

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Battle of the Gr8's: A Game-Based Strategy to improve academic writing skills of Grade 8 Learners

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Abstract

This classroom action with the goal of overcoming the students' academic writing challenges by enhancing the students' mechanics, organization, grammar, style, and composition determined the effectiveness of the researcher-made game-based strategy as an intervention on enhancing the academic writing skills of selected Grade 8 students in English at Goldenville School of Montessori Inc. for the school year 2022-2023. To determine the academic writing skills of the participants of the study before the intervention, pre-writing that requires students to compose a narrative essay on a specific topic has been administered. The students identified with difficulties were subjected for the intervention. The researchers held post-writing activities that determined the effectiveness of the game-based strategy in their academic writing performance in English. With a Purposive sampling method as the sampling technique to identify the ideal participants of the data gathering procedure, the researchers found several results after the implementation of the proposed intervention, specifically the significant difference between the scores of the respondents in the pre-writing and post-writing using the five-week intervention plan for Grade 8 students. Further analysis pondered that there was a significant difference in the academic performance between the pre-test and post-test scores of the Grade 8 students in terms of the game-based strategy in improving the academic writing skills of those students. Through the implications, the recommendations: conduct similar studies for Grade to Grade 10, implement this similar intervention to all quarters/grading periods and use differentiated instructional materials to make the game livelier and to catch the attention of the students.

Keywords: Game-based strategy; Academic writing skills; Classroom-based action research

Introduction

The ability to communicate in English is vital in the 21st century, especially in the Philippines wherein the Second Language (L2) is English. Students were often discouraged from using English in their spoken or written language even though it is taught to them during their pre-elementary and elementary level. Language instructors, particularly English language teachers, were looking for the best approach and technique for improving their students' English proficiency, especially in writing. Writing is considered the most difficult skill to teach since it covers a wide range of knowledge such as grammar rules, punctuation, syntax, and many more. Because of that technicality, students are still in need of guidance from their teacher to create an error-free writing output. In addition, writing is also considered as one of the most important skills because writing is also used for communication purposes. By mastering English as a communication tool, students are required to converse and generate suitable English texts through

written communication. Grammar and vocabulary should be acquired by pupils for them to grasp writing and use it in real-world communication.

When writing, most ESL learners struggle with consistency and cohesiveness (Belkhir & Benyelles, 2017). Several factors contribute to these issues. Huy (2015) stated that the usage of various elements of language in writing, such as grammar, was a factor that underlies students' issues in writing, and they frequently have problems with punctuation while writing. Furthermore, there are intrinsic elements to students such as students' motivation that impact students' writing skills (Dhanya & Alamelu, 2019).

Meanwhile, inefficient teaching approaches, according to Fareed et al. (2016), are one of the primary causes of students' writing issues. Rico (2014) also mentioned that the most important aspect impacting students' writing skill was teachers' instructional technique. This was because learning approaches can impact students'

enthusiasm in learning, particularly writing. The usage of learning techniques also has an impact on the quality of students' writing as well as their motivation. As a result, teachers must experiment with innovative teaching approaches in addition to established ones in order to fulfill learning objectives (Adas & Bakir, 2013). The researchers chose the game-based activities as an intervention in coping with the problem. The study consisted of four stages: observing, planning, doing and reflecting. The first stage, the researchers first observed the challenges that the Grade 8 students were facing, which was their academic writing activity in their English subject. After the researchers observed the problem, the researchers planned their intervention for the problem and how the researchers executed the intervention. When the researchers finalize the plan, the researchers proceed on executing the intervention which is tackled in the preceding chapter. Reflection was done after the execution of the intervention that resulted in the outcome of the study.

According to Ndirika (2013), the use of games in instruction is based on the need to make learning interesting to the learners, to develop a learning culture that aligns with the learners' interests, and to encourage activity-based learning. As stated by scholars, game-based learning accommodates diverse learning styles, enhances learning and memory capacity, and boosts learners' problem-solving ability and creativity, among other natural benefits. As per Stathakis (2016), game play has the potential to improve students' grasp of new ideas and concepts. Scholars state that games may teach critical thinking abilities, creativity, teamwork, and excellent sportsmanship. Several studies have also proven the effectiveness of educational games in improving learning. Fakokunde (2016) indicates that instructional games have a considerable influence on students' learning outcomes in social studies, which Adeyemi and Ajibade (2011) also support. Sowunmi and Aladejana (2013) show that simulation games increase primary school students' performance in science, whereas Watson, et al. (2011), citing Cankaya and Karamete (2019), show that instructional games improve the students' performance in mathematics. In accordance with Olatoye, et al. (2014), when students play games, their vocabulary- building performance improves.

