

Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T) As an Innovative Teaching Strategy to Improve Learners' Grammatical Writing Skills in English 5

Prof. Resty C. Samosa¹, Annabelle A. Marcial², Kyle Pauline P. Madrelejos³, Danielle Anne O. Dagum⁴, Ester Ruth C. Solana⁵

¹Colegio De San Gabriel Arcangel, Graceville National High school

resty.samosa002@deped.gov.ph

²Colegio De San Gabriel Arcangel

belleymarcial@gmail.com

³Colegio De San Gabriel Arcangel

mkylepauline@gmail.com

⁴Colegio De San Gabriel Arcangel

danielladagum10@gmail.com

⁵Colegio De San Gabriel Arcangel

esterruthsolana@gmail.com

Abstract: Teaching grammatical writing for students at the elementary level needs high creativity, the students have to be encouraged to study hard to gain writing competence. Additionally, the students themselves face many problems: Lack of writing compositions, lack of exposure to books and reading resources, and grammatical problems. The objective of the study is to improve the grammatical writing skills of students in English 5 using the RAFT Strategy. This research aims to find out how the implementation of the Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T) strategy enhanced students' skills in grammatical writing. The respondents of the study were purposively selected which composed of thirty (30) students in Bagong Buhay G. Elementary School in the Schools Division of San Jose Del Monte, Bulacan. Moreover, having conducted the pretest and posttest, the researcher found out that students were able to write more effectively as they were aware of who they were writing, to whom they were writing, what format their writing was, and the topic of their writing. So, the students wrote more purposively and focused after being introduced to the RAFT writing strategy. Lastly, the study revealed that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores of the students in the utilization of Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T) in improving grammatical writing skills of students in English 5.

Keywords: Grammatical Writing, Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T), Writing Competence,

INTRODUCTION

Writing is an essential component of English language instruction. It is the fundamental ability that learners must be taught and acquired. There are a number of reasons why writing is essential. First, writing is a productive skill that requires learners to create a language in order to communicate. Second, it can help with abilities like listening, reading, and speaking. Third, learners can properly express their messages and deliver them to the readers if they have good writing abilities.

To cite, in elementary school, learners are encountering the elements of writing for the first time, from the formation of letters to organizing their thoughts to using correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling. Elementary grade learners are supposed to advance from learning the rules of writing to automatically applying those rules starting in Grade four. By the end of elementary school, the learners should know how to write on their own and produce multiple-paragraph essays that contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. So, the researchers would like to give some data about the grade 5 learners who experience difficulty in writing.

Moreover, as cited by Moses and Mohammad (2019), developing a learners' ability in writing is one of the major challenges faced by teachers in most schools nowadays. Writing has become difficult because of lack of vocabulary, poor grammar, poor spelling, students' readiness, and lack of exposure to books and reading materials. Furthermore, according to Muhammad et al. (2016), citing specific issues that some elementary school students are having trouble with grammar. In writing, grammar is very important. Grammar provides information that aids readers in comprehending the meaning of the text. It is a structure that conveys to the reader the writer's detailed meaning. Grammar also explains how words are formed and structured (morphology) and how they are organized in sentences (syntax). Students who have a limited understanding of grammar will find it difficult to write sentences with proper grammar.

Earlier studies show some of the problems in the writing of the students, in general, Writing activities need to be conducted among students since elementary school so that the students can create good pieces of writing in the future. Even though there are many subjects in elementary schools, writing is known as one of the most crucial academic subjects for students. Also, the teachers should know how to teach writing skills and teaching strategies like R.A.F.T in order to improve

students' writing ability. Because students are difficult to motivate, students are diverse, and they have limited time to teach the students. To improve a student's writing ability, the teacher must give more attention to the learners to teach writing and give guidance and feedback.

