

# Paragraph Writing Skills and Academic Performance of Grade Nine Students

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**Abstract** — This study determined the writing skills and academic performance of the Grade Nine high school students in English in Margen National High School, Ormoc City for SY 2021-2022. The findings of the study were the bases for a proposed Enhancement Plan.

The paragraph writing skills of the three group of students are expectedly different from each other based on evaluation. The high performing group was evaluated Good in most aspects of writing areas. The average performing group had fair performance in writing and the low performing group were fairly and poorly performing in almost all writing criteria. Convention is a common weak area of the three groups. Grammar and syntax skills could be possibly enhanced. The academic performance of students in English, the high performing group had very satisfactory grades in English; the average and low performing group had fairly satisfactory grades.

In the test of difference in the paragraph writing skills of the three groups of students. The computed F is higher than the table value and so the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that the paragraph writing skills of the three groups of students significantly differ with one another.

All groups were consistent in both writing and academic performances. Hence, expectedly, the three groups differ in their paragraph writing skills and their academic performance in English. Although, high performing students were performing high in writing evaluation, the average and low performing groups can also improve their skills since writing can be enhanced through remediation based on the proposed enhancement plan.

The enhancement plan should be utilized by the English teachers and the school.

**Keywords** — *Writing skills, Academic performance; Grade Nine Students*

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## I. Introduction

“Good writing is the bedrock for future success.” This is how teenagers and their parents believed based on a survey conducted by the Pew Internet and American Life Project and the National Commission on Writing for America’s Schools and Colleges in the year 2009 (Ancog, 2009). It is likewise the conclusive statement of surveyed leaders from business and industry,

government, and education in the same series of well-publicized studies on the importance of improved writing among younger generation over the past five years.

The joint survey of the Pew Internet and the National Commission on Writing revealed that eight in 10 parents contend that good writing skills are more important now than they were 20 years ago, and 86 percent of teens believe good writing ability is an important component of guaranteeing success in later life (Ancog, 2009).

The National Commission on Writing believes the findings of the Pew study point to both success and challenges for policymakers. The 2007 National Assessment of Educational Progress Writing Assessment shows improvement, though modest, at the basic level for eighth-and 12th grades students. The commission asserts that writing is critical and needs to be a part of all school reforms (Soliven, 2007).

In the Philippines, reforms to develop communicative competence have also been made as revealed in the Department of Education (DepEd) 2002 Basic Education Curriculum (BEC) in the Secondary Level. Communicative competence not only calls for the enhancement of oral communication skills but so do with the development of writing skills. The theoretical basis of the 2002 BEC on theory of language, language acquisition and pedagogical thrusts clearly underscore the need to develop fluency of language use among the students in English from the simplest communicative acts of describing, defining, and classifying to the most challenging skills of assessing and evaluating different texts types (BEC, 2002).

Based on observation, despite the language competence thrusts of the 2002 Basic Education Curriculum, in Margen National High School, the researcher, having been the English teacher in the said public school, has found out that the grade nine high school students' writing outputs including those of the student publication writers have incoherent text structures, jumbled sentence construction and unsatisfactory macro discourse pattern and rhetorical organization. Among other predominant writing problems are on misspelling of words and using inappropriate punctuations.

Writing assumes the biggest bulk of activities in the English macro skills because writing promotes thought (Fulwiler 1982). Academic performances of students throughout the four grading periods are interdependent upon their writing outputs not only in English but also in all subject areas. Effective writing instructions and writing activities based on the writing problems of students must be looked into. Thus, an enhancement plan is being proposed in this study.

This study determined the paragraph writing skills and academic performance of the Grade Nine students in Margen National High School, Ormoc City for SY 2021-2022. The findings of the study were the bases for a proposed Enhancement Plan.

Specifically, the study answered the following inquiries:

1. What is the paragraph writing skills of the pre-grouped Grade Ten high school students in terms of:
  - 1.1 Content;
  - 1.2 Organization;
  - 1.3 Language & Word Choice;
  - 1.4 Format;
  - 1.5 Conventions; and
  - 1.6 Spelling?
2. What is the academic performance of the pre-grouped Grade Nine high school students in English?
3. Is there a significant difference in the paragraph writing skills of the pre-grouped Grade Nine high school students?
4. What Enhancement Plan can be proposed based on the findings?

