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Strengthening Writing Performance in English 9 through Multimodal Writing Activities

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A B S T R A C T

This action research aimed to determine the effectiveness of Multimodal Writing Activities in strengthening the writing performance of Grade 9 students at Santiago National High School, Agusan del Norte, Philippines, during the School Year 2026–2027. The study employed a quantitative approach using a one-group pretest-posttest research design involving 35 Grade 9 students from the Archimedes section, selected through purposive sampling. The intervention incorporated picture prompt writing, storyboard writing, digital poster writing, photo essay writing, and digital storytelling to develop learners' writing competencies in terms of organization, coherence, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Data were gathered through pretest and posttest writing assessments evaluated using a standardized writing rubric, supplemented by classroom observations and students' written outputs. Mean scores, standard deviations, and a paired-samples t-test were utilized to analyze the learners' writing performance before and after the intervention. Findings revealed that the overall mean score increased from 16.91 (SD = 5.08) in the pretest to 19.66 (SD = 5.27) in the posttest, representing a mean gain of 2.74 points. Among the five writing criteria, organization recorded the highest mean increase of 0.91, followed by vocabulary (0.54), coherence (0.51), mechanics (0.43), and grammar (0.26). Furthermore, the paired-samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores, $t(34) = 5.512$, $p < .001$, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis at the 0.05 level of significance. These findings demonstrated significant improvement in students' writing performance following the implementation of Multimodal Writing Activities, particularly in organizing and developing ideas. However, the relatively smaller improvement in grammar suggests the need for additional instructional support in grammatical accuracy. Although the one-group design limits causal conclusions, the findings suggest that multimodal writing activities offer a promising learner-centered approach to strengthening writing competencies. The study recommends integrating multimodal writing strategies into regular English instruction, complemented by explicit grammar instruction, continuous writing practice, and constructive teacher feedback to promote sustained improvement in students' writing performance.

Keywords: Multimodal Writing Activities, Writing Performance, English 9, Writing Competencies, Digital Storytelling, Action Research

1. Introduction

Writing is one of the four macro skills in English and plays a vital role in learners' academic achievement, critical thinking, and effective communication. However, studies conducted have consistently shown that many secondary school learners continue to experience difficulties in writing, particularly in organizing ideas, maintaining coherence, using appropriate vocabulary, and applying correct grammar. These challenges often result in poor writing performance and limited confidence in expressing ideas. Moreover, researchers have emphasized that traditional writing instruction may no longer be sufficient for today's digitally oriented learners, highlighting the need for innovative and engaging instructional approaches that integrate multiple modes of communication (Mills, 2018; Kim & Belcher, 2020; Mayer, 2021).

The writing PISA result experienced by Filipino learners are further reflected in national education reports. The Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II) reported that the Philippines is facing a learning crisis, with many learners failing to achieve expected literacy competencies. The report emphasized that weaknesses in reading comprehension and written communication continue to affect learners' academic performance across different subject areas. Consequently, EDCOM II recommended strengthening classroom instruction through evidence-based, learner-centered, and technology-supported teaching strategies that develop students' foundational literacy and communication skills (EDCOM II, 2023). These findings reinforce the need for innovative classroom interventions that can improve learners' writing competence.

In the local context of Santiago National High School, classroom observations and students' writing outputs suggest that some Grade 9 learners experience difficulties in producing organized, coherent, and grammatically accurate compositions. Students may struggle to generate ideas, organize their thoughts logically, and express themselves clearly during writing tasks. However, no preliminary writing assessment was conducted for this study; therefore, the number of learners experiencing these difficulties has not been quantitatively established. The school's Philippine Informal Reading Inventory (Phil-IRI) results and Academic Recovery and Accessible Learning (ARAL) Program assessment data may provide supplementary information about learners' reading proficiency and literacy needs, subject to the availability of official school records. While teachers continue to implement various instructional

strategies to address learning needs, exploring multimodal writing activities may offer an engaging approach to improving learners' writing performance in line with the Department of Education's K to 12 Curriculum (Department of Education, 2016, 2019).

Although previous studies have established that multimodal writing activities can improve learners' writing skills, engagement, and motivation (Hung & Young, 2015; Kim & Belcher, 2020), most investigations have been conducted in foreign educational settings or higher education contexts. Furthermore, there is limited action research focusing on the implementation of multimodal writing activities among Grade 9 students in public secondary schools in Santiago, Agusan del Norte. Specifically, few studies have examined the effectiveness of multimodal writing activities in improving learners' organization, coherence, and grammatical accuracy within this local setting. This gap underscores the need for a classroom-based action research that generates localized evidence to support English teachers in enhancing writing instruction.

This action research aims to determine the effectiveness of multimodal writing activities in strengthening the writing performance of Grade 9 students in English at Santiago National High School. Specifically, it seeks to assess students' writing performance before and after the implementation of multimodal writing activities and determine whether there is a significant improvement in terms of organization, coherence, and grammatical accuracy. The findings of the study are expected to provide practical evidence that can guide English teachers in integrating multimodal instructional strategies to improve students' writing performance and engagement.

