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THE IMPACT OF PUNCTUATION ISLAND ON REDUCING GRADE 4 STUDENTS COMMON PUNCTUATION MARKS DIFFICULTIES: A QUANTITATIVE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to measure and identify the common punctuation mark difficulties among Grade 4 students. In this study, forty-six students participated in the quantitative phase, while another seven individuals were involved in the qualitative phase through in-depth interviews (IDI). The researchers used purposive sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, to select participants based on specific characteristics relevant to the study (Nikolopoulou, 2023). In the quantitative analysis, students initially scored very low on the pre-test, with an average of 28.87%. After a four-week intervention using the Punctuation Island program, their post-test scores improved significantly to an average of 74.33%. Presented in table 3 of this study was the result of the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, t (45) = 21.7, p<.001. Since the probability value (p<.001) is lesser than the level of significance (£=0.05), the null hypothesis is being rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the results of the pre-test and the post-test. As shown in the above tables there is an improvement between before and after the implementation of the intervention, which is the punctuation island, the Cohen's d result of the study is 3.20 as the standardized result between the two group means. In the qualitative study, key findings revealed various insights from students regarding their struggles with punctuation and their experiences with the intervention. Five central themes emerged: improved use of punctuation through guided instruction, engaging learning through interactive digital tools, applying learned punctuation skills in writing, ease in punctuation usage in writing, and improving digital access for smoother learning. In conclusion, the study affirms the value of integrating educational games like Punctuation Island into the curriculum. Such interventions can play a transformative role in enhancing foundational writing skills, bridging learning gaps, and creating a more engaging and responsive classroom experience for all learners.

KEYWORDS: *Integration of digital tools or educational game, bridging learning gaps, Quantitative Research Design, Qualitative Research Design, Grade 4 Students, Punctuation Island*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a fundamental tool for communication, essential for the development and success of individuals in modern society. It involves the use of written symbols to convey thoughts and ideas, functioning as an extension of spoken language. One critical aspect of effective writing is the correct use of punctuation marks, which act as road signs that guide readers through the structure and meaning of sentences and essays.

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According to Smith (2020), punctuation enables readers to navigate text by signaling pauses, emphasis, or the end of thoughts, enhancing clarity and comprehension. In addition, with this according to Jones (2021) understanding on writing conventions including punctuation is a necessity for learners as it is part of early literacy in education. Furthermore, Nguyen (2022), punctuation influences reading fluency and comprehension among that functions as a cognitive cue for processing written text that significantly improves writing clarity among young learners. Despite its importance, many elementary students struggle with the proper use and placement of common punctuation marks such as periods and commas. These difficulties can hinder their ability to construct coherent and well-structured sentences. Therefore, it is essential to focus on teaching punctuation in ways that are accessible and meaningful to young learners.

In Vietnam, some students face difficulties in different areas of writing, particularly in using punctuation marks correctly. According to Delta (2021), these issues appear at both the phrase and sentence levels, showing that learners struggle to identify and fix punctuation errors. One of the main reasons for this problem is the limited access to reading and writing resources available to students in schools. Similarly, in Iraq, teachers encounter students, especially EFL learners who struggle with punctuation usage. Raheem and Ghafar (2024) found that punctuation errors, particularly involving commas and periods, are highly common among these students. These issues are largely due to students' limited exposure to English writing practices and a lack of focused instruction on the proper use of punctuation marks. And, in Bangladesh, students often struggle with punctuation as observed by many teachers. Patwary (2023) noted that common issues include the incorrect use of ending punctuation marks, such as periods, and non-ending marks, like commas. These difficulties are largely due to limited exposure to proper writing conventions and a lack of adequate instructional materials focused on punctuations.

In Negros Occidental, Apuhin (2023) found that 77.4% of punctuation errors involved these two marks, recommending self and peer correction to improve student skills. Similarly, in Davao Occidental, Egonia and San Jose (2024) observed that in the post-pandemic, many students had difficulty using punctuation correctly, mainly due to a lack of reading and writing practice during the pandemic. In Batangas, Bautista (2025) reported that junior high school students also faced challenges with proper punctuation in writing.