Statement of the Null Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant difference in the writing skills and academic performance of the pre-grouped Grade Nine high school students.

## II. Methodology

**Design.** This study utilized the quantitative methods of research employing the descriptive-correlational approach. This study determined the relationship between the writing skills and academic performance of the Grade Nine high school students in English in Margen National High School, Ormoc City for SY 2021-2022. The findings of the study were the bases for a proposed Enhancement Plan.

The Grade Nine students were categorized based on the following levels: top performing, average performing and low performing levels. These are the three groups of students that were selected as participants of the study. The writing skills of the Grade Nine high school students were determined through writing skills test. The academic performance of the pre-grouped students in English was sought. The significant difference between the paragraph writing skills and academic performance of the students were determined employing inferential statistics. The findings of this research were the bases for the proposed Enhancement plan.

**Sampling.** The research participants of the study were the Grade Nine high school students of Margen National High School, Ormoc City for SY 2021-2022. The Grade Nine high school students were categorized as to high performing, average and low performing in the class. This criterion was utilized by the researcher and that 12 students per group were randomly selected to achieve uniformity of the number of participants per group.

**Research Procedure.** After acquiring all the formal permission that the researcher must acquire from the Graduate School and the locale where the data was collected, she then delved into the gathering of the data needed on the writing skills of the Grade Nine high school students and their academic performance in English. For this, the researcher is allotting one (1) month to gather and compile all the data needed. The researcher self-administered the writing test. The Grade Nine high school students were categorized into three groups based on their academic performance. They were grouped as to high, average and low performing students. Twelve students per category were randomly selected to participate in the writing test. The pre-grouped students were given one hour to write the essay on ““What are the things you are thankful for and why?” The writing output was evaluated using the rubrics. The performance of the grade nine high school students in English was also gathered. Appropriate statistical treatment was used to correlate the variables.

**Ethical Issues.** The right to conduct the study was strictly adhered through the approval of the principal, approval of the Superintendent of the Division. Orientation of the respondents both the students and the teachers was done separately. In the orientation, the issue on, an Informed Consent Form was accomplished prior to the Focus Group Discussion. The need for the secondary data, a written permission was sought to the principal confidentiality and anonymity was discussed requiring them not to write names on the tools and will have assigned codes instead.

**Treatment of Data.** The data gathered was submitted to the following statistical treatments: Simple percentage determined the frequency of the academic performance of the Grade Nine high school students in English. Weighted mean determined the writing skills of the pre-grouped students. ANOVA – used to determine the significant difference in the writing skills of the pre-grouped Grade Nine High School students.

### III. Results and Discussion

**Table 1**  
**Paragraph Writing Skills of Students in Terms of Content**

| <b>Groups</b>                   | <b>Indicators</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>High Performing Group</b>    | Very Good         | 3                | 25                |
|                                 | Good              | 5                | 42                |
|                                 | Fair              | 4                | 33                |
|                                 | Poor              | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Total             | 12               | 100               |
| <b>Average Performing Group</b> | Very Good         | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Good              | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Fair              | 8                | 67                |
|                                 | Poor              | 4                | 33                |
|                                 | Total             | 12               | 100               |
| <b>Low Performing Group</b>     | Very Good         | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Good              | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Fair              | 7                | 58                |
|                                 | Poor              | 5                | 42                |
|                                 | Total             | 12               | 100               |

Table 1 presents the paragraph writing skills of the grade 9 students in terms of Content. Paragraph Writing Skills – refers to the grade 9 high school students’ writing competence specifically on the writing indicators such as content, organization, language, word use, format, conventions and spelling. Content – refers to the overall body text of writing outputs with strong emphasis on the writer’s conscious and thorough understanding of the theme or subject matter.

In the High Performing Group there are 3 (25%) rate as Very Good; 5 (42%) rated as Good; 4 (33%) rated as Fair and none got a poor rating. This means that majority of the high performing group have good writing skills in terms of content. This implies the idea that high performing group has better concept and understanding of what they are writing. They can expound and deal with the subject matter with deeper relevance.

In the average performing group, there are 0 (0%) with very good rating; 0 (0%) with good rating; 8 (67%) with fair rating and 4 (33%) with poor rating. This means that the average performing group has Fair rating in content aspect of the writing skills. This implies that the average performing group has fair perceptive skills in content. They have limited deal with the subject matter with deeper relevance of the theme.

