



Enhancing news writing skills of Grade 4 students through graphic organizer strategy

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to enhance the news writing skills of Grade 4 pupils at Cateel Central Elementary School using a graphic organizer strategy. The respondents are selected through a complete enumeration sampling technique, with two sections serving as respondents. The Aiken's V coefficient method and Cronbach's alpha were employed to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The validation process yielded an impressive Aiken V coefficient of 0.75, indicating robust validity. Additionally, reliability testing resulted in Cronbach's alpha values of 0.78 and 0.86, signifying satisfactory reliability levels. The pre-test results indicated that the students did not meet the expectations set by the K to 12 grading system, with a grade percentage of 66.60. Post-test results, however, revealed a significant improvement in the student's performance, with a grade percentage of 88.33, indicating a very satisfactory level. The statistical analysis confirmed this difference as significant, demonstrating the effectiveness of the graphic organizer strategy in enhancing news writing skills among Grade 4 students. The significant improvement in students' news writing skills after the implementation of graphic organizers highlights the effectiveness of this pedagogical tool, suggesting its wider adoption in curricula and the need for further teacher training to maximize its benefits for enhancing academic performance.

Keywords: Cognitive load theory, graphic organizer, graphic organizer strategy, news, news writing skill

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INTRODUCTION

In basic education, particularly in Grade 4, the goal of teaching news writing is to assist students understand how to present information effectively and properly (Nurmaini and Sukenti, 2024). The intention of incorporating news writing skills into the curriculum goes beyond simply learning how to write a news article (Hobbs, 2018). It aims to equip students with a comprehensive understanding of the news-gathering process. Therefore, students must develop strong news writing abilities (Novelti et al., 2022). These abilities are fundamental to credible and successful reporting; they require accuracy, brevity, and clarity to communicate ideas succinctly and effectively within time and space limitations (Garg, 2023). The resonance of news stories in a competitive media landscape is ensured by the capacity to produce captivating headlines, retain objectivity, and engage readers (Sarmiento, 2023). Additionally, news writing abilities enable students to traverse moral dilemmas, maintain journalistic ethics, and adjust to various media (Houston, 2023). As journalism changes, having a good foundation in news writing gives students the adaptability they need to convey pertinent and current information, which deepens their awareness of their audience and reinforces their position as knowledgeable participants in the ever-evolving news media landscape (Graham, 2019).

Furthermore, students need help modifying their writing styles for different online platforms due to the quick evolution of digital media (Abuhassna and Alnawajha, 2023). Students' capacity to generate truthful and objective content needs to be improved by the widespread disinformation on social media (Agarwal et al., 2023). These problems are worsened by school curricula that place insufficient emphasis on journalism education, depriving students of the foundation they need to build strong news writing abilities (Wallace-Segall, 2023). Research conducted by Morales (2023) shows that such

deficiencies in foundational writing skills hinder students' ability to produce clear, concise, and accurate news reports, a skill set vital in navigating the information-rich environment of the 21st century. Thus, it is imperative to prioritize journalism education in schools to equip students with the skills needed to thrive in the 21st century (Lynch, 2015). Integrating journalism into curricula can empower students to become informed citizens, critical thinkers, and effective communicators (Gretter and Yadav, 2016). This will not only enhance their academic success but also contribute to a more informed and engaged society. In order to develop a new generation of journalists capable of navigating the intricacies of modern news reporting, it is necessary to address these problems (Salma et al., 2023). Considering students with a solid foundation in journalism, can foster a generation that is equipped to critically analyze information, communicate effectively, and contribute meaningfully to the world around them (Kellner and Share, 2019).

