

Practicality of the Student Multimodal Workbook in the Academic Writing Classroom: Perspectives of EFL Student Of Higher Education

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Abstract. With the increasing importance of multimodal texts in language learning, particularly in the context of EFL instruction, the development of effective instructional materials is critical. This study aims to evaluate the practicality of a student workbook (SW) designed to support the learning of multimodal text composition in an academic setting. This study employed a descriptive design and case methodology to collect data from twenty EFL students who participated in the workbook activities at a private university in Batam, Indonesia. We employed a Likert five-scale questionnaire to gather data, and then assessed it using a categorized scale from A to E to determine the practicality levels. The results indicated that ninety-five percent of students rated the workbook as highly practical, demonstrating its usability, advantages, and accessibility in aiding students' understanding and producing multimodal text. It confirms its potential for wider application in assisting EFL students in generating high-quality multimodal text creation. Additional evaluation is required to comprehensively grasp the limitations and possible advantages of the SW, and future research should explore further technological advancements and cognitive considerations in developing multimodal learning materials to enhance their effectiveness.

Keywords: EFL Students' Perception, Multimodal Learning Materials, Multimodal Literacy, Multimodal Text, New Literacy

INTRODUCTION

The ability to comprehend and generate successful multimodal texts is critical for students in the twenty-first century, given the changing nature of communication and literacy in our increasingly digital environment (Murtadho et al. 2023; Ramli et al. 2023). This ability is related to multimodal literacy. Multimodal literacy is a new literacy that goes beyond the standard definition of the traditional literacy such as listening, reading, speaking and writing (Donaghy, Karastathi, and Peachey 2023). In the context of EFL, multimodal literacy has been shown to improve student enthusiasm, productive abilities, reading skills, and learning autonomy (Marantika et al. 2021). This ability also improves writing skills and increases learning drive (Arslan 2020). It can help EFL students enhance their writing skills more than old ways (Maghsoudi, Golshan, and Naeimi 2022).

Nonetheless, despite the growing acknowledgment of the significance of multimodal literacy, research reveals certain obstacles faced by EFL students in higher education. Students may lack sufficient assistance in developing this skill (Yana, Rozimela, and Hamzah 2023b). Students encounter difficulties in expressing thoughts or incorporating diverse media into their writing (Gómez-Zarà, Chiuminatto, and Nussbaum 2019). They necessitate proficiency in multiple formats and the capacity to assess messages across various media (Walsh 2017). They require explicit and detailed guidance, together with a

supportive framework, to accomplish their academic assignments in the new environment (Yana, Rozimela, and Hamzah 2023a) (Yana et al., 2023b).

One option to assist students is to use appropriate learning materials (Tomlinson 2008). A part of learning material is a workbook. Well-designed workbooks can enhance autonomous learning by giving structure, preparing students for face-to-face sessions, and can be used in a variety of learning environments (Salvesani, Smith, and Camina 2019). In this context, the multimodal workbook was designed to help EFL students provide structured learning that facilitates the process of understanding and writing multimodal texts both independently and collaboratively in an academic setting (Yana, Rozimela, and Hamzah 2024). However, its implementation should be assessed. Specifically, the usefulness of the workbook must be constantly monitored, particularly from the perspective of the students who use the workbook. This is crucial to ensure that students continue to benefit from the workbook.

Researching the usability of teaching materials from the students' viewpoint provides several significant advantages. First, it enables the creation of more effective learning materials that are tailored to the needs of the learners. Understanding students' experiences and perspectives allows educators to create products that are more practical, relevant, and user-friendly (Dalsmo et al. 2024; Nuradelia, Kusuma, and Nuradelia 2024). Next, it gives useful information about the utility and effectiveness of educational resources. For example, in Hikmawati et al. (2024), students rate their perceptions of Google Sites-based teaching resources, which helps educators determine how effectively the materials fit students' needs and expectations (Hikmawati et al. 2024). Furthermore, evaluating the usability of teaching materials from the perspective of students' guarantees that educational resources are not only theoretically sound but also practical and entertaining for end users. For example, Sidik and Fahyuni (2022) show how important it is to incorporate both experts' and students' perspectives when building successful learning materials. Understanding students' perspectives on learning materials contributes to a more student-centered learning environment, which has the potential to increase learning outcomes and motivation (Sidik and Fahyuni 2022). As demonstrated by Annisa et al. (2024), students' assessments of practicality can help to improve the overall efficacy of learning materials (Annisa et al. 2024).

