

## **Re-Writing the Narratives of Grade 7 Students Through Focused Enhancement Activities (FEA)**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Narrative writing is often regarded as the simplest form of writing because it mainly involves telling a story; however, it still requires certain skills to be effective, and students may still struggle with writing even when drawing from personal experiences. This study aims to identify the difficulties of Grade 7 students in narrative writing and address these through Focused Enhancement Activities (FEA). It also examined the effectiveness of these activities in improving students' writing proficiency. Employing a descriptive-associational method, the study found that the participants encountered difficulties across all five components of writing in the rubric, including content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. The results indicate that both pre- and post-task scores remained at the beginning level of proficiency, with no statistically significant difference observed. These findings suggest that continued participation of students in writing intervention programs supports the improvement of students' writing skills and contributes to meaningful progress through consistent engagement.

*Keywords:* focused enhancement activities, narrative writing, writing proficiency level

### **INTRODUCTION**

Writing is one of the four macro skills, alongside listening, speaking, and reading, that form the foundation of acquiring communicative competence. Among these four language skills, writing is considered the most labor-intensive (Peter & Singaravelu, 2021). For Sogutlu et al. (2022), writing necessitates mastery of numerous linguistic, cognitive, and social skills. Effective writing establishes essential ideas by organizing words to form a clear and meaningful message (Kristiana, 2020).

As a productive skill, writing is used to assess students' critical thinking abilities. In the cognitive domain of Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (1965), "creating" is the highest level of cognitive processing, with writing being a fundamental activity at this level. For this reason, writing is considered the most in-demand skill from students, as it enhances their academic performance and equips them to meet the demands of a competitive workplace, both locally and globally (Caliboso, 2021). Similarly, Brown (2001) cited in the study of Inayanti and Halimi (2019), noted that writing skills serve crucial functions in academic writing, particularly for pedagogical purposes, as these are essential for producing various types of academic documents, including general subject papers and reports, essays, compositions, journals, technical reports, theses, and dissertations. Therefore, writing is a compulsory requirement.

The Philippine government's goal in implementing the MATATAG curriculum is to equip students with the skills and competencies necessary to compete in the international labor market. As part of this initiative, the MATATAG Curriculum Guide for English emphasizes on enhancing learners' communicative competence, particularly in writing and composition. High school students across the Philippines are engaged in a variety of extensive writing activities in English subjects as well as in various learning areas to further develop their writing skills. According to Belarmino (2023), learners are expected to master a wide range of writing forms, including simple narrative texts, personal and factual recounts, journal entries, anecdotes, travelogues, personal letters, informative texts, biographical sketches, effective paragraphs,

informative essays, literary works, persuasive texts, argumentative essays, independent critiques, and research reports, among others.

Despite the recognized importance of writing, its challenging nature requires effective interventions to support students, especially those learning English as a second language. Although numerous studies have addressed issues in second language (L2) writing, what remains underexplored is how focused writing interventions and/or enhancement activities can address the narrative writing difficulties of grade 7 students. Many studies in writing have been carried out in public high schools (Timayi et al., 2016; Kabigting, 2020; Urbano et al., 2021; Agbayani, 2022; Garcia & Asuncion 2022; Baylon, 2023). However, most of the studies about narrative writing have focused on higher levels such as grades 10 to 12 (Ahmad et al., 2020; Peter and Singaravelu, 2021; Kristiana, 2020). The majority of the studies in writing are geared towards English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Ariyanti & Fitriana, 2017; Habiba et al., 2020; Sogutlu & Ostrosi, 2022; Robillos & Bustos, 2023).

One approach to improve junior high school students' writing proficiency is to cultivate effective Focused Enhancement Activities (FEA) that engage struggling writers to understand the writing process. FEA encompasses a variety of writing interventions aimed at addressing the specific needs of struggling writers. These activities aim to improve writing aspects such as content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Since its potential has not been fully explored in the ESL secondary school context, the researchers raised the question of whether grade 7 students would benefit from FEAs. Another approach is the concept of re-writing. Re-writing is the process of writing something again, often in a different way, to improve it or incorporate new information (Merriam-Webster, 2024). In this study, the concept of rewriting would take place where students would be asked to re-write their pre-task in their post-task. Re-writing is not merely about correcting errors but rather it involves development and progress in writing. It encourages students to reflect on their initial drafts, reconsider their ideas, and refine their expression to achieve clarity and coherence.

