

Writing Intervention Strategies and the Writing Skills of Grade 4 Learners in Mabayan Elementary School District 2-B, Olongapo City, Philippines

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Abstract: This study aimed to determine the relationship between writing intervention strategies and writing skills of Grade 4 learners in Mabayan Elementary School of District 2-B, Olongapo City School Year 2022-2023. The researcher utilized a structured questionnaire for the data gathering process to get a qualitative and descriptive survey. The primary aim of the questionnaire is to determine whether the respondents' profiles were gathered to support the researcher's data. The research used a four-part questionnaire developed by the researcher and validated by the adviser for proofreading before submitting it to the panel of examiners. Data were sorted, tabulated, tallied, and analyzed using frequency counts, weighted mean, analysis of variance (ANOVA), Pearson product-moment coefficient of correlation (r), and Likert scale. The study revealed that teachers often use writing intervention strategies to improve the learners' letter recognition, phonological awareness, and readability. And writing skills of the learners. Moreover, the learners attained high writing skills regarding letter recognition and readability. On the other hand, they have low writing skills and accuracy. Furthermore, the study shows significant differences in the learners' writing accuracy as influenced by the reading materials they read at home. Equally, there is a significant difference in the learners' writing skills as influenced by the availability of an internet connection at home.

Keywords: Writing intervention strategies, Writing skills, Elementary students.

1. Introduction

Writing plays a vital role in a child's educational development. These abilities are classified as writing talents. Writing is considered a fundamental talent for children, progressing as they mature. Writing skills are not inherently learned, but they may be developed by deliberate guidance from adults, such as parents, instructors, and peers, who can assist in enhancing their writing abilities. Research suggests that those who struggle with writing tend to engage in little pre-writing and need more consideration for text structure. They often choose their first thought and proceed to write without careful deliberation (Graham & Harris, 2016). According to researchers, the daunting aspect of writing is not the act of

writing itself but rather the evaluation and criticism provided by professors and peers (Cunningham & Link, 2020). Students in the intermediate grade levels, namely in Grade 4, possess several factors that impact their writing proficiency. The issue becomes more worrisome at the start of the academic year when teachers are assigned to perform assessments to identify and fix the problem by specifically targeting the writing skills of fourth-grade children. In order to achieve successful intervention throughout the academic year, it is essential to meticulously assess each student's unique talents and customize the intervention appropriately. This method will result in significant enhancements by the end of the school year. When learners begin formal education, they might assimilate several elements that can influence their abilities and conduct. In this regard, instructors often identify learners as having inadequate writing abilities, prompting them to assist by using tactics and procedures that are the most efficient methods for facilitating the learners' comprehension. Teachers know that learners possess distinct learning styles and adapt their tactics accordingly to accommodate these variations.

Based on the 2018 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which evaluates reading, mathematics, and science skills, the assessment measures the overall educational achievements of students at the age of 15 while they are still attending formal education (Jensen et al, 2019). The majority of nations evaluated a range of 4000 to 8000 students. Individuals chosen to take the PISA exam were assigned sample weights to accurately reflect the complete group of individuals eligible for the PISA assessment. Out of the 78 nations evaluated by PISA, the Philippines placed 77th in terms of average results in Reading, Science, and Mathematics. The objective of PISA was not to establish an additional hierarchical system of responsibility but rather to assist schools and governments in transitioning from a narrow focus on immediate individuals, institutions, and nations to a broader perspective. The PISA assesses what is important and provides educators and policymakers with this knowledge to facilitate better-informed

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decision-making. According to Gepila (2017), writing is regarded as the most challenging talent to teach and acquire among the macro skills. It is quite demanding since it involves instructing a novice on swimming. To acquire the swimming skill, students must engage in a diverse range of swimming activities. Hence, it is important to consider several ideas, concepts, and methods. Similarly, for students to effectively acquire the skill of writing, they must be exposed to many writing-related activities. Identity is crucial. The following are the justifications for doing this research.

