

**EFFECTIVENESS OF ACTIVITY ORIENTED INSTRUCTIONAL
STRATEGY ON WRITING SKILLS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS**

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to investigate the effectiveness of activity oriented instructional strategy on writing skills of elementary school students. The total sample for the study comprised of 76 students (39 students in Experimental Group and 37 in Control Group) of class V of Shivalik Public School, Sector- 41-B, Chandigarh. The tools used for the present study were Writing Skills Test and Activities designed by the investigators. The statistical techniques employed for the analysis of the data were mean, standard deviation, skewness, kurtosis and t-test. In addition to this, the students in the experimental group taught through activity oriented instructional strategy outperformed the students in the control group taught through conventional method of instruction. Keeping in consideration the findings of the study, the investigators highly recommended the incorporation of Activity Oriented Instruction in teaching learning process for better learning.

Keywords

Writing Skills
Elementary School Students
Activity Oriented Instructional Strategy
Conventional Method of Instruction

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Introduction

English language is used globally for communication purposes and it serves the purpose of link language in most of the multi- lingual countries. It has emerged as one of the global languages which rules as the language of almost all the sectors in the world be it trade and commerce, higher education, employment and travel and tourism. In the modern literate society, it is essential for every person to be fluent in English and its four skills. In order to master English language, it is essential to learn all the basic skills of English language viz-a-viz listening, speaking, reading and writing. Writing skill is the visual productive skill which gives expression to the thoughts and feelings of the writer. It emphasizes on beauty, clarity, proficiency and accuracy. It is structured way of presenting the thoughts and involves conversion of thought process into structured sentences. It has eight sub- skills i.e. mechanics (handwriting, spelling, punctuation); word choice (vocabulary, idiom, tone); organisation (paragraphs); topic, support cohesion and unity); syntax (sentence structure, sentence boundaries and stylistic choices); grammar (rules for verb agreement, articles, pronoun, etc.); content (relevance, clarity, originality, logic); the writing process (getting ideas, getting started, writing drafts, revising) and purpose (the reason for writing and justification).

Writing is not a mere production of words rather to be efficient in writing skill; one should be capable of producing connected series of grammatically and logically linked words and sentences. For the purpose of communication, learning and self- expression; writing proves to be an essential tool. A basic competence in written language is required today almost in every job. Writing proves to be a medium for checking the knowledge of the learner and also a mode which facilitates the teachers or instructors to establish the extent and nature of understanding of the subject matter by the students (**Maclellan, 2004, p. 75**). It is considered to be the most difficult among all the four skills. Students are able to effectively hear and understand the spoken language but when it comes to writing the same content, the students find it very difficult to express the same ideas.

Writing skills are a pre- requisite for the success of the students, since the basic requirement in almost all the academic subjects is the proficiency in writing. It serves as a medium for the students for the demonstration of their content mastery or knowledge in academic areas. For academic progress, writing is crucial from kindergarten to higher education as well as success in vocational field. So, problems in writing can act as a hindrance in education, employment and other pursuits of life (**Graham, 2006**).

Gagne et. al. (1993) reported that “writing is a highly complex activity with many component processes...requiring the acquisition of both declarative and procedural knowledge and a conceptual understanding of the nature and purpose of writing” (p. 314-15).

Being difficult; it is usually neglected both on the part of the teachers as well as the students. But it is very important to teach this skill along with the other language skills of English. The students usually try to ignore

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this skill as they find it too difficult and complicated. So it is the responsibility of the teachers to use innovative techniques for making the teaching of writing skills interesting in the classroom environment. Nowadays there are a number of instructional strategies like problem solving, concept mapping, drill and practise, concept mapping, brain storming, co-operative, computer assisted, conventional strategy, multimedia instructional strategy, activity oriented instructional strategy and many more which provide for conducive teaching learning environment which facilitates learning. In the present study the investigators have used the activity oriented instructional strategy for improving the writing skills of the students. The teachers should use this strategy for making the teaching of writing skill interesting for the students so that they learn better.