This study is socially relevant as it addresses the growing issue of punctuation misuse among intermediate grade students, particularly focusing on Grade 4 learners' having difficulties with commas and periods. Proper punctuation use is essential for clarity in writing, helping readers know when to pause or stop with that immediate action is needed to improve students' writing skills and ensure quality education.

Moreover, this study presents a unique research focus within the context of reducing the punctuation difficulties of elementary students, this is solely focusing on the difficulty of grade 4 students when in terms on proper usage of punctuation marks, specifically comma and period. While the other studies, *"The Effect of Peer and Self-Assessment Based on Spelling Standards and Correct usage of Punctuations"* of Tavsanli& Kara, (2021). and *"A study on Students' Use of Punctuation Marks in English Writing: A Case Study"* of Adhikary, (2020). and *"Analytical Study on Punctuation Errors in the Persuasive Writing of English Language Learners"* of Arnaiz, (2023) primarily addresses the uses of all punctuation marks in English Writing. this research specifically targets the correct placement of commas and periods in sentence and essay writing. It aims to provide lasting knowledge students can apply throughout their academic journey. Findings from this study will be shared at research conferences and with relevant agencies to support educational development.

Research Questions

The following research questions aimed to explore effective strategies for improving the common punctuation mark difficulties of Grade 4 students This study utilized the Punctuation Island as an intervention to address the identified challenges. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of students' difficulty when in terms on using punctuation marks before the implementation of Punctuation Island as an intervention on Grade 4 students?
2. What is the level of students' difficulty when in terms on using punctuation marks after the implementation of Punctuation Island as an intervention on Grade 4 students?
3. Is there a significant difference in using punctuation Island as an intervention on the usage of correct punctuation marks on Grade 4 students?
4. What are the insights of the Grade 4 students on the usage of Punctuation Island as an intervention on the correct usage of punctuation marks?

Proposed Intervention/Action Plan

The proposed intervention, called Punctuation Island is a four-week action research strategy designed to improve Grade 4 students' punctuation skills, specifically in the correct use of commas and periods. The intervention was implemented at Magatos Integrated School and integrated gamified learning with an educational app to enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Before the intervention, a pre-test was administered using a traditional paper-and-pencil format to assess students' existing knowledge and challenges with punctuation usage. With 46 student respondents and limited technological resources, the researchers opted to accommodate ten students per day over the four-week period. This allowed for focused, hands-on learning and individualized guidance during each session.

In Week 1, students were first introduced to the different punctuation marks and their importance in sentence and paragraph construction. This initial orientation was followed by hands-on sessions where students began exploring the Punctuation Island app in which they gain practice in identifying and placing punctuation marks correctly.

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Week 2 focused on the correct placement of commas in simple and compound sentences. Students engaged with the Punctuation Island app, completed an interactive task such as drag an -drop exercises and sentence correction activities. These exercises allowed learners to practice inserting commas in lists, before conjunctions, and after introductory phrases. Each session was conducted during the NMP or NRP period, lasting 30 to 40 minutes, with ten students per day to ensure close monitoring and assistance.

Week 3 introduced the correct use of periods to end declarative and imperative sentences. Learners worked on identifying sentence types and placing periods accurately using app-based games, quizzes, and sentence construction drills, these activities reinforced their understanding of sentence boundaries and punctuation placement. Students continued their hands-on practice during the same daily time blocks, maintaining the small-group setup for effective learning support.

Week 4 served as the application and mastery phase, where students applied both comma and period usage in contextual writing tasks. Through the app and printed worksheets, learners constructed short paragraphs and corrected punctuation in sample texts. This week also included review games and a mini punctuation quiz, helping students consolidate their learning. The sessions remained 30 to 40 minutes long, with ongoing use of gamification and rewards to keep learners motivated and engaged.

