knowledge of their students reflected in the project writings. Most of the students, except in IT department admit such a problem.

It was also found out that about half of the students have problems in using appropriate data collection techniques. In addition, lack of cooperation from organizations is also indicated to be another problem.

Though instructors try to give feedback on the language of their students' writings, their attempt was found to be occasional and inconsistent even within the same department. But instructors' feedback on content is observed to be minimal. Randomly selected sample student papers seem to indicate the same result, though the majority of the instructors claimed to have given content feedback often or very often.

Written feedback on format of students' writings is found to be very frequent to students of SSOM and almost non-existent in other departments. Concerning feedback on data collection techniques, instructors reported that they give guidance on how to collect data during office hours orally, but students reported that they do not get full assistance in this respect.

The majority of the students across the departments indicated that they would like to get content feedback often or very often from their major course instructors. Organization, data collection techniques and even language feedback from major course instructors were believed to be useful.

It was also found out that both teachers and students believe that project assignments improved the writing and problem solving ability of the students. Yet, students showed that they need to improve their writing more.

Regarding the English common courses students take, the majority of the students believe that much improvement on grammar, vocabulary, mechanics, paragraph and essay writing, summarizing, etc practices should be made, although they believe that these courses helped them write better. They have also indicated that they would like their English courses to acquaint them with data collection skills.

5.2. Conclusion

Project assignments are hoped to play important roles in the implementation of the new TVET program. Though the curriculum stated that project writings help students to develop their creativity and problem solving abilities other advantages are also seen both by teachers and students. They are believed to increase team work and cooperation among students, familiarize them with real work situations and develop their researching ability. It can be said that project writing assignments could have more potential advantages than those stated in the curriculum.

However completing project assignments cannot be an easy process. Students, teachers and cooperating organizations should all contribute their share so that project assignments could be successful. Without a smooth interaction and cooperation, the success is unthinkable.

In the foregoing analysis and discussions, we have seen that completing project assignments demands language ability and research skills on the part of the students. But if these demands are more than what students are expected to perform, project assignments will be additional burdens than means of achieving the general objectives.

If we considering the English language and research ability of our high school students, it is difficult to say that the project assignments will successfully be completed. How well are summarizing, writing paragraphs, essays and report writing, translation, etc. practiced in high schools so that students will have better preparedness and practice for college writing demands is a question worth considering. It is also wise to see the general language ability of these students and determine what they lack in order to successfully complete the writing assignments. Do they have the know how to design data collection instruments so that they will be able to collect accurate and appropriate data for their own purposes? Since project assignments are given right from the first year, colleges implementing the TVET curriculum should ask themselves the above questions.

Another important element in project assignment packages is instructors' feedback mechanism. As discussed earlier, instructors try to give feedback on students' language; the content, organization etc. of students' writings, data collection techniques etc. though the attempt is inconsistent. This shows that major course instructors do not consider improving the language of their students strictly the business of the English Department. Considering the students' English language background, the concerted effort of all departments could yield better results than an effort by a single department.

Grading system is also an important factor for the success of project assignments. While it is good that all instructors strictly adhere to the marks allotted in the TVET curriculum guide for each project assignment, inconsistency is observed on the emphasis they place to the language of the writing. Some instructors consider language ability often or very often, whereas others never consider it. This is observed among instructors in the same department. This is believed to contaminate the objectivity of the evaluation system used.

Evaluation of students who produce group project papers is also found out to be subjective. If the contribution and performance of each student is not objectively assessed, project assignments could be more destructive than constructive.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research the following recommendations are forwarded.

