

An Action Research to Develop the Writing Skills in English Among VIII Standard Students

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INTRODUCTION

Research is defined as the creation of new knowledge or the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way so as to generate new concepts, methodologies and understandings. This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research to the extent that it leads to a new and creative outcomes. According to John.W.Creswell, “ research is a process of steps used to collect data and analyze information to increase our understanding of a topic or issue.” It consists of three steps pose a question, collect data to answer the question and present an answer to the question.

Action research is a powerful tool for improving education and generating practical knowledge. This methodology allows for a collaborative approach to problem-solving, where researchers and practitioners work together to generate solutions to specific problems.It is critically reflective. The need for reflection exists in times when current action does not produce the desired results, and change is needed. This is why action research is often concerned with change in practice. The need for critical reflection is the reason why action research is ‘cyclic’ it calls for a process that has reflection as a fundamental part of each cycle.A final fundamental characteristic of action research is that it is concerned with the improvement of practice.

Writing is one of the four skills - LSRW (Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing) in language learning. It is a the system of written symbols, representing the sounds, syllables or words of language with different mechanisms - Capitalization, Spelling and Punctuation, Word form and Function. Generally, it is very important skill in which communication is transmitted more through writing than any other type of media. Writing in English, especially writing creativity or independently is usually a challenging endeavor for learners. Gathering ideas, organizing them in the right order, maintaining the flow of writing, writing error - free and cohesive sentences and using attractive expressions are some of the areas they faces challenges in. All these problems are hindrances occur as most of the learners do not possess a good knowledge of the process of writing.

In the present study, the investigator analyzes the problems faced by the students among VIII standard in the development of writing skills in English. For investigating it, action research is used as solving the problem and to find an immediate solution for the improvement of developing writing skills.

PHASE 1 - IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

While teaching, the investigator provides them a writing activity. Thus, realized that students are unaware about the construction of sentence, grammatical errors, spelling mistakes etc.. Therefore, investigator decided to make an awareness about basics of English writing skills and how it can be developed.

SL.NO	CAUSES	EVIDENCES
1.	Students are facing problems in writing English because of the inadequate basics of writing skills.	Not aware about the sentence construction, mechanics of writing, language use and redundancy in content etc..
2.	When students read and write, it was understood that teachers doesn't give proper importance to their writing ability.	Teachers' are not providing enough time for practicing, to develop writing skills.
3.	Students are not aware about their problems in handwriting.	It is understood that most of the students have poor hand writing and causes distortion.
4.	Students are facing many problems in writing their own sentences.	By evaluating the written responses, it is clear that they faces problems in writing.
5.	Students exhibits a reluctance because of the lack of confidence in expressing their ideas through written words.	It is clear that students considered writing as a laborious task because of different sub-components in writing.

RESEARCH QUESTION

“Can the investigator minimize the problems related to the writing skills in English among VIII standard students through appropriate action strategies?”

TECHNIQUES AND METHODS APPLIED

There are various techniques and methods used in the action research like direct observation, writing, pre-test and post-test to find out the difficulties faced by the students in writing in English language. It made the study more effective.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

During the School Internship programme, the investigator provided a writing activity for VIII standard students and ask them to complete the task. The investigator identified that majority of students have felt problem with writing. Thus investigator enquired about the reason about it. The investigator understood that the students are lacking the writing skills because of the insufficient strategies used in teaching English. So, the investigator decided to conduct an action research to solve the problem related to the writing ability of VIII standard students. The investigator founded that there are many researchers tried to conduct a studies on the present topic. According to (PJ Rajeshwari,2000), she established that English is considered as a difficult subject in Indian schools and many students were failed, some remedial practice teaching and improvement in English composition writing is essential for the students. According to (Helena Justine, 2023), she also founded that improving the writing skills in English needed a multifaceted approach. Hence, it is clear that there are wide gaps existing in the development of writing skills in English. So, that it would been filled through my study entitled, “ An action research to develop the writing skills in English among VIII standard students .”

