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STEP UP TO WRITING INTERVENTION: A FOCUS ON ENHANCING THE ENGLISH WRITING PROFICIENCY AMONG GRADE ELEVEN LEARNERS IN BALTAZAR NICOR VALENZUELA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effectiveness of the Step Up to Writing intervention in enhancing the writing proficiency of Grade 11 learners at Baltazar Nicor Valenzuela National High School in Valenzuela City, Philippines. Specifically, it aimed to determine the students' level of writing proficiency before and after the intervention and to explore their experiences with the strategy. Employing a quantitative-descriptive research design supplemented with interviews and focus group discussions, the study evaluated the writing performance of 31 Grade 11 students across pre-test, intervention, and post-test phases. An additional 10 students participated in the qualitative component. Pre-test results indicated average writing proficiency, with a mean score of 50.8, while post-test results showed a substantial improvement, with a mean of 77.5, reflecting a good level of proficiency. A paired t-test confirmed a statistically significant difference ($t(30) = 23.3$, $p < .001$) with a very large effect size (Cohen's $d = 4.18$). Qualitative findings supported the quantitative results, revealing improved confidence, stronger paragraph organization, better use of transitions, and greater ease in applying writing to real-world tasks. Students recommended continued use of visual aids and suggested further integration of creative and collaborative writing activities. The findings affirm that the Step Up to Writing intervention is a highly effective strategy for developing writing proficiency and engagement among senior high school learners.

KEYWORDS: *Step Up to Writing, Research Rubric on Measuring the Writing Proficiency, quantitative-descriptive, writing proficiency, Philippines.*

INTRODUCTION

Writing proficiency refers to the ability to communicate ideas clearly, coherently, and accurately through well-structured written texts. It involves multiple components such as content development, organization, vocabulary use, grammar, mechanics, and the appropriate application of genre conventions (Garcia & Asuncion, 2022). This skill is essential in academic contexts as it allows students to demonstrate understanding, engage in analytical thinking, and contribute meaningfully to academic discourse. Rahmat and Chan (2021) emphasize that writing proficiency not only plays a key role in achieving academic success but also prepares learners for effective communication in real-world settings, including the workplace. However, writing remains one of the most challenging areas for many students. In particular, senior high school learners frequently struggle with organizing ideas, using appropriate language, and maintaining coherence and accuracy, which can lead to low performance and a lack of confidence in written tasks (Santos & Villanueva, 2023).

In Lebanese French University, learners often find English writing skills particularly challenging to develop due to the complex interplay of factors such as language proficiency, vocabulary limitations, grammatical accuracy, and the ability to organize ideas clearly. As cited in the study conducted by Ali (2023), around 70% of students in the English department experienced difficulty in academic writing. This difficulty is compounded when learners lack sufficient support or resources to address these foundational aspects, resulting in struggles to produce coherent and impactful writing. Similarly, in Nigeria, a study by Adeyemi and Adeniran (2022) found that 68% of university students struggled with organizing academic essays due to limited vocabulary and poor sentence structure, with many attributing their difficulties to lack of feedback and writing practice. In addition, the same issue encountered in Japan, as the study conducted by Takahashi and Sato (2021) found out that approximately 72% of university-level English learners struggled with academic writing tasks, especially in maintaining logical flow and argument clarity, primarily due to limited exposure to English outside the classroom and insufficient academic writing instruction.

In Mindanao State University–Main Campus, Munder (2024) found that 96.32% of ESL college students committed local writing errors, with punctuation (33.70%) and verb tense (23.15%) as the most common. Meanwhile, a study at Benguet State University by Calpito and Ripalda (2021) revealed that students had difficulty expressing ideas logically and were often unable to maintain paragraph unity and coherence, leading to fragmented compositions. In a separate investigation conducted at Eastern Visayas State University, Bautista and Diaz (2022) reported that 65% of first-year students struggled with grammar, organization, and the development of arguments in essay writing tasks.

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In the Division of Davao del Norte, particularly at Baltazar Nicor Valenzuela National High School, a troubling pattern has been observed among senior high school students, particularly those in Grade 9, who face persistent difficulties in organizing and expressing their ideas in writing. Many students demonstrate a limited grasp of writing structures, which significantly hinders their ability to articulate their thoughts clearly and effectively. This issue not only impacts their academic performance but also undermines their confidence in their writing skills. Addressing these challenges is essential to improving their overall proficiency and preparing them with the necessary tools for success in their academic journey and future endeavors.

This action research seeks to address the pressing need to resolve challenges related to students' writing skills. It is both timely and crucial, given the widespread struggles students face with understanding and applying writing structures. These difficulties not only hinder their academic performance but also diminish their confidence and motivation to engage in writing activities. Moreover, this study holds significant social value by focusing on critical areas of improvement and aiming to develop effective strategies to enhance students' writing abilities. By tackling these challenges, the research aspires to foster students' academic success, personal growth, and readiness for effective communication in both their educational journey and future professional careers.