- i) Since writing, and research skills are highly needed across the departments, the college should revise the English courses so that students could get the most out of them, and write their projects and other assignments better. Writing Across the Curriculum courses could be very much helpful. Intensive writing across the curriculum course, which can acquaint students with the knowledge and skills of data collection techniques, could be offered during the first semester until students go out for their first project assignment.
- ii) The existing feedback system should also be changed. In order that students improve their language, feedback should be continuous and students should obtain the assistance any time they need. Since instructors may not always be available and the burden being too much, the college should assign a responsible body for this purpose. The final evaluation could be made by the instructor. It is also important that instructors make sure that each member contributes to the success of the project (in case of group projects) by arranging presentation and dialogue sessions. The grades students earn must also vary according to their performances.
- iii) As the total mark assigned for all project assignments is fixed, the criteria for evaluation should also be the same on department basis. Language of the writing, presentation, content, and other criteria to evaluate project assignments should be agreed upon and implemented by department members to maximize the objectivity of the evaluation. The other writing assignments given during in school training should have the same percentage value and criteria of evaluation in the departments they are given.

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- iv) Since project packages can not be implemented without the understanding and co-operation of organizations, the college should establish a smooth relationship with these organizations. The college and the organizations should have a common understanding that the project assignments could be helpful for both parties. Frequent follow up should also be made by the college to make sure that students obtain the data they need.

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APPENDIX A

How important is writing to succeed in

Major courses	Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	Not at all	0	0	1	4.2	0	0	0	0
	Not much important	1	2.8	1	4.2	2	9.1	2	5.9
	Important	12	33.3	16	66.7	6	27.3	17	50.0
	Very important	23	63.9	6	25.0	14	63.6	15	44.1
	Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100
Exams	Not at all	0	0	2	8.3	1	4.5	0	0
	Not much important	3	8.3	4	16.7	1	4.5	2	5.9
	Important	18	50	11	45.8	8	36.4	15	44.1
	Very important	15	41.7	7	29.2	12	54.5	17	50
	Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

APPENDIX B

How often do you practice

Note taking	Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	Never	3	8.3	5	20.8	6	27.3	3	8.8
	Occasionally	13	36.1	12	50	4	18.2	9	28.5
	Often	11	30.6	5	20.8	6	27.3	12	35.3
	Very often	9	25.0	2	8.3	6	27.3	9	26.5
	Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	32	97.1
Summarizing	Never	4	11.1	8	33.3	6	27.3	6	17.6
	Occasionally	12	33.3	10	41.7	6	27.3	7	20.6
	Often	10	27.8	3	12.5	4	18.2	17	50
	Very often	10	27.8	3	12.5	6	27.3	3	8.8
	Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	33	97.1
Essay Writing	Never	6	16.7	8	33.3	7	31.8	9	26.5
	Occasionally	9	25.0	6	25	4	18.2	8	23.5
	Often	9	25.0	9	37.5	4	18.2	11	32.4
	Very often	12	33.3	1	4.2	7	31.8	5	14.7
	Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	33	97.1

APPENDIX C

How do you think your English courses need improvement on

vocabulary	Items	<i>Marketing</i>		<i>Accounting</i>		<i>Secretarial</i>		<i>Information</i>	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
	Note at all	0	0	4	16.7	0	0	1	2.9
	Not much important	9	25	5	20.8	1	4.5	4	11.8
	Important	14	38.9	5	20.8	6	27.3	15	44.1
	Very important	13	36.1	10	41.7	15	68.2	14	41.2
	Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100
mechanics	Note at all	1	2.8	5	20.8	2	9.1	3	8.8
	Not much important	9	25.0	5	20.8	4	18.2	1	2.9
	Important	13	36.1	6	25	9	40.9	25	73.3
	Very important	13	36.1	8	33.3	7	31.8	5	14.7
	Total	36	100	24	100	22	100	34	100

