

From Errors to Excellence: Utilizing SEE (Sentence Strips, Editing Checklist, and Error Analysis) to Improve Punctuation Skills Among JHS Students

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ABSTRACT

Writing, a critical language skill, demanded proper use of punctuation to ensure clarity, coherence, and precision. However, a preliminary assessment revealed that 12.5% of students struggled with basic punctuation usage, indicating a gap in their writing competencies. Grounded in content analysis, this action research assessed the effectiveness of the SEE (Sentence Strips, Editing Checklist, and Error Analysis) intervention in improving punctuation skills among Grade 10 students at Mandaue City School for the Arts. The research followed a structured process across three phases: pre-implementation (proposal submission and material preparation), implementation (weekly 40-minute sessions), and post-implementation (evaluation and analysis). Using purposive sampling, data was gathered from five selected students through pre- and post-tests that assessed their punctuation skills via sentence strips, checklists, and error analysis. Results showed substantial improvement in post-test scores, with averages rising from 68–76% to nearly 100%, indicating the intervention's success. The SEE strategy enabled learners to internalize punctuation rules, actively engage in error identification, and apply corrections independently. This study concluded that focusing on interventions like SEE can significantly enhance students' writing mechanics. The findings hold practical value for educators aiming to strengthen foundational writing skills and will be disseminated through school-based training, learning action cells, and educational forums to encourage similar pedagogical innovations.

Keywords: Punctuation skills, SEE strategy, Sentence Strips, Editing Checklist, Error Analysis, Instructional intervention and Content analysis

Introduction

Writing is one of the four basic language skills that include listening, speaking and reading which the teacher, as an instructor, is expected to know. Unlike speaking, writing is not a natural activity. While speaking is acquired by all normally endowed human beings without explicit instruction, writing, on the other hand, has to be taught. Stubbs (1980) distinguishes formal features which are used in written language or in spoken language.

Punctuation is a sign that has an important role in a sentence or text because punctuation marks provide meaning from word to word. In other words, punctuation helps readers to understand the sentence to be read. Defining that all writing requires complete mastery of punctuation because punctuation removes ambiguity and makes prose clear and easily understandable. Punctuation is a tool used by writers to help their readers understand the meaning of their words. The punctuation marks clarify the meaning of written sentences as mentioned by Sijabat (2023). Several types of symbols are included in punctuation. The symbol consists of a dot or dots (.), comma (,), semicolon (;), colon (:), hyphen (-), hyphen (-), apostrophe ('), quotation marks (""), question marks (?), and exclamation points (!). The entire Punctuation marks have different functions in complete sentences.

Punctuation is one of the special signs in the form of symbols that are useful for making sentences irregular and giving stress or tone or intonation in sentences. Husada (2018:23) stated that punctuation is a sign component used in writing to clarify meaning, separate sentences, words, and parts of words. Khan (2016:27) stated that punctuation is important because it can provide understanding for the reader to understand the meaning contained in the writing without looking at the expression of the person writing the text. This is supported by Yun Ginting (2018:338-344) whose aim is this punctuation marks can provide an understanding to the reader in interpreting the

structure clearly and distinguishing sentences in writing. According to Harmer (2004:49), punctuation is an important and correct skill for many people. Punctuation has quality value in a piece of writing not only from the content, language, and handwriting but also from the use of punctuation.

Punctuation is important in writing because it helps make sentences clear and easy to understand. However, some Junior High School (JHS) students struggle with using punctuation marks correctly.

This study is aimed at identifying the errors in writing of Grade 10 students of Mandaue City School for the Arts. The analysis is based on common punctuation errors in writing. The explanation for each writing problem is first offered as a working hypothesis and then it is discussed under the given circumstances and contexts to explain why and how these writing errors occur. Given the broad general agreement about the importance of learning to write, it is disturbing to discover that “most researchers and educators agree that with rare exceptions, students do not and cannot write well” (Amiran & Mann, 1982).

After the first quarter, the researcher noticed that 5 or 12.5% of 40 Grade 10 students had difficulty in using correct punctuations.

According to Corder (1974), systematically analyzing errors made by language learners makes it possible to determine areas that need reinforcement in teaching.

Action Research Question

Does the implementation of SEE (Sentence Strips, Editing Checklist, and Error Analysis) improve the punctuation skills among Grade 10 students of Mandaue City School for the Arts for the School Year 2024-2025?