In the low performing group, there are none who got very good rating; 0 (0%) with good rating; 7 (58%) with fair rating; 5 (48%) with poor rating. This means that the low performing

group has fair writing skills in content area. Most of them were confused in delivering good concept of the theme or subject matter.

**Table 2**  
**Paragraph Writing Skills of Students in Terms of Organization**

| Groups                          | Indicators | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| <b>High Performing Group</b>    | Very Good  | 4         | 33         |
|                                 | Good       | 4         | 33         |
|                                 | Fair       | 2         | 17         |
|                                 | Poor       | 2         | 17         |
|                                 | Total      | 12        | 100        |
| <b>Average Performing Group</b> | Very Good  | 0         | 0          |
|                                 | Good       | 2         | 17         |
|                                 | Fair       | 5         | 41.5       |
|                                 | Poor       | 5         | 41.5       |
|                                 | Total      | 12        | 100        |
| <b>Low Performing Group</b>     | Very Good  | 0         | 0          |
|                                 | Good       | 0         | 0          |
|                                 | Fair       | 4         | 33         |
|                                 | Poor       | 8         | 67         |
|                                 | Total      | 12        | 100        |

Table 2 presents the paragraph writing skills of grade 9 high school students in terms of organization. Organization is defined as the logical arrangement of clearly defined general idea or topic sentence, variety of supporting details, and clearly presented concluding sentence.

In the high performing group, there are 4 (33%) with very good rating; 4 (33%) with good rating; 2 (17%) with fair rating; and 2 (17%) got poor rating. This means that the high performing group has proficient organizational skills in writing. This further implies that that high performing group can exhibit logical arrangement clearly and systematically.

In the average performing group, there are 0 (0%) with very good rating; 2 (17%) with good rating; 5 (42%) with fair rating and 5 (42%) got poor rating. This means that average performing group has fair organizational skills in writing. This implies that the average performing group can define general idea fairly with fair supporting details.

In the low performing group, there are none who got very good rating; there are 0 (0%) with good rating; 4 (33%) with fair rating and 8 (67%) with poor rating. This means that the low performing group has poor skills in organizing their thoughts and following details in writing. Significant numbers are performing poorly.

**Table 3**  
**Paragraph Writing Skills of Students in Terms of Language and Word Choice**

| <b>Groups</b>                   | <b>Indicators</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>High Performing Group</b>    | Very Good         | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Good              | 2                | 17                |
|                                 | Fair              | 9                | 75                |
|                                 | Poor              | 1                | 8                 |
|                                 | Total             | 12               | 100               |
| <b>Average Performing Group</b> | Very Good         | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Good              | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Fair              | 9                | 75                |
|                                 | Poor              | 3                | 25                |
|                                 | Total             | 12               | 100               |
| <b>Low Performing Group</b>     | Very Good         | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Good              | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Fair              | 2                | 16                |
|                                 | Poor              | 10               | 84                |
|                                 | Total             | 12               | 100               |

Table 3 presents the paragraph writing skills of grade 9 students in terms of Language Use & Word Choice. Language and Word Choice refer to the use of precise vocabulary for the given topic and the use of varied strong verbs or specific action words and adjectives that enhance ideas.

In the high performing group, there are 0 (0%) with very good rating; 2 (17%) with good rating; 9 (75) with fair rating and none 1 (8%) got a poor rating. This means that the high performing group is performing fairly in terms of language use and word choice. The high performing group has fairly utilized vocabulary and delivers fair language usage.

In the average performing group, there are 0 (0%) with very good rating; 0 (0%) with good rating; 9 (75%) with fair rating and 3 (25%) got a poor rating. This means that the average performing group has fair language use and word choice in their writing. This implies fair performance in utilizing vocabulary and making use of fair language use.

In the low performing group, there are none who got very good rating, 0 (0%) with good rating, 2 (16%) with fair rating and 10 (84%) with poor rating. Majority of the low performing group has poor vocabulary usage. The grammar needs improvement and the language choice and word use should be enhanced.