2. Methodology

This action research employed a quantitative approach using a one-group pretest-posttest research design to determine the improvement in the writing performance of Grade 9 students following the implementation of Multimodal Writing Activities. The study was conducted at Santiago National High School, Agusan del Norte, Philippines, during the School Year 2026–2027. The participants consisted of 35 Grade 9 students from the Archimedes section, selected through purposive sampling based on their identified needs in writing, as reflected in classroom observations and written outputs. The researchers utilized pretest and posttest writing assessments evaluated through a standardized writing rubric measuring five writing competencies: organization, coherence, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. The intervention incorporated five multimodal writing strategies, namely picture prompt writing, storyboard writing, digital poster writing, photo essay writing, and digital storytelling, which were integrated into regular English 9 lessons to strengthen learners' ability to generate, organize, and communicate ideas effectively. Before the intervention, a pretest was administered to establish the participants' baseline writing performance. Subsequently, the multimodal writing activities were implemented, during which students engaged in visual, textual, and digital writing tasks supported by classroom observations, formative feedback, and guided writing exercises. Following the intervention, a posttest was administered using a writing task similar in format to the pretest to assess changes in learners' writing performance. The collected data were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviations to describe students' writing performance before and after the intervention, while a paired-samples t-test was employed to determine whether the difference between pretest and posttest scores was statistically significant at the 0.05 level of significance. Ethical considerations were observed through institutional approval, participant orientation, informed consent procedures, and the confidential handling of learners' information. This methodology provided a systematic basis for evaluating changes in students' writing performance following the implementation of Multimodal Writing Activities.

3. Results and Discussion

The results and reflection section presents the analysis and interpretation of the findings of the study.

Problem 1. What is the writing performance of Grade 9 students before and after the implementation of multimodal writing activities?

Table 1 presents the writing performance of Grade 9 students before and after the implementation of Multimodal Writing Activities.

Table 1

Writing Performance of Grade 9 Students Before and After the Implementation of Multimodal Writing Activities

Writing Criteria	**Pre-test Mean**	**SD**	**Post-test Mean**	**SD**	**Mean Increase**
Organization	3.43	1.36	4.34	1.14	0.91
Coherence	3.37	1.29	3.89	1.35	0.51
Vocabulary	3.59	1.27	4.09	1.07	0.54
Grammar	3.23	1.29	3.49	1.22	0.26
Mechanics	3.37	1.17	3.80	1.13	0.43
Overall Total Score	**16.91**	**5.08**	**19.66**	**5.27**	**2.74**

The results show an improvement in the students' writing performance after the implementation of the intervention. The overall mean score increased from 16.91 (SD = 5.08) in the pre-test to 19.66 (SD = 5.27) in the post-test, with a mean increase of 2.74 points. This improvement was observed across all five writing criteria.

In Organization, the mean score increased from 3.43 in the pre-test to 4.34 in the post-test, showing the highest mean increase of 0.91. This suggests that multimodal activities helped students organize and develop their ideas more effectively. Activities such as picture prompt writing, storyboard writing, and photo essay writing provided students with visual guides for arranging their ideas and events logically. This finding is consistent with Kim and Belcher (2020), who emphasized that multimodal composing provides learners with different ways of developing and expressing ideas.

For Coherence, the mean increased from 3.37 to 3.89, with a mean increase of 0.51. This improvement indicates that students became better at connecting and sequencing their ideas. The storyboard and digital storytelling activities required students to arrange information and events in a logical order, which may have supported the development of coherent compositions.

In Vocabulary, the mean score increased from 3.59 to 4.09, resulting in a mean increase of 0.54. The use of pictures, photographs, and digital posters provided students with visual contexts that could help them generate ideas and select appropriate words. The improvement supports the purpose of the intervention, which included activities designed to help students expand their vocabulary and communicate their ideas more clearly.

For Mechanics, the mean score increased from 3.37 to 3.80, with a mean increase of 0.43. This indicates that students showed some improvement in the technical aspects of writing. The opportunity to draft, revise, and receive formative feedback during the intervention may have contributed to this improvement.

Meanwhile, Grammar showed the smallest increase, from 3.23 in the pre-test to 3.49 in the post-test, with a mean increase of 0.26. Although the improvement was smaller compared with the other criteria, the results still indicate positive progress. This may suggest that grammatical accuracy requires more continuous practice and explicit instruction alongside multimodal writing activities.

As researchers, we consider that the implementation of multimodal writing activities helped students improve their writing performance. The activities provided learners with different ways to generate, organize, and express their ideas. The greatest improvement in organization suggests that visual and multimodal materials were particularly helpful in assisting students in arranging their ideas before and during the writing process.

The results also show that improvement was not equal across all writing criteria. Grammar had the smallest increase, indicating that students may need additional activities that specifically focus on grammatical accuracy. Therefore, multimodal writing activities may be combined with explicit grammar instruction, continuous practice, and teacher feedback to further strengthen students' writing skills.