Through an extensive review of relevant literature on writing proficiency, the researchers identified notable studies including the study conducted by Kadar et al. (2023), entitled Enhancing Students' Writing Proficiency through Extended Writing Projects, which focuses on how engaging students in sustained writing tasks over an extended period can improve their writing fluency, critical thinking, and ability to organize complex ideas. Also, the study of Jafary et al. (2023), entitled Enhancing Writing Proficiency: The Role of Model Essays as Corrective Feedback Tools in IELTS Writing Task Achievement and Coherence/Cohesion, examines the effectiveness of using model essays as instructional tools to provide corrective feedback, emphasizing improvements in task achievement, coherence, and cohesion in academic writing. Additionally, the study by Ramírez and Liu (2022), Scaffolding Academic Writing Skills through Genre-Based Instruction in EFL Classrooms, highlights how genre-based pedagogical strategies support learners in understanding structural patterns and language features of academic texts, thereby enhancing their overall writing performance. These studies provide valuable insights into innovative approaches for enhancing writing proficiency.

Within the scope and context of this study, no research has been identified that employs a descriptive quantitative method using a one-group pretest-post-test design to address students' writing proficiency, attitudes, vocabulary development, and idea organization through the Step Up to Writing Intervention. This gap in the existing literature is particularly significant, as no prior studies have specifically targeted the needs of students struggling with writing, including challenges related to writing structure, attitudes toward writing, vocabulary usage, and effective idea organization. This emphasizes the necessity of the present study, which aims to bridge this gap and provide valuable insights into improving writing proficiency through Step Up to Writing Intervention.

Research Questions

The research questions below aim to investigate how the Step Up to Writing intervention can enhance the English writing proficiency of Grade Eleven learners at Baltazar Nicor Valenzuela National High School. This intervention is designed to address learners' challenges in organizing, developing, and expressing ideas effectively in written form across various writing tasks. The following research questions guide this study:

1. What is the level of writing proficiency among Grade 11 students before the Step Up to Writing intervention has been implemented?
2. What is the level of writing proficiency among Grade 11 students after the Step Up to Writing intervention has been implemented?
3. What is the significant difference between pretest and post-test employing Step Up to Writing intervention?
4. What are the insights of the students about the use of the Step Up to Writing intervention strategy in improving their skills in writing?

PROPOSED INTERVENTION

The Step Up to Writing intervention employed a structured, color-coded system to help students craft well-organized paragraphs. It began with Green (GO) for the topic sentence, Yellow (SLOW DOWN) for supporting details with transitions, and Red (STOP) for elaborating on those points through explanations or examples. The paragraph ended with Green (GO BACK) for a concluding sentence. The researchers modeled this structure, guided students through exercises, and encouraged peer and self-editing to promote clarity. As students gained mastery, color cues were gradually removed to foster independent writing. To expand vocabulary, three new words were introduced after each session for review in the following one.

This intervention was specifically designed to improve the English writing proficiency of Grade 11 students at Baltazar Nicor Valenzuela National High School by addressing issues like poor organization and weak writing structure. Using scaffolded instruction and focused feedback, the strategy enhances grammar, language use, and clarity. It also builds student confidence and supports both academic and personal development in writing.

The program was delivered across ten sessions, held on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM. On the first week of employing the intervention, the researchers carefully discussed with how the plan worked. Also, after the explanation of the intervention, the participants were instructed to write an essay and apply the steps taught to them based on the intervention. On the second week, the same process was imposed to the students, however, this time, instead of using the color-coded approach as their guide, it was temporarily removed to see how they would respond without

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the presence of the guide. On the third week, the use of color-coded strategy was reutilized as students' output from the previous week were seemingly not good and most of them got confused with the flow of the intervention. Students were assigned topics in crafting their essay, different topics from every session of the intervention. The conduct of the plan provided students with targeted writing instruction aimed at addressing their specific needs and measuring progress over time.

Before the implementation, the researchers collaborated with school administrators to select 31 students who demonstrated difficulty in organizing written ideas. These students took a pretest to establish baseline writing skills before beginning the color-coded intervention. A post-test followed the sessions, and the results were compared to evaluate the program's impact.

Prior to starting, an orientation session was held to inform participants about the intervention's goals and procedures, assuring them of confidentiality and explaining how the program would support their growth. This introduction also established a supportive atmosphere for learning. As the program progressed, researchers conducted interviews with ten students to gather feedback and involve them in planning, implementation, and assessment. This inclusive approach fostered student ownership and strengthened their engagement with the process.

The primary goal of this study was to help struggling Grade 11 students at BNVHS improve their writing structure and overall proficiency through the Step Up to Writing method. Guided by research questions, the program was carefully designed to meet student needs and promote measurable improvement. Students practiced essential skills such as grammar, vocabulary usage, and coherence, with structured tasks and clear guidance. Through regular practice and feedback, the program nurtured confidence, critical thinking, and clear communication—skills vital for both academic and future professional success.

Following the intervention, students were expected to demonstrate better understanding and application of writing conventions, especially in organizing and expressing ideas clearly. The structured support was also anticipated to boost creativity and confidence, while fostering critical thinking by encouraging thoughtful use of writing skills in various contexts.

