

# Enhancing Writing Competence: An Analysis of the Writing Strategies Employed by Grade 7 Students

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## ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the writing strategies employed by Grade 7 students to enhance their writing competence. Utilizing a descriptive research approach, the study assessed the proficiency levels of sixty (60) students in specific writing strategies: clustering, outlining, journal writing, and diary writing. The results revealed that students demonstrated "Excellent" competence in clustering (78.33%) and journal writing (40%), "Very Good" competence in diary writing (41.67%), and "Good" competence in outlining (58.33%). The study concludes that while students are highly proficient in creative and reflective strategies, there is room for improvement in structural strategies like outlining. Recommendations include integrating these

strategies across the curriculum and providing advanced activities for high-performing students.

**Keywords:** *Writing competence; Writing strategies; Clustering; Outlining; Journal writing; Diary writing; Grade 7 students.*

## INTRODUCTION

Writing is a sophisticated and fundamental skill that transcends basic communication; it is a complex, communal act that leverages linguistic symbols to articulate premeditated and meaningful messages (Akinwamide, 2012). As a multi-dimensional ability, it necessitates the seamless integration of grammatical precision, expansive vocabulary, and rhetorical flair, while remaining deeply intertwined with THE receptive and productive domains of listening, speaking, and reading (Chitravelu et al., 2005). Within the Philippine educational landscape, writing remains one of the most persistent pedagogical challenges, often viewed by learners as a daunting and puzzling task (Guinto & Figueroa, 2017). Because writing is a skill refined through consistent practice rather than passive discourse, the English teacher must evolve from a traditional lecturer into an enabler and facilitator, one who empowers students by deploying targeted cognitive and metacognitive tools such as clustering, outlining, journal writing, and diary writing (Kellogg, 2008).

Despite the established importance of these techniques, a significant research gap exists regarding their specific application among Grade 7 learners in localized settings. While general writing difficulties are well-documented, there is a lack of empirical evidence specifically analyzing how the interplay between creative strategies (like clustering) and structural strategies (like outlining) affects the foundational competence of students at the beginning of their junior high school journey. Most existing literature focuses on higher academic tiers, leaving the early developmental stages of strategy acquisition under-examined. This study sought to bridge that gap by rigorously assessing the proficiency levels of Grade 7 students at

Dr. Aurelio Mendoza Memorial Colleges (AMMC). By recognizing specific areas of mastery and deficiency, this research provides the necessary empirical basis for educators to design innovative, data-driven instructional frameworks that transform writing from a source of frustration into a meaningful and effective medium of expression.

## METHODS

This study utilized a descriptive research design to provide a comprehensive assessment of writing strategies among students at Dr. Aurelio Mendoza Memorial Colleges (AMMC). The participants included sixty (60) Grade 7 learners, consisting of thirty-two (32) females and twenty-eight (28) males, selected through purposive sampling to ensure the group met the specific criteria necessary for analyzing beginner-level writing competence. To evaluate these competencies, the study employed standard questionnaires and tests adapted from recognized authorities in the field: Melanie Dawson and Joe Essid for Clustering, Dennis Doyle for Outlining, Nicole Williams for Journal Writing, and Suzanne Williams for Diary Writing.

The data gathered were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages to establish clear proficiency levels across the four domains. The results identified Clustering as the most effectively employed strategy, with 78.33% of students achieving an "Excellent" rating, highlighting a significant strength in visual brainstorming and concept unification. While the students also demonstrated strong capabilities in Journal Writing (40% "Excellent") and Diary Writing (41.67% "Very Good"), Outlining emerged as the primary area for improvement, with 58.33% of the participants rated as "Good." This suggested that while learners at Dr. Aurelio Mendoza Memorial Colleges (AMMC) excel in creative and reflective expression, they require further instructional focus to master the logical hierarchy and structural exactness demanded by formal outlining.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study yielded significant findings regarding the four writing strategies assessed. The findings from this study highlight a clear hierarchy in the writing competencies of Grade 7 students across four specific strategies, with Clustering emerging as the most effectively employed method. A substantial majority of 78.33% achieved an "Excellent" rating in this area, demonstrating that students possess a strong talent for visually unifying concepts and artistic brainstorming. Similarly, students showed a natural affinity for personal expression through reflective writing; 40% reached an "Excellent" level in Journal Writing, while 41.67% were rated as "Very Good" in Diary Writing, indicating that these learners are highly capable of documenting their daily experiences and internal reflections.

In contrast, the study identifies a significant performance gap when transitioning from creative to structural tasks, particularly in Outlining. This strategy presented the greatest challenge to the group, with the majority of students (58.33%) falling into the "Good" category and a mere 5% reaching "Very Good." This disparity suggests that while students are proficient in fluid, stream-of-consciousness techniques, the rigid organizational demands of outlining which require exactness and logical hierarchy remain a primary developmental hurdle. Consequently, although clustering remains the most successfully utilized strategy for generating ideas, students require more targeted instructional support to master the formal organization of those thoughts into structured formats

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The exploration of writing strategies among Grade 7 students reveals a high level of proficiency in creative and reflective techniques, with students achieving "Excellent" marks in clustering and journal writing and a "Very Good" standing in diary writing. While their "Good" performance in outlining indicates a specific need for enhanced focus on structural organization, the overall results underscore the necessity of integrating these strategies across all high school levels to ensure curricular continuity. To support this growth, educators should implement differentiated instruction providing remedial drills for those who struggle while offering advanced challenges for high-performers and consistently apply these methods in the classroom to transform writing into an entertaining, meaningful, and deeply integrated academic experience.

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