Activity oriented instructional strategy is the strategy which focuses on use of activities and creating such learning environment which facilitates the learners to be active learners who learn by doing and not by just sitting and listening to the lectures delivered by the teacher in the classroom. In this strategy, the students play the role of the active learners and teachers just guide them and help in the completion of the tasks assigned. It requires learning to be a fun activity based on some activities and hands- on experiments. It is learning by doing and not learning by mere listening. While doing the activities, all the senses of the students are involved, their interest enhanced and they feel motivated to participate in the act. This aids the learning process. The best learning takes place when students gain knowledge by means of exploration and active learning. Instead of text-books, hands- on material is used for teaching and the students are motivated to explore, think rationally, logically and critically.

Various types of activities like Collaborative/ cooperative learning, Problem - based learning Case method, jigsaw learning, Course projects, Simulations and technology can be used by the teachers to aid teaching learning process. When the students learn through games and activities, the understanding as well retention increases. Activity oriented instructional strategy has many benefits and few of these are as follows:

- It is learning by doing and the students learn better when they get involved in the teaching learning process.
- It enhances the understanding of the concepts as the students perform the tasks themselves.
- It encourages the students to use their knowledge and ideas in finding solution to the problems and thus develops problem solving skill in them.
- It helps the learner on the psychological grounds as the student can express his emotions while actively participating in the activities.

So the teachers should incorporate various activities in order to improve the understanding and learning in the classrooms.

The initial years of schooling are considered to be best time for teaching of basics to the students as during these years students are like empty vessels which can be filled with the right amount of knowledge and this knowledge will remain with them for the rest of their lives. Keeping this in mind, it was decided by the investigators to select elementary school students as the sample of the study. In India, elementary school students are the students studying in classes I to VIII. So, the investigators decided to carry out the research work on class V.

Rationale of the Study

A close analysis of literature shows that many researchers like **Raval (2001)**, **Ramamoorthy (2006)**, **Thongwad (2011)** have used games to teach grammar, oral communication, speaking proficiency; **Whitney (2002)**, **Uddin (2009)**, **Shaw (2009)**, **Mothe (2013)** have used various activities for improving the vocabulary of the students. But the focus of all these research studies was improvement of one or other sub skills of writing skills and not the writing skill as a whole. All these have focussed on narrow aspects of the writing skills. In addition to this, majority of the studies were conducted on college students or higher classes and only few have been conducted on elementary school students.

In addition to this, **Nambiar (2006) & Mohanty (2012)** used intervention; **Nandha (2009)** used communicative tasks; **Nijeesh (2014)** used semantic mapping strategy; **Wangchuk (2014)** used Folk Literature; **Jazeel (2015)** used ICT-enabled instructional strategy; **Patel (2016)** used co-operative language learning (CLL); **Swathi (2016)** used Differentiated Instruction; **Thenmozhi (2015) & Himangani (2017)** used package; **Tomy (2017)** used biography; **Vijayakumar (2017)** used multimedia supported process approach; **Sankar (2017)** used communicative tasks; and **Sangamitra (2018)** used process approach to enhance the writing skills of the students in India. Majority of the studies reflected on the use of strategies other than the activity oriented instructional strategy for improving the writing skills of the students.

So keeping into consideration the importance of the writing skills in modern literate society and also the studies conducted in the past, the investigators were motivated to take up the present study and investigate the effectiveness of the activity oriented instructional strategy on the writing skills of the elementary school students.

Review of literature

Thongwad (2011) conducted a study on a sample of nine students (average age 19 years) in provincial Thailand to investigate the effect of communicative activities, information- gap and role play in developing the speaking proficiency of students in English in an EFL classroom. The findings of the study revealed that a high correlation was found between the participation in the activities and progress in speaking proficiency in relation to a range of factors.