2. Methods

Research Design: The research design used in this study was descriptive – correlation. Furthermore, this study aimed to find the relationships between writing intervention strategies and the writing skills of Grade 4 learners in Mabayan Elementary School District 2-B, Olongapo City. Qualitative research involves collecting and analyzing non-numerical data (e.g., text, video, or audio) to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences. It can be used to gather in-depth insights into a problem or generate new ideas for research. Qualitative research is used to understand how people experience the world. While there are many approaches to qualitative research, they tend to be flexible and focus on retaining rich meaning when interpreting data. The most common qualitative methods used by the researchers are observations, interviews, focus groups, surveys, and secondary research (Bhandari, 2020). According to Atmowardoyo (2018), descriptive research is an appropriate choice when the research aim is to identify characteristics, frequencies, trends, correlations, and categories. Survey research allows the researcher to gather large volumes of data that can be analyzed for frequencies, averages, and patterns. A descriptive survey attempts to establish the range and distribution of some social characteristics, such as education or training, occupation, and location, and to discover how these characteristics may be related to certain behavior patterns or attitudes (Doyle et al., 2020).

Respondents: The respondents of this study were all Grade 4 learners of Mabayan Elementary School District 2-B, Olongapo City, composed of 210 pupils, during the 2022-2023 school year. Six (6) Grade 4 class advisers will participate in this study. Sixty grade 4 learners' respondents or Six (6) Grade 4 class advisers participated in this study. Sixty grade 4 learners' respondents, or twenty-eight percent (28 %) of the total number of enrollees in each section, were randomly selected.

Sampling Technique: A stratified sampling was used to determine the size of the study's respondents. Stratified sampling is used to determine apportionment from each stratum. In this case, each stratum was provided equal chances to be randomly selected. Slovin's formula at a 5% margin of error was utilized to determine sample size in the quantitative phase. In the qualitative phase, a purposive sampling technique was utilized. The study purposively selected eight school heads to participate in the interview, while twelve respondents were randomly selected until data saturation was met.

Instrument: The researcher utilized a structured questionnaire for the data gathering process to get a qualitative and descriptive survey. The primary aim of the questionnaire was to determine whether the respondents' profiles were gathered to support the researcher's data. The research used a four-part questionnaire developed by the researcher, and the adviser validated it for proofreading before submitting it to the panel of examiners. Upon approval, it was administered to 6 teachers - respondents. The data-gathering instrument had four parts. Part I contained the basic information of the participants: Gender, Occupation of Parents, Reading Materials Used at Home, and Availability of Internet Connection at Home. In part II of the survey questionnaire, the researcher used a four-point scale where the respondents checked if it was always, often, seldom, or never. Part III of the questionnaire was an interview on how teachers use writing intervention strategies to enhance letter recognition, readability, and instructions. Open-ended questions were also given to the subject teacher and class adviser participants to get their answers. Additionally, in part IV of the questionnaire, the respondents checked if it was very high, high, low, or very low.

Table 1
Reliability test for the instrument

Writing Intervention Strategies	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Phonological Awareness	10	.775
Alphabet Knowledge	10	.726
Word Recognition	10	.797
Letter Recognition	10	.785
Writing Accuracy	10	.717
Readability	10	.798

Moreover, the reliability of the instrument was conducted to measure the inter-consistency of the writing results using Cronbach's alpha. Results revealed Cronbach's alpha coefficients to be greater than 0.7, indicating the instrument's high reliability.

Data Collection and Analysis. Permit to conduct the study was secured by giving a letter requesting permission from the Schools Division Superintendent and Principals of the Mabayan Elementary School, District 2-B, Division of Olongapo City; upon approval of the conduct of the study, the researcher disseminated the survey questionnaire to all Grade 4 learners at Mabayan Elementary School and retrieved them after a week.

Document analysis is a form of qualitative research in which documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning to an assessment topic (Cardno, 2019). Analyzing documents incorporates coding content into themes similar to how focus groups or interview transcripts are analyzed (Cardno, 2019). After gathering the data from the questionnaire disseminated to participants was organized, recorded, tabulated, and interpreted. The researcher used statistical tools to help the researcher interpret the collected data. The data were treated statistically using appropriate formulas to obtain a reliable result. Data analysis included the following: Frequency Counts, Weighted Mean, Correlation, Thematic Analysis, and ANOVA.

3. Results and Discussion

A. Profile of the Respondents

The grade four learners were described in terms of their gender, parents' occupation, reading materials used at home, and availability of internet connection. In terms of sex, the majority of the learner respondents are male. While an equal proportion of the learner respondents are children of parents who are teachers or virtual assistants, office employees, labor and utility workers, and vendors. There were two learners whose parents were self-employed or business owners. Moreover, most of the learner respondents have story books at home, and only four learners have available Abakada reading materials at home. Furthermore, majority of the learner respondents have internet connections at home. According to Hargittai *et al.* (2019), the digital divide persists, with marginalized communities and socioeconomically disadvantaged populations experiencing limited internet connectivity at home.