APPENDIX D

TRANSCRIPT FOR MIDDLE LEVEL TVET YEAR ONE TRAINING PROGRAMME

REGION _____
NAME OF THE TRAINING CENTER _____
NAME OF THE _____
TRAINEE _____
SEX _____ AGE _____

OCCUPATIONAL TITLE: Sales Person

S.N	Course Title	Training Hrs.	Max Achievable Marks	Achieved Marks
1	Main courses			
1.1	Marketing and sales man ship			
1.1.1.	In school training	369	26	
1.1.2	Project work	81	6	
1.1.3	Apprenticeship	234	17	
1.2	Sales clerical and record keeping			
1.2.1	In school training	123	9	
1.2.2	Project work	27	2	
1.2.3	Apprenticeship	78	6	
2	Supportive courses			
2.1	Introduction to marketing	75	5	
2.2	Basic bookkeeping	75	5	
3	Common Courses			
3.1	Mathematics	75	5	
3.2	English	75	5	
3.3	Civics	50	4	
3.4	Introduction to computer and its application	50	4	
3.5	Entrepreneurship	80	6	
	Total	1,392	100	

Record Officer _____
(Sig.) _____

_____ Date of Issue

Director
(Sig.) _____

This Transcript will be prepared in 3 copies; 1st copy will be given to the Trainee, 2nd copy for the record office and the 3rd copy will be attached with the certificate when it is sent to be signed by the Bureau head.

APPENDIX E

TRANSCRIPT FOR MIDDLE LEVEL TVET YEAR TWO TRAINING PROGRAMME

REGION _____
NAME OF THE TRAINING CENTER _____
NAME OF THE _____
TRAINEE _____
SEX _____ AGE _____

OCCUPATIONAL TITLE: Assistant Sales Supervisor

S.N	Course Title	Training Hrs.	Max Achievable Marks	Achieved Marks
1	Main courses			
1.1	Work and work force supervision			
1.1.1.	In school training	232	17	
1.1.2	Project work	41	3	
1.1.3	Apprenticeship	145	10	
1.2	Customs and bank clearing operation			
1.2.1	In school training	150	11	
1.2.2	Project work	26	2	
1.2.3	Apprenticeship	94	7	
13	Managing Lower Level Marketing Activities			
1.3.1	In School training	116	8	
1.3.2	Project work	20	1	
1.3.3	Apprenticeship	73	5	
2	Supportive courses			
2.1	Record management	90	7	
2.2	Introduction to management	75	5	
3	Common courses			
3.1	Mathematics	75	5	
3.2	English	75	5	
3.3	Civics	50	4	
3.4	Introduction to computer net working	50	4	
3.5	Small business management	80	6	
	Total	1,392	100	

Record Officer _____
(Sig.) _____

_____ Date of Issue

Director
(Sig.) _____

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APPENDIX F

TRANSCRIPT FOR MIDDLE LEVEL TVET YEAR THREE TRAINING PROGRAMME

REGION _____

NAME OF THE TRAINING _____ CENTER _____

NAME OF THE _____

TRAINEE _____

SEX _____ AGE _____

OCCUPATIONAL TITLE: Sales Supervisor

S.N	Course Title	Training Hrs.	Max Achievable Marks	Achieved Marks
1	Main courses			
11	Basics of marketing reasearch			
1.1.1.	In school training	70	5	
1.1.2	Project work	16	1	
1.1.3	Apprenticeship	43	3	
1.2	Managing promotion			
1.2.1	In school training	174	12	
1.2.2	Project work	40	3	
1.2.3	Apprenticeship	107	8	
13	Managing distribution			
1.3.1	In School training	84	6	
1.3.2	Project work	19	1	
1.3.3	Apprenticeship	52	4	
1.4	Managing sales			
1.4.1	In school training	108	8	
1.4.2	Project work	25	2	
1.4.3	Apprenticeship	66	4	
1.5	Principles of marketing			
1.5.1	In school training	72	5	
1.5.2	Project work	17	1	
1.5.3	Apprenticeship	44	4	
2	Supportive courses			
2.1	Principles of Accounting	50	4	
2.2	Business communication	75	5	
3	Common courses			
3.1	Mathematics	75	5	
3.2	English	75	5	
3.3	Civics	50	4	
3.4	Introduction to Web Page Development	50	4	
3.5	Business growth strategy	80	6	
	TOTAL	1,392	100	

Record Officer _____
(Sig.)