Mubaslat (2012) conducted a study to investigate the effects of using educational games on the students' achievement in English language at the primary stage. The findings of the study revealed that the games had a positive impact on the improvement of the achievement and also led to an increased motivation and attention of the students.

Kadel (2013) conducted a study on a sample of 25 students of class IX to investigate the effectiveness of task-based language teaching in developing writing skills at the secondary level in Nepal. The findings of the study revealed that the use of TBLT proved to be beneficial in the development of writing skills of the students. There was a considerable improvement in all the components of the writing skills i.e. content, organisation, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics.

Ashraf et al (2014) conducted a study to investigate the effect of online games on Iranian EFL learners' vocabulary learning. They found that "online games, due to creating an interactive and motivating context where learners can easily and subconsciously share their information, and also due to the requirements and obligations encountered by them during playing, are effective in vocabulary acquisition. The subjects acquire the new words via the games because they are willing to be the winner. They compete and cooperate with each other in an enjoyable environment".

Latha (2015) conducted a study on a sample of 61 first year students (aged between 16 and 17 years) to investigate the efficacy of using communicative grammar games on teaching verb tenses to students at the tertiary level. The findings of the study revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group and post test mean scores of the experimental group was 75.0 which was more than that of the control group (71.0).

Sharma (2016) conducted a study on a sample of 60 students of class VIII to study the teaching of English writing skills through cartoons. The findings of the study revealed that usage of the cartoons led to enhancement in the writing skills of the students.

Jahan (2017) conducted a study on a sample of 50 students aged between 17- 18 years of Dhaka to investigate the use of music as an effective medium of teaching vocabulary in EFL classroom. The experimental group outperformed the control group by performing better in acquisition and remembering of vocabulary.

Barai (2018) conducted a study on a sample of 200 students of class IX in Alipurduar District of West Bengal to investigate the effectiveness of learning physical science through activity based methods at secondary level. The findings of the study revealed that the students in the experimental group taught through activity based learning methods performed better than the students of the control group taught through traditional method of instruction.

Objectives

The objective of the present study is: To assess the development/ improvement of writing skills of elementary school students through activity oriented instructional strategy.

Research Hypotheses

"There will be significant difference between experimental group (taught through activity oriented instructional strategy) and control group (taught through conventional method of instruction) with regard to development in the writing skills of the elementary school students".

Design of the study

Pre-test, post-test experimental and control group design has been used in the present study. Quasi experimental design was used in which intact classes were selected for the study. The groups were assessed before and after

the treatment using Writing Skills Test. The experimental group was given intervention through activity oriented instructional strategy and the control group was taught through conventional method of instruction.

Sample

A total of 76 students (39 students in the experimental group and 37 students in control group) of class V were selected from Shivalik Public School, Sector 41- B, Chandigarh.

Tools Used

The following tools were used by the investigator in the present study:

1. Writing Skills Test (self- developed).
2. Activities for classroom teaching (self- developed).

Procedure of the Study

Phase I (Pre- testing Stage)

Writing Skills Test was administered as Pre- test on both the experimental and the control group during the first phase.

Phase II (Intervention)

The second phase involved teaching experimental group through activity oriented instructional strategy and control group through conventional method of instruction.

Phase III (Post- testing Stage)

The third phase involved the administration of the Writing Skills Test (same as used for Pre- test) as the Post – test on both the experimental and the control group.

Table 1. Procedure of the study

S. No.	Phase	Experimental Group	Control Group
1	Pre- testing	Test for Writing Skills	Test for Writing Skills
2	Intervention	Instruction through Activity Oriented Instructional Strategy	No Intervention. Instruction through Conventional Method of Instruction
3	Post- testing	Test for Writing Skills	Test for Writing Skills

Statistical Techniques Employed

Descriptive statistical techniques like mean, median, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis were employed to know the nature of distribution. Inferential statistical technique of t- test was employed to find the significant difference between means of the experimental and the control group. Graphical representation was used wherever necessary.