At the end of the intervention, a post-test and pre-test was administered to measure student progress. The researchers also provided worksheets throughout the intervention period to support both digital and traditional learning. As a motivational strategy, rewards were given to participants to encourage active participation and reinforce learning outcomes. Overall, Punctuation Island offers a creative and engaging approach to developing students' punctuation skills. By integrating technology and gamified learning, the intervention supports foundational writing competencies and fosters greater student motivation and retention.

Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Focus: Different punctuation marks and its importance in sentence and paragraph construction. • Students learn the different common punctuation marks. • Integrating gamification to have a better and engaging learning. • Through hands-on activities or sessions students learned the proper placement of punctuation marks in writing sentences and paragraph.	Focus: Correct placement of commas in simple and compound sentences. • Students engaged with the intervention called "Punctuation Island" a form of gamification that help students to learn the proper placement of punctuation marks. • Students completed an interaction task which enables them to learn more about punctuation marks. • Through the intervention it allowed learners to practice inserting commas in lists before conjunctions and after introductory phrases.	Focus: Correct use of periods to end declarative and imperative sentences. • Students engage in sentence construction drills. • Through the gamified punctuation island students continue to practice the hands-on session to better learn and understand the correct usage of punctuation marks. • They are divided into small group for better and effective learning.	Focus: Application and mastery phase. • Students learned to apply the comma and period in contextual writing task. • Through the gamified app "punctuation island students learn to construct short paragraphs and corrected punctuation in sample texts. • Students engage in review games, and mini punctuation quiz to assess their learnings.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed quantitative through a one-group pre-test and post-test design. It involves assessing a single group of respondents through implementing pre-test and after the implementation of the intervention which is the post-test, it assess the difference between the baseline or before the intervention was implemented and the end-line evaluation, after the implementation of the said intervention. this method is frequently used by professionals and educators to assess and enhance a teacher's pedagogy and practice. Action research is a continuation of the critical introspection and contemplation that they use in their daily work as educators, through transformation and reflection in a challenging circumstance within a mutually agreed ethical framework, blends theory and practices (Clark et al. 2020).

In the context of the study, the one-group pre-test and post-test is used to assess the effectiveness of the used gamified app "punctuation island" to reduce the common difficulties of Grade 4 students when it comes to proper placement of punctuation marks, specifically comma and period. The design of this study aims to determine whether the intervention being implemented lead to significant improvement, or it impacts to the lives of the students in the proper usage of punctation marks in writing sentences and paragraph. With the use of pre-test and

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post-test it provides a direct comparison on the students understanding when it comes to proper usage of punctuation marks. This approach is suitable for this study as it seeks to measure the direct impact of the Punctuation Island on student understanding and performance.

Research Respondents

Upon respondent's selection, the researchers used a purposive sampling in which it refers to a group of non-probability sampling techniques which units are selected because they have characteristics that you need in your sample. In addition, units are selected "on purpose" in purposive sampling (Nikolopoulou, 2023). Moreover, purposive sampling is also called as judgmental sampling wherein, in this sampling method relies on the researcher's judgment when identifying and selecting the individuals, cases, or events that can provide the best information to achieve the study's objectives.

In this study the respondents are the selected grade 4 students enrolled in the school year 2024-2025 at Magatos Integrated School who had difficulty with regards to proper placement of punctuation marks, specifically comma and period. This study involving 46 students from grade 4 from the school being mentioned. Aligns with this guidance, balancing sample size and practicality, using the correlation quantitative to investigate the relationship between the frequency of using the punctuation island as an intervention and the student's development with regards to proper placement of comma and sentences in essay and sentences.

Research Instrument

The researchers used a pre-assessment and post-assessment printed tool and teacher as a rater to assess and measure students' level of difficulty in the proper placement of punctuation marks, specifically comma and period in the sentences and essay before and after the implementation. The attached images below are the scoring guide of the rater.