B. Writing Intervention Strategies Used to Improve Writing Skills

Hermansson and Lindgren (2019) propose that to identify early writing skills, educators should consider implementing uncomplicated writing tasks that motivate students to engage in writing activities outside the confines of the classroom. While they may now be physically present at home, their ideas are not confined to that space. An abbreviated writing exercise that may be regularly practiced stimulates learners to contemplate their feelings and their time use. Learners can either compose a narrative about their day without any pre-existing structure, or instructors may provide a template for students to complete by filling in the missing information daily. This framework generates a sense of organization and ideally encourages learners to find ways to make each day engaging, especially when the likelihood of boredom is notably elevated. The writing intervention aimed to enhance letter recognition, phonological awareness, readability, and writing proficiency. Intervention tactics are used to enhance letter recognition in writing. Letter recognition refers to the cognitive capacity to visually distinguish and accurately identify a given letter or selectively isolate a particular letter from a set of others. Table 2 displays the average analysis of the writing intervention tactics used by instructors to enhance the learners' letter recognition.

Table 2

Writing intervention strategies used to improve letter recognition		
Indicators	Wt. Mean	Qualitative Interpretation
Letter sounding game	3.67	Always
Give me a word	3.33	Often
Word wall	3.17	Often
Guided reading	3.50	Always
Phoneme drill	3.17	Often
Decoding of sound	2.67	Often
Composite	3.25	Often

The instructors consistently used phonics activities (3.67) and supervised reading sessions (3.50). Their technique for boosting the learners' letter identification often involves using

"decoding sound (2.67)". The value of 3.25 suggests that instructors often use writing intervention tactics to enhance learners' letter recognition. Frequently, educators start instruction by teaching youngsters to recognize capital letters. Letter blocks are often printed in this manner, as are magnetic letter tiles. Capital letters possess more straight lines, making them more manageable for young children to shape. The issue lies in that most writing is in lowercase, with just a few characters being identical in both uppercase and lowercase forms. Engaging in letter-sounding activities helps improve one's ability to recognize and understand the relationship between letters and their corresponding sounds. Multiple research studies investigate the advantages of phonics games as tools for improving writing skills. In a randomized control experiment, Smith (2018) investigated the efficacy of letter-sounding games in enhancing writing proficiency among primary school pupils. The findings demonstrated a significant improvement in phonological awareness and writing proficiency within the intervention group compared to the control group. Furthermore, Johnson, B., & Martinez, C. (2019) conducted a quasi-experimental investigation with a cohort of second-grade kids. The intervention group participated in interactive phonics activities, while the control group adhered to conventional writing directives. The results indicated that the group that received the intervention showed greater improvements in their writing abilities, suggesting that the letter-sounding games were beneficial. In addition, Gonzalez, M., & Lee, S. (2020) specifically examined English language learners and explored the influence of letter-sounding games on their writing proficiency. The findings indicated that the inclusion of phonics-based activities in writing intervention approaches had a beneficial impact on the writing skills of English language learners, namely in vocabulary and spelling. In addition, Brown, R., & Davis, M. (2021) performed a meta-analysis to combine the results of many research on letter-sounding games used as tactics for improving writing skills. The investigation revealed a notable and favorable impact size, suggesting that letter-sounding games greatly enhance writing proficiency across various grade levels. Wang and Chen investigated the impact of phonics-based activities on improving early writing abilities in young children attending preschool. The results demonstrated that including phonics-based games in the intervention substantially positively impacted the development of letter recognition, letter-sound association, and overall emergent writing abilities in young children.

C. Writing Intervention Strategies Used to Improve Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is recognizing and manipulating the spoken parts of sentences and words. Table 3 presents the intervention strategies teachers use to improve the learners' phonological awareness. Table 3 shows that the instructor consistently employs the "Letter Sounding Game" (4.00) and "Give Me a Word" (4.00) activities. They seldom use the "word wall" (2.17) and the "phoneme drill" (2.40). The composite score of 3.11 suggests that instructors often use writing

intervention tactics to enhance their pupils' phonological awareness. These tactics enable learners to identify rhyming words, detect alliteration, segment sentences into words, identify syllables in a word, and blend and segment onset rimes. Phonological awareness, which refers to the capacity to identify and manipulate the sounds in spoken language, is strongly associated with the acquisition of writing abilities.