Analysis and Interpretation of the Data

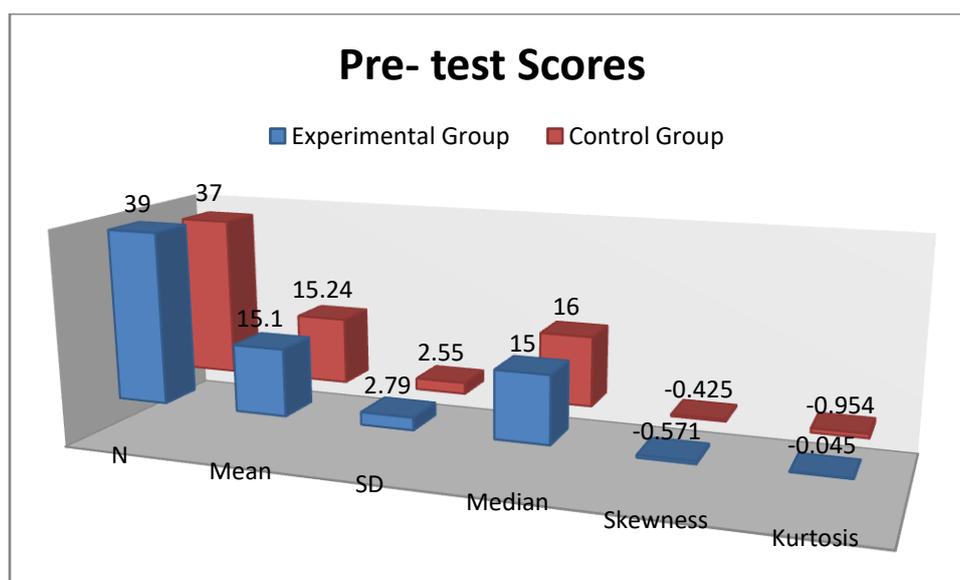
I. Descriptive Analysis

In order to see the nature of distribution at the pre- test and post- test stage, descriptive statistics like mean, median, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis were calculated. The following table depicts the values for the same:

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics (Mean, Median, SD, S_K , K_u) of Pre- test Scores of Experimental Group (taught through Activity Oriented Instructional Strategy) and Control Group (taught through Conventional Method of Instruction)

Group	Pre- test Scores					
	N	Mean	SD	Median	Skewness	Kurtosis
Experimental Group	39	15.10	2.79	15.00	-0.571	-0.045
Control Group	37	15.24	2.55	16.00	-0.425	-0.954

Fig. 1. Descriptive Analysis of Pre- test Scores of Experimental Group and Control Group



Following information is provided by Table 2 and Fig. 1:

For Experimental Group:

The value of mean, median, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis is 15.10, 15.00 2.79, -0.571 and -0.045 respectively. It shows that the distribution is negatively skewed which means that there were many individuals in this group whose score was higher than the average score of the group and slightly platykurtic (more flat at the top).

The value of skewness lies within the normal range of ± 1 , so the distribution is normal.