**Table 4**  
**Paragraph Writing Skills of Students in Terms of Format**

| <b>Groups</b>                   | <b>Indicators</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>High Performing Group</b>    | Very Good         | 3                | 25                |
|                                 | Good              | 6                | 50                |
|                                 | Fair              | 3                | 25                |
|                                 | Poor              | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Total             | 12               | 100               |
| <b>Average Performing Group</b> | Very Good         | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Good              | 2                | 16                |
|                                 | Fair              | 5                | 42                |
|                                 | Poor              | 5                | 42                |
|                                 | Total             | 12               | 100               |
| <b>Low Performing Group</b>     | Very Good         | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Good              | 1                | 8                 |
|                                 | Fair              | 4                | 33                |
|                                 | Poor              | 7                | 59                |
|                                 | Total             | 12               | 100               |

Table 4 presents the paragraph writing skills of the grade 9 students in terms of Format. Format is defined as the paragraph overall appearance observing the accepted standard formatting guidelines such proper indentation, spacing, margining and appropriate length.

In the high performing group; there are 3 (25%) with very good rating; 6 (50%) with good rating; and 3 (25%) got fair and none in poor rating. This means that the high performing group was good in observing standard format in writing.

In the average performing group, there are 0 (0%) with very good rating; 2 (16%) with good rating; 5 (42%) with fair rating, and 5 (42%) got poor rating. This means that majority of the average performing group are fair in following standard format guidelines in writing.

In the low performing group, there are none who got very good rating; 1 (8%) with good rating; 4 (33%) with fair rating and 7 (59%) with poor rating. This means that the low performing group has poor skills in following format guidelines.



**Table 5**  
**Paragraph Writing Skills of Students in Terms of Conventions**

| <b>Groups</b>                   | <b>Indicators</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>High Performing Group</b>    | Very Good         | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Good              | 3                | 25                |
|                                 | Fair              | 8                | 67                |
|                                 | Poor              | 1                | 8                 |
|                                 | Total             | 12               | 100               |
| <b>Average Performing Group</b> | Very Good         | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Good              | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Fair              | 4                | 33                |
|                                 | Poor              | 8                | 67                |
|                                 | Total             | 12               | 100               |
| <b>Low Performing Group</b>     | Very Good         | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Good              | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Fair              | 1                | 8                 |
|                                 | Poor              | 11               | 92                |
|                                 | Total             | 12               | 100               |

Table 5 presents the paragraph writing skills of grade 9 students in terms of conventions. Conventions refer to the proper use of grammar and usage including the use of appropriate punctuations throughout the paragraph.

In the high performing group, there are none who got very good rating; there are 3 (25%) with good rating; 8 (67%) with fair rating and 1 (8%) with poor rating. This means that the high performing group has fair skills in language use especially in grammar. This implies difficulty in mastering the grammar skills in writing.

In the average performing group, there are none who got very good rating; 0 (0%) with good rating; 4 (33%) with fair rating and 8 (67%) with poor rating. This means that the average performing group has poor skills in using grammar in writing.

In the low performing group, there are none who got very good and good ratings; there is 1 (8%) with fair rating and 11 (92%) with poor rating. This means that the low performing group is poorly doing in convention aspects.

**Table 6**  
**Paragraph Writing Skills of Students in Terms of Spelling**

| <b>Groups</b>                   | <b>Indicators</b> | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| <b>High Performing Group</b>    | Very Good         | 3                | 25                |
|                                 | Good              | 9                | 75                |
|                                 | Fair              | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Poor              | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Total             | 12               | 100               |
| <b>Average Performing Group</b> | Very Good         | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Good              | 4                | 33                |
|                                 | Fair              | 7                | 59                |
|                                 | Poor              | 1                | 8                 |
|                                 | Total             | 12               | 100               |
| <b>Low Performing Group</b>     | Very Good         | 1                | 8                 |
|                                 | Good              | 0                | 0                 |
|                                 | Fair              | 10               | 84                |
|                                 | Poor              | 1                | 8                 |
|                                 | Total             | 12               | 100               |

Table 6 presents the paragraph writing skills of students in terms of spelling. Spelling is defined as the correct or exact way of transcribing words or terminologies.

In the high performing group, there are 3 (25%) with very good rating; 9 (75%) with good rating and none got fair and poor ratings. This means that the high performing group has good skills in spelling of words and terminologies.

