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Research Article

Effectiveness of “How to Write a Sentence” as Instructional Material to Improve the Writing Skills of Grade 6 Pupils

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ABSTRACT

As students' progress in their studies, they must learn a variety of important skills. Among these is writing, which is undeniably one of the most important skills that every student must develop. However, writing has always been a major challenge for students learning English, particularly in elementary schools and for second language learners. This study determined the effectiveness of the instructional material "How to Write a Sentence" as an intervention to improve the writing skills and academic performance in English of Grade 6 students at a public elementary school in the Philippines. The one-group pretest-posttest design of the quasi-experimental research design was used in this study. A 50-item pretest and posttest were used to assess the participants' academic performance before and after the intervention was implemented. The mean, standard deviation, and paired-samples t-test were used to interpret the data. Results revealed that the use of the instructional material "How to Write a Sentence" was found to be an effective intervention in improving the writing skills and academic performance in English of Grade 6 students at a public elementary school in the Philippines. It is recommended that administrators should encourage teachers to collaborate in order to further enhance or improve the intervention material or to create other contextualized and localized learning materials suited to diverse learner types.

Keywords: *Academic intervention, Basic writing skills, Instructional material*

Introduction

As students' progress through their studies, they must learn a variety of important skills.

These skills are taught in schools, from elementary school through college, to expose students to the various ways they can solve real-life

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problems when they encounter them. Among these is writing, which is undeniably one of the most important skills that every student must attain. Writing, as a skill, allows students to learn many other important skills that will help them succeed in their academics, careers, and other aspects of their lives (Rae, 2020).

Many people find writing intimidating, especially those who do not write for a living or on a regular basis. The good news is that writing doesn't have to be agonizing, and anyone can improve their writing skills with little discipline and willingness to learn. Learning how to write paragraphs and essays is one of the most difficult experiences students have in school, but it is also one of the most important skills to have. There are numerous consequences that could have a significant impact on students' academic performance if they have a weak foundation in writing. If children do not attempt to learn to write at a young age, they will have difficulty mastering the skill later in life.

Writing is a major component in teaching and learning English. One of the vital skills among English teachers is the ability to teach writing effectively. However, writing has always been a major challenge for students learning English, particularly in elementary schools and for second language learners. Furthermore, some students appear to be unaware of the importance of writing in their lives.

Several studies on teaching writing skills were conducted to develop intervention strategies for English language learners. Gagne and Parks (2013) found that using a small group scaffolding method was a successful strategy for producing the language required to complete a writing task. Individual English language learners frequently lack the vocabulary base required to create writing pieces in the mainstream classroom, so by scaffolding amongst themselves, students learned how to use one another's strengths, rely less on the teacher, and feel more confident about writing assignments.

According to Usmeldi (2018), research-based learning modules using the Predict-Observe-Explain (POE) strategy were effective in

improving students' competence, and there was a significant difference in students' competence between the experimental class and the control class in favor of the experimental group. Similarly, Pantigan (2020) found that the scores of respondents before and after the intervention did not differ significantly, but there was a significant difference after the intervention of the module users.

Hence, this study aimed to investigate the use of the instructional material "How to Write a Sentence" as an intervention in teaching English to Grade 6 students at a public elementary school in the Philippines.

Purpose of the Study

This study determined the effectiveness of the instructional material "How to Write a Sentence" as an intervention to improve the writing skills and academic performance in English of Grade 6 students at a public elementary school in the Philippines. Specifically, it sought answers to the following questions:

1. What is the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Age
 - 1.2 Gender
2. What are the least mastered skills of the respondents in English?
3. What is the pretest and post test scores of the respondents?
4. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and post test scores of the respondents?
5. What is the academic performance of the pupils after the intervention?
6. How effective is the used the instructional materials in learning to write sentences?