Table 4.1
The Students' Scores of Test

No.	Students Number	Score
1	2003001	60
2	2003002	50
3	2003003	57.5
4	2003004	52.5
5	2003005	40
6	2003006	52.5
7	2003007	52.5
8	2003008	57.5
9	2003009	47.5
10	2003010	50
11	2003011	45
12	2003012	52.5
13	2003013	62.5
14	2003014	60
15	2003015	62.5
16	2003016	72.5
17	2003017	57.5
18	2003018	47.5
19	2003019	47.5
20	2003020	65
Average		54.5
Highest Score		72.5
Lowest Score		40

Table 4.2
Frequency Table

Scores	Frequency
40	1
45	1
47.5	3
50	2
52.5	4

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Table 4.3
Recapitulation of Students' Error in Using Punctuation in Narrative Writing

No.	Students' Number	Period	Comma	Semicolon	Apostrophe	Question Mark	Total Error
1	2013001	4	2	1	9	0	16
2	2013002	8	3	1	8	0	20
3	2013003	6	3	1	7	0	17
4	2013004	7	3	1	8	0	19
5	2013005	6	4	5	9	0	24
6	2013006	6	4	2	7	0	19
7	2013007	6	3	4	6	0	19
8	2013008	7	2	3	5	0	17
9	2013009	7	3	3	8	0	21
10	2013010	8	4	2	6	0	20
11	2013011	9	5	3	5	0	22

Procedure

In this quantitative study the researchers utilized pre-assessment and post-assessment after implementing the intervention and innovation. The pre-assessment measures the average of the students who are having difficulty in putting the correct punctuation marks in a sentence or in an essay before the implementation. The post-assessment measures the improvement or development of the students regarding in putting correct punctuation mark in a sentence or in essay through giving the same set of activity in the pre-assessment.

In gathering the necessary data for this quantitative research study, the following steps are followed by the researchers. First, before implementing the study, the researchers sent or asked permission to the school's principal where the respondents were enrolled. Second, the researchers gave a parent consent or asked permission to the parents of the students. Third, the researchers administered a pre-assessment to determine the respondent's status with regards to putting a comma and period in a sentence or in an essay. Following the pre-assessment, punctuation island is being introduced, within four weeks of intervention period. At the end of the implementation process, a post-assessment are being conducted using the same tool to evaluate the development or improvement of the students with regards on the proper placement of comma and period in a sentence or in an essay after implementing the intervention. Lastly, the data from the pre-assessment and post-assessment are being collected and tabulated.

In conducting the analysis of the pre-test and post-test scores, data collection, and tabulation were pivotal. The collected scores underwent scrutiny using various statistical tools. Firstly, mean, and standard deviation calculations were employed to gauge the students' comprehension levels during both tests and assess the dispersion of scores. Additionally, the paired sample t-test served as a critical tool in evaluating the significance of the disparities between the pre-test and post-test scores, providing valuable insights into the effectiveness of the instructional intervention.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data analysis is the process of making sense of numerical data through data reduction, coding, and thematic statistical tests. It helps to identify patterns, relationships, and trends to make better decisions. (Hotjar, 2018). The significant difference in this context refers to the measurable change in participants' performance from the pre-test to the post-test, assessed through statistical analysis to ensure that the improvement due to the Punctuation Island Intervention is not random but a result of the intervention itself. In analyzing, the researchers employ observation before and after the Punctuation Island Intervention has been implemented. The researchers identify the concept and finding the significance difference between the observed performance of the participants during the pre-test and post-test.

Ethical Consideration

In this quantitative study it is crucial to follow ethical guidelines when doing the research. Fundamentally, this shaped the study's actual goals knowledge, truth, and error avoidance and fostered attitudes that are necessary for teamwork, like accountability, trust, respect for one another, and justice. This study followed the ethical guidelines of the Belmont Report (2010) to ensure responsible research practices. Principles such as autonomy, beneficence, fairness, informed consent, confidentiality, data protection, integrity, and conflict of interest were carefully respected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the findings study in the quantitative aspects as reflected in the pre-test and post-test results of the participants. It also provides a discussion of the significant differences between the scores, offering interpretations and implications of the use of different punctuation marks. While, in the qualitative aspects presented below the answers, emerging themes and the discussions.

Research Question No. 1: What is the level of students' difficulty when in terms on using punctuation marks before the implementation of Punctuation Island as an intervention on Grade 4 students?