Innovation, Interventions and Strategy

The researcher developed the SEE (Sentence Strips, Editing Checklist and Error Analysis) intervention to improve the punctuation skills among Grade 10 learners. These instructional materials were implemented for forty minutes every Friday from 4:00 to 4:40 in the afternoon during the Third Quarter of this school year.

Pre-implementation Phase: The process began with submitting a research proposal to our school principal, Dr. Leslie Joy R. Paña, for approval, which served as the foundation of the research project. Once approved, the implementation phase of the research will be initiated. At the same time, preparations were carried out, including the creation of a matrix, scheduling, and the development of instructional materials to ensure everything was in place for smooth execution.

Implementation Phase: This phase signified the actual implementation of the research plan. The SEE sessions, conducted according to the established schedule, provided the setting for data collection.

Post-implementation Phase: the researcher undertook a thorough evaluation of the research outputs produced by the Grade 10 students of Mandaue City School for the Arts. This process included reviewing, tabulating, organizing, analyzing, and interpreting assessment data to generate insights that aligned with the overall research goals. To ensure a varied representation, purposive sampling was used to select participants based on pre-test results for the action research conducted at the school.

Methodology

The researcher used Content Analysis that gave a systematic and objective way to analyze the essays and quantify the impact of the interventions, especially when it came to punctuation errors. The research was conducted at Mandaue City School for the Arts Capasanan, Casili, Mandaue City. Purposive sampling was used to identify the respondents among the learners of the Grade 10-Singkil on this school year. In line with the research objectives, this outlines the guidelines for selecting, collecting, and processing the data utilized in the study. Pre-data gathering. The researcher presented a research proposal to the school head for approval. Upon receiving approval, the implementation of the research proceeded. This phase also included the preparation of necessary materials. Actual data gathering.

During the data collection phase, the researcher examined each student's submitted work. Post-data gathering. In this stage, the researcher carefully analyzed the learner's submitted outputs while simultaneously tabulating, organizing, evaluating, and interpreting the collected data. To maintain privacy and encourage open communication, the results of their work were kept confidential. In this study, the researcher carefully examined the learner's submitted outputs, undertaking the tasks of tabulating, organizing, evaluating, and interpreting the collected data. Quantitative data from both pre-intervention and post-intervention assessments were thoroughly analyzed using Content Analysis to determine the changes in the average action research scores before and after the intervention.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher followed some ethical considerations in this action research. The main goal of this research was honesty in stating only the facts and results of the gathered data. The researcher will sought permission from the school head conducted the study and a consent form from the parents of the respondents to fully inform them as to the goals and objectives of the research. The confidentiality of the research participants was considered.

It was made clear to the respondents/participants that their participation in this study was voluntary and that they were not compelled to participate should they believe it detrimental to their interest. Furthermore, the respondents/participants were informed that the research was conducted solely for academic purposes and the data gathered from them should be exclusively used for such purposes.

The researcher ensured the confidentiality of the gathered data relative to the personal information of the respondents/participants of this study and should not be disclosed to the public at any cause. This could be guaranteed by the following activities: The sheet containing the name of the respondents should be removed and be kept or destroyed when no longer needed for research. The researcher should have sole access to the code's master list. Files containing research data should be protected to keep the data safe.

Discussion of Results and Reflection

This chapter presented the data gathered from the pre-assessment and post-assessment of the study participants, both in tabular and textual formats. The data were subjected to appropriate statistical tests for analysis and interpretation to address the research questions. Additionally, this chapter included reflection on the implementation of the study's intervention, both during and after its implementation.

Table 1

Pre-Test Results on Punctuation Skills Using Sentence Strips, Editing Checklist, and Error Analysis

Participants	Sentence Strips (Punctuation Focus) 24 points	Editing Checklist (Punctuation) 24 points	Error Analysis (Identification) 24 points	Average
1	18	19	18	76.38
2	15	18	19	72.22
3	17	17	15	68.05
4	18	17	16	70.83
5	18	19	18	76.38

The pre-test results revealed that participants demonstrated a basic understanding of punctuation, with average scores ranging from 68.05% to 76.38%. In the Sentence Strips component, scores ranged from 15 to 18, indicated that while some students showed a fair grasp of sentence structure and punctuation used, others had difficulty applying the rules consistently. The Editing Checklist results were slightly higher, with most participants scoring between 17 and 19, suggesting moderate ability in self-assessing punctuation use, though not at a proficient level. Error Analysis scores were varied, with a range of 15 to 19, showing inconsistency in recognizing and explaining punctuation errors. Overall, these results suggested that while students have a foundational awareness of punctuation, they needed targeted instruction and practice to improve accuracy and confidence in applying punctuation rules across different writing tasks.