Methods

The one-group pretest-posttest design of the quasi-experimental research design was used in this study to identify the least mastered skills in English and to determine the effectiveness of the instructional material "How to Write a Sentence" as an intervention to improve the writing skills and academic performance in English of Grade 6 students. The participants were 32 students, 12 male and 20 fe-

male, from the Grade 6 class at a public elementary school in the Philippines during the first quarter of the School Year 2021-2022.

The instrument used is a 50-item pretest and posttest to assess the participants' academic performance before and after the intervention was implemented. Before the study was conducted, the research instrument was

validated by experts in the field and pilot tested.

The data gathered were statistically analyzed using mean, standard deviation, and paired-samples t-test with a level of significance set at 0.05 alpha to test the significant difference between the students' performance before and after the intervention.

Results and Discussion

A. The Respondents' Demographic Profile

Table 1. The Profile of the Respondents in terms of Age

Age	f	%	Rank
13	2	6.25	3
12	26	81.25	1
11	4	12.5	2
Total	32	100%	

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the respondents' profile in terms of age. Out of 32 respondents, 26

(81.25%) are 12 years old, 4 (12.5%) are 11 years old, and 2 (6.25%) are 13 years old.

Table 2. The Profile of the Respondents in terms of Gender

Gender	f	%	Rank
Male	12	37.5	2
Female	20	62.5	1
Total	32	100%	

Table 2 shows the frequency and percent distribution of the respondents' profile in

terms of gender. 20 (62.5%) of the 32 respondents were female, while 12 (37.5%) were male.

B. On the Respondents' Least Mastered Skills in English

Table 3. The Respondents' Least Mastered Skills in English

Least Mastered Skills in English	f	%	Rank
Identify real or make-believe, fact, or non-fact images	2	6.25	8
Interpret the meaning suggested in visual media through a focus on visual elements, for example, line, symbols, color, gaze, framing and social distance	3	9.37	7
Make connections between information viewed and personal experiences	5	15.62	5
Identify the purpose, key structural and language feature of various types of informational/factual text	30	93.75	2.5
Recognize evaluative word choices to detect biases and propaganda devices used by speakers	29	90.63	4
Compare and contrast content of materials viewed to other sources of information (print, online and broadcast)	4	12.5	6
Present a coherent, comprehensive report on differing viewpoints on an issue	32	100	1

Least Mastered Skills in English	f	%	Rank
Evaluate narratives based on how the author developed the elements	30	93.75	2.5
Compose clear and coherent sentences using appropriate grammatical structures (verb tenses, conjunctions, adverbs)	32	100	1
Compose a persuasive essay on self-selected topic	32	100	1

Table 3 shows the respondents' least mastered English competencies, which include presenting a coherent, comprehensive report on differing viewpoints on an issue, composing clear and coherent sentences using appropriate grammatical structures (verb tenses, conjunctions, adverbs), and composing a persuasive essay on self-selected topic (100%); identifying

the purpose, key structural and language features of various types of informational/factual text and evaluating narratives based on how the author developed the elements (93.75%); and recognizing evaluative word choices to detect biases and propaganda devices used by speakers (90.63%).

C. On the Respondents' Pretest and Post-Test Scores

Table 4. The Respondents' Pretest and Post-Test Scores

Respondents	Pretest	Post-test	Difference
1	17	36	19
2	14	34	20
3	14	39	25
4	15	42	27
5	17	44	27
6	14	35	21
7	24	39	15
8	23	40	17
9	13	33	20
10	9	37	28
11	10	36	26
12	19	35	16
13	8	34	26
14	15	40	25
15	12	42	30
16	19	43	24
17	19	39	20
18	21	40	19
19	18	35	17
20	14	37	23
21	20	44	24
22	11	38	27
23	26	40	14
24	16	36	20
25	18	35	17
26	10	38	28
27	7	33	26
28	15	38	23
29	20	41	21
30	14	37	23

Respondents	Pretest	Post-test	Difference
31	19	39	20
32	22	41	19
Mean	16.03	38.13	
Standard Deviation	4.721	3.108	
Mastery Level	32.06	76.26	

Table 4 shows the pretest and posttest score of the students. In the 50-item pretest, students received scores ranging from 7 to 26. The students' poor performance on the pretest was evident, as the mean score was only 16.03 with a standard deviation of 4.721. The mastery level was 32.06, indicating their difficulty with the subject.