Table 1. Matrix of the Intervention
Step Up to Writing: Color-Coded Framework

Phase	Description	Duration
Green (GO)	Students begin with a clear topic sentence that introduces the main idea of the paragraph.	10 minutes
Yellow (SLOW DOWN)	Students add supporting details and use appropriate transitions to guide the reader and elaborate on the topic.	30 minutes
Red (STOP)	Students expand on supporting details with explanations, examples, or evidence to develop depth and clarity.	20 minutes

METHODOOGY

Research Design

This study utilized a quantitative-descriptive method, which produces both qualitative and quantitative data to characterize the current state of a situation at a specific moment in time. By collecting detailed information, this approach helps to better understand existing issues or challenges through systematic data collection, enabling a comprehensive description of the situation (Manjunatha, 2019).

In context, combining the quantitative-descriptive method with interviews provides a well-rounded research approach. The quantitative component allows for objective measurement and analysis of the effectiveness of the Step Up to Writing intervention on students' writing proficiency, while the interviews offer deeper insights into the experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of both students and teachers during the implementation. This blended method provides a fuller and more reliable understanding of the challenges and improvements related to enhancing English writing proficiency among Grade 11 learners at Baltazar Nicor Valenzuela National High School.

Research Participants

Purposive sampling, a non-random selection technique, empowers researchers to delve into specific populations by choosing individuals, cases, or events with key characteristics aligned with the research aims. This approach, also known as judgmental sampling, leverages the researcher's expertise to identify participants who can offer the most valuable insights, unlike random selection where chance dictates participant selection (Memon et al., 2025).

In connection, this study was conducted at Baltazar Nicor Valenzuela National High School, a public secondary school where many Grade 11 learners face difficulties in organizing and developing coherent English compositions. Specifically, the study focused on the writing proficiency of Grade 11 students before and after the implementation of the Step Up to Writing intervention during the academic year 2024–2025. A total of thirty-one (31) Grade 11 students participated in the pre-test, intervention, and post-test phases. Purposive sampling was employed to deliberately select participants who could best provide relevant data to address the study's objectives.

Additionally, ten (10) participants comprising students were selected for qualitative data collection, with five (5) participating in in-depth interviews and five (5) in focus group discussions. These qualitative insights complemented the quantitative data, enriching the study's understanding of the intervention's impact on enhancing writing proficiency.

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Research Instrument

In assessing writing proficiency for the total score, the researchers adapted a set of assessment criteria from the study of Lee (2014), which examined Korean EFL university students' English vocabulary size and their writing proficiency. The following criteria were used to evaluate the learners' written outputs:

Table 1.
Range of Mean Percentage

Range of Mean Percentage	Descriptive Level	Interpretation
91-100	Very High	If the measures described in the writing proficiency of the students is outstanding.
76-90	High	If the measures described in the writing proficiency of the students is very satisfactory.
61-75	Average	If the measures described in the writing proficiency of the students is satisfactory.
51-60	Low	If the measures described in the writing proficiency of the students are fairly satisfactory.
0-50	Very Low	If the measures described in the writing proficiency of the students did not meet expectations.

Data Collection

The researchers followed the subsequent procedures when collecting the data in order to get the information required for the investigation.

Crafting of Questionnaire - Pretest and Post-test Questionnaires: The researchers adopted the Rubric on Measuring the Writing Proficiency of Lee (2014), which is a research-based standardized rubric, for both pre-test and post-test assessments. The test questionnaire was a tool in gathering quantitative data about their level of spelling proficiency. There were two sets of test questionnaires administered, the pre-test and post-test questionnaires.

Questionnaire Validation: The researcher sought validation of the questionnaire from experts or a panel well-versed in questionnaire development to ensure its validity and reliability.

Seeking Permission to Conduct the Study. The researchers asked the school principal to distribute the questionnaires (pre-test) to the identified students. Also, the researcher asked permission to implement the intervention to the identified class group.

Pre-test Assessment Administration: Prior to implementing the intervention, the researcher administered a pre-test to the experimental group. This pretest aimed to gauge the students' baseline performance levels in English writing proficiency.

Post-test Assessment Administration: After one month of the implementation in experimental group, a post-test was administered to assess the students' progress in English writing proficiency. This test measured the students' enhanced writing skills and proficiency after the intervention.

Data Tabulation and Evaluation: The gathered data from the pre-test and post-test underwent tabulation. The completed questionnaire was collected by the researchers and subsequently transferred into a Microsoft excel spreadsheet for data encoding. The statistician was granted confidential permission to perform calculations, create tables, and analyze the data with utmost discretion. The results of the tabulation served as the basis for evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention in enhancing students' writing proficiency.

Statistical Tool

The computation of data involved the utilization of statistical tools. Thes tools were employed to ensure accurate analysis and interpretation of the data.

Mean. This refers to the average and is calculated by dividing the sum of a score of the students in pretest, as well as in the post test. This was used to determine the level of performance of the students before the intervention and after the intervention.

Standard Deviation. Standard deviation is a statistical measure that quantifies the amount of variation or dispersion in a set of values. A low standard deviation indicates that the values are close to the mean, while a high standard deviation signifies greater variability (Moore, McCabe, & Craig, 2017).

