Reading as A Pre-Writing Activity and the Writing Skills among Esl Students

Halili, Denlyn Joy A.[1], Diva, Cecilia B.[2]

[1] Lucena City, Quezon 4301 / Manuel S. Enverga University Foundation – Lucena City Campus

[2] San Pablo City, Laguna 4000 / Laguna State Polytechnic University – San Pablo City Campus

ABSTRACT: Effective writing skills are crucial for college students in today's competitive world. This study explores the impact of reading as a pre-writing activity on ESL students' writing proficiency. This quasi-experimental research focuses on 4th year college students enrolled in the course English for Occupational Purposes, analyzing their writing proficiency in content, conventions, and structure through pre-tests, formative assessments, and post-tests. Statistical analyses were conducted on the collected data, revealing a decline in content, conventions, and structure proficiency from the pre-test to the post-test. Formative test scores indicate satisfactory proficiency in content and conventions with slight fluctuations, while structure proficiency remains generally low. No significant difference is observed between the pre-test and formative test performances, indicating stability in writing proficiency. However, a significant negative difference between the formative test and post-test performances suggests a decline in content proficiency. Most importantly, there is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test performances mainly due to the limited teacher involvement as a sole facilitator in the process. To maximize the benefits of reading as a pre-writing activity, teachers may incorporate close monitoring, give timely feedback after each writing activity, select appropriate reading materials, and set clear writing models and guidelines. Administrators may offer workshops on assessment and ensure access to supplementary reading materials. The exploration of different teacher involvement strategies in the pre-writing process is also recommended for future researchers.

KEYWORDS: Essay Writing, Pre-Writing, Reading, Writing Proficiency, Writing Skills

I. INTRODUCTION

In the Philippines, college students strive to develop strong writing skills as communication is incredibly significant in academic and professional fields. Despite the country's education system placing immense importance on improving writing skills, many students experience difficulties mastering effective written communication.

To adequately address this issue, it is critical to first acknowledge and understand the specific challenges presented to Filipino college students when it comes to writing. Literature suggests that a common concern among these students is limited exposure to several types of written works - such as technical reports or academic essays - resulting in struggles with properly conveying ideas through their own writings. Additionally, grammar and mechanics represent another obstacle for many Filipino college learners. English educators, curriculum planners, and even governmental bodies have raised concerns about various aspects such as grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, capitalization, and the smooth flow of thoughts, among others, due to the prevalence of errors in writing [1].

The influence of technology and social media on writing proficiency should not also be underestimated. Over the past two years, an evident transformation has taken place in the educational system of the Philippines with a significant shift towards flexible learning modalities. The term "flexible learning", as defined by the Department of Education (DepEd), implies making use of diverse teaching approaches such as multimedia resources, blended learning and online platforms that cater to varying learners and provide flexible access to education. The pandemic outbreak has further intensified this shift by leading to remote-learning strategies being implemented across several parts of the country. Such measures were necessary to make sure that education remains unaffected in these turbulent times.

During the past two years of flexible learning, the widespread practice of using reading as a pre-writing activity has gained popularity. It has emerged as an alternative approach for guiding students in writing when the teacher is not physically present. This trend can be attributed to the growing body of research that explored reading's effectiveness in enhancing writing skills. [2], for instance, undertook an investigation that explored how reading can affect student's writing skills and results found out that reading habit had a profound effect on college students' academic writing skill. Likewise, [3] implied that this approach could help enhance students' aptitude for idea generation, thought organization, and make improvements to their writing quality. These studies

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collectively support the utilization of reading as a pre-writing activity as it gives students opportunities to gather ideas, expand their vocabulary, and refine their writing style.

However, in a flexible learning environment where students have limited direct supervision and interaction with their teachers, the use of reading as a pre-writing activity, though widespread, lacks effective monitoring. Questions are now arising about the impact of the lack of assessment and monitoring during the past two years. This brings to light concerns about students' current writing proficiency levels. Therefore, it is imperative that this gap be addressed by conducting research and evaluating how useful reading truly is in preparing for writing within and outside flexible learning contexts.