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the students' scores in the pre-test.

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Table 1. Frequency of the Pre-test Scores

Score	Frequency	Percentage
1	7	15.2%
2	4	8.7%
3	6	13.0%
4	6	13.0%
5	8	17.4%
6	6	13.0%
7	6	13.0%
8	3	6.5%
TOTAL	**46**	**100%**
Standard Deviation		**2.18**
Average Percentage Score (%)		**28.87%**
Description		**Very Low**

Presented in Table 1 are the result of the pre-test, indicating the performance level of 46 students in Grade 4 having difficulty in punctuation marks. The highest score (8) was achieved by three students, representing 6.5% of the total. In contrast, the lowest score (1) was recorded by seven students, making up 15.2% in total and the overall mean or the standard deviation is 2.18%. The average percentage score shown in the table above is 28.87%, which indicates very low performance of the students during the pre-test. These measures signifying limited prior knowledge or misconceptions about the use of different punctuation marks, specifically comma and period. According to, Gezmiz (2023) incorrect usage of punctuation marks is one of the arising problem nowadays, especially those times after the Covid-19 Pandemic, the common misuse of the students especially in elementary is the proper usage of comma in writing sentences or essay. By this, teachers must focus on detailed instruction with regards on punctuation marks in the target language and highlighting differences between native and target language punctuation rules.

Before the implementation of the intervention, as shown in the table 1 above, the pre-test average score is 28.87% in which the description is very low. This indicates that the students had really difficulty in the correct usage of punctuation marks in sentence or essay. From the result of our pre-test we can say that it is very low, that means grade 4 students really had the difficulty in punctuation marks, specifically comma and periods. According to Erniyati (2023), the most prevalent problem of students today is the correct usage of comma and periods in writing sentences or essay, and this is caused by lack of practice at home and in school and having not enough of reading and writing resources. Furthermore, by Garcia (2021), elementary students struggle with the correct usage of punctuation marks, specifically commas and periods, due to insufficient reading and writing practice both at home and in school, this lack of exposure negatively affects the students writing skills. And according to Bayon-on (2022), indeed that students nowadays has a problem when in terms to proper usage of comma and period, with a total of 62% as by studied. This result is caused by lack of reading and writing practice and materials, and guidance by parents at home.

Research Question No. 2: What is the level of students' difficulty when in terms on using punctuation marks after the implementation of Punctuation Island as an intervention on Grade 4 students?

Table 2 illustrates the frequency and percentage distribution of the students' scores in the post-test.

Table 2. Frequency of the Post-test Scores

Score	Frequency	Frequency
9	4	8.7%
10	12	26.1%
11	14	30.4%
12	8	17.4%
13	5	10.9%
14	3	6.5%
TOTAL	**46**	**100%**
Standard Deviation		**1.35**
Average Percentage Score (%)		**74.33%**
Description		**Average**

Table 2 presents the result of the post-test, showing the performance level of 46 students in Grade 4 having difficulty in punctuation marks. There are three students who obtained the highest score of 14 which 6.5% of the total and four students 8.7% obtaining the lowest score of 9. The most frequent score achieved by fourteen students 30.4% was 11. These results highlight the range of the performance level of the students after the implementation of the intervention. From the study of Muhammed (2025), entails that punctuation mark problems is one of the problem in school towards the students, but it is not the hindrance for them to stop striving and learning through, practice and interventions students can easily understand and apply what is being taught when they write sentences or essay. As a researchers we see to it that our respondents had a progress from before the intervention implemented up until it was done, by this we can say that the "punctuation island" which is a form of gamification really help students to understand easily the correct usage of punctuation marks.