When it comes to academic writing, teachers must inform pupils that there are no 'native-like' standards. To improve students' writing competency, we must clearly teach the writing processes as well as particular tactics. It is beneficial for writing teachers to understand different ways of teaching writing. However, teachers must recognize that simply assisting students with idea development and preparation, as well as teaching the rhetorical techniques of certain genres, is insufficient to help students improve their writing. Teachers should

also teach students the socio-cognitive approach to writing, which considers readers' expectations, socio-cultural settings, and the thinking processes involved in planning, organizing, and composing/revising essays. Teachers must emphasize to children that writing is a recursive, complicated process. To move forward, we must reread and edit our writing. An excellent piece of writing should be revised several times. This is true not only for new authors, but also for seasoned ones. Understanding this might help clear up a common misperception among students: that only inexperienced writers will require major modifications to their work. The socio-cognitive method to writing guarantees that students determine the essay's macro-rhetorical aim and that all content in the essay contributes to this goal. Readers will be able to understand the one item or one important lesson that they may take away (Cheung Yin Ling, 2016).

Based on the K-12 Department of Education Curriculum, students need to know how to write letters, short messages, advertisement, news, electronic mail, etc. Moreover, students should be able to master the new genres of text which require the students' writing skill. The teaching of writing in Junior High School is just as important as the teaching of other skills as basic language skills. Students should master academic writing skills as well as other skills since academic writing skills also contribute to improving students' competence in communication. Teaching academic writing in junior high school was a good way to prepare students in the globalization era. In conclusion, good academic writing skills are required to achieve both academic purposes and communicative purposes.

The researchers observed that some of the Grade 8 students still find it difficult to accomplish their formal writing activity without the help of their subject teacher. Furthermore, the Grade 8 students' written output in their formal theme writing book received various criticism from their subject teacher. Some of the common remarks are capitalizations, margins, redundancies, spellings and many more. It shows that some of the grade 8 students still have difficulty in terms of their academic writing. Through this research the Academic Institutions and Administrator may promote game-based strategy as an intervention to the students who are having a difficulty in their academic writing and, the students were the main beneficiaries of this study because it also helped them to widen their vocabularies that they may use in writing their ideas. In addition, the outcome of this study benefited the future researchers as they know that they can use game-based strategy in helping students who were struggling with writing.

The main aim of the study was to determine the effectiveness of a game-based strategy in enhancing the academic writing skills of Grade 8 students in English at

Goldenville School of Montessori Inc. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following questions:

1. how may the writing skills of the Grade 8 students be described in terms of mechanics, grammar, organization, style, and composition of pre-writing and post-writing before and after exposing them to game-based strategy; and
2. is there a significant difference between the writing skills in pre-writing and post-writing when they are exposed to game-based strategy?

Methodology Research Design

This study was classroom-based action research since its nature was to improve the quality of action inside the classroom. The researchers performed classroom action research in this study with the goal of overcoming the students' academic writing challenges by enhancing the students' mechanics, organization, grammar, style, and composition with the use of game-based strategy. This action research may assist educators in identifying answers to difficulties in the classroom and, perhaps, to enhance students' success.

This study used pre-experimental as a research design. According to Gormandy, (2014) pre-experiments are the most basic type of research design. In a pre-experiment, either a single or multiple groups are observed after some agent or treatment that was thought to cause change. The chosen design was preferred because it was concerned with examining the relationship of game-based strategy to the student's writing skills. This method of study allows researchers to make inferences about the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. It also reduces variability, making it easier for the researchers to find differences in treatment outcomes. This study aimed to determine whether the use of a Game-Based Strategy may improve the writing skills of the Grade 8 students in Goldenville School of Montessori Inc. The experimental method was the appropriate method to use in this study.

Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was used in this study that considered the researchers to select respondents with the characteristics that were needed in the study. The researchers conducted the pre-writing first to determine the respondents. Students who received a score of 12 points and below were subjected to be part of this study. The Grade 8 students of Goldenville School of Montessori served as the participants of the study. Specifically, the researchers identified the participants of the study by means of pre-writing activity. Afterward, the students who were reflected as having difficulty in writing proficiently were subjected to be the respondents of the study.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researchers first asked for permission to conduct the study in Goldenville School of Montessori, Inc. by a submitted request letter to the principal of the school and to the researchers' research critique. Further letters were given to the evaluators of the pre-writing and post-writing essays to ask for their permission to evaluate the essays of the respondents; the researchers ensured that the letter mentions the confidentiality of their responses to the evaluation form.

The students were informed regarding the purpose of the study. These participants were assured that their answers would be treated with the utmost confidentiality. The researchers distributed the question for the pre-writing to the students of grade 8 in the afternoon session. The question was related to the previous and current educational situations in the Philippines that had been answered by the students with a minimum of 150 words and a maximum of 200 words. The respondents only had 60 minutes to answer the question.

The result of the pre-writing helped the researchers establish and assess the 'level of difficulty of students who have been the respondents of the study. After determining the respondents, the researchers executed the five-week intervention plan which was a game-based strategy.

The post-writing had been done after the five-week intervention plan, and the scores from the pre-writing and post-writing were assessed through the use of Paired-Sample T-test to determine the significant difference between the dependent and independent variables.

The impact of game-based strategy on the academic writing skills of grade 8 students was the focus of this study. The data was collected from students in the afternoon session of Grade 8 at Goldenville School of Montessori throughout the school year 2022- 2023. Other students who were not included in the afternoon session of grade 8 students were not included in the scope of this study. The research was carried out using a game-based strategy with the students' essays which served as the references. The researchers' technique allowed them to determine the effects of game-based strategy on the academic writing skills of Grade 8 students.

The study was done with the assessment of students' writing. Using this strategy, the researchers determined that the game-based strategy helped Grade 8 students in creating good academic writing.

Proposed Intervention

This research proposed the use of a five-day game-based strategy for Grade 8 students with difficulties in

academic writing in Goldenville School of Montessori, Inc.

The researchers asked permission to conduct the study at Goldenville School of Montessori Inc, by submitting a request letter to the Principal of the School. For permission to conduct the study, in which Grade 8 students were the respondents, the researchers asked the class adviser of the students regarding the students' academic writing. In order to carry out this investigation, this was the initial step. Prior to submitting a letter to the principal, the researchers' school waited for their professor to give the all-clear to begin conducting the study.

The researchers informed the teacher adviser from Grade 8 Ruby to conduct the study. The researchers signed copies of the formal theme activities from the first and second quarters of their English subject from the English instructor of Grade 8 Ruby students. The researchers selected the Grade 8 - Ruby students. Students in grade 8 were still instructed in their formal theme writing.

The Pre-writing had been completed in the third week of February and the post-writing had been done in the last

week of April. When the result of pre-writing was disclosed, the researchers selected students who gathered 12 points and below to be the respondents. In order to enhance and mold the students' talents and pinpoint the grammatical structures and punctuations they struggled with; this study was carried out.

The researchers created a Pre-writing and Post-writing activity that determined the effectiveness of using game-based strategy in their Academic writing performance in terms of English Subject at Goldenville School of Montessori, Inc. To determine the academic writing skills of the participants of the study before the intervention, pre-writing has been administered. The pre-writing asked students to compose a narrative essay on a specific topic. The decision to employ the composition of a narrative essay for collecting data obeys the straightforward connection of the instrument to the dependent variable of this study which was academic writing skills. Every week, the researchers gave activities to Grade 8 students at Goldenville School of Montessori Inc. followed by a post-writing after the intervention.