This study looks at the link between reading and writing skills of ESL students in the Philippines. Specifically, it seeks to determine the impact of reading as a pre-writing activity on one's writing skills. By examining the challenges encountered by these students when writing and drawing from relevant research materials, this study seeks to formulate tailored strategies aimed at enhancing their overall proficiency level in academic writing.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research aims to identify the implications of reading on one's writing skills if strictly done as a pre-writing activity. Specifically, this seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the writing proficiency level of the participants as reflected by their essay's pre-test and post-test scores in terms of its:
    1.1 Content;
    1.2 Conventions; and
    1.3 Structure?
2. What is the writing proficiency level of the participants as reflected by their essay's formative assessment scores in terms of its:
    2.1 Content;
    2.2 Conventions; and
    2.3 Structure?
3. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and formative test performance of the participants?
4. Is there a significant difference between the formative test and post-test performance of the participants?
5. Is there a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test performance of the participants?

III. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

This is a quasi-experimental study to investigate the impact of reading on improving writing skills. The one-group pretest-posttest design was utilized in this quasi-experimental study. A non-random sample of participants is exposed to a specific intervention or therapy in this type of quasi-experiment, and the outcome of interest is measured twice: once before and once after.

In this study, the group participated in an essay-writing task as a pre-test. The group was subsequently exposed to the dependent variable, which is reading and did it strictly before each of the prepared formative assessments. After this series of intervention, the students' writing skills were once more assessed through a post-test essay-writing task.

B. Respondents of the Study

The study included a total of 34 fourth-year college students from different academic departments at Manuel S. Enverga University Foundation, specifically from the College of Education (CEd), College of Criminal Justice and Criminology (CCJC), College of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences (CNAHS), and College of International Hospitality and Tourism Management (CIHTM), who were currently attending the English for Occupational Purposes course. The diverse sampling and selection of participants from multiple departments ensured thorough analysis of the effects of reading as an activity before writing in enhancing writing proficiency.

C. Sampling Technique

The selection for this study involved the purposeful use of homogeneous sampling technique. It considered several factors such as (a) the researcher's familiarity with the class, (b) their classification as fourth-year college students who will soon enter the workforce, where proficient writing skills are essential for report writing and proposal development, and (c) MSEUF's commitment to producing academically competent graduates.

D. Research Instrument

The research instruments used in this study consist of five writing prompts used in the pre-test, post-test, and the three formative writing activities. Alongside the prompts were five reading materials, and self-made analytic rubrics.

The reading materials used in this study were gathered from various online sources found on the internet. Carefully edited and paraphrased, these articles aimed to cater to the students' level of understanding. Selecting online articles proved valuable due to their accessibility and prevalence as a resource often utilized by students in today's digital age.

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The reading materials, writing prompts, and analytic rubrics were validated by three language teachers from the same school as the researcher to ensure their relevance and alignment with the course topics. The writing prompts and the reading materials were designed and chosen based on their relevance to the course topics and their suitability as pre-writing activities.

E. Research Procedure

After receiving approval from the research adviser and evaluation by several panels of experts to ensure quality of the content, the researcher carried out the study on the effect of using reading as a pre-writing activity to MSEUF college students' writing skills. The writing prompts and analytic rubrics designed by the researcher were validated by three language teachers in the same school. After the validation, the researcher sought the approval of the Dean of the College of Education for the conduct of the study. After the Dean's approval, the researcher requested the consent of the fourth-year students to serve as the study's participants.

The main procedure was split into three phases. In the first phase of the research, the students were asked to write an essay about a particular prompt related to the theme of the quarter which was Building Professional Relationships. Their essays were graded using the analytic rubrics designed by the researcher and were recorded as their pre-test scores.