Table 3

Writing intervention strategies used to improve phonological awareness

Indicators	Wt. Mean	Qualitative Interpretation
Letter sounding game	4.00	Always
Give me a word	4.00	Always
Word wall	2.17	Seldom
Guided reading	3.33	Often
Phoneme drill	2.40	Seldom
Decoding of sound	2.67	Often
Composite	3.11	Often

The significance of phonological awareness in the early development of writing was emphasized in a study conducted by Grasby et al. (2020). This skill enables youngsters to comprehend the connections between sounds and symbols and the phonemic structure of words. In a study conducted by Kjeldsen et al. (2019), the researchers investigated the effects of phonological awareness training on children's early writing skills.

D. Writing Intervention strategies used to Improve readability

Readability measures how easy a piece of text is to read. The level of complexity of the text, its familiarity, legibility, and typography all feed into how readable your text is. Readability is a key factor in user experience. Accessible content builds trust with your audience. Table 4 presents the mean analysis of teachers' writing intervention usage in improving readability.

The composite rating of 3.83 indicates that the instructors consistently use writing intervention tactics to enhance the legibility of learners' written outputs. They consistently provide various tasks that enhance the pupils' writing abilities. The professors consistently provided sufficient time for students to complete their assignments and demonstrated the right technique for writing letters. Furthermore, they consistently motivate their students to engage in writing exercises outside the classroom. The direct teaching strategy is highly acknowledged for its efficacy in enhancing readability. Pressley

et al. (2018) conducted research that found that providing direct teaching in comprehension tactics, such as summary, improves the overall clarity and readability of written work. Graham and Herbert (2020) conducted a study on text structure instruction, highlighting the significance of educating students about text structures to enhance readability. Providing clear guidance on arranging information using headings, subheadings, and other textual elements helps improve understanding and make written texts easier to understand.

E. Writing Intervention Strategies Used to Improve Writing Skills

Table 5 presents the mean analysis of teachers' use of writing intervention strategies in the learners' writing skills. Table 5 shows that the teachers had the highest mean rate of 4.00, which indicates that they always "give clear instructions on how to write letters" and "motivate the learners to write legibly."

The composite value 3.81 indicates that teachers always use intervention strategies to improve the learners' writing skills. They always provide activities that enhance the learners' writing skills, and they encourage the learners to share their writing experiences in the calls and allow them to define letters operationally. The process-based approach to writing instruction has been widely recognized for its effectiveness in improving writing skills. According to a study by Graham et al. (2018), teaching students the writing process, including pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing, can significantly enhance their writing skills and overall writing quality. Research by Harris and Graham (2019) emphasized the importance of explicit instruction in writing strategies. Teaching students specific strategies, such as planning, organizing ideas, and revising, can improve their writing skills and promote greater clarity, coherence, and effectiveness in their written work. A study by Choi and Cho (2019) found that peer collaboration and feedback in the writing process have shown promising results in improving students' writing skills by providing opportunities for reflection, critique, and revision. Effective instruction in the sentence is crucial for improving writing skills. In their study, Saddler and Andrade (2019) highlighted the significance of teaching sentence construction, grammar, and syntax to enhance students' writing clarity, coherence, and overall quality.

Table 4

Writing intervention strategies used to improve readability

Indicators	Wt. Mean	Qualitative Interpretation
I gave differentiated activities that will develop the writing skills	3.83	Always
I gave them ample time to finish their work	3.83	Always
I showed the proper way and stroke how to write letters correctly	3.83	Always
I encourage the learners to practice writing at home	3.83	Always
Composite	3.83	Always

Table 5

Writing intervention strategies used to improve writing skills

Indicators	Wt. Mean	Qualitative Interpretation
I gave clear instructions on how to write letters and words	4.00	Always
I gave activities that will enhance the writing skills of the learners	3.83	Always
I motivated the learners to write legibly	4.00	Always
I gave instructions for the learners to observe and follow.	3.83	Always
I encourage my students to share their writing experiences in the class	3.67	Always
I allow my students to define the letter operational method	3.50	Always
Composite	3.81	Always

Table 7
ANOVA on learners' writing skills across profile variables

Profile Variables	Letter Recognition		Writing Accuracy		Readability	
	F	Sig.	F	Sig.	F	Sig.
Gender	1.75	.19	1.04	.31	.02	.89
Occupation of Parents	1.71	.11	1.41	.21	1.9	.06
Reading Materials at Home	1.31	.27	3.10	.02	2.2	.08
Availability of Internet Connection at Home	11.6	.00	14.4	.00	12.8	.00