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Reading is always intertwined with writing. Writing becomes more magnificent only if it filled with proper phrasing and sentence structure. Everything has its own structure. Similarly words, punctuations, grammar, word order, proper phrasing, use of literary language makes the style of writing splendidful. So, the students are not aware about the process of writing. They all are showing an arduous approach to writing in English. So it is important to find out the difficulties faced by the students and also important to solve the problems. Therefore the investigator decided to conduct an action research to find out the problems related to writing skills. Hence, the present study is entitled as, “An action research to develop the writing skills in English among VIII standard students.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

ACTION RESEACH

“Action research as a form of collective reflective inquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out”. (Kemmis and Mc Taggart,1988)

In the present study “action research” means to develop the writing skills in English among VIII students through appropriate actions strategies.

DEVELOP

[Type here]

Development can be defined as to build up, grow or improve gradually over time. (Cambridge University)

In the present study, “develop” means to gradually improving the writing skills in English language of VIII standard students.

WRITING SKILLS

“Writing skills are specific abilities which help writers put their thoughts into words and meaningful form and mentally interact with the message”(Harmer,2004)

In the present study, “writing skills” can be defined as the skills of VIII standard students, which is used to convey the ideas in English language.

ENGLISH

“The language of England, now used in many varieties throughout the world”(Oxford Dictionary)

In the present study, “English” means the language that is studied by the VIII standard students under the Kerala syllabus.

VIII STANDARD STUDENTS

“ Students studying in grade VIII of age ranging from 12 to 13” (Collins Dictionary)

In the present study, VIII standard students refers to the students who studied in standard VIII of Government Higher Secondary School, Thattathumala.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

During the second School Internship Programme,the investigator founded the problem in writing English by the VIII standard students.The investigator asks the students to complete a writing activity. But students were not able to fulfill their tasks. The insufficient guidance, improper practices of writing, the reluctancy of reading, lack of proper awareness about the mistakes in writing are some of the major reasons of this problem.The teachers are not at all trying to mould the students from their repeating mistakes.Therefore, the investigator decided to teach the students and solve their problems regarding difficulty in writing in English.For that, an action research is decided to conduct to find out and solve the problems related to the writing skills.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To make an awareness about the common writing mistakes in English.
2. To prepare an action plan to solve the difficulties of writing in English of VIII standard students and improving the writing skills.
3. To evaluate the writing progress of VIII standard students after the implementation of actions strategies.

PHASE II - PLAN OF ACTION

As a part of solving the writing difficulties in English language learning, the investigator decided to conduct an action research. The investigator decided to conduct a pre –test to check the awareness of students related to the basic of writing in English language. The teacher planned certain activities for the students.

ACTION HYPOTHESIS

The problems related to writing skills in English among VIII standard can be minimized through appropriate action strategies.

SAMPLE

The investigator selected VIII standard students from Government Higher secondary school.

The details of the activities planned are as follows:

DAYS	PLANNED ACTIVITIES	
Day 1	<p style="text-align: center;">Activity 1</p> <p>The investigator decided to check the ability in writing in English language through conducting a pre-test.</p>	<p>The investigator conducted a pre-test for analyzing their ability in writing in English language.</p>
Day 2	<p style="text-align: center;">Activity 2</p> <p>The investigator planned to provide an awareness about the basics of English writing skills.</p>	<p>The investigator discussed about spelling, punctuation, capitalization, handwriting, sentence construction .</p>

DAY 3

Activity 3

The investigator make students to spell out the words which is presented in screen, to write some words in blackboards, to write about themselves in one sentences.

The investigator makes each students to involve in the activity.

DAY 4

Activity 4

The investigator decided to make the students to read the English text.

The investigator gave the proper way of reading a word and to read a sentence.

Activity 5

The investigator provide the students to write about a simple topic titled , “ My Favourite place”.