Date of Issue _____

Director _____
(Sig.)

This Transcript will be prepared in 3 copies; 1st copy will be given to the Trainee, 2nd copy for the record office and the 3rd copy will be attached with the certificate when it is sent to be signed by the Bureau head.

APPENDIX H

TRANSCRIPT FOR MIDDLE LEVEL TVET YEAR TWO TRAINING PROGRAMME

REGION _____
NAME OF THE TRAINING CENTER _____
NAME OF THE _____
TRAINEE _____
SEX _____ AGE _____

OCCUPATIONAL TITLE: Accounting Clerk

S.N	Course Title	Training Hrs.	Max Achievable Marks	Achieved Marks
1	Main courses			
1.1	Introduction to Financial Accounting			
1.1.1.	In school training	147	11	
1.1.2	Project work	5	1	
1.1.3	Apprenticeship	76	5	
1.2	Introduction to Cost Accounting			
1.2.1	In school training	213	15	
1.2.2	Project work	5	1	
1.2.3	Apprenticeship	76	5	
13	Introduction to Management Accounting			
1.3.1	In School training	78	5	
1.3.2	Project work	4	1	
1.3.3	Apprenticeship	75	5	
1.4	Introduction to Budgetary Accounting			
1.4.1	In school training	141	10	
1.4.2	Project work	7	1	
1.4.3	Apprenticeship	85	6	
2	Supportive Courses			
2.1	Business communication	75	5	
2.2	Business law	75	5	
3	Common Courses			
3.1	Mathematics	75	5	
3.2	English	75	5	
3.3	Civics	50	4	
3.4	Introduction to Computer Networking	50	4	
3.5	Small Business Management	80	6	
	TOTAL	1,392	100	

Record Officer _____
(Sig.) _____

_____ Date of Issue

Director
(Sig.) _____

This Transcript will be prepared in 3 copies; 1st copy will be given to the Trainee, 2nd copy for the record office and the 3rd copy will be attached with the certificate when it is sent to be signed by the Bureau head.

APPENDIX I

TRANSCRIPT FOR MIDDLE LEVEL TVET YEAR THREE TRAINING PROGRAMME

REGION _____
NAME OF THE TRAINING CENTER _____
NAME OF THE _____
TRAINEE _____
SEX _____ AGE _____

OCCUPATIONAL TITLE: Junior Accountant

S.N	Course Title	Training Hrs.	Max Achievable Marks	Achieved Marks
1	Main courses			
11	Introduction to Fund Accounting			
1.1.1.	In school training	137	10	
1.1.2	Project work	36	3	
1.1.3	Apprenticeship	80	6	
1.2	Introduction to Tax Accounting			
1.2.1	In school training	103	7	
1.2.2	Project work	15	1	
1.2.3	Apprenticeship	89	6	
13	Introduction computerized accounting			
1.3.1	In School training	154	11	
1.3.2	Project work	15	1	
1.3.3	Apprenticeship	69	5	
1.4	Introduction to auditing			
1.4.1	In school training	176	13	
1.4.2	Project work	34	2	
1.4.3	Apprenticeship	74	5	
2	Supportive courses			
2.1	Introduction to statistics	80	6	
3	Common courses			
3.1	Mathematics	75	5	
3.2	English	75	5	
3.3	Civics	50	4	
3.4	Web Development	50	4	
3.5	Small Business Management	80	6	
	TOTAL	1,392	100	