*The difference is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

F. Level of the Writing Skills of the Learners

Writing is one of the important skills in learning. It has always occupied the most space in learning a course. The learners' level of writing skills was measured in terms of letter recognition, writing accuracy, and readability. Table 6 shows the learners' level of writing skills. The table shows that the learners have a low (2.40) writing accuracy. And had a High Letter Recognition (3.10) and Readability (3.00) level. This indicates that learners need to check that the text they write is factually and grammatically correct and confirms the style guidelines in their written outputs. Moreover, there is a need to enhance their letter recognition and the readability of their written outputs. Several studies have examined the relationship between writing skills and academic achievement. For instance, Graham et al. (2018) conducted a meta-analysis and found a positive correlation between writing skills and overall academic performance. Learners with strong writing skills tend to excel academically across various subjects.

Table 6
Learners' level of writing skills

Skills	Mean	Qualitative Interpretation
Letter Recognition	3.10	High
Writing Accuracy	2.40	Low
Readability	3.00	High

Research has also explored the link between writing skills and language proficiency. A study by Perin and Lauterbach (2018) examined students' writing skills and found that language proficiency significantly influences writing performance. Students with higher language proficiency demonstrate better writing skills. Wu et al. (2020) investigated the impact of motivation on writing skills and found that learners with higher motivation tend to exhibit better writing abilities. Additionally, studies have identified other factors, such as prior writing experience, self-efficacy, and effective writing strategies (Atasoy, 2021).

G. Differences in Writing Skills of Learners across Profile Variables

The researcher hypothesized the influence of the profile variables of the learner respondents on their differences in writing skills. Table 7 shows the summarized analyses of variance in learners' writing skills in terms of letter recognition, writing accuracy, and readability. In terms of Writing Accuracy, the profile variable Reading Materials at Home (F=3.105, p=.022) has significance values that are less than the set alpha level ($\alpha=.05$). This signifies rejection of the null hypothesis; hence, significant differences in the writing accuracy of the learners as influence by the reading materials

they read at home. This implies that as they read the material at home, they become accurate in writing.

In terms of Letter Recognition (F=11.673, p=.001), Writing Accuracy (F=11.673, p=.001) (F=14.666, p=.000) and Readability (F=12.986, p=.001), profile variable availability of internet connection at home has significance values that are less than the set alpha level ($\alpha=.05$). This prompts rejection of the null hypothesis Hence, there are significant differences on the writing skills of the learners as influenced by the availability of internet connection at their own homes. This implies that an internet connection at home among the learners is also vital in learning how to recognize letters, be accurate in their writing, and read their written outputs. A study by Fidalgo et al. (2019) explored gender-related variations in writing performance among elementary school students. The findings indicated that female students tended to outperform their male counterparts in writing tasks, suggesting a gender difference in writing skills. In a study by Rijlaarsdam et al. (2018), the differences in writing performance were examined among primary and secondary school students. The results indicated that the study exhibited higher levels of writing proficiency based on differences in learners' writing skills across profile variables.

4. Conclusion

From the findings of this study, the researcher draws the following conclusions. First, a typical grade four learner in Mabayan Elementary School is a male pupil with parents who are employed as a source of income, who have story books as reading materials, and who have an available internet connection at home. Second, teachers often use writing intervention strategies to improve the learners' letter recognition and phonological awareness and always apply intervention strategies to improve the readability of the learners' outputs and writing skills. Third, learners had a high level of letter recognition and readability but low writing accuracy. Fourth, available reading materials at home influence the writing skills of learners. However, the learners' letter recognition, writing accuracy, and readability depend on the availability of internet connections at home.

5. Recommendations

Based on the study findings and conclusions, the following are recommended:

1. Parents of the grade four learners may continue encouraging their child learners to practice writing at home with the help of story books and make sure that an internet connection is available at home in order to motivate their children to write even at home.
2. Teachers may continue to always apply their

intervention strategies in motivating the grade four learners to write and acquire higher writing skills regarding letter recognition, accuracy, and writing.

3. Parents may provide additional reading materials at home and guide their children in browsing the internet to learn to recognize letters, write with accuracy, and improve the readability of the written outputs.
4. A follow-up research may be conducted to validate the result of this study.

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