Learners have unique obstacles in the Philippine context that impede the development of solid news writing abilities. Even with the significance of media literacy, the national curriculum needs to provide significant instruction on comprehensive journalism (Labangon and Zabala, 2018). Moreover, the curriculum and instructional strategies used by educational establishments greatly influence students' ability to learn how to write news articles (Campbell-Phillips, 2020). Students' ability to understand the complexities of this specialized writing may be hampered by a lack of emphasis on journalism education (Kumashiro, 2015). As Dalagan Jr. and Dagansan (2023) note, teachers may face challenges in developing their own content knowledge and pedagogical skills, particularly in areas that require them to adjust their teaching methods to meet the evolving needs of students in an increasingly digital world. The lack of tailored professional development opportunities for teachers

in news writing and digital literacy can hinder their ability to guide students effectively, leading to persistent gaps in student learning outcomes. Furthermore, learners' exposure to and depth of information in developing their news writing skills can be influenced by the availability and caliber of learning resources, including textbooks and online materials (Wandera, 2019). Additionally, research indicates that many Filipino pupils lack the critical thinking abilities to assess the validity of online information (Atoy et al., 2020). In news writing education, it is vital to emphasize the value of critical thinking and fact-checking (Horn and Veermans, 2019). Accurate and credible news reporting is enhanced when students are taught to challenge information, check sources, and discriminate between trustworthy and faulty sources (McGrew et al., 2017). By including these critical thinking abilities in the curriculum, instructors can make sure that students approach news writing with a critical perspective (Mehta and Al-Mahrooqi, 2015). Thus, intervention should be implemented and a potent tactic for improving students' news writing skills is the integration of graphic organizers into the educational process (Harney et al., 2017). Using graphic organizer will help students develop their critical thinking abilities by pushing them to evaluate and synthesize material (Ganeh et al., 2019). Help improves their capacity to identify important details and helps them write news articles that are more thorough and organized (Horkoff and Horkoff, 2015). In a study of Evarado (2024), it was highlighted that providing students with organized templates or frameworks aids in their understanding and helps them make connections between various pieces of information, ultimately improving both their writing and analytical skills. Using graphic organizers like storyboards and concept maps, students can help easily break down intricate news articles into smaller, more accessible chunks and better discern the primary concepts and illustrative details (Velarde, 2019). Additionally, graphic organizers make acquiring specific news writing techniques easier through practice,

such as creating headlines and organizing stories. These resources help cultivate the fundamental abilities needed for successful journalism, providing a useful and illustrative way to improve news writing's organization, critical analysis, and general quality. Through graphic organizers, students can become familiar with the format and norms of news items, which will help them digest and organize information efficiently, resulting in profound knowledge and enhanced news writing skills (Carter, 2022).

METHODS

Description of the study area

The study was conducted at Cateel Central Elementary School, located at Castro Avenue, Poblacion, Cateel, Davao Oriental. It is the largest school in the municipality of Cateel, Davao Oriental and has the largest population of students. The study started on the first week of the month of May 2024. The respondents were given two (2) to three (3) sessions in one week during their English subject allotted hour schedule. The researchers chose this school due to its focus on practical learning, which she noted throughout her assessment in FS 100. The assessment identified a multitude of students encountering difficulties in news writing skills.

Research design

This study utilized an experimental research design. As a scientific research method, experimental research involves manipulating one or more independent variables while controlling other potentially affecting factors to observe and measure the effects on dependent variables.

Researchers employed an experimental study design to explore causal links and draw conclusions regarding the influence of an independent variable on a dependent variable. This design was beneficial when controlling the experimental settings and