The second stage was the intervention, which covered three distinct course topics: 1) Job Interview, 2) Communication in the Workplace: Emails, Letters, and Memos, and 3) Communication in the Workplace: Giving and Receiving Feedback. For each topic, one reading material related to the topic of discussion was distributed to the participants. After that, they were given a writing prompt related to the topic and were asked to write an essay on it. This process was repeated for all three topics. In all cases, reading was strictly used as a pre-writing activity. In other words, before starting their writing activity, students had to read the provided material/s.

The third phase of the study was the post-test where the participants wrote again an essay for a different writing prompt under the next topic, Advancing One's Career, but now with three reading materials to be utilized. These were the same materials the students read in the formative assessment tasks. Their essays were again graded using the analytic rubrics designed by the researcher and the scores from which were recorded as their post-test scores.

During this 5-week study, the researcher took on numerous responsibilities without much involvement from the teacher. The tasks comprised creating writing prompts, selecting relevant reading materials, and deliberating over assessment criteria with them. By minimizing direct participation from the teacher during these activities, a controlled environment was created, making it easier to independently observe how reading as a pre-writing activity influenced participants' writing skills. This method sought to gauge if reading proved to be an adequate self-guided pre-writing mechanism for promoting autonomous thought processes leading to better writing proficiency.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table A

Score	Pre-test		Post test		Verbal Interpretation
	f	%	f	%	
5			1	2.94	Exceptional
4	14	41.18	2	5.88	Competent
3	13	38.24	5	14.71	Satisfactory
2	4	11.76	17	50.00	Developing
1	7	20.59	9	26.47	Inadequate
Total	34	100	34	100	

Legend: 4.01 to 5.00 – Exceptional   3.01 to 4.00 – Competent   2.01 to 3.00 – Satisfactory
1.01 to 2.00 – Developing   0 to 1.00 – Inadequate

A. Writing Proficiency Level of the Participants as Reflected by their Essay's Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores in Terms of Content
Considering the data presented in Table A, it is evident that the writing proficiency levels of the participants have declined. In the pre-test, 41.18% of the participants were considered competent, but in the post-test, only 5.88% reached this level – indicating an alarming drop. On top of this, the number of students in the developing level increased from 11.76% in the pre-test to 50% in the post-test. Moreover, the number of students categorized as inadequate rose from 20.59% in the pre-test to 26.47% in the post-test.

Several factors can impact the efficacy of reading as a pre-writing activity, even though a few studies have found that it can heighten writing skills by enhancing vocabulary, coherence, and sentence structure [4]. Factors like the genre and purpose of writing, the reading materials chosen, and the students' level of reading comprehension play a critical role in determining the effect of reading on writing skills.

It is noteworthy that the participants displayed better writing performance in the pre-test, during which no reading material was provided, as opposed to in the post-test, where three resources were made available for their written responses. [5] research indicates that relying on one's prior knowledge and personal experience enhances writing skills more than depending excessively on external aids. These findings strongly imply that an individual's language proficiency and familiarity with a subject matter - referred to as

schema - have a key role in expressing oneself through writing even without access to references. To put it differently, an understanding of both language and topic are significant factors that contribute towards one's capability to write effectively.

Contrary to common belief, teachers included, these findings contradict the notion that giving students resources can enhance their writing quality. Such a practice may not yield desired results as previously thought. Surprisingly though, when left to rely on their own ideas and knowledge without any resources provided, they tend to produce more unique and imaginative content. However, if given an excess of resources, students may become unduly reliant on them leading to unremarkable and uninspiring creations.

The use of reading materials for the post-test has negatively influenced the students' performance, as shown by the decrease in their scores and this may be attributed to several factors. A) The students might not have known how to utilize the three resources efficiently producing original and independent ideas such as personal ones instead; B) They could have relied too much on these external sources whilst ignoring their own capabilities and knowledge base [6]; and C) using three materials concurrently could easily overwhelm and confuse the students. Consequently, during the post-test, it was evident that some participants simply reproduced excerpts from the assigned texts without a thorough understanding or appropriate referencing. Additionally, many participants deviated from the rubric's instructions, which mandated the incorporation of all three materials in their essays. It is crucial to acknowledge that the failure to adhere to this criterion resulted in a maximum attainable score of 3, thereby contributing to the lower scores recorded in the post-test.