With all this information, if we do not deal with this problem properly it might result in poor performance and writing skills of students. As researchers, we conduct this research to use Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T) as an Innovative Teaching Strategy to Improve Learners' Grammatical Writing skills in English 5. RAFT is seen as an efficient writing strategy for solving some of the learners' problems while learning how to write.

Action Research Questions

This study determines Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T) as an Innovative Teaching Strategy to improve learners' Grammatical Writing Skills in English 5 from School Year 2021-2022.

Specifically, this research tries to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of learners' grammatical writing skills in terms of:
 - 1.1 focus
 - 1.2 content
 - 1.3 organization
 - 1.4 style
 - 1.5 convention
2. How effective is the Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T) as an Innovative Teaching Strategy for improving learners' Grammatical writing Skills based on the pretest and posttest mean scores?
3. Is there a significant difference between the pretest and posttest of the learners?
4. What is the attitude of the learners on the utilization of Role, Audience, format, Topic (R.A.F.T) as an Innovative Teaching Strategy for improving learners' Grammatical writing Skills?
5. What are the challenges encountered by the learners in using the R.A.F.T strategy?
6. What teaching exemplar may be proposed using the Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T) based on the findings of the study?

Methods

This study utilized experimental research design One-Group pretest-posttest design to determine the effectiveness of Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T) as an innovative teaching strategy to improve learners' grammatical writing skills in

English 5. According to Samosa (2020), the treatment group needs to be measured before and after the utilization of the strategy or program implementation.

The dependent variable was defined by gain scores, the difference in scores between the pretest and posttest scores of the treatment group is assessed. These structures potentially offer control over all of the possible extraneous variables since the treatment group consists of subjects assigned from the selected group. A pretest and a posttest as utilized as a measure of the performance of the treatment groups.

In this study, there were selected thirty (30) Grade 5 learners that were used as part of the treatment group that received the use of Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T) as an immediate intervention among the Grade V who encountered difficulties in grammatical writing in able for them to learn and to improve their grammatical writing skills in the City Schools Division of San Jose Del Monte City, Bulacan.

The first day of the implementation was focused on the pre-test, which was given by the researcher. After the administration of the pre-test to members of the treatment group, the researcher immediately conducted the classes using the Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T) in the treatment group where the teacher ignited the hypothesis to determine the significant difference between the pretest and posttest of the learners.

The respondents were chosen selectively, to gather important and necessary data in this study. The researchers use thirty (30) Grade 5 learners in Bagong Buhay G. Elementary School in the School Division of San Jose Del Monte City, Bulacan in SY.2021-2022.

The researcher utilized the Purposive sampling technique and according to Samosa, et al, (2020), it is a form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research.

Cognizant to Black (2020) Purposive sampling (also known as judgment, selective or subjective sampling) is a sampling technique in which a researcher relies on his or her own judgment when choosing members of the population to participate in the study. The study involved thirty (30) Grade 5 learners who have no experience in conducting action research.

To get the appropriate data needed, the researchers utilized the writing test as a form of pretest and posttest. A test is any measurement technique for ability, know-how, or performance according to Richards and Schmidt (2015). The writing test will be graded based on the given rubric. A rubric

is a coherent set of criteria for students' work that includes a description of levels of performance quality on the criteria. The main purpose of rubrics is to assess performance made evident in processes and products. It can serve as a scoring guide that seeks to evaluate a student's performance in many different tasks based on a full range of criteria rather than a single numerical score.

In gathering the data, the researchers carried out a request letter to conduct the study noted by the School Principal and Research Coordinator for approval and permits to undertake the said study and sign in by the Dean of Education and VP for Academic Affairs in Bagong Buhay G. Elementary School.

Relatively, after the permission was granted, the researchers sent the Informed Consent Form to all learners' parents/guardians for the conduct of the study. They were also informed about the main objective and the main role of the researcher to the achievement of their children through the implementation of Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T) as an innovative teaching strategy in improving the grammatical writing skills. After the retrieval of the Informed Consent Form, the researcher personally administered the pretest and post-test to the respondents of the study.