In the average performing group, there are 0 (0%) with very good rating and 4 (33%) with good rating and 7 (59%) got fair and 1 (8%) poor rating. This means that the average performing group has fair spelling skills in writing.

In the low performing group, there 1 (8%) who got very good and none in good ratings; there are 10 (84%) with fair rating and 1 (8%) with poor ratings. This means that the low performing group has fair skills in spelling.

**Table 7**  
**Academic Performance of Students in English**

| Groups                    | Academic Performance in English |                            |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
|                           | WM                              | Description                |
| <b>High Performing</b>    | <b>87.33</b>                    | <b>Very Satisfactory</b>   |
| <b>Average Performing</b> | <b>79.10</b>                    | <b>Fairly Satisfactory</b> |
| <b>Low Performing</b>     | <b>75.80</b>                    | <b>Fairly Satisfactory</b> |

Table 7 presents the academic performance of students in English. The high performing group has a weighted mean of 87.33 in English interpreted as Very Satisfactory. This means that the high performing group are able to live up with their performance in English subject. Performing above regular students is a challenging tasks of the high performing group because they are expected to do well and lead the class. Most of them are honor students and are achievers in many subjects. Their study habits are well defined and formed and their discipline in the class is well mannered.

The average performing group scored 79.10 in English interpreted as Fairly Satisfactory. This means that the average performing group performs fairly in the English subject. They are the average men and women in the class. They perform fairly in standard means. Their skills are trainable and with right motivation they can also excel in the class.

In the low performing group, the average mean is 75.80 in English interpreted as Fairly Satisfactory. This means that the low performing group performs fairly in English subject. Some of them failed in the class and requires remediation or intervention. Their study habits are far below fair and their thinking skills are substandard. They need academic intervention to improve their performance. Most of them have behaviour problems or family problems. Some are inherently weak, meek, and has low self-esteem.

**Table 8**  
**Test of Difference in the Paragraph Writing skills of the Students**

| <b>Writing Skills of High Performing vs Average performing vs Low Performing</b> | <b>Computed F</b> | <b>Table Value</b> | <b>Decision</b> | <b>Interpretation</b> |
|--|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Content  | 3.631             | 1.252              | Reject Ho       | Significant           |
| Organization   | 4.214             | 1.252              | Reject Ho       | Significant           |
| Word Choice  | 1.413             | 1.252              | Reject Ho       | Significant           |
| Format   | 2.992             | 1.252              | Reject Ho       | Significant           |
| Conventions  | 1.327             | 1.252              | Reject Ho       | Significant           |
| Spelling   | 1.562             | 1.252              | Reject Ho       | Significant           |

Table 8 presents the test of difference in the paragraph writing skills of the three groups of students. In all the areas of the writing skills, the computed F were higher than the table value of 1.252 and so the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that the paragraph writing skills of the three groups of students significantly differ with one another. To recall, the high performing group were evaluated to have mostly good in all aspects of their paragraph writing skills. The average group had Fair evaluation in almost all aspects of their paragraph writing skills. And the low performing group had fair and poor evaluation on their paragraph writing skills. The Language facility in the three groups differ and so as their academic performance. Paragraph Writing Skills is a potent prerequisite in learning. It can make or break students in a class (Savignon, 2011).

#### IV. Conclusion

The paragraph writing skills of the three group of students are dependent on their differences based on groupings. All groups were consistent in both writing and academic performances. Hence, expectedly, the three groups differ in their paragraph writing skills and their academic performance in English. Although, high performing students were performing high in writing evaluation, the average and low performing groups can also improve their skills since writing can be enhanced through remediation based on the proposed enhancement plan.

## V. Recommendations

1. The enhancement plan should be utilized by the English teachers and the school;
2. To develop a strong English Communication Program (ECP) of the school through:
  - 2.1 Establishing an assessment unit to promote different aspects of diagnosis, development of test materials, and research to provide data for instructional decisions.
  - 2.2 Establishing the Reading and Writing Laboratory (RWL) as a bridging and developing unit for the promotion of reading and writing skills proficiency.
  - 2.3 Strengthen the English Immersion Program (EIP) to promote widespread use of the English language in all aspects of life.
  - 2.4 Review the English program in general education and define the parameters of a language skills continuum that cuts across disciplines.

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