Table 1. Activities to be done per week in the study

Week	Activity	Focus	Process
1.1	Mechanics: Spelling, Punctuation, and Capitalization	ABCD Corners	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Each corner of the room will be labeled as A, B, C, and D. 2. Then the researcher will read a question and students move to the corner of the correct answer. 3. The researcher will randomly call on students to defend their answers from different corners. 4. Students who get wrong answers will be eliminated from the game.
1.2		Paste-it-on	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will be grouped into four (4). Each group will have a set of punctuation marks that they will paste on the board. 2. Each group will have one representative per question, but their teammates can still help them to decide what punctuation mark is correct. 3. Only the first group to paste their punctuation mark will be acknowledged. However, if the answer of the first group is incorrect, other teams can steal the point. 4. If none of the groups got the correct answer, the teacher will discuss what is the correct punctuation in the given sentence. 5. 5. The group that will garner the

			highest point be the winner.
2	Grammar	Preposition Simon's Says	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The class will form a 4 batch. 2. Each student of the batch will stand and choose one object that everyone has and can use while playing such as pencil, book, chair or folder. 3. The teacher will serve as the leader in the game. 4. Each student must follow the leader and do the action, but only when Simon says. (ex. Simon says put your pencil under your chair.) If a student follows a command that is not preceded by "Simon says" and does a wrong motion, they are out. 5. The game will start per batch. Each student in every batch who loses will get a consequence. 6. The consequence will be truth or dare. The student will choose between truth or dare and will pick a paper in a box regarding the consequence he/she chooses. 7. In the box filled with papers, who chose "truth" or "dare" includes different questions/actions that will not violate their rights and also the school.
3	Organization	Word Jumble Race	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The researchers will write out 8 sentences with the use of different colors for each sentence. 2. It will be cut out to have a handful of words. 3. A basket will be used to carry on the words. 4. The students will be grouped into four (4) and will be given two sentences each. 5. The group of students who arrange it correctly in a short period of time will be the winner.

4	Style: Sentence Flow and Variety	Scatter-gories (Parts of Speech)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The students will be split into three groups and ask them to note down the categories on their pieces of paper. Categories are namely verbs, adjectives, and adverbs. 2. The researchers will randomly pick a letter from the mini basket they made containing the letters AZ and give students 2 minutes to think of a word for each category, beginning with that letter. 3. Once the time is up, allocate points for unique answers, i.e., if two teams write down the same word for a category then neither gets any points. 4. Repeat the game with different letters.
		Human Sentence	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will be grouped into two. 2. Every member of the group will have a word assigned to them. 3. Students are tasked to create as many sentences as they can in their given words in the span of 5 minutes. 4. The group that creates more sentences will be the winner of the game.
5.1	Composition	Pair to Know Me (Biography Writing)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The students will pair up. When every student has their own partners, they will get a piece of paper and a pen. 2. The students will ask each other with the help of the guide questions the teacher will present on board. 3. Each student will have ten sets of questions to be asked and they will jot down the answers of their pair. 4. When they are done with the questions, they will write a biography about their partners. 5. The content of the biography will be based on the answers of their pair.
5.2		Free Writing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find a place to focus and concentrate on writing. 2. Set a timer for at least 10 minutes. 3. Start writing and don't stop going back and editing your words. 4. Keep writing even if you can't think of what to say. When you're stuck, write "I don't know what to say" and then continue. 5. Stop writing when you hear the timer's alarm. 6. Read what you wrote and circle, highlight or underline any exciting ideas. 7. Ask, "Can I write an essay or paper about any of these ideas?" 8. Select your idea and decide if you

			want to try looping for more ideas related to your topic.
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The researchers utilized Paired-Sample T-test as a statistical technique to find out the average Pre-writing and Post-writing scores of Grades 8 students. The researchers also used the weighted mean that determined the average pre-writing and post-writing scores. The Statistical Method was used to calculate the average scores of the pre-writing and post-writing. The evaluators score the content of the post-writing and pre-writing using rubrics ranging from 0-4 scales: style, organization, mechanics, composition, and grammar.

Instrument

In this study, the researchers used pre-writing that determined the respondents that reflected the desired characteristics of the researchers. While in the post-

writing, the intervention has already been applied to know if there was a difference in terms of their writing skills with the use of the game-based strategy. The essay writing was carefully prepared to be answered by a group of people designed to collect data and results. The question was related to the previous and current educational situations in the Philippines that had been answered by the respondents with a minimum of 150 words and a maximum of 200 words.