These findings are consistent with studies by [7] that found that students tend to experience a decrease in their writing performance when they are tasked with working on too many sources. This finding emphasizes the significance of attentively following instructions and effectively integrating given sources when undertaking writing assignments especially when utilizing reading as a pre-writing activity.

The study involved fourth-year students who had already done research but fell short of the expected writing standards. These participants may not have been well-accustomed to referencing various sources properly or lacked mentorship on how to integrate them into their writing seamlessly while retaining original thinking.

Implications of these findings are crucial for both students and educators, especially in the context of flexible learning. Although flexible learning offered students additional independence, there were challenges associated with sustaining student motivation and involvement thus may be seen as ineffective compared to conventional learning [8].

Table B

Score	Pre-test		Post test		Verbal Interpretation
	f	%	f	%	
5	6	17.65	2	5.9	Exceptional
4	9	26.47	1	2.9	Competent
3	7	20.59	17	50.0	Satisfactory
2	4	11.76	10	29.4	Developing
1	8	23.53	4	11.8	Inadequate
Total	34	100	34	100	

Legend: 4.01 to 5.00 – Exceptional   3.01 to 4.00 – Competent   2.01 to 3.00 – Satisfactory
1.01 to 2.00 – Developing   0 to 1.00 – Inadequate

B. Writing Proficiency Level of the Participants as Reflected by their Essay's Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores in Terms of Conventions
The scores presented in Table B above showed a slight decline in writing proficiency, indicating that reading as a pre-writing activity may not significantly enhance¬ the participants' writing conventions which implies that solely giving students reading materials does not always lead to better writing abilities [9]. The results from the pre-test, however, indicate that most of the participants were already competent or exceptional writers in terms of conventions. In contrast, their post-test performance shifted to satisfactory levels, and there was a decrease in students with inadequate skills.

Most of the observed mistakes in the participants' outputs were related to spelling, subject-verb agreement, indention, and punctuation marks. Some students even wrote sentences that do not make sense. The fact that these issues persist in the fourth year of college despite taking multiple writing courses is surprising. It should be noted, however, that these courses were taken in a flexible setup, which could have impacted their academic writing skills development and learning.

Alternative strategies, like clear instruction and practice in traditional grammar conventions, may even be more effective in strengthening students' skills in writing proficiency [10]. It is important to note that becoming skilled in the development of writing conventions requires more than just reading. It requires a combination of thoughtful consideration, explicit instruction, and feedback, as well as ongoing practice [11].

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Table C

Score	Pre-test		Post test		Verbal Interpretation
	f	**%**	**f**	**%**	
5	7	20.59	2	5.9	Exceptional
4	3	8.82	2	5.9	Competent
3	12	35.29	12	35.3	Satisfactory
2	3	8.82	10	29.4	Developing
1	9	26.47	8	23.5	Inadequate
Total	34	100	34	100	

Legend: 4.01 to 5.00 – Exceptional   3.01 to 4.00 – Competent   2.01 to 3.00 – Satisfactory
1.01 to 2.00 – Developing   0 to 1.00 – Inadequate

C. Writing Proficiency Level of the Participants as Reflected by their Essay's Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores in terms of Structure
Table C above presents the writing proficiency level of the participants as reflected in their pre-test and post-test scores in terms of structure. The data in the table showed a decrease in writing proficiency, as reflected through their post-test scores, compared to their pre-test scores. There were fewer exceptional students in the post-test. Many factors such as lack of familiarity with academic writing conventions or difficulty organizing complex ideas and concepts could have led to this decrease. The findings imply that providing students with reading materials had limited impact on the improvement of structure and organization.

Although pre-writing materials can be useful, they are not always effective in facilitating a clear understanding of essay structure since not all follow the standard three-paragraph format used in academic writing, just like the ones used in this study.