Since this study employed a one-group pretest-posttest design, the findings describe the changes observed among the participating Grade 9 students. The improvement in mean scores provides evidence of progress after the intervention; however, a statistical test is still necessary to determine whether the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores is statistically significant.

Problem 2. Is there significant difference between the writing performance of Grade 9 students before and after the implementation of multimodal writing activities?

Table 2 presents the results of the test for the significant difference in the writing performance of Grade 9 students before and after the implementation of multimodal writing activities.

Table 2

Test on the Significant Difference in the Writing Performance of Grade 9 Students Before and After the Implementation of Multimodal Writing Activities

Writing Performance	N	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	t-value	df	p-value	Decision	Interpretation
Pre-test	35	16.91	5.08					Reject H_0	Significant
Post-test	35	19.66	5.27	2.74	5.512	34	< .001		

The findings reveal a statistically significant improvement in the writing performance of Grade 9 students after the implementation of multimodal writing activities. The students obtained a pre-test mean score of 16.91 (SD = 5.08), which increased to 19.66 (SD = 5.27) in the post-test. The mean difference of 2.74 points indicates an observable improvement in students' writing performance following their exposure to the intervention. The paired-samples t-test further established that this difference was statistically significant, $t(34) = 5.512$, $p < .001$. Thus, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between students' writing performance before and after the implementation of multimodal writing activities is rejected.

The significant increase in post-test scores suggests that the use of multimodal writing activities may have provided students with a more supportive environment for developing their writing skills. Unlike conventional writing tasks that rely predominantly on written text, multimodal activities allow learners to engage with ideas through combinations of linguistic, visual, spatial, and other modes of representation. Such opportunities can assist students

in organizing ideas, establishing relationships among concepts, and translating their understanding into written compositions. In this sense, multimodal activities may function not merely as supplementary materials but as scaffolds that support the processes involved in composing written texts.

The result is also consistent with the descriptive findings across the different dimensions of writing. Improvements were observed in organization, coherence, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics, although the magnitude of improvement varied across these areas. Organization showed the greatest increase, from 3.43 to 4.34, suggesting that multimodal activities may be particularly useful in helping students structure and sequence their ideas. Vocabulary and coherence likewise improved, while comparatively smaller gains were observed in grammar and mechanics. This pattern suggests that multimodal writing activities may more readily support higher-level processes such as generating, connecting, and organizing ideas, whereas linguistic accuracy may require more explicit and sustained instruction.

As a teacher-researcher, the results also provide an important reflection on the role of the teacher in implementing multimodal writing activities. The effectiveness of such activities does not necessarily come from the use of technology or visual materials alone. Students still need clear instructions, appropriate models, opportunities to collaborate, and guidance in transforming multimodal representations into coherent written texts. Research on multimodal writing likewise emphasizes the importance of task design, instructional support, and the relationship between linguistic and non-linguistic modes. Therefore, the improvement observed in this study may reflect not only the materials used but also the structured learning experiences and teacher guidance provided throughout the intervention.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Writing performance of Grade 9 students improved across all five assessed competencies following the implementation of Multimodal Writing Activities. The increase in the overall mean score from 16.91 in the pretest to 19.66 in the posttest indicates positive development in students' organization, coherence, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. The greatest improvement was observed in organization, suggesting that multimodal writing activities may be particularly beneficial in helping learners structure and express their ideas logically. However, the relatively smaller improvement in grammar highlights the need for continuous practice, explicit grammar instruction, and constructive feedback to further strengthen students' writing proficiency.

2. A statistically significant difference was established between the pretest and posttest writing performance of Grade 9 students, $t(34) = 5.512$, $p < .001$, resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis. This finding confirms that students demonstrated significantly higher writing performance following the implementation of Multimodal Writing Activities. The results support the potential of multimodal instructional strategies as an effective approach to strengthening students' writing competencies. Nevertheless, because the study employed a one-group pretest-posttest design, the observed improvement cannot be attributed exclusively to the intervention.

Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

DepEd Agusan del Norte Division. The Division is encouraged to institutionalize multimodal writing activities in English instruction through division-wide policies, LAC sessions, cluster workshops, and in-service training aligned with the K to 12 Curriculum. Providing accessible digital resources, free educational technology platforms, and a shared repository of localized lesson exemplars, rubrics, and student outputs can further support teachers in effectively implementing learner-centered multimodal writing activities.

English Teachers. Teachers are encouraged to integrate multimodal writing activities, such as picture prompts, storyboards, digital posters, photo essays, and digital storytelling, into regular writing instruction. These activities may help students generate, organize, and communicate their ideas more effectively.

Students. Students are encouraged to actively participate in multimodal writing activities, use visual and digital materials to develop their ideas, and apply teacher feedback through regular revision of their written outputs.

School Principal. School administrators may support the implementation of multimodal writing instruction by providing appropriate digital resources, instructional materials, and professional development opportunities for teachers.

Future Researchers. Future researchers may conduct similar studies with larger groups of participants, comparison or control groups, and longer implementation periods. They may also examine the long-term effects of multimodal writing activities and determine which specific activities are most effective in developing particular writing skills.

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