The study aims to identify the difficulties encountered by Grade 7 students and address these challenges through a series of Focused Enhancement Activities (FEA) to be conducted over a period of six (6) weeks. The following research problems are the specific concerns of this paper:

1. What is the writing proficiency level of the Grade 7 students in narrative writing in:
  - a.) pre-task and
  - b.) post-task?
2. What are the difficulties of the Grade 7 students in narrative writing?
3. Is there a significant difference in the writing proficiency level of grade 7 students in their pre-task with their post-task?
4. What specific FEAs gained positive results to the grade 7 students' narrative writing?

## **METHODOLOGY**

A descriptive-associational research design was used. The descriptive method was utilized to identify the students' levels of proficiency, their difficulties in writing, and the specific FEAs that obtained positive results. The associational method was used to identify significant differences between the pre-task and post-task of students. The study was conducted at Saint Mary's University Junior High School. Grade 7 students in one class were targeted as participants. There were 12 students who agreed to be part of the study. The instruments used by the researchers were the pre-tasks and post-tasks, Focused Enhancement Activities (FEA), an interview guide, and a rubric by Heaton (1989) to assess students' output.

The research procedure consisted of two phases: the preparatory stage and the writing stage. The preparatory stage involved the approval of the school principal, subject coordinators, and subject teachers. It was followed by a collection of the Informed Consent Forms from the parents and students. Lastly, researchers identified the research participants. The writing stage consisted of six sessions. The first session was assigned to conduct an orientation and accomplish the pre-task. Sessions 2-4 were allotted for a lecture on mechanics, organization, language use, vocabulary, and writing process. The last session was used to accomplish the post-task.

The data collected was subjected to two inter-raters. The Levels of Proficiency by DepEd and the Expanded Levels of Proficiency were used to determine the proficiency level of students and identify the difficulties of students based on the rubric by Heaton. A paired sample T-test was used to assess if there was a significant difference between students' pre-task and post-task. Lastly, the written interview determined the specific FEAs that gained positive results.

The study was approved by Saint Mary's University Research Ethics Office (SMUUREO) for ethical considerations. There was no conflict of interest in conducting the study, as no dependent relationships were identified that influenced the study. The data collected was ensured with confidentiality and was used for research and educational purposes only. The participants were considered minors; hence, a thorough explanation of the process and purpose of the study was guaranteed before writing sessions. There were identified risks for the participants, such as consecutive scheduled sessions that were beyond class hours and an added workload for the students. Participants were informed beforehand that any activity in the study would not contribute to their academic grades. Any activity in the study was purely for research purposes and the enhancement of students' writing skills. The intellectual property of the study was owned by the university. The authorship of the paper belongs to the researchers and the research adviser. The results and findings of the study were also presented to the faculty of Saint Mary's University Junior High School and Science High School.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Section 1. Writing Proficiency Level of the Grade 7 Students in Narrative Writing

**Table 1**

*Writing Proficiency Level of the Grade 7 Students in Narrative Writing in Pre-task*

Scores	Descriptive Interpretation	Post-task score (f)	%
100-90%	Advanced	0	0
89-85%	Proficient	2	16
84%-80%	Approaching Proficiency	1	8
79-75%	Developing	0	0
74% and below	Beginning	9	75
	Total	12	100

Table 1 presents an overview of the respondents' narrative writing proficiency in their pre-task. It shows that the majority of students, specifically 75% of the whole, are at the beginning level of proficiency. This indicates that a significant portion of the learners did not meet the expected standard for narrative writing. This finding aligns with several studies reporting that there is a low level of narrative writing proficiency among students, which highlights a difficulty faced mainly in grammar skills (Che Awang et al., 2020; Gurung & Upadhyay, 2025; Quijano & Legaspi, 2020). Moreover, 8% of students are approaching proficiency in narrative writing, which shows that there is still room for improvement if there is a guide for them to hone their writing skills.