The researchers adapted and modified the writing Rubric of University of Cambridge (Lim, 2012) was employed, which measured four categories based on a 1-4 scale: style, organization, mechanics, composition, and grammar. This rubric had been used by the evaluators that assessed the pre-writing and post-writing of the Grade 8 students.

Table 2. Rubrics for Pre-test and Post-test

Category	4 Expert	3 Competent	2 Developing	1 Beginner	0 Poor
Mechanics: Spelling, Punctuation, and Capitalization	Punctuation, spelling, and capitalization are correct. No errors.	Punctuation, spelling, and capitalization are generally correct, with few errors. (1-2)	A few errors in punctuation, spelling, and capitalization (3-4)	Distracting errors in punctuation, spelling, and capitalization	Did not answer anything to his/her paper
Grammar	Sentences are structured powerfully; with a rich, well-chosen variety of sentence styles and lengths.	Effective and varied sentences; few syntactical errors or colloquialisms	Sentences show structural errors; little or no variety; little grasp of sentence flow	Simple sentences are used almost exclusively; with frequent errors in structure and syntax.	
Organization	Sentences are structured powerfully; with a rich, well-	Effective and varied sentences; few syntactical errors or	Sentences show structural errors; little or no variety;	Simple sentences are used almost exclusively; with frequent errors	

	chosen variety of sentence styles and lengths.	colloquialisms	little grasp of sentence flow	in structure and syntax.	
Style: Sentence Flow and Variety	Writing is smooth, skillful, and coherent. Sentences are strong and expressive with varied structures.	Writing is clear and sentences have varied structures.	Writing is clear, but sentences may lack variety.	Writing is confusing and hard to follow. Contains fragments and/or run-on sentences.	
Composition	Must be able to compose a minimum of 150 words and a maximum of 200 words. Two paragraphs are composed.	Must be able to compose a minimum of 130 words and a maximum of 149 words. One paragraph is composed.	At least a minimum of 100 words and a maximum of 129 words. One paragraph is composed.	Less than 99 words are used. One paragraph is composed.	

The researchers adapted and modified the level of proficiency in writing of ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines 2012, which measured the writing skill level of students. There were five levels namely: novice, advance beginner, competent, proficient, and expert. This guideline had been used by the researchers to assess the level of proficiency students possessed in pre-writing and post-writing based on the score they attained.

Table 3. Proficiency Level Guideline

ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines (2012)	
Score scale	Verbal Description
17-20	Expert
13-16	Proficient
9-12	Competent
5-8	Advance beginner
0-4	Novice

Data Analysis

Data that were gathered from the intervention were examined using the frequency count technique, to find the average pre-writing and post-writing scores of Grade

8 students. The researchers also used the weighted mean that determined the average of the pre-writing and post-writing scores. The evaluators scored the content of the pre-writing and post-writing essay using a rubric with responses ranging from 0-4 wherein 4 was the highest point.

On the other hand, to identify if there is a significant difference between the pre-writing and post-writing scores of the students, the researcher utilized Paired-Sample T-Test. In research from Statistic Solutions

(2022), this kind of T-test, sometimes called the Dependent Sample T-test as a statistical procedure that determined whether the mean difference between two sets of observations was zero. In a Paired Sample T-test, each subject or entity was measured twice, resulting in pairs of observations.

Results and Discussions

Description of the writing skills of Grade 8 students in terms of mechanics, grammar, organization, style, and composition

Table 5. Frequency and Percentage of Pre-Writing Results

Criteria	(4)	%	(3)	%	(2)	%	(1)	%	(0)	%
Mechanics, punctuation, and capitalization	0	0	6	27.27	7	31.81	8	36.36	1	4.54
Grammar	0	0	10	45.45	8	36.36	3	13.63	1	4.54
Organization	2	9.09	7	31.81	8	36.36	4	18.18	1	4.54
Style	3	13.63	3	13.63	9	40.90	6	27.27	1	4.54
Composition	3	13.63	1	4.54	9	40.91	8	36.36	1	4.54