The investigator gave the proper guidance and basic things to be followed while writing

<p>DAY 5</p>	<p>Activity 6</p> <p>The investigator gave a general awareness about spelling, punctuation capitalization, organization of words</p>	<p>By providing many examples the investigator explains about some basic writing skills.</p>
<p>DAY 6</p>	<p>Activity 7</p> <p>The investigator tries to familiarize the students about tenses and to create simple sentences.</p>	<p>The investigator shows the different sentences and makes them atleast to create simple sentence.</p>
	<p>Activity 8</p> <p>The investigator asks the students to write about their “school”.</p>	<p>The investigator gave proper instructions to write about it.</p>
<p>DAY 7</p>	<p>Activity 9</p> <p>The investigator deals with the construction of sentence by emphasizing above mentioned actions.</p> <p>The investigator provide the students to make corrections in given passage.</p>	<p>The investigator shows the simple subject-verb-agreement to different sentences with changing tenses.The investigator provides instruction.</p>

Activity 10

DAY 8

The investigator asked the students to complete the story given below

The investigator gave proper guidance to write it.

DAY 9

Activity 11

The investigator provides a topic for writing conversation of four exchanges.

The investigator provides the instructions.

Activity 12

DAY 10

The investigator asked about any more clarifications or doubt regarding the discussions.

The investigator cleared all the doubts.

Activity 13

The investigator conducted a post-

The investigator is conduc-

PHASE III - IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN**DAY 1**

The investigator enters to the class and had an informal interaction with them. The investigator asks them about English language learning. After the discussion, some activities were provided related to the English language learning.

ACTIVITY - 1

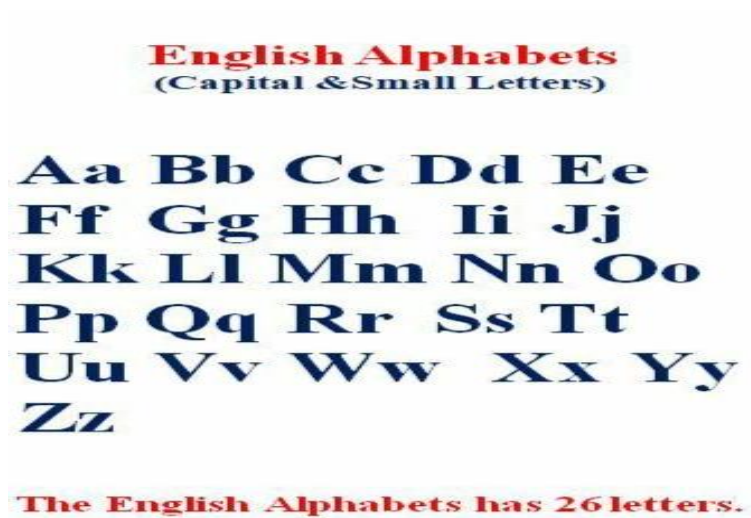
The investigator conducts a pre-test to check the awareness about basics of English writing skills.

DAY 2

The investigator presented the alphabets in English language. The investigator discusses about spelling, capitalization, punctuation, hand writing, sentence construction. These would provide strengthening students' knowledge.

ACTIVITY- 2

The investigator planned to provide an awareness about English alphabets. The investigator presented the alphabets through power point presentation.

**ACTIVITY - 3**

The investigator provides some examples for analyzing the capitalization, punctuation, handwriting, sentence construction through power point presentation

Capitalize with M.I.N.T.S.

M - Months
My favorite month is **S**eptember.

I - the letter I
Bob and **I** ran down the hill.

N - Names: people, places, things
Frank has gone to visit his friend **R**aj in **O**rlando.

T - Titles
Charlotte's **W**eb is my favorite book.

S - Start of sentences
We are going for a walk in the forest.



Name: _____

PUNCTUATION		
Symbol	Name	Use
●	Period	to end a statement
?	Question Mark	to end a question
!	Exclamation Point	to end an exclamatory sentence
,	Comma	to separate words or groups of words in a series
;	Semicolon	to join two independent clauses without a conjunction
:	Colon	to introduce a list, a quotation, and to link two related sentences
-	Hyphen	to join words together into a compound noun
()	Parentheses	to provide additional information
'	Apostrophe	to show possession
“ ”	Quotation Marks	to mark the beginning and end of a quote

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Sentence Structure

Subject -- Verb -- Object

She studies science.