Khan (2016:27) stated that punctuation is important because it can provide understanding for the reader to understand the meaning contained in the writing without looking at the expression of the person writing the text. This was supported by Yun Ginting (2018:338-344) whose aim is to provide an understanding to the reader in interpreting the structure clearly and distinguishing sentences in writing.

Table 2

Post-Test Results on Punctuation Skills Using Sentence Strips, Editing Checklist, and Error Analysis

Participants	Sentence Strips (Punctuation Focus) 24 points	Editing Checklist (Punctuation) 24 points	Error Analysis (Identification) 24 points	Average
1	24	24	24	100
2	24	23	24	98.61
3	23	24	24	98.61
4	24	24	23	98.61
5	24	24	23	98.61

The post-test results indicated a significant improvement in the participants' punctuation skills, with average scores ranging from 98.61% to 100%. All participants demonstrated a high level of accuracy in the Sentence Strips activity, with most achieving perfect scores, reflecting a strong grasp of sentence structure and punctuation placement. The Editing Checklist component also showed excellent performance, with scores of 23 and 24, suggesting that students developed a consistent ability to self-assess and correct punctuation errors effectively. In the Error Analysis section, scores remained high, indicating that participants were able to accurately identify and explain punctuation mistakes. Overall, the data suggested that the intervention was highly effective in enhancing the participants' understanding and application of punctuation rules.

According to Harmer (2004), punctuation is an important and correct skill for many people and supported by Suliman and Ben (2019) find that the benefits of punctuation are important in writing. Punctuation marks provide written structure, intonation, and pauses during reading. Punctuation marks are used to provide the right sentence to convey. In writing, punctuation is the part important component in the structure of writing, sentences, and words.

Conclusion

The findings of this study clearly demonstrated that the implemented intervention was highly effective in improving participants' punctuation skills. Participants exhibited strong competence in the Sentence Strips activity, as evidenced by the high rate of perfect scores. This suggested that learners developed a solid understanding of sentence structure and accurate punctuation placement. Furthermore, the strong performance in the Editing Checklist component reflected the participants' ability to independently self-assess and systematically correct punctuation errors, highlighting growth not only in knowledge but also in metacognitive skills. The consistently high scores in the Error Analysis section further confirmed that learners were able to accurately identify, analyze, and explain punctuation mistakes. This demonstrates deeper comprehension beyond surface-level application, indicating that students internalized punctuation rules and could apply them critically. Lastly, the intervention greatly improved students' knowledge and use of punctuation. The consistent high performance shows that the strategy helped increase accuracy, confidence, and independent editing skills. This approach is recommended for future use to maintain and repeat these positive results.

Reflection

The SEE (Sentence Strips, Editing Checklist, and Error Analysis) approach was created because there was a need to improve punctuation skills among Grade 10 students. During the program, 5 out of 40 students struggled with basic punctuation, which affected their writing and made it harder to understand. The SEE method broke punctuation into smaller, easier tasks, giving students a clear and organized way to work through their challenges.

Sentence Strips helped students see how sentences are built and how punctuation fits into them. It encouraged them to get involved and try placing punctuation in the right spots, which helped them understand how punctuation affects the meaning and clarity of a sentence. The Editing Checklist gave students a way to check their own writing for punctuation mistakes, helping them take responsibility for their learning. The Error Analysis part helped students find specific punctuation mistakes and understand why they happened, making it easier to remember the rules and use them correctly in the future.

Looking back at how SEE was used, it was clear that students became more confident in their punctuation skills. They were better at finding and fixing errors, and their writing became clearer and easier to read. The success of this method shows how useful focused, hands-on activities like SEE are for helping students with specific areas they struggle in. This approach not only improved their understanding of punctuation but also helped them become more independent and thoughtful learners, skills that will help them in their future studies.

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