One critical factor that must be noticed is how students perceive the use of workbooks. Specifically, to what level are the workbook's usability, advantages, and accessibility? Practical workbooks can help students have a more positive learning experience, boost their interest in learning, and ultimately improve learning results. Workbooks that are overly complex, difficult to obtain, or not designed to meet the needs of learners, on the other hand, could block the learning process.

As a result, this study seeks to fill a research gap by investigating the use of multimodal workbooks, specifically student workbooks (SW) that stimulate EFL students to develop multimodal texts in academic settings at higher education. This study will provide valuable insights into how multimodal workbooks encourage students to develop multimodal texts.

METHOD

This study employs a descriptive research design, utilizing a case study methodology. A literature review was conducted to identify previous studies related to the topic. The

participants are the twenty EFL students who have used student workbooks (SW) focused on creating multimodal texts in their academic writing course at the English Education Study Program of a private University in Batam, Indonesia. We collected the data using a Likert scale-based questionnaire, obtaining informed consent from all participants prior to data collection. There are twenty-four statements in the questionnaire. Two experienced lecturers then evaluated the questionnaire, focusing on its content and construction. The validators categorized the questionnaire as valid and then distributed it to the participants. We expect participants to select 1 to 5 from the five options they deem suitable for the statement. 1 indicates strong disagreement, 2 indicates slight disagreement, 3 indicates moderate disagreement, 4 indicates agreement, and 5 indicates strong agreement. We tabulated the collected data from the questionnaire, presenting the cumulative scores (S), mean (M), and standard deviation (St.D) of each statement in Table 1. We then analyzed the data by categorizing it from A to E to assess its practicality.

Table 1. The practicality category of the student workbook

Category	Range	Description
A	97-120	Highly practice
B	73-96	practice
C	49-72	Almost practice
D	23-48	Less practice
E	1-24	Not practice

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The objective of this study is to analyze the practicality of a learning material that was designed in a student workbook (SW) to help students produce multimodal text. In general, the results show that 19 out of 20 students on average agreed or strongly agreed with the statements provided in the questionnaire regarding the practicality of SW. This indicates that the majority (95%) gave a positive assessment of SW. In detail, we display the results of this study into three categories: usability (Table 2), advantages (Table 3), and accessibility (Table 4).

Table 2. The Usability of the students workbook (SW)

No	Statements	S	M	St.D	Descriptions
1.	The general learning objectives in the SW are formulated in easily understandable language.	94	4,7	0,47	practice
2.	The specific learning objectives in the SW are formulated in easily understandable language.	95	4,75	0,44	practice
3.	The explanation of the material in the SW is easy to understand.	88	4,4	0,60	practice
13.	All the SW steps provide opportunities for easy reflection.	86	4,3	0,57	practice
21.	Worksheet 3 in the SW contains a task guide that is easy to perform.	84	4,2	0,52	practice
24.	In general, all worksheets in the SW contain reflection sheets that are easy to do, either on paper or online.	89	4,45	0,51	practice

Table 2 presents the data of the Usability of the students' workbook. A mean score of 4.7 and a standard deviation of 0.47 in the first statement indicate strong agreement,

suggesting that the learning objectives of the student's workbook (SW) are easily understudied. The mean score of the second statement is slightly higher at 4.75, indicating even greater agreement among students that the specific learning objectives are clear. This suggests that the specificity of the objectives enhances understanding. In the third statement, with a mean score of 4.4, students generally find the explanation of the material in the SW easy to understand, although the standard deviation is slightly higher (0.60), indicating a wider range of perceptions among students regarding the clarity of material explanations. Next, in the fourth statement, a mean score of 4.3 suggests that students feel that the steps in the SW provide good opportunities for reflection. This indicates a positive experience in engaging with the material, although there may still be some variability in opinions. In the fifth statement, students rated the ease of performing tasks in worksheet 3 of the SW at a mean of 4.2. This indicates that while most students find the tasks manageable, the standard deviation suggests that some students may struggle with certain aspects. The last statement, the mean score of 4.45, reflects a strong positive perception of the reflection sheets in the worksheets, indicating that students find them helpful and straightforward to use. The standard deviation of 0.51 indicates moderate variability in responses.