Legend: 4-Expert 3-Competent
2-Developing 1-Beginner
0-Poor

Table 5 shows the characteristics of Grade 8 students' writing skills through the use of pre-writing activity conducted before the implementation of the intervention plan game-based strategy among the Grade 8 students that comprises a 5-week intervention program. The scores were recorded and ranked based on the given rubric which ranges from 1-4. The results showed that the average score of the categories distinguished poor performance among the pupils. In scaling the number of scores in Mechanics (spelling, punctuation and capitalization), the majority of the students did not show mechanical proficiency wherein eight of the students (36.36%) got the score of 2 points which represented a meaning of students committed three to four errors in punctuation, spelling, and capitalization on their pre-writing activity. There were no students who got a perfect score (4) as regards to the mechanics. In tabulating the grammar criteria of the rubric, the results reflect a satisfactory performance among ten students in which they comprised 45.45% of the entire population. They scored 3 points which is an indication that students have a capacity to create effective and varied sentences with few syntactical errors or colloquialisms. The organization of most students received poor outcomes. Most of the students (8) (36.36%) got 2 points which

appears to be that students can create texts or writings that was connected with a use of basic and high frequency linking words. Next criterium was the style in which most of the students (40.90%) got 2 points which shows that their writing was clear, but their sentences may lack variety. Lastly, for the composition wherein nine or 40.91% of the students got a score of 2 points which means that they can compose at least minimum of 100 words and a maximum of 129 words and one paragraph.

The study of Murray and Christison (2011) states five competencies that must be achieved in Academic Writing. First, students were able to have a high level of organizational competence so that the ideas in their writing were clearly understandable which the respondents failed to attain since most of them got a rating of 2(36.36%). Next, students also have high accuracy in writing by paying attention to technical terms to avoid misunderstanding their meaning which eight out of 15 (36.36%) respondents acquired 2 as their rating. Third, students as writers need to control the use of grammar so that information is conveyed which shows that they were knowledgeable in grammatical rules as 45.45% of them obtain a rating of 3. Furthermore, the author must know the vocabulary in the discipline and then students as writers must be able to integrate all these competencies to produce a style that is suitable for the reader and certain context.

Table 6. Pre-writing Activity Scores

Score Scale	Respondents (N)-15			Percentage
	Verbal Description	Tally		
17-20	Expert	0		0%
13-16	Proficient	0		0%
9-12	Competent	6		40%
5-8	Advanced beginner	8		53.33%
0-4	Novice	1		6.67%

As table 6 presented, the scores of the pre-writing activities of the students only ranges from 0-12 points wherein 0 was the lowest score and 12 was the highest. The table exhibits that most of the students were at the advanced beginner level of their academic writing skills which indicates that they have distracting errors in punctuation, spelling, and capitalization. Students' sentences showed structural errors, little or no variety, and a little grasp of sentence flow. Their writing style was tagged as confusing and hard to follow and contains fragments and/or run-on sentences. The respondents under this level only construct less than 99 words up to 129 words. Followed by 6 respondents who got scores ranging from 9-12 which was under the competent level which reveals that they still have few errors in

punctuation, spelling, and capitalization. They have effective and varied sentences and few syntactical errors or colloquialisms. Their writing style is clear and sentences have varied structures. There was one student under the novice level in terms of academic writing skill wherein the respondent did not write anything on his/her paper.

As table 6 presented, the scores of the pre-writing activities of the students only range from 0-12 points wherein 0 was the lowest score and 12 was the highest. The table exhibits that most of the students were at the developing level of their academic writing skills, followed by 4 respondents who got scores ranging from 11-12 which was under the expanded level.

Table 7. Frequency and Percentage of Post-Writing Scores

Criteria	(4)	%	(3)	%	(2)	%	(1)	%	(0)	%
Mechanics, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization	7	31.81	6	27.27	2	9.09	0	0	0	0
Grammar	0	0	14	63.63	1	4.54	0	0	0	0
Organization	3	13.63	11	50	1	4.54	0	0	0	0
Style	3	13.63	10	45	2	9.09	0	0	0	0
Composition	10	45	1	4.54	4	18.18	0	0	0	0

Legend: 4-Expert 3-Competent
2-Developing 1-Beginner
0-Poor

Table 7 shows the number of students' scores for the post-test. The respondents became 15 students only, who need improvement in the different categories of the rubric. These students got the lower scores 12 and below. The scores of the 15 students in Grade 8 has arisen after the implementation of the intervention game-based strategy among the Grade 8 students that comprises a 5-week intervention plan. The scores were evaluated with the use of the same rubric that has been used in evaluating the pre-test.

