



**TEACHING AND LEARNING ENGLISH ESSAYS IN A BARANGAY
HIGH SCHOOL: INSTRUCTIONAL CHALLENGES AND COPING
STRATEGIES AS BASES FOR WRITING WORKSHOP**

KAREN PEARL S. FAYO

Customer Service Representative (CSR)

Sagility Philippines, Inc.

kaso.fayo.ui@phinmaed.com

ABSTRACT

This qualitative study was conducted to find out the teaching and learning of English essays and their instructional and coping strategies among the four (4) Junior High School English teachers and twelve (12) Junior High School learners as bases for writing workshop. Results revealed that the instructional challenges as observed by the English teachers were: poor learner's comprehension, spelling, and vocabulary, learner engagement issues, and difficulty in correcting learners' output; while those as experienced by the learners were: grammar, spelling, and vocabulary; logical organization of ideas; and difficulty in essay format and mechanics. The coping strategies that were employed by the English teachers were: use of activity sheets and exercises on spelling, vocabulary, and writing, use of context clues to unlock the unfamiliar words, give home reading assignments and guided practice, while those as manifested by the learners were: asking help from teachers and peers, use of website and digital applications, compiled words and used them for writing, and planning and organizing of ideas before writing.

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Keywords: *Teaching and Learning English Essays, Instructional Challenges and Coping*

Strategies, Bases for Writing Workshop

INTRODUCTION

Essay writing plays an essential role in learning English. One way to enhance students' creativity and cognitive skills is by making them write. Essay examinations are given not just to test grammar and sentence formation but to evaluate students' abilities to comprehend and write their ideas coherently. In some countries, writing is the basis of determining the students' proficiency in any language. Writing an English essay can be one of the hardest things to teach to learners, especially in the barangay areas. Compared to urban schools, most schools in the barangays have different settings that may affect the way students learn. Teachers in these contexts face multiple challenges in guiding students to become confident writers. Limited instructional materials, insufficient writing practice, and the need to balance multiple responsibilities can make it difficult for teachers to provide the feedback and support that students require.

Vance (2024) highlights that English proficiency is integral to assessing global opportunities, particularly in business, science, and academia. These findings reinforce the significance of English in facilitating international communication and educational advancement. Also, English is vital as it helps people to communicate effectively and internationally with one another either orally or in written mode.

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In writing, English has been a challenge nowadays; limited learning resources, big student capacity, lack of technology, and students with little to no exposure to the English language are common. These conditions may lead students to perform poorly and lack confidence while writing paragraphed texts. Rural teachers also have students with different learning capabilities under these circumstances.

Learning about these constraints and strategies can help teachers uncover practical solutions that may be beneficial in creating a writing workshop that accommodates English teachers and learners. Moreover, students in rural communities may experience language barriers due to the dominance of their mother tongue in daily communication. This situation can result in difficulties in vocabulary development, grammar usage, and idea organization when writing essays in English. As a result, many learners struggle to express their thoughts clearly and logically, thus leading to low motivation and performance in writing tasks. These challenges highlight the need for effective and context-appropriate instructional approaches suited to the needs of English teachers and learners in barangay schools.

In addition, Rosayda and Apoko (2023), assert that vocabulary mastery such as spelling and determination of word meanings were the learners' weaknesses.

The researcher has been observing that some of the learners' vocabulary are not sufficient enough to express their ideas and thoughts in writing essays. She, then, believes that poor vocabulary can affect learners' performance in writing essays. Researchers' observations need scientific data for support, the reason why, the researcher conducted this

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study on teaching and learning English essays and the instructional challenges and coping strategies among the Junior English teachers and learners.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter introduces the underlying processes of the phenomenological research methodology as well as discusses the parts, specifically the research instrument, research design, research method, participants in the study, sampling design, validity of the research instrument, and data analyses.

Research Methods

The study utilized a qualitative research design using in-depth interviews. Through open-ended interview questions, and verbally stated observations, a greaterbody of knowledge on the effects of the writing workshop on the effectiveness of English teachers at Jamabalud National High School, District of Pototan, Province of Iloilo, was sought.