Overall, the data indicates that students have a positive perception of the SW's clarity and ease of use. The consistently high mean scores (ranging from 4.2 to 4.75) suggest that the learning objectives and materials are well-designed and effectively meet students' needs. This information is pertinent to the research conducted by (Damsa and Lange 2019). They tailor learning objectives and materials to address unique learning interests and needs, enabling students to engage with knowledge, resources, tools, and people in a way that supports their individual learning processes (Damsa and Lange 2019). The presence of standard deviations indicates that while many students share similar views, there are variations in individual experiences. This could imply differences in background knowledge, learning styles, or engagement levels among students. Although the scores are high, the areas with the lowest means (e.g., Worksheet 3) could indicate potential areas for improvement. Feedback from students can help refine these aspects to enhance their learning experience further. It is relevant to the idea that students' feedback has significance in improving various aspects of the learning environment (Mayhew 2019), including the student workbook. Furthermore, adopting a learner-centered feedback framework can help instructors provide quality feedback content and promote better student learning outcomes (Lin et al. 2023). By continuously refining these aspects based on student feedback, educators or material designers can create a more engaging and effective learning environment. Educators can use this data to inform future iterations of the SW, ensuring that objectives remain clear and accessible and that tasks are appropriately challenging. Engaging with students to understand their concerns about any specific materials can also foster a more supportive learning environment.

Table 3. The advantages of the student workbook (SW)

No	Pernyataan	S	M	St.D	Descriptions
1.	The series of step-by-step procedures in the SW makes it easier to complete the project.	87	4,35	0,59	practice
2.	The multimodal text project worksheet in the SW provides me with the opportunity to express ideas and concepts in an expressive and meaningful way.	86	4,3	0,57	practice

3.	The multimodal text project worksheet in the SW provides me with the opportunity to learn independently and in groups.	90	4,5	0,61	practice
4.	The multimodal text project worksheet in the SW gives me the chance to learn both inside and outside the classroom.	92	4,6	0,50	practice
5.	The SW is beneficial for me in working on projects according to learning objectives.	99	4,65	0,49	practice
6.	The SW is beneficial in training my skills in writing multimodal texts in English.	93	4,25	0,55	practice
7.	The SW trains collaboration in writing academic texts.	85	4,3	0,57	practice
8.	The SW helps enhance my creativity in expressing ideas and concepts.	86	4,3	0,47	practice
9.	The SW provides opportunities to apply various supporting technologies in academic writing projects.	86	4,6	0,50	practice
10.	The SW offers links to learning resources such as e-books, journals, webpages, and YouTube videos relevant to learning objectives.	92	4,75	0,44	practice
11.	The SW provides links to tutorials or guides on using supporting technologies for academic writing.	95	4	0,86	practice

Table 3. displays the second set of data regarding students' perceptions of the advantages of the SW related to their multimodal text projects. The mean scores indicate that students generally have a positive view of the SW's step-by-step procedures and the resources it provides. For instance, the mean score of 4.35 for the practicality of the procedures highlights that students find the guidance beneficial for project completion. - Statements related to expressing ideas and learning opportunities (statements 5, 6, and 7) received favorable ratings, with means of 4.3, 4.5, and 4.6, respectively. This suggests that students feel empowered to express themselves creatively and engage in both independent and collaborative learning. The responses regarding skill development and project alignment (statements 9 and 10) also reflect a positive perspective, with mean scores of 4.65 and 4.25. Students feel that the SW effectively supports their learning objectives and improves their skills in writing multimodal texts. The means for statements about creativity (statement 12) and collaboration (statement 11) are 4.3, indicating that students perceive the SW as enhancing their collaborative skills and creative expression. Statements related to technology and learning resources scored well, particularly statement 15, with a mean of 4.75. This suggests that students highly appreciate and perceive the availability of diverse resources (e-books, journals, videos) as a significant advantage of the SW. The standard deviation for statement 16 (0.86) indicates a wider range of opinions about the availability of tutorials or guides on using supporting technologies. While some students may find these resources useful, others may perceive them as lacking or not as helpful.