The average percentage score of 74.33% in the post-test indicates a substantial improvement compared to the result of the pre-test, indicates that the punctuation island which is a form of gamification through using laptop or technology as an intervention or strategy essentially enhanced the difficulty of the students in the correct usage of punctuation marks. Also, the intervention really helped students to improve their usage of correct punctuation marks in writing sentences or essay. According to Jarius (2023), intervention is very important to make students easily understand the correct usage of punctuation marks in writing, such as digital game-based intervention to enhance basic punctuation skills of the students, specifically comma and period in writing sentences and essay, also the engaging nature of the digital game-based intervention increased students motivation and participation. From the study in Quebec by Arseneau (2023), states that through interventions on the correct usage of comma and period students can easily understand and apply what is being taught in writing process through correct application of punctuation rules. Furthermore, Lee (2022) stated that through digital game-based interventions

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it significantly improve students' punctuation skills, particularly in the correct usage of commas and periods, in which it highlights that technology enhance learning tools not only help students grasp punctuation rules more effectively but also it increases students motivation and engagement in any writing activities. The result of this highlighted a significant improvement in students' ability in using punctuation marks in writing sentences and essay.

Research Question No. 3: What is the effect of Punctuation Island as an intervention on the usage of correct punctuation marks on Grade 4 students?

Shown in the table below the significant difference between before the implementation of the intervention (pre-test) and after the intervention was implemented (post-test).

Table 3. Significant Difference between the Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Paired Samples T-Test

		Students'	t	p	Mean difference	SE difference		Effect Size
Pre-test	Post-test	46	45.00	<.001	6.83	0.314	Cohen's d	3.20

Presented in table 3 was the result of the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores, t (45) = 21.7, p<.001. Since the probability value (p<.001) is lesser than the level of significance (£=0.05), the null hypothesis is being rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference between the results of the pre-test and the post-test. As shown in the above tables there is an improvement between before and after the implementation of the intervention, which is the punctuation island, the Cohen's d result of the study is 3.20 as the standardized result between the two group means.

The comparison between the pre-test and post-test results reveals a highly significant improvement in students' understanding and performance following the intervention, as evidenced by a t-test value of 45, that quantifies the difference between two group means. This statistically significant result underscores the effectiveness of the intervention in enhancing punctuation skills. The average score increased markedly from 28.87% to 74.33%**,** indicating a substantial learning gain. The low pre-test scores confirmed that students initially had minimal knowledge of correct punctuation use, validating the need for targeted intervention. Conversely, the post-test results demonstrate that the learning objectives were successfully met by most of the respondents. According to Adhikary (2020), such improvements highlight the success of interventions in bridging knowledge gaps and deepening students' understanding of punctuation rules. Moreover, Thompson (2023) argues that integrating digital tools in literacy instruction provides dynamic and personalized learning experiences, which are essential for skill retention. Similarly, Martinez (2024) found that targeted scaffolded interventions significantly improve elementary students' ability to apply punctuation rules independently in their writing.

Furthermore, the clustering of post-test scores around the higher range suggests a uniform grasp of the content among students, implying the Gamification method used not only improved scores but also reduced performance disparity.

Research Question No. 4: What are the insights of the Grade 4 students on the usage of Punctuation Island as an intervention on the correct usage of punctuation marks?

To answer this research question, an in-depth interview was conducted with the participants. Five sub-questions were asked to the grade 4 students having difficulty in common punctuation marks. The major themes and core ideas for the fourth main research question are presented in Table 4. From the answers of the research participants, 5 major themes emerged: (1) Improved use of punctuation through guided instruction, (2) Engaging learning through interactive digital tools, (3) Applying learned punctuation skills in writing, (4) Ease in punctuation usage in writing, (5) Improving digital access for smoother learning.

Table 4
Insights of Grade 4 Students on the Usage of Punctuation Island as an Intervention on the Correct Usage of Punctuation Marks

Emerging Themes	Supporting Statements
	✓ "We are grateful to you, sir, and ma'am for your help. Because of your guidance, my classmate and I have learned the correct way to use commas, periods, and other punctuation marks. Yes, ma'am, my punctuation skills have improved, especially when writing sentences and essays." – IDI-05 ✓ "Thank you so much ma'am because of your help we have learned the correct use of commas, periods, exclamation points, question marks, and others. My writing skills especially in sentences and essays has really improved because I now know where to place the punctuation marks." – IDI-06