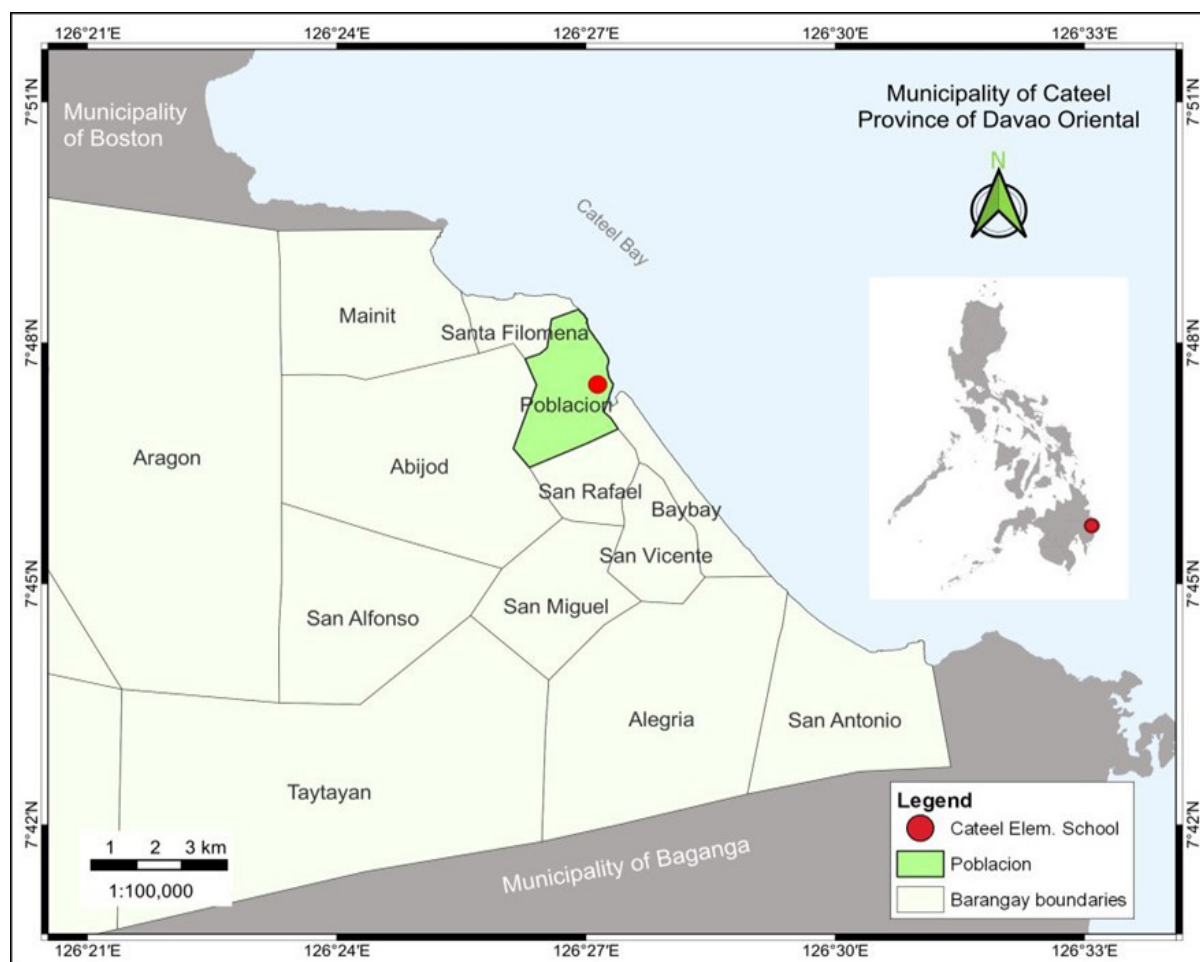


Figure 1. Map highlighting Cateel Central Elementary School.

adjusting the variables, which was practically and ethically acceptable. The ability of experimental research to offer solid empirical evidence in support of causal assertions was highly regarded, as it is essential for scientific investigation and the advancement of knowledge across a wide range of domains.

Research instrument

In this study, a two-component evaluation tool was developed to accurately gauge the educational progress of respondents before and after the intervention. The first component prompted the respondents to complete a news report by filling in provided facts, while the second component required them to craft the report based solely on the facts. Rigorous validation procedures and meticulous reliability assessments were

undertaken to fortify the credibility and effectiveness of this instrument.