Connectedly, another letter of request is personally sent online by the researcher to the school principal of the said school to officially execute the study. To ensure the confidentiality of the results, the researcher adhered to the ethical guidelines and issues related to gathering data procedures. Upon the completion of the relevant data, the researcher manually checked the writing created by the learners in the form of pretest and posttest answers by the respondents. The spreadsheet in Excel was used in tabulating and tallying the test results. After the tabulation, the collected and tabulated data was computed and processed using Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS).

In analyzing the effectiveness of using Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T) as a strategy, pretest scores of the experimental group were compared using the t-test of the independent means. A t-test is a type of inferential statistic used to determine if there is a significant difference between the means of two groups, which may be related to certain features. Moreover, after the pretest, the intervention was given in the experimental group. After the given intervention, a posttest was administered to see if there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest results of the experimental group. Weighted Mean was utilized in each question of the four point likert scale to determine the result and academic achievement of the learner respondents.

Results and Discussions

This part discusses the data obtained based on the research instruments employed in the study. Furthermore, this

part interprets and analyzes data gathered to describe the effectiveness of Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T) as an innovation to improve learners' grammatical writing skills in Grade 5 learners' of BBG Elementary School. Moreover, the findings of the study were:

TABLE 1: LEVEL OF LEARNERS' GRAMMATICAL WRITING SKILLS USING R.A.F.T STRATEG

Legend: Very satisfied (3.26 – 4.00), satisfied (2.51 – 3.25),

Grammatical Writing Skills	WM	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Focus	3.48	4.88	Very satisfied
Content	3.74	5.02	Very satisfied
Organization	3.50	4.87	Very satisfied
Style	3.76	5.01	Very satisfied
Convention	3.06	4.59	satisfied
OVERALL	3.51	4.88	Very satisfied

dissatisfied (1.76 – 2.50), Very dissatisfied (1.00 – 1.75). The tabulated data revealed the level of learners' grammatical writing skills using the R.A.F.T strategy. Data showed that the R.A.F.T strategy assessed on the learners' grammatical writing skills was very satisfied based on the overall computed weighted mean of 3.51 and SD =4.88. More so, the R.A.F.T strategy help learners in terms of style was X = 3.76, SD = 5.02; content was X = 3.74, SD = 5.01; organization was X = 3.50; SD = 4.87; focus was X = 3.48, SD =4.88 which denoted as very satisfied level of grammatical writing skills. Also, and convention was X=3.06, SD=4.59 which denotes as a satisfied. On the other hand, when the learners assess using the R.A.F.T strategy it showed that it was very satisfied, based on the overall computed weighted mean of 3.51 and SD = 4.88.

This outcome agreed to studied of Umaemah, Latief, Irawati (2016), which implemented RAFT strategy in teaching writing and found out that it was successful to improve the students' writing ability. All the students achieved the score at least 55 and 74.24% of them were actively involved in the process of teaching and learning. Connectedly to Lindawaty, et.al (2014), found out that the teaching practice improved and the result of students' writing scores also improved from cycle to cycle in terms of content and language. The students were able to write more effectively as they were aware who they were writing as, to whom they were writing, what format their writing was and the topic of their writing. The students wrote

more purposively and focused after being introduced to RAFT writing strategy.

TABLE 2: PRETEST AND POSTTEST SCORES ON WRITING SKILLS

	Pre-test score	Posttest Score	Gain Score
Mean	60.33	90	29.67

Presented on table 1 was the pretest-posttest of Grade 5 learners on grammatical writing skills. As gleaned on the tabulated data, it indicates that before the utilization of the R.A.F.T Strategy, learners' achievement in pretest were 60.33, then in posttest were 90. Hence, the learners' gains mean score of 29.67%. In addition, it can be concluded that R.A.F.T Strategy as innovation had a positive effect on the learners' achievement, as evidenced by the significantly greater mean in the posttest than in the pretest.