According to Negou Ernest, et al. (2023), a qualitative research approach is effective in obtaining in-depth information about individuals' beliefs, attitudes, actions, experiences, and the social contexts in which they operate. An in-depth interview goes beyond simple questioning and allows participants to share their perspectives and experiences more fully. In this study, the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with the participants. However, due to the number of participants, the interview questions were provided in written form, and the participants were asked to write their responses. This approach allowed the researcher to gather rich and meaningful insights into the participants' views and lived experiences.

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Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach. This method was chosen to gain a deeper understanding of the participants' lived experiences in teaching and learning English essay writing. Phenomenology focuses on exploring the shared meanings and perceptions of individuals who have experienced the same phenomenon (Fundal, 2021). As emphasized by Koster and Fernandez (2023), phenomenology seeks to examine experiences as they are lived and understood through human consciousness.

Participants in the Study

The participants in the study were the total population of four (4) Junior High School English teachers and twelve (12) Junior High School learners from Jamabalud National High School for school year 2025-2026.

The process of choosing the participants was conducted on the basis of the strategy referred to as purposeful sampling.

The study focused on teachers and learners who met the following criteria: they were English teachers teaching the subject and they were learners who were enrolled for school-year 2025-2026.

In order to observe fairness and confidentiality, the researcher identified the Junior High School English teachers as Participants 1, 2, 3, and 4. The Junior High School learners, on the other hand, were identified as Participants 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12.

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Sampling Design

The researcher employed purposive sampling in selecting the learners as the participants in the study. This technique is commonly used in qualitative research to identify and choose information-rich cases, thereby allowing for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2002 in Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025). Purposive sampling involves selecting individuals or groups who possess specific knowledge or experience related to the phenomenon under study. In this research, four (4) Junior High School English teachers and twelve (12) Junior High School learners were intentionally selected.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument used in this study was a researcher-developed interview guide. This instrument was reviewed and validated by a panel of experts to ensure its relevance and appropriateness. It was a 2-item questionnaire that allowed the participants to reveal freely their challenges and strategies.

The interview guide was given to the four Junior High School English teachers and twelve Junior High School learners. Right after answering the questionnaire, they notified the researcher and gave back the answered forms.

Validity of the Research Instrument

The interview guide developed by the researcher was forwarded to the adviser for evaluation and modification. After incorporating the necessary corrections, the revised guide was forwarded to a panel of experts for content-and-face validation. The guide was deemed valid after it had been reviewed by the panel. The revisions suggested by the panel were

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made, and all their feedback were incorporated. The final draft was resubmitted to the panel for approval.

Data-gathering Procedures

The researcher secured a permit to conduct the study from the dean of the Graduate School of the University of Iloilo. Then, she asked permission from the principal of Jamabalud National High School, in the District of Pototan, Province of Iloilo.

Once the permissions were granted, the researcher proceeded with scheduling the interviews at times most convenient for the participants to minimize disruption in their teaching responsibilities. A formal invitation, including the purpose of the study, the scope of the interviews, and the estimated duration was sent to the participants in advance. The participants were gathered in one room and the researcher conducted an orientation before they answered the interview guide.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face to ensure a more personal and detailed exchange of information. Each interview was expected to last between 25 to 30 minutes, depending on the depth of the responses.

During the interview, the researcher followed a semi structured format using prepared researcher-made interview guide questions. This approach allowed flexibility for the participants to elaborate on their experiences while ensuring that all necessary topics would be covered.

When the written responses were completed, the researcher gathered them and consolidate all the information. Then the responses were thematically analyzed.