Record Officer _____
(Sig.) _____

_____ Date of Issue

Director _____
(Sig.) _____

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APPENDIX K

TRANSCRIPT FOR MIDDLE LEVEL TVET YEAR TWO TRAINING PROGRAMME

REGION _____
NAME OF THE TRAINING CENTER _____
NAME OF THE _____
TRAINEE _____
SEX _____ AGE _____

OCCUPATIONAL TITLE: Secretary

S.N	Course Title	Training Hrs.	Max Achievable Marks	Achieved Marks
1	Main courses			
11	English and Amharic production typing			
1.1.1.	In school training	205	15	
1.1.2	Project work	50	4	
1.1.3	Apprenticeship	122	8	
1.2	Office Automation			
1.2.1	In school training	190	14	
1.2.2	Project work	35	3	
1.2.3	Apprenticeship	120	8	
13	Accounting for Secretaries			
1.3.1	In School training	135	10	
1.3.2	Project work	15	1	
1.3.3	Apprenticeship	70	5	
2	Supportive Course			
2.1	Business Maths	45	3	
2.2	Business communication	75	5	
3	Common courses			
3.1	Mathematics	75	5	
3.2	English	75	5	
3.3	Civics	50	4	
3.4	Introduction to Computer Networking	50	4	
3.5	Small Business Management	80	6	
	TOTAL	1,392	100	

Record Officer _____
(Sig.) _____

_____ Date of Issue

Director
(Sig.)

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APPENDIX O

TRANSCRIPT FOR MIDDLE LEVEL TVET YEAR THREE TRAINING PROGRAMME

REGION _____
NAME OF THE TRAINING CENTER _____
NAME OF THE TRAINEE _____
SEX _____ AGE _____

OCCUPATIONAL TITLE: Information Technology Technician

S.N	Course Title	Training Hrs.	Max Achievable Marks	Achieved Marks
1	Main Courses			
1.1	Intermediate Computer Programming			
1.1.1.	In school training	136	10	
1.1.2	Project work	60	4	
1.1.3	Apprenticeship	83	6	
1.2	Intermediate Database Management			
1.2.1	In school training	170	12	
1.2.2	Project work	42	3	
1.2.3	Apprenticeship	146	10	
1.3	Intermediate Computer Networking			
1.3.1	In School training	194	14	
1.3.2	Project work	48	3	
1.3.3	Apprenticeship	113	8	
2	Supportive Courses			
2.1	Basics of Telecommunications	75	5	
2.2	Basics of Data Structure & Algorithm	75	5	
3	Common Courses			
3.1	Mathematics	75	5	
3.2	English	75	5	
3.3	Civics	50	4	
3.4	Business growth strategy	80	6	
	TOTAL	1,392	100	

Record Officer _____
(Sig.)

_____ Date of Issue

Director _____
(Sig.)

This Transcript will be prepared in 3 copies; 1st copy will be given to the Trainee, 2nd copy for the record office and the 3rd attached with the certificate when it is sent to be signed by the Bureau head.

APPENDIX P

STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear student,

I am conducting a research on Types of Writing Assignments in Business Courses, Student Writing Needs and Faculty Beliefs about Writing.

This particular questionnaire is, therefore, designed to obtain information about your perception of the kind of writing and feedback you think is appropriate to your needs. Realizing that your responses to the questions are vital for the success of this research, and the development of writing courses, I request you to fill this questionnaire genuinely and carefully. Your willingness to participate is very much appreciated.

N.B. Writing in this questionnaire refers to any kind of assignment or practice that demands students to produce a page or more in discipline-specific courses.

General Instruction:

The questions are divided into seven sections. Most of the questions have four alternatives among which you circle or tick one based on your judgment.

1. General Questions

1. Indicate year of study?

1st 2nd 3rd
O O O

2. Have you dropped any major courses?

Yes No
O O

3. Have you dropped any English courses?

Yes No
O O

4. Are you given writing assignments in your supportive courses?

Yes No
O O

5. If your response to the above questions is "Yes", please write how many per course, per semester. Write their *types as well (see question no.1 part III for types of writing).

6. How many writing assignments of more than two pages do you do per semester per main course? Take the average.

II. The Relevance of Writing Ability to your Courses

Respond to the following questions based on the scale given below.