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Improved Use of Punctuation through Guided Instruction	✓ "You have been a great help to us, sir and ma'am. Thank you, now we already know where to put commas and other punctuation marks in a sentence. And yes, my understanding of punctuation marks has improved." – IDI-07
Engaging Learning through Interactive Digital Tools	✓ "When the time that you and sir ma'am allowed us to try the punctuation island on your laptop it was fun and at the same time I'd learned and it motivated me more to write, because I know already the right usage of punctuations." – IDI-01 ✓ "Because of Punctuation Island we really had fun ma'am, since it felt like a game, but we also learned how to use punctuation marks correctly, especially the basic ones since we are still young. We are excited to learn even more next time." – IDI-04 ✓ "For me, the use of island as an intervention had a big impact, because it wasn fun and because of that I now like to write, because I already know where to use commas and if your sentence is in the question form just put question mark in the end." – IDI-07
Applying Learned Punctuation Skills in Writing	✓ "As what I'd experience ma'am your intervention was nice and I already applied it ma'am whenever our teacher ask us to write I already know the proper usage." – IDI-02 ✓ "On the end of our class ma'am is all about punctuations I already used it whenever our teacher ask us to write essay I already know where to put commas, then if you are angry or shock, exclamation point is the right punctuation to use." – IDI-03 ✓ "My not so fond of writing has changed by the time I know the right usage of punctuations, because I already like to write an essay and I already applied your teachings ma'am and sir. " – IDI-06
Ease in Punctuation Usage in Writing	✓ "Because of the punctuation island ma'am it's not really difficult to me when I write sentence or essay if what are the correct punctuation marks to be use, because we already learned it from you ma'am together with sir." – IDI-01 ✓ "Your teachings ma'am had a positive impact to me, through that it is sligthly easy to me to put correct punctuation marks when writing an essay." – IDI-02 ✓ "Through the intervention ma'am its slightly easy to me to write sentence and essay and if what punctuation marks will be use that is correct, because I do not know about it in the past ma'am." – IDI-06
Improving Digital Access for Smoother Learning	✓ "The intervention was nice ma'am, but I hope their is an online application of it ma'am, so that their will be no trouble just like those one time that the signal is low its because is was really nice ma'am it really help people just like us." – IDI-01 ✓ "I really liked your intervention ma'am, through it I really understand the correct usage of punctuations, but it has a disadvantage since sometimes its lag because of the internet, maybe it is beneficial when it is offline." – IDI-03 ✓ "This is really a big help for us ma'am it makes our learning much easier, especially if the internet connection is strong. Or even better ma'am if there is an offline version available." – IDI-05

The first theme that emerged from the insights of Grade 4 students' having difficulties with common punctuation marks is the **improved use of punctuation through guided instruction**. This theme highlights how Grade 4 students benefited from the "Punctuation Island" intervention, which specifically addressed their challenges with the correct usage of commas and periods in writing. Supporting this approach, research by Mohan (2023), Farjana (2025), and Pangke (2023) underscores the effectiveness of a structured process involving pre-tests, intervention sessions, and post-tests. Their studies demonstrate that this method not only deepens students' understanding and application of basic punctuation rules but also significantly enhances their overall writing skills, as reflected in improved test scores.

The second prominent theme that emerged was the **engaging learning through interactive digital tools**. This theme underscores that the intervention not only facilitates student learning but also makes the experience enjoyable and motivating. Research by Wati (2021), Mekeko (2022), and Saraiwang (2024) highlights the effectiveness of gamification and digital tools in supporting students struggling with

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punctuation marks. Their studies demonstrate that incorporating these interactive elements helps improve students' punctuation accuracy as well as their overall writing skills, fostering both skill development and sustained engagement in the learning process.

The third theme that emerged from the Grade 4 students was **applying learned punctuation skills in writing**. Students expresses their feelings towards the big impact of punctuation island in learning that they can be able to apply in the sentence and paragraph construction. Schumaker (2022), Garcia (2024), and Pitukwong (2021) emphasize that this intervention driven learnings not only boost overall writing proficiency but also support students in a wide range of writing tasks outside the classroom. As a result, students demonstrated marked improvements in the correct usage of commas, and periods in real-world writing activities whether drafting short stories, completing journal entries, or crafting friendly letters. Moreover, this hands-on application has fostered greater metacognitive awareness wherein students are now more adept at self-monitoring their improvements when in terms to proper usage of punctuation marks.