Aiken's V coefficient method was employed to ensure content validity, involving expert scrutiny to evaluate the instrument's alignment with educational objectives, its necessity, and the quality of its content. This meticulous process yielded an impressive Aiken V coefficient of 0.75, indicating robust validity (Sireci and Bond, 2014). Furthermore, internal reliability was assessed for the first component and inter-rater reliability for the second component, employing Cronbach's alpha as a recognized measure of consistency. These evaluations yielded Cronbach's alpha values of 0.78 and 0.86, respectively, indicating satisfactory reliability levels for the intended purpose (Ahdika, 2017). Hence, the extensive validation and reliability testing underscored the instrument's ability to

offer precise and dependable assessments of participants' learning progress, affirming its significance and reliability for application in educational research.

Data collection

Initially, the researchers requested permission to conduct a survey that included school directors and classroom advisers. Subsequently, a pilot test was implemented which involved 60 respondents at San Rafael Integrated School. Two sections were incorporated into the pilot test to guarantee a comprehensive assessment of the questionnaire's reliability and validity. A formal letter was submitted to the School Principal of Cateel Central Elementary School to request permission to conduct the study. Following discussion with the section's adviser and students, were verified their willingness to participate in the data collection procedure. The learners were determined through a complete enumeration sampling technique, where the whole class served as the respondents and received the intervention. A group of 30 respondents were first given a consent form that outlined the study's aims, procedures, and participant rights, as well as an assent section to indicate their willingness to participate. Afterwards, a pre-test was given to determine their prior knowledge. The researchers developed a self-made questionnaire, oversaw its reproduction, and distribution to the participants (30). To validate the questionnaire, a panel of three experts, all elementary English teachers, evaluated its content. It was deliberately designed to emphasize on news writing skills while keeping the topic appropriate for their school level. During the implementation phase, the experimental group was taught the graphic organizer strategy, which is an innovative approach to improving students' news writing skills. To ensure consistency and efficacy in learning, detailed lesson plans and teaching materials, such graphic organizer was utilized. A post-test was given to the group following the teaching time. The post-test employed the same set of questions to assess the

effectiveness of the intervention. This uniformity enabled a direct comparison of findings, allowing for an accurate assessment of student performance. A research statistician compiled and examined the data from the pre-tests and post-tests to determine the statistical significance of the results, offering a comprehensive assessment of the study's findings.

Data analysis

Mean: This statistical tool was used to determine the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental group, thus answering the questions: What is the level of the pre-test score in terms of news writing skills among Grade 4 pupils in Cateel Central Elementary School? What is the level of the post-test score in terms of news writing skills among Grade 4 pupils in Cateel Central Elementary School? Hence, this tool was utilized in achieving objectives 1 and 2.

Paired *t*-test: This statistical tool was utilized to determine whether there was a significant difference in the news writing skills of Grade 4 students before and after the graphic organizer intervention. Thus, this answered the third question: Is there a significant difference in news writing skills among Grade 4 students before and after the graphic organizer intervention?

RESULTS

Table 1 showed the experimental group's score interval, mean, and grade percentage before administering any intervention. The findings showed that most respondents did not meet the expected passing score, indicating a need for improvement in their performance level. The statistical analysis of the pre-test scores of the experimental group, as presented in Table 1, revealed several key findings. Among the 30 respondents in the experimental group, most scores fell within the interval of 6-10, with 70.30% of the respondents scoring in this range.

Table 1. Level of pre-test scores of the respondents.

Score interval	Frequency	Percentage	Standard deviation	Mean	Grade percentage	Remarks
5 and below	1	3.30				
6-10	21	70.30				
11-15	6	19.80				
16-20	2	6.60	3.54	9.60	66.60	Did not meet expectations
21-25	0	0.00				
26 and above	0	0.00				
Total	30	100				

Table 2 showed that the experimental group made progress in writing a news report after the strategy. The experimental group's mean post-test score indicates a very satisfactory level of performance. The statistical analysis of the post-test scores of the respondents

in the experimental group, as presented in Table 2, revealed notable findings. Among the 30 respondents, most of the scores fell within the 21-25 and 26 and above intervals, with 60.40% and 23.10% of the respondents scoring in these ranges, respectively.