**Table 2**

*Writing Proficiency Level of the Grade 7 Students in Narrative Writing in Post-task*

Scores	Descriptive Interpretation	Post-task scores (f)	%
100-90%	Advanced	1	8
89-85%	Proficient	1	8
84%-80%	Approaching Proficiency	0	0
79-75%	Developing	1	8
74% and below	Beginning	9	75
	<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows the students' post-task scores after presenting the Focused Enhancement Activities (FEA). Out of the 12 participants, 75% of students are categorized at the beginning level. It implies that they did not meet the expected standard after the intervention. According to Kuhfeld et al. (2020), academic progress especially among students who begin with lower prior knowledge can take time to surface in standardized assessments or post-task evaluations. However, 8% of students were on both developing, proficient, and advanced proficiency. It suggests that despite the overall number of students who are at the beginning proficiency, there are students who are performing to the expected standard. On the other hand, the fact that only a small percentage (8%) reached the expected standards might also raise concerns about the overall effectiveness and inclusivity of the intervention.

**Section 2. Difficulties Faced by Grade 7 Students in Narrative Writing****Table 3***Difficulties of the Grade 7 Students in Narrative Writing in the Pre-task*

Criteria	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Extended Proficiency Level
Content (30)	22.17	4.589	Beginning	High beginning level
Organization (20)	13.92	3.370	Beginning	High beginning level
Vocabulary (20)	13.25	3.194	Beginning	High beginning level
Language use (25)	13.92	5.160	Beginning	Average beginning level
Mechanics (5)	2.17	.389	Beginning	Low beginning level
<b>Total</b>	<b>68.08</b>	<b>18.209</b>	<b>Beginning</b>	<b>High beginning level</b>

Table 3 highlights an extended interpretation of the proficiency levels due to the majority of students performing at the beginning level in pre-task. This approach was necessary to provide a more detailed understanding of their current capabilities and to identify specific areas that required Focused Enhancement Activities and focused instruction. The table shows the identified difficulties of 12 participants in narrative writing in their pre-task. Generally, the participants showed very poor performance in all five areas of writing. This finding in the pre-task coincides with the study of Telaumbanua (2020) which also found that ninth-grade students produce inferior narrative texts in terms of grammar, the lack of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and layout. Furthermore, most of the students' difficulties are mechanics where the participants gained the lowest mean score.

**Table 4***Difficulties of the Grade 7 Students in Narrative Writing in the Post-task*

Criteria	Mean	SD	Interpretation	Extended Proficiency Level
Content (30)	22.25	4.615	Beginning	High beginning level
Organization (20)	14.08	3.288	Beginning	High beginning level
Vocabulary (20)	13.42	2.906	Beginning	High beginning level
Language Use (25)	14.75	4.159	Beginning	Average beginning level
Mechanics (5)	2.33	.492	Beginning	Low beginning level
<b>Total</b>	<b>69.38</b>	<b>16.641</b>	<b>Beginning</b>	<b>High beginning level</b>

Table 4 presents the level of proficiency of Grade 7 students in narrative writing after the intervention, based on the post-task scores. The participants remained at the beginning level in

all components of the rubric. Among these, mechanics had the lowest mean score with 2.33, labeled as low beginning level. Similarly, Raudah et al. (2021) found that students also encountered difficulties in mechanics, particularly with spelling, punctuation (especially the proper use of commas), and capitalization. Siregar (2023) also reported that several students demonstrated challenges in correctly using punctuation and capitalization in narrative writing, with only a few achieving higher levels of proficiency. Furthermore, language use is the second lowest mean score with 14.75, labeled as average beginning level. This is followed by vocabulary (13.42), organization (14.08), and content (22.25), all labeled as high beginning level. The data concludes that students still need improvement in content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics despite undergoing an intervention.

### Section 3. Difference in the Writing Proficiency Level of Grade 7 Students in their Pre-Task with their Post-Task

**Table 5**

*Test on Significant Difference in the Writing Proficiency Level of Grade 7 Students in their Pre-task with their Post-task (Total Scores)*

	Mean	SD	Mean Difference	T-stat	df	P-value
Pre-task	65.41667	16.16651	1.41666	-0.71451	11	0.4898
Post-task	66.83333	14.48406				

Table 5 shows the results of a paired sample T-test that was used to compare the scores of students in pre-task and post-task. Results show that there is no significant difference since P-value (0.4898) is greater than alpha level (0.05). This suggests that the intervention did not have a statistically significant effect on the students' writing skills. Similarly, in the study of Peltzer et al. (2025), the intervention showed little changes among the results of the writers. However, in the study of Bouwer et al. (2024), results showed the writing skills of students have improved. Also, in the study of Rosário et al. (2019), students who underwent intervention showed significant positive results in their writing skills. These imply that interventions vary in their effectiveness. It is also important to consider that the intervention may have little to no effectiveness because there might be some underlying cause that can stem from a range of factors including student participation, time, and consistency of student attendance during the intervention sessions.