- 1. Not at all
- 2. Not much important
- 3. Important
- 4. Very important

	1	2	3	4
1. How important, do you think, is writing ability to succeed in college?				
2. How important, do you think, is writing ability for success in your major courses?				
3. How important, do you think, is writing ability at working place (after graduation)?				
4. How important, do you think, is writing ability to get good grades in the final exams of your major courses?				
5. Do you think writing is an emphasized mode of assessment in your major courses?				

7. How do you perceive yourself as a writer to complete your writing assignments?

- Very poor
- poor
- good
- v. good

III. Writing Assignments in your Major Courses

1. What type of writing assignment do you complete in your major course? You can circle or tick more than one type of assignment.

- library research paper
- project work
- lab reports
- letter and memo
- article or book report
- research proposal
- case analysis
- business report

If any other, please specify _____

Respond to the following questions based on the scale given below.

- 1. No problem at all
- 2. A few problems
- 3. Some (but affect the writing)
- 4. Major problems

	1	2	3	4
What problems do you have in completing the writing assignments?				
Language use/ grammar				
Vocabulary				
mechanics (punctuation, spelling, cap)				
Organization				
Content of the writing				
Appropriate use of data collection skills (e.g conducting interviews, designing questionnaires...)				
Summarizing documents				
Translating documents				
Any other problems, please specify _____				

IV. Techniques of Improving your writing

Respond to the following questions based on the scale given below.

- 1. Never
- 2. Occasionally
- 3. Often
- 4. Very often

	1	2	3	4
1. How often do you write multiple drafts to complete your writing assignments?				
2. How often do you show other people to read something you wrote to see if it is clear to them?				
3. How often do you ask an instructor or staff member for advice & help to improve your writing?				
4. Any other technique (please specify and rate) _____				

6. If there is any technique you want to use but can't, please specify the reason.

VIII. Your Recommendation

Respond to the following questions based on the scale given below

- | | |
|---------------|--------------|
| 1. Not at all | 3. Much |
| 2. Not much | 4. Very much |

	1	2	3	4
1. How well, do you think, your English courses helped you in writing the assignments in your major courses?				
2. To improve your academic writing ability, in which of these areas do you think your English courses need improvement?				
Language use grammar				
Vocabulary				
Mechanics				
Paragraph writing				
Essay writing				
Summarizing				
Note taking				
Report writing				
Data collection techniques				
Any other (please specify and rate)				

APPENDIX- Q

TEACHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Teacher,

I am conducting research on Types of Writing Assignments in Business Courses, Student Writing Needs and Faculty Beliefs about Writing. The subjects of the research are 2nd Year TVET (10+3) program students.

This questionnaire is, therefore, designed to obtain information regarding the place of writing in the major courses, your students' writing ability, the kind of feedback you provide to the students and your recommendation to help students write better. Realizing that your genuine responses to the questions are vital for the success of this research, I request you to fill in this questionnaire carefully. Your willingness, to participate is very important and very much appreciated.

N.B. 'Writing' in this questionnaire refers to any kind of assignment or practice that demands students to produce a page or more in discipline-specific courses.

General Instruction: The questions are divided into four sections. Most of the questions have four alternatives among which you circle or tick one.

I. General Questions

1. You are teaching ____ year students in the TVET program (you can tick more than one alternative).

1st 2nd 3rd

2. Which of the following TVET students have you taught previously?

1st 2nd 3rd

3. Do you give writing assignments (other than the project in the main courses)?

Yes No

4. If your response to the above question is 'yes', write how many per course, per semester. Write their *types as well.

5. What percentage value do you assign for the writing assignments? Write the estimate average.

6. Do you give writing assignments in the supportive courses?

Yes

No

7. If your response to the above question is 'yes', write how many per course, per semester. Write their *types as well.

8. What percentage value do you assign for the writing assignments? Write the estimate average.

9. Have you ever assigned ungraded writing assignments?

Yes

No

* Types of writing assignments could include:

- Library research paper
- Design projects
- Lab reports
- Letter and memo
- Translating documents
- summarizing documents
- Article or book report
- Research proposal
- Case study (case analysis)
- Business report
- Others

Respond to the following questions based on the scale given below.