Table 2. Level of post-test scores of the respondents

Score interval	Frequency	Percentage	Standard deviation	Mean	Grade percentage	Remarks
5 and below	0	0.00				
6-10	0	0.00				
11-15	0	0.00				
16-20	5	16.50	2.46	23.00	88.33	Very satisfactory
21-25	18	60.40				
26 and above	7	23.10				
Total	30	100				

Table 3 shows a statistically significant difference between the experimental group's pre-test and post-test scores. The pre-test mean score is 9.60, while the post-test mean score is 23.00. This suggests a substantial

improvement in performance after the intervention or learning experience. This finding suggests that the experimental group showed improvement in writing news reports after implementing the strategy.

Table 3. Mean comparison between pre-test and post-test scores.

Type of test	Mean	Standard deviation	t-value	p-value	Remarks
Pre-test	9.60	3.54			
Post-test	23.00	2.46	15.807	0.000	Pre-test scores and post-test scores differ significantly.

DISCUSSIONS

The distribution of pre-test scores among the experimental group illustrates the complex interplay of factors discussed in the literature, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and addressing these elements to improve students' news writing skills. The data indicates that only one

respondent scored in the 5 and below interval, with a grade percentage of 66.60, reflecting that this particular score did not meet the expectation. This outcome resonates with the discussion on the impact of ineffective teaching tactics and the need for more emphasis on journalism education, which hinders students' ability to grasp the complexities of news

writing (Kumashiro, 2015).

According to Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory (1988), learning is optimized when cognitive resources are effectively managed to prevent overload (Sweller et al., 2006). The intrinsic cognitive load associated with understanding the complex structure of news stories poses a challenge for students. Instructional methods that simplify this complexity are essential to improve their performance. These variables such as motivation and interest in influencing students' news writing skills (Harackiewicz et al., 2016).

The absence of respondents scoring in the 21-25 and 26 and above intervals underscores the critical role of educators in developing students' news writing skills. This underscores the importance of teacher-led initiatives, such as employing graphic organizers, to scaffold learning and provide consistent feedback, which are critical components in improving news writing skills (Dalagan Jr. and Dagansan, 2023). Teachers' backgrounds in journalism, instructional methods, and mentorship are pivotal in fostering skilled news writers (Share et al., 2019). The data interpretation underscores the importance of addressing educational, individual, and feedback-related elements to create a supportive environment for students to excel in news writing skills.

The statistical analysis of the post-test scores of the respondents in the experimental group, as presented in Table 2, reveals notable findings. The absence of respondents scoring in the lower intervals (5 and below, 6-10, 11-15) and the predominance of scores in the higher intervals suggest that the use of graphic organizers has positively impacted the respondents' ability to organize their ideas, synthesize information, and improving both writing and critical thinking skills. (Yunus and Chien, 2016; Enario et al., 2022). The statistically significant increase in scores in the 21-25 and 26 and above intervals highlights how graphic organizers can aid students

in breaking down complex articles into manageable sections and enhancing their comprehension of news writing concepts (Velarde, 2019). In this study, graphic organizers were a crucial tool in reducing extraneous cognitive load, allowing students to focus on the intrinsic elements of news writing (Maranan, 2017). Graphic organizers provide a visual framework that enables learners to arrange information logically, aiding comprehension and retention, thus enhancing their ability to write news articles with greater coherence and accuracy (Estacio et al., 2022). The visual representation provided by graphic organizers helped students better organize and structure their thoughts, improving their performance (Dereje, 2019). This aligns with findings of Sablan and Roleda (2024), that visual learning aids can enhance engagement and cognitive regulation, proving especially valuable for learners who may otherwise be overwhelmed by complex information-processing demands.

Furthermore, the higher mean grade percentage and the remarks indicating a "Very Satisfactory" level of performance for scores in the 26 and above interval support the literature's assertion that graphic organizers help students write more thorough and organized news articles (Horkoff and Horkoff, 2015). Using graphic organizers can significantly benefit students by providing a visual representation of the structure and components of a news article. 5Ws chart is an example of a tool that aids in organizing information and enhancing students' understanding of key elements (Van Nooijen et al., 2024).