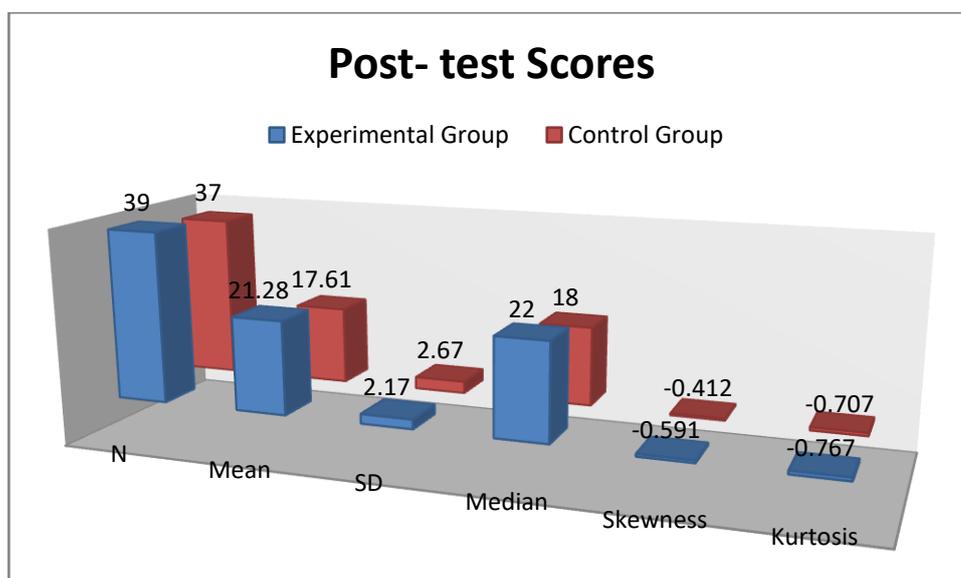
For Control Group:

The value of mean, median, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis is 15.24, 16.00, 2.55, -0.425 and -0.954 respectively. It shows that the distribution is negatively skewed (means that there were many individuals in this group whose score was higher than the average score of the group) and slightly platykurtic (more flat at the top). The value of skewness also lies between the range of normalcy i.e. ± 1 . It implies that the distribution is almost normal for the control Group.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics (Mean, Median, SD, S_K , K_w) of Post- test Scores of Experimental Group (taught through Activity Oriented Instructional Strategy) and Control Group (taught through Conventional Method of Instruction)

Group	Post- test Scores					
	N	Mean	SD	Median	Skewness	Kurtosis
Experimental Group	39	21.28	2.17	22.00	-0.591	-0.767
Control Group	37	17.61	2.67	18.00	-0.412	-0.707

Fig. 2. Descriptive Analysis of Post- test Scores of Experimental Group and Control Group



Following information is provided by Table 3 and Fig. 2:

For Experimental Group:

The value of mean, median, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis is 21.28, 22.00, 2.17, -0.591 and -0.767 respectively. It shows that the distribution is negatively skewed which means that there were many individuals in this group whose score was higher than the average score of the group and slightly platykurtic (more flat at the top). The value of skewness lies within the normalcy range of ± 1 which implies that the distribution is almost normal.

For Control Group:

The value of mean, median, standard deviation, skewness and kurtosis is 17.61, 18.00, 2.67, -0.412 and -0.707 respectively. It shows that the distribution is negatively skewed which means that there were many individuals in this group whose score was higher than the average score of the group and slightly platykurtic (more flat at the top). The value of skewness lies within the normalcy range of ± 1 which implies that the distribution is almost normal.

II. INFERENCE ANALYSIS: TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

Research Hypothesis. There will be significant difference between experimental group (taught through activity oriented instructional strategy) and control group (taught through conventional method of instruction) with regard to development in the writing skills of the elementary school students.

To test the research hypothesis “There will be significant difference between experimental group (taught through activity oriented instructional strategy) and control group (taught through conventional method of instruction) with regard to development in the writing skills of the elementary school students”, the alternate null hypothesis “There will be no significant difference between experimental group (taught through activity oriented instructional strategy) and control group (taught through conventional method of instruction) with regard to development in the writing skills of the elementary school students” has been formulated.

Table 4. t- values for Experimental Group (taught through Activity Oriented Instructional Strategy) and Control Group (taught through Conventional Method of Instruction)