The fourth theme that emerged from this study highlighted that one of the significant benefits of the intervention is the **ease in punctuation usage in writing**. Maru (2023), Liando (2021), and Arupova (2022) emphasize that the structured process of pre-testing, targeted intervention, and post-testing helps students grasp punctuation concepts more easily and enhances their overall writing skills. Furthermore, through consistent writing practice combined with intervention sessions, students became not only more proficient but also more creative in their writing. This improvement was largely due to their better understanding and effective application of punctuation rules, which allows them to express their ideas more clearly and confidently.

The fifth and final theme that emerged from Grade 4 students' insights on punctuation challenges **improving digital access for smoother learning**. Rumah (2021) argues that direct in-person instruction and practice unhindered by connectivity issues in which it enables students to engage more deeply with punctuation concepts. Serrano (2020) supports this view, demonstrating that offline activities such as handwriting drills, word games, and sentence construction tasks enhance the impact of classroom-based interventions. Moreover, Younas (2020) highlights that scaffolding techniques delivered through face-to-face collaboration not only strengthen students' grasp of punctuation rules but also boost their confidence in applying them independently. Together, these findings underscore the value of blending digital resources with traditional, offline learning experiences to ensure smoother, and more equitable mastery of punctuation.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data collected the Punctuation Island intervention had a clear and positive effect on students' academic performance, especially in their mastery of punctuation marks. Before the intervention, a significant number of students struggled with correct punctuation usage, with their initial performance falling into the "Very Low" category. Following the targeted activities and scaffolded support of the Punctuation Island program, most students demonstrated measurable gains in accuracy and confidence. These improvements were reflected not only in higher post-test scores but also in more precise and varied use of commas, periods, and other punctuation marks in their writing. Overall, the intervention successfully bridged critical gaps in students' understanding and application of punctuation that leads to a stronger foundation for their future literacy development. After engaging with the Punctuation Island activities, students' performance marked an improvement progressing to an "Average" level. This notable shift underscores the intervention's effectiveness and highlights gamification's potential as a powerful pedagogical tool. By transforming punctuation practice into an interactive game, Punctuation Island not only boosted engagement but also deepened students' understanding and retention of key concepts.

After engaging with the Punctuation Island activities, students' performance marked an improvement, advancing from "Very Low" to an "Average" performance level. A paired t-test yielded a t-value of 45 ($p < .001$), confirming this gain was statistically significant, and the effect size was exceptionally large (Cohen's $d = 3.20$). This notable shift underscores the intervention's effectiveness and highlights gamification's potential as a powerful pedagogical tool. By transforming punctuation practice into an interactive game, Punctuation Island not only boosted student engagement but also deepened their understanding and retention of key punctuation concepts. These results suggest that further integration of gamified interventions must continue to strengthen writing proficiency across diverse learner groups.

In conclusion, the study affirms the value of integrating educational games like *Punctuation Island* into the curriculum. Such interventions can play a transformative role in improving students' foundational writing skills, bridging learning gaps, and fostering a more engaging and responsive classroom experience for all learners.

RECOMMENDATION

Considering the findings of this study, it is essential to first acknowledge the diversity of learners within the classroom and their specific challenges with basic punctuation marks. Understanding these difficulties allows educators to gain insight into the obstacle's students face, enabling them to design appropriate and effective interventions. By addressing these needs directly, teachers can create targeted solutions that support students' learning and enhance their writing skills. Recognizing and responding to such challenges not only promotes academic growth but also fosters a more inclusive and supportive educational environment where all learners can succeed. Therefore, it is highly recommended that educators, curriculum developers, and school administrators consider integrating gamified and differentiated interventions like Punctuation Island into their teaching strategies to better engage students and address foundational writing issues in a meaningful and impactful way.

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