In correlation, Alisa and Rosa (2015) discovered that R.A.F.T strategy can be chosen for the alternative strategy of teaching writing skills because this strategy encourages learners to write creatively, to think about a topic from different points of view, to a specific audience in a variety of text formats, because the writer needs to consider those aspects in order to convey the reader. Applying R.A.F.T strategy in teaching writing is suggested to help the learners achieve better.

Relatively to, Sudarsono, Sada (2015) showed that RAFT strategy improved the students' performance in writing formal letter from cycle to cycle. It strengthens their sense of writers by making them aware of the impact of the topic on the format of their audiences.

TABLE 3: TEST OF SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PRETEST AND POSTTEST ON THE WRITING SKILLS.

df	t-test	t-test (critical value)	Probability level	Decision	Interpretation
29	10.50	2.043	P > 0.05	Ho is rejected	Highly significant

When the data was computed, it was discovered that the t-value of 10.50 surpasses the t-test critical value of 2.043 at 29 degrees of freedom. At 0.05, the results are significant. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected. As a result, the learners in the RAFT as an innovative teaching technique to increase learners' grammatical writing skills had a substantial difference in their pretest and posttest scores. The findings are further corroborated by El Sourani (2017), who found

statistically significant changes between students' pretest and posttest scores in favor of the experimental group.

Cognizant to Suharni, Mukhaiyar and Radjab (2015) found that RAFT strategy could improve the students' writing achievement. In addition, El Sourani (2017) concluded that the RAFT strategy was more effective and outperformed the traditional method of teaching and learning the writing skills.

TABLE 4: ATTITUDE OF THE LEARNERS TOWARDS UTILIZATION OF ROLE, AUDIENCE, FORMAT, TOPIC (R.A.F.T) INNOVATION IN TEACHING GRAMMATICAL WRITING SKILLS

Legend: Very High (3.26 – 4.00), High (2.51 – 3.25), Low

Statement	WM	Interpretation
1. I found that using RAFT strategy is effective.	3.41	Very High
2. I enjoyed learning writing using RAFT Strategy.	3.61	Very High
3. I found that using RAFT strategy is not difficult.	2.65	High
4. I found that RAFT strategy improve grammatical writing skills in terms of Focus, Content, Organization, Style, and Convention.	3.53	Very High
5. I found that it is interesting to use RAFT strategy in learning grammatical writing.	3.18	High
Overall weighted mean	3.28	Very High

(1.76 – 2.50), Very Low (1.00 – 1.75).

The table 4 showed the attitude of the learners towards utilization of Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T) innovation in teaching grammatical writing skills. The data revealed that learners have a very high attitude towards the utilization of RAFT innovation in teaching grammatical writing with overall weighted mean of 3.28. As gleaned with the indicators that learners found that writing using R.A.F.T was enjoyable (x=3.61), R.A.F.T strategy improve grammatical writing skills in terms of Focus, Content, Organization, Style, and Convention (x=3.53), RAFT strategy is effective (x=3.41), RAFT strategy is interesting to use in learning grammatical writing, and RAFT strategy is not difficult (x=2.65).

The findings align with those of Umaemah, Latief, and Irawati (2016), who indicated that the ability of learners to write and participate in the implementation of the RAFT strategy has progressively improved. The result of writing tests for learners shows that implementing the RAFT strategy helps them increase their writing skills. RAFT strategy thus far has a positive effect on the involvement and motivation of the learners in the teaching of learning the writing process.

TABLE 5: CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY THE LEARNERS IN USING THE R.A.F.T STRATEGY

Legend: Very High encountered (3.26 – 4.00), High Encountered (2.51 – 3.25), Encountered (1.76 – 2.50), Not encountered (1.00 – 1.75).