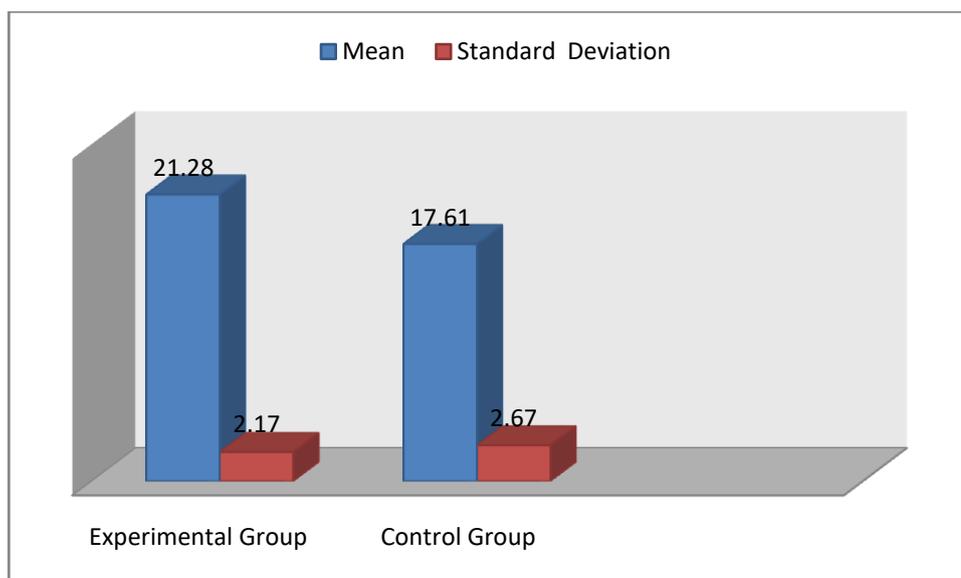
Groups	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t- value	p- value	Remarks
Experimental Group	39	21.28	2.17	6.59**	.000	Significant
Control Group	37	17.61	2.67			

$$df = n_1 + n_2 - 2$$

**Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance

Table value:

at 0.05 = 2.00; at 0.01 = 2.65(df = 74)

Fig. 3. Post- test Mean scores and standard deviation of Experimental Group and Control group

From table 4 and Fig. 3, it is quite evident that t- value for post- test scores of writing skills is 6.59 which is significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels of significance. It means that the alternate null hypothesis “There will be no significant difference between experimental group (taught through activity oriented instructional strategy) and control group (taught through conventional method of instruction) with regard to development in the writing skills of the elementary school students” is rejected and the research hypothesis i.e. “There will be significant difference between experimental group (taught through activity oriented instructional strategy) and control group (taught through conventional method of instruction) with regard to development in the writing skills of the elementary school students” is accepted. It implies that the significant difference between the means is real and is in favour of Experimental Group as the post- test mean scores of Experimental Group (21.28) is greater than the post- test mean scores (17.61) of the Control Group. So it can be inferred that the activity oriented instructional strategy used by the researcher has enhanced the writing skills of the elementary school students. The activity oriented instructional strategy proved to be beneficial in comparison to conventional method of instruction in enhancing the writing skills of the students.

As per the above interpretation of the results, it is found that there is significant difference between the post- test mean scores of experimental and control group. During the intervention, it was observed that the students in the experimental group actively participated in the teaching learning process, were highly interested, motivated to learn and were able to easily grasp the concepts. That might be the reasons for significant difference in the post- test mean scores of the experimental and the control group.

The results of the present study is evidenced by the research studies of **Pati and Behera (2011)**, **Mubaslat (2012)**, **Lakshmi (2012)**, **Mothe (2013)**, **Sasikala (2014)**, **Ashraf et al (2014)**, **Ajmeri (2015)**, **Cosgun (2016)**, **Jahanshahi (2017)**, **Rajeswaran (2017)**, **Alnabulsi (2018)** and **Omachonu (2018)** which showed the significant effect of various games, activities and tasks on the achievement of the students.

Conclusion

The results of the present study depict the benefits of using activity oriented instructional strategy in teaching learning process. The teachers should start using various activities for promotion of better teaching and learning. The school administration should encourage the teachers as well as the students to incorporate more and more of activities in learning. The increased use of activities and hands- on material for teaching can result in improved understanding and learning on the part of the students as they will enjoy while learning through activities and games.

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