Overall, the data indicates that students have a generally positive perception of the SW, particularly regarding its structure, opportunities for expression, and availability of resources. The high mean scores across most statements suggest that the SW effectively meets students' needs and supports their learning processes. However, the variability in some responses highlights areas for further investigation, such as enhancing the usefulness

of tutorials on supporting technologies. Tutorials provide opportunities for personal and academic support, enabling students to receive targeted assistance and guidance (Matinde 2019). This insight can guide educators and curriculum developers in making continuous improvements to the SW and its associated materials.

Table 4. Accessibility of the student workbook

No	Pernyataan	S	M	St.D	Categories
1.	The multimodal text project worksheet in the SW can be accessed anytime and anywhere because it can be printed or in soft copy.	99	4,95	0,22	practice
2.	Worksheet 1 in the SW offers easily accessible examples.	94	4,7	0,57	practice
3.	Worksheet 2 in the SW contains a plan guide that is easy to work on with the team.	86	4,3	0,57	practice

Table 4 presents the third set of data on students' perceptions of the SW's accessibility. Statement 8, asserting that the multimodal text project worksheet is accessible anytime and anywhere, garners an exceptionally high mean score of 4.95. This indicates that students find the SW very accessible, whether in printed or digital formats. The low standard deviation (0.22) suggests a strong consensus among students, reflecting that they all generally agree on the ease of access. Statement 17, which refers to Worksheet 1 in the SW, which provides easily accessible examples, received a mean score of 4.7. This indicates that students appreciate the examples provided in the worksheet, finding them helpful and relevant to their learning. The higher standard deviation (0.57) compared to statement 8 suggests some variation in responses, but overall, students still view these examples positively. For statement 20, regarding the ease of working with the plan guide in Worksheet 2, the mean score of 4.3 indicates a positive perception, although it is lower than the previous two statements. This implies that although students find the plan guide useful, there might be potential challenges in collaboration or teamwork that require attention. The standard deviation (0.57) indicates a moderate level of variability in responses, implying that some students may have different experiences or levels of comfort with the guide. Generally, the data indicates that students have a very positive perception of the accessibility of the SW, particularly emphasizing the convenience of accessing the multimodal text project worksheet at any time. The high ratings suggest that the materials effectively support students' learning needs. However, the slight variability in responses regarding the plan guides in Worksheet 2 of the SW points to potential areas for improvement. Gathering more detailed feedback on specific aspects of collaboration and usability could help enhance the practicality of these materials, ensuring that all students feel equally supported in their learning processes.

EFL students' perspective on measuring the practicality of SW in producing multimodal texts can serve as a benchmark for educators, helping them identify areas that require future improvement. This aligns with prior research, which suggests that student perspectives can shed light on the difficulties or constraints students encounter when utilizing learning materials, assist teachers in assessing how well the materials align with their needs and expectations (Hikmawati et al. 2024), and serve as a foundation for educators to develop more practical, relevant, and user-friendly materials (Dalsmo et al. 2024; Nuradelia et al. 2024).

CONCLUSION

This research aims to evaluate the practicality level of the student workbook (SW) in supporting multimodal text learning for academic writing of EFL students. Based on the survey results using a five-point Likert scale, 95% of the research participants rated the SW used as very practical. This indicates that the developed SW has successfully met the practicality criteria in academic writing classes, particularly in aiding students in understanding and producing multimodal texts.

The contribution of this research to the field of multimodal English language learning is the availability of empirical evidence regarding the practicality study of multimodal materials. These findings reinforce the importance of developing teaching materials that not only meet students' needs but are also simple to use in a more interactive and technology-oriented learning context.

This research can serve as a reference for the development of multimodal teaching materials in various educational institutions, including both university-level and formal ones. We also expect the use of multimodal teaching materials to enrich students' learning experiences and enhance their skills in writing texts more creative and integrative.

Future research should investigate how to further develop SW, considering broader cognitive and technological aspects, and how variations in multimodal materials can enhance students' writing confidence more effectively. We can also conduct experimental studies to quantitatively assess the impact of BKM usage on students' learning outcomes.

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