Paired t-test. Also referred to as a dependent or correlated t-test, this statistical method is an effective tool for evaluating differences in means and standard deviations between two related groups (Gleichmann, 2020). It is especially useful in studies where the relationship between two data sets is important, such as in pretest and post-test comparisons. In this research, the paired t-test was used to assess whether there was a statistically significant difference between the average scores of the pretest and post-test.

Cohen's d. Cohen's d is a measure of effect size that expresses the standardized difference between two means. It is commonly used to determine the magnitude of an intervention's impact, with values typically interpreted as small (0.2), medium (0.5), or large (0.8) effects (Cohen, 1988).

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DATA ANALYSIS

In analyzing the data, the researchers tabulated the raw scores of the students from both pre-test and post-test. Afterwards, the mean for each indicator and the overall mean were calculated to reveal the level of writing proficiency of students before and after the implementation of the intervention. This approach aligns with the procedures described by Creswell and Creswell (2018), who emphasize the importance of descriptive statistics in evaluating educational interventions.

In addition to the quantitative analysis, qualitative data from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were examined to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the intervention's impact. Thematic analysis of the interview transcripts revealed students' perspectives on the Step Up to Writing intervention, uncovering valuable insights into its effectiveness, perceived benefits, and the challenges encountered during its implementation, in line with the thematic analysis approach outlined by Braun and Clarke (2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presented the results of the study, including data on students' essay writing proficiency before and after the intervention. It covered the students' performance levels in essay writing during the pre-test and post-test, as well as the significant differences between the two sets of scores.

Research Objective No. 1: What is the writing proficiency level of Grade 11 students prior to the implementation of the Step Up to Writing intervention?

To address this objective, the study utilized the diagnostic writing proficiency test created by Lee (2014) in his research on "Korean EFL University Students' English Vocabulary Size and Their Writing Proficiency," which helped assess students' writing abilities. The mean scores of students' performances before the intervention are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Mean Average of the Scores in Pre-test

Pretest		
Pretest Scores	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
78	1	3.23
72	1	3.23
70	2	6.45
68	1	3.23
63	1	3.23
62	1	3.23
60	1	3.23
59	3	9.68
58	2	6.45
54	1	3.23
52	1	3.23
50	1	3.23
49	1	3.23
47	1	3.23
46	1	3.23
42	1	3.23
41	2	6.45
38	2	6.45
37	1	3.23
36	3	9.68
35	1	3.23
34	2	6.45
Total	**31**	**100 %**
Standard Deviation	**33.38**	
Overall Mean	**49%**	
Description	**Average**	

Table 2 presents the pre-test results that indicate the level of writing proficiency among 31 Grade 11 students prior to the implementation of the Step Up to Writing intervention. The scores ranged from 34 to 78, with modal scores of 36 and 59, each attained by 3 students (9.68%). Although a few students achieved relatively higher scores, the distribution of scores was generally skewed toward the lower and mid-range levels. The mean score was M = 49.00, corresponding to an Average proficiency level. The standard deviation was SD = 33.38, reflecting a high degree of variability in students' writing performance. These findings suggest a general inconsistency in writing skills prior to the intervention, highlighting the need for structured instructional strategies to improve and standardize writing proficiency.

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These findings are supported by Ismael and Boholano (2022), who observed that senior high school students in Northern Mindanao often struggled with paragraph development and cohesion, resulting in unclear written outputs. Similarly, De Vera and Capulong (2021) reported that students from various public schools in Region III had difficulty maintaining logical sequencing and grammatical accuracy in their compositions, indicating a broader issue of fluctuating writing proficiency among Filipino learners. In addition, Mendoza and Reyes (2023) found that Grade 11 students in Metro Manila commonly exhibited weak organization and underdeveloped ideas in their essays, highlighting the need for structured writing interventions to strengthen coherence and clarity.

Table 3.
Summary on the Level of Essay Writing Proficiency among Grade 11 Students before the Step Up to Writing Intervention

Indicator	Pre-Test	
	Average Percentage Scores (%)	Description
Content	56.77	Average
Organization	49.35	Average
Vocabulary	48.87	Average
Language Use	40.65	Low
Mechanics	47.10	Average
Total	49.00	Average

The table presented the mean scores for several writing proficiency indicators, with most falling into the Average category, except for Language Use, which is classified as Low. Content obtained 56.77%, indicating that students are performing averagely well in developing content for their writing. They were able to provide relevant ideas but may struggle with depth or complexity. Further, Organization with 49.35% as the mean score, suggesting that students are facing some challenges in structuring their writing coherently. Moreover, Vocabulary with 48.87% as the score showed that students have a decent grasp of word choices but may lack variety or precision in their writing. Similarly, Language Use which obtained 40.65% as its score is the lowest among the indicators, emphasizing significant difficulties in applying correct grammar and sentence structure. Students are likely making frequent errors in tense usage, sentence formation, and word order, which affects the clarity and quality of their writing. Further, Mechanics with 47.10% score emphasized that students show average proficiency in spelling, punctuation, and other technical aspects of writing. Finally, the overall mean score of 49.00% reinforces the notion that students' writing proficiency is generally average, with significant struggles in language use. The results suggest that while students are making reasonable progress in some areas of writing, their proficiency remains inconsistent, especially in grammar and language use. With this, targeted interventions would likely help enhance their overall writing skills.