**Table 6**

*Test on Significant Difference in the Writing Proficiency Level of Grade 7 Students in their Pre-task with their Post-task (Content)*

Criterion		Mean	SD	Mean Difference	T-stat	df	P-value
Content	Pre Task	22.16	4.70814 9	0.09	-0.1534 8	1 1	0.88080 3
	Post Task	22.25	4.58918 4				

Table 6 shows the comparison of students' scores in terms of content using a Paired Sample T-test. Results showed that there is no significant difference in their pre-task and post-task since the P-value (0.880803) is greater than the Alpha Level (0.05). There is a positive change in their scores but it is small-scale considering their mean difference of 0.09.

**Table 7**

*Test on Significant Difference in the Writing Proficiency Level of Grade 7 Students in their Pre-task with their Post-task (Organization)*

Criterion		Mean	SD	Mean Difference	T-stat	df	P-value
Organization	Pre Task	13.91	3.369875	0.17	-0.35156	11	0.731809
	Post Task	14.08	3.287949				

Table 7 presents the results of students' scores in terms of organization using a paired sample T-test. Results showed that there is no significant difference in their pre-task and post-task since the P-value (0.731809) is greater than the Alpha Level (0.05). Only a small positive difference is observed considering their mean difference of 0.17.

**Table 8**

*Test on Significant Difference in the Writing Proficiency Level of Grade 7 Students in their Pre-task with their Post-task (Vocabulary)*

Criterion		Mean	SD	Mean Difference	T-stat	df	P-value
Vocabulary	Pre-task	13.25	3.194455	0.16	-0.33002	1	0.747587
	Post-task	13.41	2.906367				

Table 8 shows the comparison of students' scores in terms of vocabulary using a paired sample T-test. The data reveals that there is no significant difference in their pre-task and post-task since the P-value (0.747587) is higher than the Alpha Level (0.05). There is still a little positive change considering their mean difference of 0.16.

**Table 9**

*Test on Significant Difference in the Writing Proficiency Level of Grade 7 Students in their Pre-task with their Post-task (Language Use)*

Criterion		Mean	SD	Mean Difference	T-stat	df	P-value
Language Use	Pre-task	13.91	5.160309	0.84	-1.13096	11	0.282127
	Post-task	14.75	4.15878				

Table 9 shows there is no significant difference in their pre-task and post-task since the P-value (0.282127) is greater than the Alpha Level (0.05). There is still a small-scale positive difference considering their mean difference of 0.84.

**Table 10**

*Test on Significant Difference in the Writing Proficiency Level of Grade 7 Students in their Pre-task with their Post-task (Mechanics)*

Criterion		Mean	SD	Mean Difference	T-stat	df	P-value
Mechanics	Pre-task	2.16	0.389249	0.17	1.4832	1	0.166087
	Post-task	2.33	0.492366				

On the comparison of participants' scores in their pre-task and post-task using a paired sample T-test, results show that there is no significant difference in their pre-task and post-task

since the P-value is greater than the Alpha Level (0.05). There is still a little positive difference considering their mean difference of 0.17. Post-task with the presence of focused enhancement activities, showed little to no changes in the scores of the students. Predominantly mechanics is still the lowest score among the criteria despite the varied ranges of scores from the student outputs. The results of the study of Jayanti (2019), are similar whereas mechanical errors were still a problem for the participants in writing. Moreover, aside from grammatical errors, mechanical errors are among the issues that need to be addressed in the writing skills of students (Fitria, 2022). In the study of Garduce and Baluyos (2023), they underscored the need for students to improve their mechanics in writing.

#### Section 4. Focused Enhancement Activities that Gained Positive Results in the Grade 7 Students' Narrative Writing

Focus Enhancement Activities (FEA) are activities that are created to improve student writing proficiency as well as learning during the sessions. These activities were created by the researchers who served as teachers during the four sessions in between the pre-task and post-task. A written interview was also conducted after the post-task to probe the effectiveness of strategies as well as specific FEAs that helped the students. There are also responses that did not specify a FEA, these are also taken into account.