1. Not at all

3. Important

2. Not much important

4. Very important

	1	2	3	4
10. How important, do you think, is writing ability for success in college?				
11. How important, do you think, is writing ability to complete the assignments?				
12. How important, do you think, is writing ability for success in the exams?				
13. How important, do you think, is writing ability for students at work place?				

14. What percentages of your students, do you think, are:

	Percentage (%)
Very poor writers	
Poor writers	
Fair writers	
good writers	
Very good writers	
Excellent writers	

II. Writing Assignments in Major Courses

1. How do you rate students' writing problems in completing their assignments?

Respond based on the key given below.

1. Not at all

2. A few problems

3. Average

4. Major problems

	1	2	3	4
Language use/grammar				
Vocabulary				
Mechanics				
Organization				
Content				
Style of writing				
The format of the paper they produce				
Appropriate use of data collection techniques (e.g. conducting interviews, designing questionnaires...)				
Any other (please specify)				

III. Regarding Feedback to Writing Assignments

Respond to the following questions based on the scale given below.

1. Never

2. Occasionally

3. Often

4. Very often

	1	2	3	4
How often do you provide feedback for your students?				
How often do you consider composing (writing) ability in grading the assignment				
How often do you provide feedback on the following?				
• Language use/grammar				
• Vocabulary				
• Mechanics				
• Organization				
• Content				
• Data collection technique				
Any other (please specify and rate)				

4. If your response to items under number 2 is 'Never' or 'Occasionally', mention the reasons why. You can tick more than one item.

- It is not my business
- It's not important
- My English is not that good
- Too much error
- Too many students
- Work load

5. Any other (please specify)

6. Do you think the writing assignments helped students to learn the contents of the courses better?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

7. If your response to the above question is 'No', specify your reason.

8. Do you think the writing assignments improved your students writing ability?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

9. If your response to the above question is 'no', specify the reason

10. To what extent, do you think the following departments have the responsibility of improving students writing ability? Use the scale given below.

- 1. Not at all
- 2. To a lesser extent
- 3. To a greater extent
- 4. To a very great extent

	1	2	3	4
English Department				
Your own department				
Any other party(please specify)				

11. What do you suggest to improve the writing ability of the students?

APPENDIX – R

Sample Project Handout

St. Mary's College

**Department of Secretarial Sciences Office &
Management**

Project Work Guide on

Sales Clerical Record Keeping

January 2005

Course Summary

LEVEL: *TVET 10+1*

COURSE TITLE: *Sales Clerical Record Keeping*

JOB TITLE: *Sales Clerk*

COURSE OBJECTIVE

The course is designed to equip and make you maintain sales related documents in a meaningful manner. The following main points were covered in your school training sessions:

Duty 1: *Handling sales related records*

- Identify sales related & other types of records
- Filling information in sales related records
- Preparing different kinds of forms used in local firms,
- Filing/ keeping/ different kinds of records.

Duty 2: *Conducting merchandise/ supplies inventory taking*

- Identify the nature of inventory taking.
- Identify types of inventory & procedures in inventory taking,
- Taking inventory using periodic & perpetual methods
- Computing cost of goods sold using different cost flow assumptions.

Project Work Guide on Sales Clerical Record Keeping

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the training areas included in the new training scheme is marketing and salesmanship, which aims at producing salespersons equipped with basic knowledge and skills in the area of selling in which one of the courses is **sales clerical record keeping**.

This project is designed to enable you implement the knowledge and skill you gathered from your theoretical and practical lessons delivered in the class sessions.

Each task proposed in the project has direct relation to the duties and tasks in the module. It enables you to appreciate the relationship between the theoretical discussions with the reality being exercised in the local business firms. This in turn creates about better opportunities to interface the world of work in your future carrier.

II. OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT

The project aims at enhancing your capacity by letting you transfer what you have learnt in class (theoretical & practical forms) to the real world. The main objective of this project thus is to enable you develop both capacity and self confidence on the following areas:

- Identify sales related documents appropriately.
- Identifying the purpose of sales related records.
- Correctly filling information into related documents such as purchase orders invoices, etc... correctly.
- Correctly fill inventory data in inventory report forms.

III. SCOPE OF THE PROJECT

The project is designed to be applied on local business firms such as merchandising, service, and manufacturing businesses.

IV. IMPORTANCE OF THE PROJECT

This project enables you to communicate with the practical world and get exposure to the working environment (business environment) in your surroundings.

V. METHODOLOGY

1. Human resource allocation

- ◆ The project is to be attempted in group with five to eight members.
- ◆ Visiting the local firm, which is selected by the group.
- ◆ The project is to be conducted with continuous consultation to your respective instructor.

2. Project resource allocation

Materials needed for the project for each group are:

- 2.1. Samples of sales related records
- 2.2. Sales related records constructed by the group
- 2.3. Paper for presenting the final project

3. Time table for the project (working schedule)

This project will be implemented within two weeks and the total time allotted is 27 hours.

VI. TASKS OF THE PROJECT

The project has three tasks in which most of the tasks will be done based on the information collected from the local firm selected by each group.

Tasks 1:

Listing and identifying sales/purchase related documents being used in the selected firm, that may include:

- Sales/purchase invoice
- Sales/purchase order
- Receipt
- Contact document
- Stock card
- Purchase requisition form
- Sales related correspondence
 - Letter
 - Memo
 - Reports
- List of inventories
- List of suppliers
- List of customers
- Sales performance sheet/summary sheet/
- List of employees
- Payroll register

Task 2:

- i. Collecting at least six samples of the above documents from the local business firm selected
- ii. For the documents that you could not collect samples, prepare /construct/ similar to those forms you observed
- iii. Comment on the documents collected and you constructed:
 - ☞ Form design
 - Items arrangement
 - Spacing
 - Margin
 - Lining, etc

- If the information to be filled is relevant and sufficient for that business firm activities

Task 3:

- i. Identify the inventory type and item identification applied in the firm.
- ii. Write the procedure used for taking physical inventory (count) in the firm and the forms used in relation to inventory taking.
- iii. Comment on the procedure the firm uses in inventory taking.
- iv. Using an inventory sheet, fill in the items on hand and their costs at date of your visit in the firm.

Task 4:

Format of the presentation of the project work

While presenting your project work, you should organize the whole content in the following structure

Cover of the Project Work

On the cover of the project paper write:

- a. The name of the project,
- b. The names of the group members,
- c. The whom the project is submitted (Instructor's name)
- d. The date (January, 2005)

The Body of the Project Work

The project work should be organized in the following arrangement:

1. Introduction

In this part you shortly state down why, where, what, how and when you do the project.

Explain or write short introduction of the firm you visited

- The name of the business and its location
- Its type of business
 - a. Service, import, export, wholesale, retail, manufacture, etc.
 - b. Type of product or service it renders offers.

List down the types of records, method of filing and forms used in the business

- A. Sales/purchase records
 - e.g. - Sales/purchase journal
 - Sales/purchase invoice
- B. Correspondences
- C. Company's filing system

Analyze & give comments on

- The recording system
- The quality and sufficiency of forms
- The filing system

Conclusion

This part summarizes the whole work. In this part you put your criticism (positive or negative) on what you observed in the visited firm by comparing against what you have learned in class sessions.

At the end, attach samples of the forms you collected from the firm and what you produced on behalf of the firm.

tion

This project is evaluated in separation with in-school training, continuous assessment and final exam, which accounts 100%.

Submission date:

The project should be submitted on **February 7, 2005**.