The correlation between reading and writing may not be as straightforward as we once believed. While reading undoubtedly exposes writers to innovative ideas and concepts, it does not necessarily equip them with the tools or strategies they need to effectively organize and structure those ideas within their writing. Studies conducted by [11] discovered that while explicit writing instruction was linked to significant improvements in writing quality, simply reading a text did not yield a comparable effect. This illustrates the distinction between being acquainted with ideas and genuinely learning the art of implementing said ideas into a written text. Furthermore, other investigations have emphasized the significance of explicit instruction in structuring and organizing written texts, rather than naively assuming that reading well-structured texts will naturally nurture improved writing.

Based on these findings, it is crucial that teachers explicitly teach essay structure during writing instruction if they seek to enhance their students' writing abilities. Numerous studies have exhibited the effectiveness of such guidance in improving essay structure [12]. Alongside instruction, promoting challenging opportunities for peer review and feedback can help foster development in writing capabilities over time.

Table D

Scores	Formative Test						Verbal Interpretation
	1		**2**		**3**		
	f	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	
5	1	2.9	2	5.9	3	8.8	Exceptional
4	2	5.9	2	5.9	1	2.9	Competent
3	17	50.0	10	29.4	17	50.0	Satisfactory
2	10	29.4	14	41.2	8	23.5	Developing
1	4	11.8	6	17.6	5	14.7	Inadequate

Legend: 4.01 to 5.00 – Exceptional   3.01 to 4.00 – Competent   2.01 to 3.00 – Satisfactory
1.01 to 2.00 – Developing   0 to 1.00 – Inadequate

D. Writing Proficiency Level of the Participants as Reflected by their Formative Assessment Scores in terms of Content
The slight decrease in the average score for the second assessment presented in Table D may indicate that challenges may have been experienced by participants while understanding the writing prompt and/or the reading material or using their acquired writing skills.

It is possible that the challenging nature of Assessment 2's material has played a role in the participants' declining scores. This observation aligns with research findings indicating that harder writing assignments can have a greater effect on essay quality [13]. These studies imply that educators ought to contemplate the difficulty level of written tasks and adapt their teaching accordingly. By doing so, they can help students advance their writing abilities, thus improving overall academic performance.

Furthermore, it can be inferred from the satisfactory scores achieved by most participants in both Assessment 1 and Assessment 3 that they possess a certain degree of writing proficiency. Nonetheless, the consistency of their scores across the three assessments can also suggest that there was not a significant improvement observed in their writing abilities over the course duration. Considering this, it reinforces the necessity for personalized instruction geared towards enhancing students' content-specific writing competences to ensure continued development.

Based on the findings, it was discovered that a variety of components have the potential to influence participants' proficiency in

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writing. Notably, both reading materials and writing prompts play an integral role in shaping this effect. Several research underline that both elements can exert a considerable impact on students' aptitude for writing. Studies have shown that using authentic reading materials and carefully chosen writing prompts can have a significant impact on students' writing skills. [14] found that using authentic materials can improve writing quality, while [15] found that prompts can impact linguistic complexity and accuracy.

Despite any challenge that arose, implementing consistent and ongoing formative assessments throughout each stage of the learning process can enhance one's ability to improve their skills through targeted interventions aimed at specific learning outcomes. These findings reveal that doing repeated exercises leads to gradual progression as students show higher scores from one test to another. The data gathered from the formative tests presented in Table E below indicates that the participants' writing proficiency slightly improved in terms of conventions over time. The average score for assessments 2 and 3 was higher than assessment 1. This points to an upgrade in convention by participants across all three evaluations. A positive indication of their writing proficiency is also highlighted through relatively low percentage of inadequate level in the three assessments throughout. Participants who fall under satisfactory and competent levels are also notably high during all these assessments. The results from all three evaluations have shown that most participants achieved satisfactory or competent scores and a minimal percentage received inadequate scores. This suggests that their writing proficiency was at a certain level, which is encouraging.