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED BY THE LEARNERS IN USING R.A.F.T	WM	SD	Verbal Interpretation
Intellectual factor	1.72	3.55	Not encountered
Linguistic factor	2.56	4.41	High encountered
Environmental Factor	2.53	3.33	High encountered
OVERALL	2.57	3.76	High encountered

The above mentioned tabulated data showed the challenges encountered by the learner in grammatical writing skills. Data revealed that learners' shows highly encountered challenges in using R.A.F.T based on the overall computed weighted mean of 2.57 and standard deviation of 3.76. R.A.F.T as described on the following domain the mean scores in the linguistic factors ($X = 2.56$, $SD = 4.41$), environmental factors ($X = 2.53$, $SD = 3.33$) was highly encountered while the intellectual factors ($X = 1.72$, $SD = 3.55$) was low encountered.

This result is in agreement with Kabigting R. (2020) who found out that linguistic issue and writing skill has been considered one of the most necessary skills in teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Traditionally, teaching writing at schools or even at universities focus on having writing that is free of mistakes in grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary. But nowadays, this way of teaching writing is no longer acceptable. Writing is thinking and it is the effect of foreign language on the writers' thought. Therefore, much more attention should be given to the process of the writing itself and the students' problems in writing; for example, generating ideas and vocabulary items, understanding the core elements to organize paper, focusing on their choices of words and details to meet specific needs, structuring to create strong expressions...etc. Researchers believe in the necessity of having new strategies that provide the students with ideas, many more vocabulary items in addition to that, ways of thinking creatively. Raft strategy has been seen as one of the practical solutions to the students' problems in writing. Therefore, and due to the belief in the importance of RAFT as an innovative teaching strategy in improving writing performance, this study aimed to examine the impact of this strategy in improving the students' writing performance.

Moreover, Purnama (2021) said that in intellectual factors many students find some difficulties in learning English. Writing analytical exposition text is one of the problems in learning English.

Concomitant to Hughes and Schwab (2010) believe that writing is one of the most difficult competences because it not only requires the mastery of technical aspects such as punctuation and orthography, but also the mastery of the strategy, namely design, organization and registration. There were also reasonable problems for many students in writing. As stated by Harmer (2001), in writing, we should focus on product of what writing or the writing process itself.

Lastly, in correlation to environmental Sudarningsih & Wardana conducted a study in 2015, they discovered that environmental is one of the factors they said that a child cannot focus when the environment is noisy and chaotic because they are distracted so they can't understand the topic but with the use R.A.F.T could improve the grade 5-grade learners' writing skills. This also made the learners have positive attitudes, high motivation for learning as well as active participation in learning to grammatical writing skills the technique.

Conclusions

The result of and discussion on the Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T) as an innovative teaching strategy to improve learners grammatical skills in English Grade 5 is to improve learner's writing skills draw several conclusions.

1. Most of the learners are instructional writers when discussing the RAFT teaching strategy to improve learners writing skills.
2. As shown by the significantly higher mean in the posttest than in the pretest, the innovation RAFT teaching strategy as innovation to improve learners writing skills had a positive impact on the learners writing skills.
3. The learners exposed to the RAFT teaching strategy as an innovation to improve learners writing skills are significantly different in the pretest and posttest results in writing.
4. The RAFT strategy has encouraged a learning environment that offers opportunities to explore and examine how their role as writers can be understood.
5. The learners' parents are hands-on in guiding their children to get the instructional materials in school that are distributed by the school.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusion drawn, the following are recommended:

1. Further research is needed on possible connections between the integration of Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T) as innovation and how teachers can potentially collaborate and/or design materials and strategy to support this practice in English.

2. Utilize the use of the Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T) as an innovative teaching strategy in improving the grammatical writing skills in English for further research with a bigger population and other grades.
3. Conduct a School-Based workshop on proper implementation of the Role, Audience, Format, Topic (R.A.F.T) as an innovation to improve learners' grammatical writing skills.
4. Make use of RAFT strategy so they can better understand and express their creativeness in writing.
5. For more comprehensive findings, further studies on the same area of concentration may be conducted for improving education and writing where the students will be benefited.

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