The investigator make the students to write themselves a sentence.

DAY 3

The investigator asked some questions regarding the previous sessions to ensure their learning progress.

ACTIVITY - 4

The investigator decided to make the students to read the English text.

One day, the boy drew some beautiful cat on the large screen in the temple. When the priest saw it, he said immediately the boy must leave the temple because perhaps he could be a great artist and impossible to become a good priest.

Then, the priest gave must advice to the boy that he has to stay in small place and stay away from large place at night.



The boy did not know what the priest meaning by saying that. He was embarrassed to discuss this with the priest, so he left the temple.

DAY 4

The investigator explained the basic of writing simple sentences. The investigator provided some activities.

ACTIVITY - 5

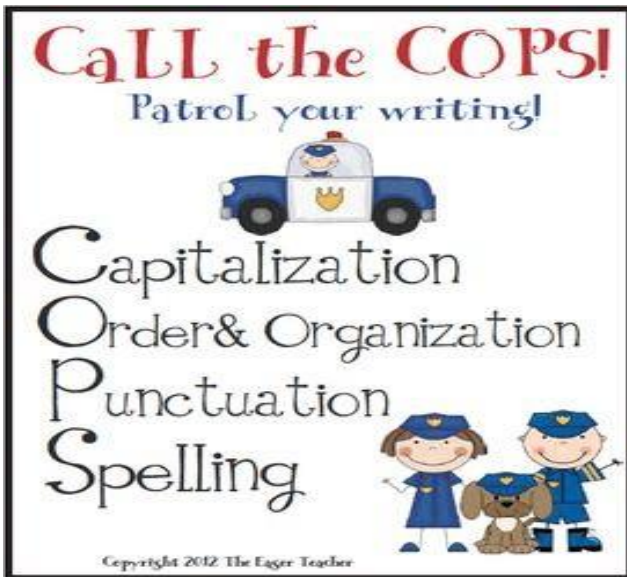
The investigator provide the students to write about a simple topic titled, “My Favourite Place” in some sentences.

DAY 5

The investigator discussed “COPS”

ACTIVITY-6

The investigator gave a general awareness about spelling, punctuation, capitalization, organization of words.

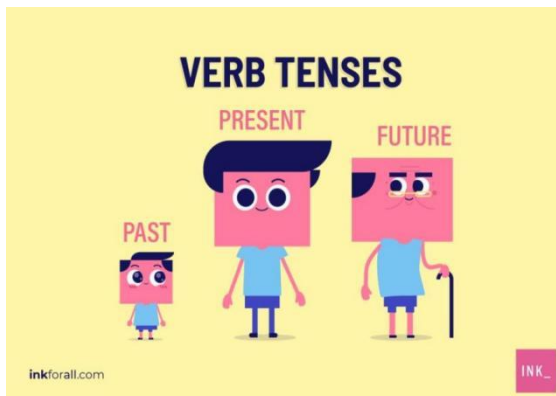


DAY 6

The investigator decided to give more activities.

ACTIVITY -7

The investigator tries to familiarize the students about tenses and to create simple sentences.



Tenses Chart		
Present Tenses	Past Tenses	Future Tenses
Simple Present Tense Sub + V1 + obj. I always speak the truth.	Simple Past Tense Sub + V2 + obj. We went to the zoo yesterday.	Simple Future Tense Sub + will/shall + V1 + obj. You will pass the examination.
Present Continuous Tense Sub + is/am/are + V1 + ing + obj. Ali is riding a bicycle.	Past Continuous Tense Sub + was/were + V1 + ing + obj. He was smiling.	Future Continuous Tense Sub + will/shall + be + V1 + ing + obj. They will be visiting the zoo.
Present Perfect Tense Sub + has/have + V3 + obj. The sun has set.	Past Perfect Tense Sub + had + V3 + obj. They had already finished their work.	Future Perfect Tense Sub + will/shall + have + V3 + obj. I shall have finished my home work.
Present Perfect Continuous Tense Sub + has/have + been + V1 + ing + obj + since/for. The sun has been shining since morning.	Past Perfect Continuous Tense Sub + had been + V1 + ing + obj + since/for. The carpenter had been making chairs for many days.	Future Perfect Continuous Tense Sub + will/shall + have+ been + V1 + ing + obj + since/for. She will have been sleeping since evening.