In scaling the scores in the Mechanics (spelling, punctuation, and capitalization) 7 of the students or 46.66% of the respondents got a higher score of 4 which means most of the students has no error in punctuations, spelling and capitalization, 6 or 40% of the student scored 3 which means students only has 1-2 errors and 2 or 13.33% of the students scored 2 which means they got 3-4 errors. Most of the students (14 or 93.33%) got a higher score of 3 showed that the respondents only got a few syntactical errors or colloquialisms. While only 1 or 6.66% respondent got a lower score of 2 means that the respondent's sentences show structural errors, no variety, and a little grasp of sentence flow.

In terms of organization, only 3 or 20% of the students got a higher score of 4 which means that the respondents' text was generally well-organized and coherent, using a variety of linking words and cohesive devices. While most of the students (11 or 73.33%) got a score of 3 which means that the text was connected and coherent, using basic linking words and a limited

number of cohesive devices. Only 1 or 6.66% of the student got a score of 2 means that the text was only connected using basic, high frequency linking words. 3 out of 15 respondents got a higher score of 4 in the category of style (sentence flow and variety) which means writing was smooth, skillful and coherent. Sentences were strong and expressive with varied structures. While most of the students (10 or 66.66%) got a score of 3 which means writing was clear and sentences have varied structures. Only 2 or 13.33% of the students got a score of 2 means that writing was clear, but sentences may lack variety. In the last category, which was the composition only 10 or 66.66% of the respondents got a higher score of 4 which means the text of the students reached the minimum words of 150 and a maximum word of 200. Only 1 or 6.66% got a score of 3 means that the paper was composed of a minimum of 130 words and a maximum of 149 words. Lastly, 4 or 26.66% got a lower score of 2 which means the respondents' answer consists of a minimum of 100 words and a maximum of 129 words. According to Arcagok (2021), a game was known to play key role in the lives of not only humans but also all living things. Games, which are beneficial for different purposes for people of all ages, have fundamental contributions to the education and development of individuals. In this sense, games had to be integrated in curricula not only as an entertainment tool but also as an educational tool.

Table 8. Post-writing Activity Scores Respondents (N)-15

Score Scale	Verbal Description	Tally	Percentage
17-20	Expert	8	53.33 %
13-16	Proficient	7	46.67 %
9-12	Competent	0	0 %
5-8	Advance beginner	0	0 %
0-4	Novice	0	0 %

In table 8, it presented that the respondents got a score from 13 to 20. 7 students or 46.67% of the students got a score of 13-16 who were classified as proficient. The

remaining 8 students or 53.33% of the students got a highest score of 17-20 who were classified as experts. This table showed how the respondents improved after the implementation of the game-based strategy. After the implementation of the intervention, all of the respondents were knowledgeable in constructing their own sentences. There were only a few errors in terms of their spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, ranging from 1 – 2 errors only, there were also a few students who found no errors in their papers. As well in their grammar, only few syntactical errors have been found. In terms of their organization, the respondents used a variety of linking words and cohesive devices that helped their sentences to be organized. In addition, the style (sentence flow and variety) the sentences were strong and expressive with varied structures. Lastly was their composition, before they only got 99 –129 words but this time they got a minimum word of 130 and a maximum word of 200. This only shows the effectiveness of the intervention that has been implemented to them.