Table E

Scores	Formative Test 1		2		3		Verbal Interpretation
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
5	4	11.8	3	8.8	5	14.7	Exceptional
4	4	11.8	8	23.5	4	11.8	Competent
3	13	38.2	11	32.4	14	41.2	Satisfactory
2	6	17.6	8	23.5	6	17.6	Developing
1	7	20.6	4	11.8	5	14.7	Inadequate

Legend: 4.01 to 5.00 – Exceptional   3.01 to 4.00 – Competent   2.01 to 3.00 – Satisfactory
1.01 to 2.00 – Developing   0 to 1.00 – Inadequate

E. Writing Proficiency Level of the Participants as Reflected by their Formative Assessment Scores in terms of Conventions
These observations could have come about because of several factors including but not limited to exposure to different forms of writing, and the practice of exercise. Since the students have been exposed to the process and several reading materials multiple times already, it somehow influenced their writing conventions. This importance of repeated practice is also emphasized by [16].

Based on the results, it is recommended that teachers use various prompts and tasks to evaluate their students' ability to follow proper grammatical conventions. Additionally, confirming that students fully comprehend each aspect of the assignment and providing guidance on how to maximize these elements is crucial for success. It is also advantageous for teachers to implement frequent pre-writing activities like reading exercises into the curriculum; doing so can significantly improve writing proficiency over an extended duration.

After analyzing the formative test results presented in Table F on the next column, it is apparent that the participants' proficiency in essay structure is lacking overall. When comparing the three assessments, there was not much increase in this specific area of writing. It is noteworthy that many participants scored in the Inadequate and Developing levels, indicating challenges in organizing ideas logically and coherently.

One potential reason progress has not been made could be because students were not directly instructed on how to effectively structure a three-paragraph essay. While clear guidelines were provided, it was noted that they struggled with producing content that adhered to this format. Additionally, the reading materials distributed may have contributed to their difficulty in following the required structure due to their extensive length. Considering these factors is essential for addressing any lack of advancement in writing skills amongst students.

Table F

Scores	Formative Test 1		2		3		Verbal Interpretation
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
5	6	17.6	5	14.7	3	8.8	Exceptional
4	2	5.9	4	11.8	4	11.8	Competent
3	8	23.5	9	26.5	12	35.3	Satisfactory
2	12	35.3	6	17.6	10	29.4	Developing
1	6	17.6	10	29.4	5	14.7	Inadequate

Legend: 4.01 to 5.00 – Exceptional   3.01 to 4.00 – Competent   2.01 to 3.00 – Satisfactory
1.01 to 2.00 – Developing   0 to 1.00 – Inadequate

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F. Writing Proficiency Level of the Participants as Reflected by their Formative Assessment Scores in terms of Structure

These results suggest that teaching structured and specific techniques related to organizing information within three paragraphs would benefit students significantly. Research demonstrates improvement in students' writing proficiency through providing comprehensive feedback as well as instruction on how essay organization truly works [17].

Providing diverse reading materials which adhere strictly with desired formats can also aid an increase of understanding about essay structures among students [18]. Finally, if teachers continue implementing formative assessments throughout the semester, they will achieve two things at once - efficiently keeping track of everyone's progress while addressing areas which require further improvement.

The results presented in Table G below suggest that there is no significant difference between the pre-test and formative test performance of the participants in terms of conventions and structure (at $p=0.523$ and $p=0.577$, respectively). Despite this, there was a noticeable improvement in their writing proficiency when it comes to content (with a p-value of 0.068). This increase may have been influenced by the supplementary resources given during the formative testing process which aided them in developing their ideas, particularly through examples.

Table G

Writing Skills	Pre-test		Formative test		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Verbal Interpretation
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Content	2.12	0.946	2.50	0.961	-1.888	33	0.068	Not Significant
Conventions	2.94	1.594	2.79	1.250	0.645	33	0.523	Not Significant
Structure	2.79	1.591	2.65	1.368	0.564	33	0.577	Not Significant

Legend: Sig (2-tailed) ≤ .05 (Significant); Sig (2-tailed) ≥ .05 (Not significant)

G. Significant Difference Between the Pre-Test and Formative Test Performance of the Participants

Looking at these findings, it is noteworthy that despite the useful resource materials given, there was a drop in both conventions and structure from the pre-test to the formative assessment results. This may signify that other factors beyond resource availability might be contributing to their writing proficiency.