ACTIVITY - 8

The investigator asks them to write an essay about their ‘school’.

DAY 7

The investigator deals with the construction of sentences by emphasizing the above mentioned actions.

ACTIVITY - 9


The investigator provides the students to make corrections in a given passage.

Passage	Incorrect	Correct
Paper were first made by the Egyptians	_____	_____
From the plant names papyrus. For	_____	_____
the long time, papyrus was used extensively	_____	_____
as writing material before a Chinese	_____	_____
perfected the processes. Demand of paper	_____	_____
growing with the advent of books worldwide.	_____	_____

DAY 8

The investigator asked students about the construction of a story.

ACTIVITY 10



The format of Story Writing

The format of Story Writing-

Beginning- Interesting phrases like- "Adam was in a fix", "The day was departing", "The breeze was messaging his face", "Every morning I used to walk there but that day was different"

Character Introduction- A few dialogues can reveal the characters in a well way but remember to keep them limited otherwise the story will look like a one-act play.

Plot- Description of happenings in their best order.

Conclusion- End of the story

ACTIVITY - 11

The investigator asked the students to complete the story given below.

Write a story using the following hints;

Two friends passing through a forest - a bear came - one friend climbed a tree – the other friend could not climb the tree – helpless – lay down like a dead man – bear came near the man – thought he was dead – went away.

DAY 9

The investigator decided to develop self-writing in English.

ACTIVITY - 12

The investigator provides a topic for writing conversation of eight exchanges.

Write a conversation between you and your friend about a film watched recently.



DAY 10

The investigator ended the activities.

ACTIVITY - 13

The investigator asked the students to raise their doubts and cleared it.

ACTIVITY - 14

The investigator conducted a post-test based on the previous activities.

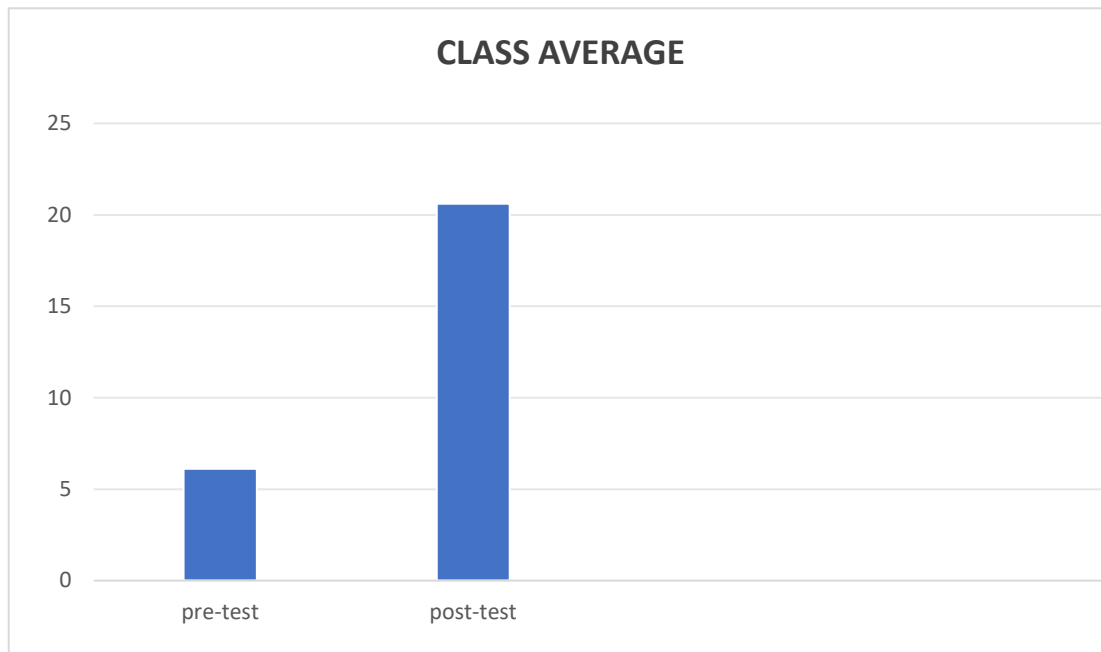
PHASE IV - OBSERVATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