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Data Analyses

Thematic Analyses is a widely used technique for recognizing, examining, and understanding recurring themes within qualitative information. It involves six key steps to ensure a systematic and thorough approach. The first step is familiarization, where the researcher delves himself/herself into the data, thoroughly examining and revisiting it to develop a comprehensive grasp. Next is coding, which involves generating concise labels or codes for significant features of the data. These codes capture important details that relate to the research questions. The third step is searching for themes, where the researcher groups the codes into broader themes that represent patterns of meaning. This is followed by reviewing themes, during which the researcher adjusts and fine-tunes the themes to ensure they truly represent the information gathered. During the fifth phase, which involves defining and labeling themes, the researcher explicitly clarifies the meaning and significance of each theme and develops a coherent narrative for each. Finally, in writing the report, the researcher integrates the themes into a compelling and organized report, supported by relevant examples from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This study aimed at identifying the teaching and learning of English Essays in a barangay school and its instructional challenges and coping strategies as bases for writing workshop. By asserting the collective opinions and perspectives of the participants, the study

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aimed at discovering the key concepts that can help the structure and implementation of the writing workshop for teachers and learners during the school year 2025-2026.

The participants in the study were the four (4) Junior High School English teachers and twelve (12) Junior High School English learners in a barangay school in the Municipality of Pototan during the school year 2025-2026.

The research instruments utilized in the study was a researcher-made interview guide and documentation during the interview proper.

A panel of experts validated the interview schedule. All comments and suggestions related to the validation of the tool were considered and implemented.

The results of the study brought to light the findings concerning the teaching and learning English essays in a barangay school and its instructional challenges and coping strategies as bases for writing workshop at Jamabalud National High School during the school year 2025-2026.

The instructional challenges of the teachers included their poor learner's comprehension, spelling, and vocabulary, learner engagement issues, difficulty in correcting learner's output. On the other hand, the learners instructional challenges included grammar, spelling, and vocabulary, logical organization of ideas, and difficulty in developing essay format and mechanics.

The coping strategies of the teachers included giving of learning activity sheets and exercises on spelling , vocabulary, and writing, use of context clues to unlock meaning of words, giving home reading assignments and guided practice, while the coping strategies of

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the learners included asking help from teachers and peers, use of website and digital applications, compiled words and used them for essay writing, and planning and organizing ideas before writing.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following insights were drawn:

The insights drawn from these observations emphasized that both teachers and learners encounter interconnected challenges in the teaching and learning of English essay writing. Teachers observe that students struggle with comprehension, vocabulary, and engagement, which in turn make it difficult to guide them effectively and provide corrections. On the other hand, learners themselves recognize issues in grammar, spelling, and organizing their ideas, as well as understanding proper essay structure. These overlapping difficulties highlight a gap between instruction and student readiness, where foundational language skills and critical thinking need further strengthening before students can fully meet writing expectations. At the same time, these challenges point to the need for more responsive and supportive strategies in the classroom. Since both teachers and students identify similar areas of difficulty, targeted interventions such as focused grammar exercises, vocabulary development, and guided writing practice can help address these concerns. Providing step-by-step instruction, modeling of good writing, and opportunities for revision may also ease the burden on teachers while helping students gradually improve. Overall, the results emphasize that improving essay writing requires not only clear instruction but also continuous support that responds directly to the learners' needs.

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The coping strategies used by both teachers and learners show a shared effort to overcome the difficulties in essay writing through active and practical approaches. Teachers focus on strengthening students' basic skills by providing activity sheets, exercises, and guided practice, which help reinforce spelling, vocabulary, and writing techniques. Their use of context clues and reading assignments also encourages students to become more independent in understanding unfamiliar words and ideas. These strategies reflect an attempt to build a stronger foundation in language while gradually guiding students toward better writing performance. On the learners' side, their coping strategies reveal initiative and adaptability in dealing with their challenges. By asking help from teachers and peers, they create opportunities for clarification and support, while the use of websites and digital tools shows their openness to modern learning resources. Their habit of compiling new words and planning their ideas before writing indicates a growing awareness of the writing process. Together, these strategies highlight that improvement in writing is not only teacher-driven but also depends on the learners' willingness to actively engage, seek help, and develop their own techniques for organizing and expressing their thoughts.

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