The participants partaking in this research were fourth-year college students who had spent two years learning through flexible modules which could have influenced their writing skills. It is plausible to say that the learning modality might affect students' writing skills since proper writing necessitates consistent practice and feedback. During the formative assessments, even with all resources being readily available, it is evident that most of them did not maximize their usage across all evaluations potentially because they lacked adequate guidance and practice on how to effectively utilize resource materials since most of their subject courses were majorly online.

The absence of appropriate instruction and practice may have played a significant role in the participants' incapacity to enhance their writing regarding conventions and structure. Providing them with more personalized teaching, as well as opportunities for frequent practice and assessment, could prove beneficial since research has demonstrated that explicit instruction, individualized feedback, and extended time spent practicing can all result in students improving their writing skills [19].

To address this problem, future interventions could concentrate on honing students' critical thinking and analysis skills to better their content writing proficiencies. Moreover, there might be a need for increased guidance and resources to assist students in the composition process, particularly concerning appropriately utilizing sources without committing plagiarism. Research has depicted that instructing writing strategies explicitly and furnishing feedback can yield substantial advancements in learners' writing competencies.

Table H

Writing Skills	Formative test		Post test		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Verbal Interpretation
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Content	2.50	0.961	2.09	0.965	3.230	33	0.003	Significant
Conventions	2.79	1.250	2.62	0.954	1.139	33	0.263	Not Significant
Structure	2.65	1.368	2.41	1.104	1.391	33	0.174	Not Significant

Legend: Sig (2-tailed) ≤ .05 (Significant); Sig (2-tailed) ≥ .05 (Not significant)

H. Significant Difference Between the Formative and Post-Test Performance of the Participants

After analyzing the data presented on Table H above, it is evident that there is a significant difference between the participants' formative test and post-test performance regarding content, as indicated by the p-value of 0.003. However, the difference is an unfavorable one since the students did better on their formative assessments than they did during their post-tests. However,

conventions and structure made no significant difference with p-values of 0.263 and 0.174 correspondingly; therefore, students displayed similar levels of proficiency in this regard both formative and post-assessment tests.

Incorporating reading materials as pre-writing activities in the formative assessments may have aided the students' development of writing content, as discussed in the previous table. However, as revealed by the table above, this effect did not seem to transfer to their performance on the post-test. One explanation for this could be that the post-test materials were slightly more challenging since they consisted of three readings, all of which they had read before, or perhaps the skills developed from formative assessments were not applied effectively by participants.

Additionally, the students relied on copying and pasting without proper citation or even disregarding provided materials. This highlights the need for more emphasis on original thinking and effective use of resources, particularly in the context of flexible learning which the participants experienced for two years.

An important aspect of producing quality written work is effectively utilizing sources. Incorporating multiple sources into one's writing can improve its overall quality. However, it is also necessary for students to know how to seamlessly integrate this information into their composition so as not to commit plagiarism or disrupt the coherence of their writing [20]. As [6] have observed, despite the benefits of using multiple sources, students may struggle to synthesize information effectively, leading to confusion, lack of coherence, and even plagiarism. Students should establish a mastery over critical thinking skills to responsibly employ sources when creating high-quality written compositions.

It is also observed that the participants did not adhere to the rubrics of the post-test which required the use of three materials in their essays thus the negative impact on their post-test scores. Notably, [21] and [22] suggest that discussing rubrics beforehand with students is essential for them to fully comprehend and align their writing with desired outcomes. As such, it is vitally important that teachers make a concerted effort to prioritize regular class discussions focused on imparting comprehensive knowledge regarding rubrics while actively setting written assignment expectations. Ultimately, adherence to these strategies stands to have a profound positive impact on student writing outcomes.