The significant difference between the writing skills in pre-writing and post-writing when they are exposed to Game-Based Strategy

After the implementation of the intervention, the pre-writing results revealed low level skills in academics writing pertaining to mechanics (spelling, punctuation, and capitalization), grammar, organization, and style of the respondents that caused them to get low scores of 0,5,7,8,10,11 and 12 in their pre-writing activity. The post-writing results showed a higher level of writing skills in terms of the said categories in the rubric. The respondents got higher scores of 14, 15, 16, and 17 in the post test after intervention. The results of the pre-writing and post-writing indicate that the 5-week intervention plan or the game-based strategy was successful in increasing the participant’s knowledge about the said category in the rubric comparatively to the study of Berrin and Derya (2022) wherein the writing skills of the students also increase due to educational games they employed. The increase in knowledge suggests that the game-based strategy implemented in the Grade 8 Students was effective in helping participants enhance their knowledge in constructing sentences. Each game-based strategy that has been implemented every week shows improvement in students’ knowledge about writing proficiency.

The result in the present study resembled the findings of Sofwan and Artyanni (2015) which also developed game-based strategies in learning to develop the products. The results of the observation, interview, test, questionnaire, and expert validations showed that the Battleship Game contributed to the process of learning English. Considering the result of the pre-test and the post-test, it was proven that studying the grammar of

procedural text by using Battleship game will increase Junior High School students’ writing skill.

In addition, according to Allen (2014), results indicated that, for all students, interactions with W-Pal led to increases in writing performance and more positive attitudes towards the system (engagement, motivation, and perceived performance). For L1 students, game difficulty was a significant predictor of boredom; however, for the L2 students, game enjoyment predicted both their motivation and perceived writing improvement. Notably, the L2 students’ game ratings accounted for more variance in these daily reports than did the ratings of L1 students. This study suggests that L1 and L2 students experience similar benefits offered by game-based strategy practice in an ITS. Further, the strategy link between game attitudes and overall daily perceptions of training may be stronger for L2 students than L1 students.

Table 9. Comparison of the Mean Score of Pre-Test and Post-Test of Grade 8 Learners

	N	Mean and Standard Error	Standard Deviation	T-stat	P<0.05	Verbal Description
Pre-test	15	8.20 ±0.82	3.17	2.45	0.006	Highly significant
Post-test	15	16.07±0.30	1.16			

Table 9 shows the computed T-test and p-value. In the pre-test, N was the total of respondents which was 15. The mean of the student’s scores in the pre-test and posttest. The pre-test got a mean of 8.20 with a standard deviation of 3.17, while the post- test got a mean of 16.07 with a standard deviation of 1.16. The standard error in the pre-test got 0.82 while the post-test got 0.30. The result of the T-stat in the pre-test and post-test got 10.25. The p-value was used to help determine the significance of the hypothesis test results in statistics. The p-value resulted in 0.004, which was lower than 0.05 alpha or the significance level. The result suggests the rejection of the null hypothesis and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis. This means that there was a significant difference between the writing skills in pre-writing and post-writing when they were exposed to the intervention. The result implied that the intervention used in the form of a game-based strategy was an effective tool in improving the academic writing skills of Grade 8 students.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The major conclusion was that there was a significant

difference between the scores of the respondents in the pre-writing and post-writing using the five-week intervention plan for Grade 8 students. With that being said, the five-week intervention plan through game-based strategies helps the students gain more knowledge about the effectiveness of the intervention for those Grade 8 pupils who were having difficulties in academic writing particularly in essay writing. This means there was a significant difference in the academic performance between the pre-test and post-test scores of the Grade 8 students in terms of the Game-Based Strategy in improving the academic writing skills of those students.

This study revealed the effectiveness of using the 5-week intervention plan or the game-based strategy as a solution to the writing difficulty of the students in Grade 8 in terms of mechanics (punctuations, spelling, and capitalization), the use of grammar, organization, the style (sentence flow and variety), and lastly is the composition of words. Similar studies can be done by future researchers, but they should focus on another aspect of writing such as the students' writing attitudes towards their writing. From the results collected, researchers recommended that future researchers conduct similar studies in Grade 5 to Grade 10, since it is a game-based strategy, the students will enjoy and learn at the same time without getting disinterested in the game. Future researchers can do similar studies in all quarters. The researchers recommended to future researchers to have a simple token as a prize whenever they got the highest score or whenever they win in every game, light consequences may also be given to the students who will get a lowest score. The researchers also recommended to use instructional materials, Power Points, energetic or joyful music to make the game livelier and to catch the attention of the students.

Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in this study has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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