**Table 11**

*Specific FEAs that gained Positive Results in the Grade 7 Students' Narrative Writing*

Themes	f	%	Specific Responses
Game-based activities and Group activities	5	42	Games and Group activities Mingle game Vivid words game Punctuation marks game Educational game
Writing Activities	4	33	The writing activities The writing process Essay Writing Narrative writing

Table 11 presents the responses that surfaced in the semi-structured interview conducted after the post-task having a generally positive impact on the narrative writing skills of Grade 7 students. Among the various activities of FEA, game-based activities and group activities emerged as the most positively received by students. The interactive games during the sessions, such as the mingle game, vivid words game, and punctuation marks game, were frequently mentioned by the student participants and appear to have made the FEA sessions as well as the writing process more engaging and enjoyable. According to Salim et al. (2023) implementation of games in lessons has a significant impact on the students' performance in writing and that there is an increase in students' motivation in the class, collaboration with their peers, and enjoyment of the learning process. Taiyrkyzy (2024) added that incorporating games or game elements in teaching writing makes the learning experience more interesting and ultimately leads to a deeper understanding. Game-based activities and group activities captured students' interest and also encouraged active participation, which likely contributed to their improved motivation to learn and in their development in writing. The findings from the responses of students solidified that game-based and group activities gained positive results among the other strategies and activities that were done throughout the sessions. According to Mantilla and Herrera (2024) the incorporation of games and gamified elements most especially narrative-driven challenges help the students to be proactive in writing. Highlighting this FEA and strategy as the most vital key drivers in improving the narratives of grade 7 students.

## Conclusion

The study identified the difficulties encountered by Grade 7 students in narrative writing and addressed these through a series of Focused Enhancement Activities (FEA) conducted over a period of six (6) weeks. The following conclusions were made based on the findings:

1. The participants' writing proficiency level in both pre-task and post-task was at the beginning level. Thus, the students lack the necessary skills needed in writing narratives.
2. Generally, the participants faced difficulties in all five areas of writing, namely, content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Among these components, language use and mechanics were observed to have the greatest problems in the participants' narratives. Hence, the participants need focused support and instruction in both areas.
3. The pre-task result did not vary with the post-task. But, the scores in the post-task generally increased. Hence, the intervention in FEA may not necessarily have failed, but may have other factors that affected the result of the scores.
4. Game-based and group activities gained positive impact according to participants' responses that they deemed helpful in improving their narrative writing skills. Writing tasks presented as games or group activities allowed the participants to practice their narrative skills in a more interactive way; more so, it reduced the pressure often felt in more traditional exercises. Furthermore, this suggests that game-based activities and group activities foster motivation and engagement during the sessions.

## Recommendations

Students are highly encouraged to take an active role in their own writing development by seeking opportunities to practice and improve their skills in writing. Their engagement in these activities is essential for achieving meaningful progress in writing performance.

Moreover, English teachers are encouraged to integrate data-driven strategies, interventions, and differentiated instruction that are specific into their teaching methods in order to address problems and difficulties in areas of writing. Writing assessments, constructive feedback mechanisms, and peer collaboration should also be emphasized to monitor and support student progress, proficiency, and development.

For the faculty and staff, they are encouraged to implement programs that focus on improving the writing proficiency of students. The programs may be in the form of workshops, interventions or programs like Focused Enhancement Activity (FEA). In this particular project, it is also beneficial to involve the primary parent or guardian in the implementation of such programs. Close coordination between and among subject teachers and parents can ensure that interventions are targeted, accessible, and well-monitored.

For the school administrators and policymakers, they are encouraged to provide institutional support for extended, research-based writing intervention programs by integrating them into the curriculum and by allotting a specific time for activities or projects like FEA. Institutional support through sustained teacher training, enhancement of existing policies, and adequate provision of learning materials is essential in fostering long-term improvements in students' writing abilities. These strategic interventions will help create a more supportive environment for developing essential academic skills.

Future researchers are recommended to explore writing interventions over longer periods and with more participants to capture significant and measurable outcomes.

Randomized participant selection and targeted inclusion of students with lower writing proficiency level will allow for more accurate assessments of impact.

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