Table I

Writing Skills	Pre-test		Post test		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Verbal Interpretation
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD				
Content	2.12	0.946	2.09	0.965	0.138	33	0.891	Not Significant
Conventions	2.94	1.594	2.62	0.954	1.383	33	0.176	Not Significant
Structure	2.79	1.591	2.41	1.104	1.626	33	0.113	Not Significant

Legend: Sig (2-tailed) ≤ .05 (Significant); Sig (2-tailed) ≥ .05 (Not significant)

I. Significant Difference Between the Pre-Test and Post-Test Performance of the Participants

Based on the analysis of the data presented in Table I above, there is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test performance of the participants in terms of content, conventions, and structure. This finding is consistent with previous studies that have also shown that providing resources or materials does not necessarily lead to better writing performance [23 & 24].

These findings may suggest that the provision of reading resources did not have a strong impact on improving one's essay writing skills, particularly in terms of content, conventions, and structure. However, we cannot rule out that these resources had a greater influence on other key aspects such as reasoning and evidence usage in student writing. Several prior studies indicate strong improvements in evidence sourcing and argument presentation as positive impacts from using external resources [24].

Nevertheless, the writing performance of participants in both tests could also be affected by factors such as their familiarity with the grading rubrics. Their lack of integration of the three reading materials in their post-test contributed to most participants receiving a score below three points, which is clearly outlined in the scoring guidelines provided. Therefore, prior discussion of the rubrics and clear instructions before the task can aid in improving students' writing performance.

Studies have shown that incorporating reading as a pre-writing activity can considerably uplift the writing abilities and overall performance of students [4]. Despite this positive correlation, it is worth mentioning that its effectiveness depends on several factors such as the writing prompts, materials utilized, the skill level of learners, and teacher guidance [4].

Interestingly, some teachers choose to omit feedback during pre-writing sessions intentionally. This stance enables students to produce fresh ideas and proficiently organize their thoughts through reading without immediate correction or evaluation. However, feedback is vital for subsequent writing stages since it allows refining areas that require improvement after careful evaluations. Nonetheless, driving forward on these earlier stages with no direct intervention offers opportunities for constructive exploration enhancing individual student's craft and versatile writing competencies.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

After utilizing reading as pre-writing activity, the findings indicate changes in the participants' writing proficiency levels over time. There was a decline in proficiency in content, conventions, and structure in the post-test compared to the pre-test. The formative assessments provided insights into the participants' progress, with consistent performance in content but room for improvement in conventions and structure.

Based on the statistical evidence gathered, there is a lack of significant difference between the pre-test and formative test performance. This suggests limited progress during the formative assessment period. There is also no significant difference between the formative test and post-test in conventions and structure, however, there is in content, but in negative direction. Between the pre-test and post-test performance, there is no significant difference in all variables.

Considering these conclusions, the following were recommended: the following recommendations are hereby suggested:

1. To maximize its benefits, teachers can incorporate reading as pre-writing activity into their lesson plans with close monitoring and feedback during the process. It is also essential for teachers to select clear guidelines and models for successful integration of reading as a pre-writing activity. This should not only focus on essay structure but also address content conventions that enhance comprehension. Teachers must also carefully evaluate supplementary reading materials before use in the classroom setting to ensure their alignment to language goals. Clear explanation of grading rubrics used to assess student work will also help learners better understand assessment criteria and how their performance aligns with expectations.

2. Administrators may offer substantial assistance in improving student learning outcomes. This could take the form of professional development opportunities like feedback-focused workshops that highlight valuable techniques within the learning process. Furthermore, they might ensure access to supplementary reading materials that are appropriate to each grade level and provide targeted exercises aimed at strengthening students' writing skills.

3. Considering the limited teacher involvement in this study, future researchers may investigate different strategies to support students' pre-writing phases. Various forms of teacher guidance, including explicit instructions, scaffolding techniques, and peer collaboration, might be implemented. Such efforts could contribute to existing understanding about effective teaching practices involving reading as a pre-writing activity that could help nurture students' writing proficiency.

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