The data interpretation of the post-test scores reveals graphic organizers' effectiveness in improving news writing skills. The significant gain in scores in the upper intervals demonstrates graphic organizers' usefulness in enhancing students' news writing talents and fostering high achievement. By consistently using graphic organizers, students can

internalize the structural nature of news articles and the significance of each section, leading to more purposeful and accurate news writing (Counsell and Hyerle, 2023).

The statistical significance between the pre- and post-test scores, supports this interpretation, underscoring the strategy's effectiveness in facilitating information processing and memory retention (Abeysekera et al., 2024; Pingil, 2022). Using graphic organizers helps students methodically organize their articles, leading to a coherent progression of ideas (Yavich and Starichenko, 2017). The visual organization of information through graphic organizers also aids in managing the cognitive load involved in composing news articles, allowing students to focus on higher-order thinking processes (Maranan, 2017).

The significant improvement in the post-test scores suggests that the participants could apply the skills and strategies learned by implementing the graphic organizer strategy. It supports the idea that integrating graphic organizers into the educational process can enhance students' news writing abilities (Paul et al., 2019). Graphic organizers, as cognitive scaffolding tools, helped students manage the complexity of news writing by breaking down the task into more manageable components such as headlines, lead paragraphs, and supporting details (Paron and Güelfi, 2024). This method aligns with the principles of CLT by reducing unnecessary cognitive demands and promoting the formation of effective mental models (Rahmat, 2020). The improvement in post-test scores can be attributed to this enhanced cognitive processing and organization facilitated by the graphic organizers.

Integrating text and visual elements in graphic organizers supports multimodal learning, improving comprehension and information retention (Shin et al., 2022). This approach helps students internalize the structural aspects of news writing and enables them to understand the writing process better, leading to improved writing

skills (Counsell and Hyerle, 2023).

The findings of this study support the assertion that graphic organizers can significantly enhance students' news writing abilities by providing a clear and organized framework for information processing (Garnett, 2020). Del Mundo and Caballes (2022), found that organizing information visually helps to reduce cognitive load, allowing learners to focus on content analysis and synthesis, which are critical for effective news writing. By reducing extraneous cognitive load and aiding in the creation of mental models, graphic organizers facilitate a more effective learning experience (Klepsch and Seufert, 2020).

Using graphic organizers in conjunction with Cognitive Load Theory principles proved to be an effective strategy for improving students' news writing skills. The substantial improvement in post-test scores demonstrates the potential of graphic organizers to enhance cognitive processing and writing performance in educational settings (Bahari and Ayres, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The pre-test results showed that the majority of pupils struggled with news writing. This finding showed a learning gap in which students struggled to properly organize and convey material, emphasizing the need for focused interventions to improve their news writing skills.

Following the implementation of graphic organizers, there was a marked improvement in students' news writing skills, as evidenced by the significant gains in post-test scores. It is suggested that graphic organizers be frequently implemented into the news writing curriculum for Grade 4 students. These tools assist students in structuring their thoughts, organizing material, and improving the clarity and consistency of their writing. Through implementing these recommendations, schools can improve

the news writing skills of their students, ensuring that they build fundamental solid writing skills that will benefit them throughout their academic careers.

There is a significant difference in news writing skills among Grade 4 students before and after the graphic organizer intervention. The pre-test result showed low scores, while the post-test result indicated significantly increased scores following the intervention of the graphic organizer strategy. This strategy effectively enhanced the news writing abilities of the Grade 4 students, demonstrating its efficacy as a pedagogical tool in this context. Therefore, schools may adopt this strategy more widely to improve students' writing skills and academic performance. Additionally, further training for teachers on using graphic organizers could enhance the effectiveness of this intervention, ensuring that students receive the maximum benefit from this instructional approach.

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