These findings are supported by Alharbi (2021), who found that English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners in Saudi Arabia experienced significant difficulties in grammar, vocabulary use, punctuation, and organizing ideas logically factors that contributed to poor academic writing performance. Similarly, Rahman and Wulandari (2022) emphasized that English as a Second Language (ESL) students often encounter ongoing challenges such as limited vocabulary, weak grammatical skills, and inadequate exposure to reading materials. These issues were shown to hinder their ability to produce coherent and well-structured texts. Additionally, Zhang and Liu (2023) reported that Chinese high school students demonstrated low writing proficiency due to insufficient feedback, lack of practice, and minimal focus on structure and cohesion in classroom instruction, highlighting the need for systematic writing interventions.

Given the prevalence and persistence of these academic writing difficulties, a targeted writing intervention is crucial. Such an intervention would address the root causes of students' weaknesses in content development, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics. Improving these areas would enhance the clarity, coherence, and overall quality of their written work. This, in turn, would help learners overcome the barriers posed by poor writing skills, thereby supporting their academic success and future professional development.

Research Objective No.2: What is the level of writing proficiency among Grade 11 students after the Step Up to Writing intervention has been implemented?

To address this objective, the study utilized the diagnostic writing proficiency test created by Lee (2014) in his research on "Korean EFL University Students' English Vocabulary Size and Their Writing Proficiency," which helped assess students' writing abilities. The mean scores of students' performances before the intervention are presented in Table 4.

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Table 4
Mean Average of the Scores in Posttest

Posttest		
Score	Frequency	Percentage (%)
92	1	3.23
87	1	3.23
85	3	9.68
84	3	9.68
83	5	16.13
82	1	3.23
81	1	3.23
80	2	6.45
79	1	3.23
78	1	3.23
76	1	3.23
74	2	6.45
72	1	3.23
70	3	9.68
69	1	3.23
64	1	3.23
63	2	6.45
62	1	3.23
Total	**31**	**100 %**
Standard Deviation	**9.76**	
Overall Mean	**76%**	
Description	**Good**	

Table 4 presents the post-test results of 31 Grade 11 students following the implementation of the Step Up to Writing intervention. The scores ranged from 62 to 92, with a modal score of 83, attained by 5 students (16.13%). The mean score was M = 76.00, which corresponds to a Good level of writing proficiency. The standard deviation was SD = 9.76, indicating relatively low variability in student performance and suggesting that most learners demonstrated consistently strong writing outcomes. When compared to the pre-test results, the post-test scores reflect a substantial improvement, highlighting the effectiveness of the intervention in enhancing students' writing proficiency.

The current result is aligned with Graham et al. (2020), who conducted a meta-analysis of 56 studies involving elementary, middle, and high school students. The study revealed that writing-to-learn strategies consistently enhanced learning across various subject areas. Similarly, a study by Iniesta and Serrano (2025) assessed the effectiveness of a comprehensive game-based intervention for writing skills in Spanish primary school children, reporting significant progression in post-intervention scores among children who received the intervention compared to those who did not. In addition, Santos and Villanueva (2023) found that Filipino junior high school students who participated in a scaffolded writing workshop demonstrated notable gains in coherence, grammar, and idea development in their written outputs. These studies support the effectiveness of structured writing interventions in improving students' writing proficiency.

Table 5.
Summary on the Level of Writing Proficiency among Grade 11 Students after the Step Up to Writing Intervention

Indicator	Posttest	
	Average Percentage Scores (%)	Description
Content	79.19	Good
Organization	76.13	Good
Vocabulary	77.26	Good
Language Use	72.19	Good
Mechanics	65.16	Average
Total	76.00	Good

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Table 5 revealed the results that indicate a marked improvement in students' writing proficiency, with most indicators falling into the Good category, particularly in Content with 79.19% score, indicating a strong performance in the area of idea development and coherence, suggesting that students are increasingly able to address the writing task effectively, with clear and substantial content that aligns with the assigned topic. In addition, Organization scored 76.13%, showing that students are able to structure their writing in a coherent and logical manner. Further, Vocabulary obtained a score of 77.26%, suggesting that students are proficient in selecting appropriate words and demonstrating a degree of lexical variety in their writing. Language Use, on the other hand, scored 72.19%, indicating that students generally demonstrate good control over grammar and sentence structure. Moreover, Mechanics scored 65.16% and remained the lowest among the indicators, categorizing it as average. This indicates that while students show some proficiency in technical aspects such as spelling, punctuation, and capitalization, errors are still prevalent. Lastly, the overall score of 76.00% reflects a strong general proficiency in writing, with students demonstrating good abilities in content, organization, vocabulary, and language use, suggesting that most students can produce clear, coherent, and well-organized writing with an appropriate range of vocabulary.