Following the intervention, students' performance improved, with posttest scores ranging from 33 to 44. The mean was 38.13, the standard deviation was 3.108, and the level of mastery was 76.26%. This demonstrated the positive impact of using the intervention "How to Write a Sentence" as Instructional Material in teaching students how to write sentences.

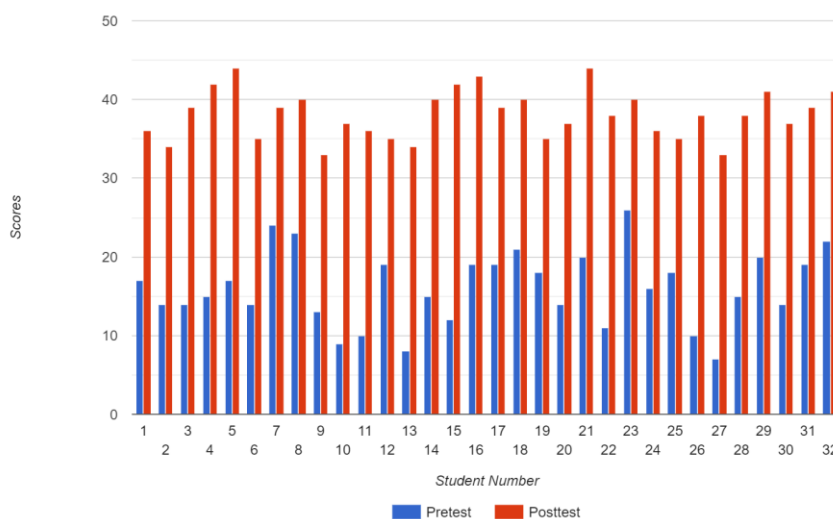


Figure 1. Comparison of the Pretest and Post-Test Scores

Figure 1 shows a comparison of the students' pretest and posttest scores before and after the implementation of the intervention "How to Write a Sentence" as an Instructional

Material in learning to write sentences. This implies that the intervention improved the students' performance significantly.

D. On the Significant Difference Between the Pretest and Post Test Scores of the Respondents

Table 5. Difference Between The Participants' Academic Performance in Science Before and After the Intervention

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Standard Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Posttest and Pre-test Results	22.094	4.253	0.752	20.56	23.627	29.387	31	0.000

Table 5 shows the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the students. The paired-samples t-test was used, with the level of significance set at 0.05 alpha. The data showed a mean difference of 22.094 between the pretest and posttest and a t-value of 29.387. The results revealed a significant difference in student performance before and after the intervention, with a 0.000 level of significance based on the set value of 0.05 alpha.

Conclusion

The study revealed that the use of the instructional material "How to Write a Sentence" was an effective intervention to improve the writing skills and academic performance in English of Grade 6 students at a public elementary school in the Philippines. The study found a significant difference in students' performance before and after the intervention, with a 0.000 level of significance based on the set value of 0.05 alpha. This indicated that the intervention was effective in improving the academic performance of Grade 6 students in English.

For further researches, it is recommended: (1) the school may continue to use the instructional material "How to Write a Sentence" in learning to write sentences and further enhance and apply modifications in light of any weaknesses it may have; (2) administrators should consider hosting webinars or training workshops on the construction of English learning materials, particularly in writing and encourage teachers to work collaboratively to construct contextualized and localized learning

materials suited to diverse learner types; (3) teachers must maintain their commitment to service by doing their best to share their knowledge and skills with students and never stop learning about innovative academic approaches; (4) parents are encouraged to support their children in all aspects, as they play an important role as para-teachers in the new normal educational setup; and (5) future studies may use the findings of the study as a reference, which can be a feasible instrumental factor for related studies in the area of using instructional materials.

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