The current finding is supported by the study conducted by Wang and Zhang (2020), which revealed that the Step Up to Writing intervention significantly improved students' ability to organize ideas and enhance language accuracy in their written compositions. Complementing this, Chen and Li (2021) demonstrated that targeted interventions emphasizing genre awareness not only boosted vocabulary development but also improved writing mechanics among high school students. Additionally, Rivera and Santos (2022) found that structured writing programs that incorporate visual cues and scaffolding techniques significantly enhanced coherence, cohesion, and grammatical accuracy among senior high school learners in the Philippines. Together, these studies highlight the effectiveness of genre-focused instructional approaches in promoting comprehensive improvements in writing proficiency across multiple dimensions.

Table 7
Significance Difference Between the Pre-test and Post-test Scores

Type of Test	T-Value	df	Mean Difference	SD	Cohen's d (Effect Size)
Pre-Test- Post-Test	23.3	30	26.7	1.15	4.18

Table 7 presents the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of Grade 11 students after the implementation of the Step Up to Writing intervention. There was a statistically significant difference between the scores, $t(30) = 23.3$, $p < .001$, indicating a substantial improvement in students' writing performance. The mean difference of 26.7 points illustrates the degree of academic progress made following the intervention.

Additionally, the effect size, calculated using Cohen's $d = 4.18$, indicates a very large effect, signifying not only statistical significance but also a strong practical impact on students' writing proficiency. This suggests that the Step Up to Writing intervention effectively improved learners' skills in organizing ideas, using transitions, and applying appropriate language conventions.

The statistical findings conclude that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. This marked improvement supports the effectiveness of the Step Up to Writing approach in addressing writing challenges among Grade 11 learners. In support of this, Wang and Zhang (2020) reported that the Step Up to Writing strategy significantly enhanced students' ability to structure paragraphs and improve accuracy. Similarly, Rivera and Santos (2022) emphasized that scaffolded and visual writing instruction substantially strengthened coherence and grammar in student compositions. Additionally, Martinez and Cruz (2023) found that explicit instruction in paragraph organization and transitional devices significantly improved the clarity and logical flow of high school students' written outputs, reinforcing the importance of structured writing frameworks in developing academic writing proficiency.

In summary, the results from the quantitative data clearly indicate that the Step Up to Writing intervention had a substantial positive impact on improving students' writing proficiency. The significant increase in scores, coupled with a high t-value and a very large effect size, affirms the instructional value of this structured writing strategy. Educators are encouraged to adopt scaffolded, step-based writing frameworks to support and elevate academic writing outcomes in secondary education.

Research Question No.4: What are the insights of the students about the use of Step Up to Writing in improving their skills in writing?

To address the research question, in-depth interviews were conducted with the participants. Probing questions were used to collect their views and experiences regarding the effect of the Step Up to Writing intervention on improving writing proficiency among Grade 11 students. The key themes and example statements for research question 1 are outlined in Table 3. Participants provided insights based on their personal experiences and observations of the intervention. From their feedback, seven main themes emerged: Challenges and Concerns with Writing in English, Improvement in Skills and Understanding of Various Writing Genres, Recognition of the Program's Effectiveness, Boosted Confidence in Essay Writing Post-Program, Preference for a Specific Writing Genre, Suggestions for Extending the Program Duration, and Recommendations for Incorporating Group Work into the Program.

In this study, the findings revealed that the Step Up to Writing intervention significantly Improved Writing Through Structured Process Through its structured and sequential

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approach, the intervention helped students organize their thoughts, develop clear paragraphs, and apply proper grammar and transitions in their writing. This supports the findings of Carter and Hughes (2021), who

Table 8
Insights of the Students on the Step-up to Writing in improving Writing Skills

Emerging Themes	Supporting Statements
Improved Writing Through Structured Process	• *"Before, writing felt like pressure to me... But through Step-Up to Writing, I came to understand that writing actually has a structure." – IDI2* • *"It felt like I had no idea what should come first or what should follow. But when Step-Up to Writing started, it was like something clicked in my mind." – IDI3* • *"My ideas used to stray from the main topic, but because of the intervention, I now know how to stick to the main point." – IDI4* • *"The intervention really helped because it allowed me to organize my thoughts and made my writing clearer and more detailed." – IDI6* • *"I understood that it is not necessary to be perfect right away. What matters is that the ideas are clear and organized." – IDI7* • *"I was taught that there is actually a formula to follow. My fear of writing was eased because I now know that I have a reliable pattern." – IDI8* • *"It helped me view writing as a process with structure. It is no longer just a talent; it can be practiced." – IDI9* • *"After joining Step-Up to Writing, I realized that my thoughts become more organized when I follow the process." – IDI10*
Consistent Practice and Feedback as Reinforcement	• *"We are assigned writing tasks in each session that follow the steps, so it becomes a routine." – IDI1* • *"Each session had a clear focus. We were not just given lessons, but we actually practiced and received feedback." – IDI3* • *"From pre-writing to the final draft, we were always guided." – IDI4* • *"In every session, we did an activity, not just listening." – IDI5* • *"There is constant feedback... I was able to understand what I was missing." – IDI6* • *"In every session, we do writing activities that are not just theoretical, but practical." – IDI7* • *"Every week, we practiced the same process until it became a routine." – IDI8* • *"It starts from the sentence level, then to paragraphs, and finally to essays." – IDI9* • *"The feedback is constructive... we are given clear explanations on where to focus." – IDI10*
Development of Content and Elaboration	• *I have personally noticed that my paragraphs are clearer and more polished. When I give explanations, I now include examples, and I know how to use transition words to make the flow of ideas smoother.* IDI-01) • *Now, I know how to elaborate ideas. I also know how to connect them using transition words. It is no longer choppy, and I am able to say more clearly. It is not just about quantity, but also about quality.* (IDI-03) • *Now, I know how to expand a thought, provide supporting details, and link it back to the main point. My teacher also noticed the improvement, because I used to be just average, but now my essay scores are higher.* (IDI-04) • *I observed that my writing is now clearer and more concise. I am better at developing a claim and supporting it with evidence or examples.* (IDI-09)
Enhanced Coherence and Idea Connection	• "*Now, everything is connected… my teacher has also noticed that I am more confident in writing." – IDI1* • *"The connection between my sentences is much clearer… I know how to expand on my thoughts." – IDI4* • *"My paragraphs are now more complete, and the ideas are connected." – IDI8*

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Visual Aids for Structure and Clarity	• *"The color-coding technique allowed me to easily identify the topic sentence, supporting details, and conclusion, which made paragraph construction much clearer for me." – IDI1* • *"Graphic organizers served as visual maps that guided the logical sequence of my ideas. I no longer feel lost when planning my writing." – IDI3* • *"Before, I struggled to see the structure of my paragraphs. The color-coded examples now help me follow the flow and ensure all parts are present." – IDI7* • *"Seeing the different parts of a paragraph in color makes it easier to check if my ideas are complete and properly connected." – IDI9* • *"Graphic organizers and sentence starters helped me know where to begin and how to support my main point. It made writing feel less overwhelming." – IDI10*
Model Texts and Sentence Starters	• *"The sample paragraphs really helped me see what a well-organized output should look like. It gave me a guide to follow." – IDI2* • *"The samples helped me understand how to translate my thoughts into writing. I could say, 'Ah, okay, this is how it should be done.'" – IDI5* • *"Sentence starters and transition guides were useful, especially when I didn't know how to begin. They helped me write faster and more clearly." – IDI4* • *"Using sentence starters showed me how to structure my sentences properly. It made it easier to support my ideas step by step." – IDI10*
Real-World Application and Creative Expansion	• *"My suggestion is to include situational writing activities like letters or blog posts, so we can apply writing to real-life situations, not just for school." – IDI1* • *"It would be great if we could also include creative writing parts, like making comics or writing poetry using the structure." – IDI5* • *"It would help if we could write reaction papers in subjects like Social Studies using the same technique." – IDI4* • *"We should include practical writing scenarios like business letters or proposals for real-world applications." – IDI7*

noted that structured writing frameworks help high school students develop coherence and clarity in academic writing. Similarly, Navarro and Dela Cruz (2021) found that scaffolded writing interventions increased student engagement and writing accuracy, particularly among learners with initially low writing proficiency. In addition, Tan and Villanueva (2022) reported that implementing step-by-step writing guides in Philippine senior high school classrooms led to notable improvements in students' use of cohesive devices and paragraph development. These findings highlight the effectiveness of using systematic, process-oriented strategies to build strong foundational writing skills in senior high school students.

In addition, the findings indicated that Consistent Practice and Feedback as Reinforcement played a crucial role in reinforcing the writing skills of the participants. Regular writing exercises allowed students to apply newly learned strategies, while immediate and constructive feedback from teachers and peers helped them identify areas for improvement and refine their drafts. Supporting this, Simmons and Hartley (2020) found that repeated writing tasks paired with formative feedback significantly enhance writing proficiency and student motivation. In the same vein, Alvarez and Santos (2021) highlighted that feedback-driven learning environments promote better self-editing and sustained writing development. Additionally, Kim and Garcia (2022) demonstrated that continuous writing practice supported by targeted feedback led to marked improvements in coherence, grammar accuracy, and organization among high school EFL learners. These results demonstrate the value of consistent engagement and responsive guidance in building students' writing confidence and competence.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that the Step Up to Writing intervention significantly has Development of Content and Elaboration effectively in students written work. The structured guidance enabled learners to expand on main ideas with relevant details, examples, and explanations, resulting in more coherent and enriched compositions. This aligns with the study of Wallace and Daniels (2020), who found that explicit instruction in content development fosters more detailed and organized student writing. Likewise, Choi and Rivera (2021) emphasized that writing frameworks that promote elaboration strategies help learners convey complex ideas more effectively and improve overall writing quality. Additionally, Lopez and Hernandez (2022) reported that structured paragraph scaffolding techniques enhanced students' ability to elaborate on arguments and provide supporting evidence, particularly in academic essay writing. These findings underscore the importance of teaching structured elaboration techniques to enhance the depth and clarity of students' written expression.

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In addition to the current focus, the findings showed that the Step Up to Writing intervention significantly enhanced Coherence and Idea Connection in the written outputs of Grade 11 learners at Baltazar Nicor Valenzuela National High School. Students learned to logically organize their thoughts, use effective transitions, and maintain a clear flow of ideas across sentences and paragraphs. Supporting this, Benson and Clark (2020) found that explicit instruction in organizational patterns improves students' ability to maintain coherence and clarity in their writing. Similarly, Li and Huang (2021) emphasized that teaching transition use and structural planning leads to better textual flow and reader comprehension. In addition, Dela Cruz and Evangelista (2022) reported that senior high school students who engaged in structured writing workshops focusing on cohesion devices and logical flow showed marked improvement in maintaining paragraph unity and idea progression. These findings highlight the importance of structured writing approaches in fostering cohesive and well-connected written communication.

Furthermore, based from the result the integration of Visual Aids for Structure and Clarity, such as color-coded graphic organizers and writing templates, within the Step Up to Writing intervention greatly contributed to improving students' structural understanding and clarity in writing. Learners reported that visual tools helped them break down complex tasks, plan their compositions more effectively, and clearly distinguish between parts of a paragraph or essay. This enhanced their ability to construct well-organized and readable texts. Supporting this, Daniels and Kim (2020) emphasized that visual scaffolds like graphic organizers enhance students' comprehension of writing frameworks and improve content organization. Likewise, Torres and Zhang (2021) found that using visual prompts in writing instruction aids learners in generating and logically sequencing their ideas, resulting in clearer and more coherent writing. In addition, Bautista and Reyes (2022) reported that senior high school students in the Philippines who were taught using color-coded paragraph models showed increased ability to identify key writing components and improved overall paragraph development.

On the other hand, it was revealed in the study that the use of model texts and sentence starters in the Step Up to Writing intervention significantly supported the students in developing more structured and confident writing. Learners expressed that these tools reduced writing anxiety and increased their ability to write with fluency and cohesion. This is consistent with the findings of Mitchell and Rowe (2020), who observed that model texts serve as cognitive frameworks that enhance students' understanding of genre and structure. Similarly, Bae and Freeman (2020) found that sentence starters promote language development and help students articulate complex ideas more clearly in writing. In addition, Santos and Villamor (2022) reported that guided writing tools, such as sentence frames and modeled examples, significantly improved the paragraph organization and content development of senior high school students. These results affirm the usefulness of guided tools in scaffolding academic writing for struggling learners.

In addition, based from the result of the study the Step Up to Writing intervention effectively fostered real-world application and creative expansion in the writing of students. Students reported feeling more confident in applying writing skills to practical contexts such as composing letters, reflections, essays, and even job application documents. This aligns with the findings of Roberts and Lee (2020), who reported that writing programs connecting academic tasks with real-life situations improve student engagement and transfer of skills. Likewise, Hernandez and Cruz (2021) found that when learners are given space for creativity within structured writing instruction, they produce richer content and demonstrate greater enthusiasm toward writing tasks. In addition, Delgado and Ramos (2022) emphasized that contextualized writing tasks that mimic real-world scenarios enhance students' ability to adapt academic writing skills for functional and personal communication. These outcomes highlight the importance of integrating authentic tasks and creative opportunities into writing instruction.

CONCLUSION

The research study aimed to enhance the writing proficiency of Grade 11 learners through the implementation of the Step Up to Writing intervention. Prior to the intervention, students demonstrated average to below-average writing proficiency, with notable difficulties in organizing ideas, constructing coherent paragraphs, and using appropriate grammar and transitions. However, following the intervention, a significant improvement in writing performance was observed. Post-test results reflected a shift toward higher levels of proficiency, indicating progress in students' ability to produce more structured, logical, and grammatically accurate written outputs. These improvements suggest that the step-by-step, scaffolded approach of the Step Up to Writing program effectively addressed learners' challenges and supported their writing development. The results affirm the success of the intervention in strengthening both the writing competence and confidence of Grade 11 students.

Qualitative findings gathered from interviews and focus group discussions further supported the positive outcomes of the Step Up to Writing intervention. Students expressed that (1) improved writing through structured process; (2) Consistent Practice and Feedback as reinforcement; and (3) development of content and elaboration; (4) enhanced coherence and idea connection; (5) visual aids for structure and clarity; (6) model texts and sentence starters; and, (7) real-world application and creative expansion made writing more manageable and less intimidating. They also reported increased clarity in expressing their ideas and improved confidence in applying writing skills to real-world contexts. Both students and teachers acknowledged the practicality of the intervention, noting that its structured nature, timely feedback, and focus on gradual skill building played a key role in enhancing students' writing abilities. Overall, the findings demonstrate that Step Up to Writing is an effective instructional strategy for improving academic writing among senior high school learners.

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Recommendation

Based on the results of the study, it is recommended that the Step Up to Writing intervention be adopted more broadly across Grade 11 writing curricula to improve students' writing proficiency. Expanding the duration of the program and incorporating more independent and group-based writing activities can further strengthen students' mastery of paragraph structure, transitions, and elaboration strategies. Additionally, integrating ongoing formative assessments and providing timely, constructive feedback will support students' writing development and boost their confidence. Educators are encouraged to undergo training on scaffolded writing techniques and visual-based instructional tools to effectively implement the Step Up to Writing approach. Doing so can create a more structured, engaging, and supportive environment that fosters clarity, organization, and fluency in student writing.

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