During the School Internship program, the investigator found certain difficulties among the secondary school students in writing in English language. One of the main problem is the inadequate basics in mechanics of writing in English language. In order to find out the solution for this problem, the investigator conducted a pre-test to check the awareness of students about their writing skills in English language. Most of the students get low marks in the test. So the investigator the conducts an action research using appropriate action strategies .The investigator gave a detailed discussions of different activities in ten days. Then the investigator conducts a post-test by using same questions of the pre-test to assess the improvement in students. The average score and the standard deviation of the students in pre-test and post-test are represented below:

For the analysis of data, the investigator found out mean and standard deviation. The mean scores and standard deviation represented in the below table :

ITEMS	CLASS AVERAGE	STANDARD DEVIATION
PRE-TEST	6.12	4.93
POST-TEST	20.04	1.28

The main score of pre-test is 6.12 and standard deviation is 4.93. It means that scores are highly scattered from the mean score. The mean score of post test is 20.04 and standard deviation is 1.28. The difference between the mean score of pre-test and post test is 13.9 and it shows a greater difference between the scores. The class average of post-test shows that there is a greater improvement in writing in English language among secondary school students. Thus, the problem is solved.



By this diagrammatic representation, the result can be interpreted as there is a large variation between the mean score of pre-test and post-test. The figure shows that, after the implementation of action strategies, the score is increased. It means the greater improvement among secondary school students in the writing of English language by understanding all the mechanics of writing. Therefore, the problem was solved.

PHASE V - REFLECTION AND SHARING

During the second phase of school internship program, the investigator provides a writing activity from the part of teaching. So that, identified the problems related to writing skills among the students. Thus, the investigator planned to make an awareness about the basics of writing skills. For that, the investigator decided to conduct an action research to develop the writing skills in English among VIII standard students. Initially, the investigator decided to conduct a pre-test and identified the problems in grammar, syntax, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, handwriting, sentence construction, redundancy of content etc... These problems are only because of the improper practice in the classrooms and insufficient strategies used in teaching English. Therefore the investigator decided to teach the students by implementing action strategies to solve their problems based on the difficulty in writing in English. The investigator used some techniques and methods for conducting the action strategies in the classroom through ICT. The investigator presented the 26 capital and small alphabets in English language, tricky ways to remember the capitalization through MINTS, different punctuations, types of handwriting, structure of simple sentence, reading the text, presentation of COPS, tenses with simple sentences, activities of writing like editing, short story writing, writing conversation etc... The investigator implemented these action strategies within 10 days. After conducting the action strategies, the investigator conducted a post-test to analyze the improvement among them. Thus, the investigator compared the scores of pre-test and post-test for understanding the improvement of writing skill.

The students proved their ability to overcome the difficulties in writing in English language. The action strategies which implemented upon them was the main cause of their good results. Based on the result of this study, it is clear that action strategies implemented for their problem is highly effective. The proper planning of investigator through the action research solved the long-term impact on students' writing abilities. Thus, the investigator minimized the problems related to the writing skills in English among VIII standard students through appropriate action strategies.

CONCLUSION

Developing writing skills is very important for making an impressive and effective communication. Writing is an extremely complex cognitive activity. So, the strong writing skills may enhance students chances for success. Students are unaware about the basics of writing skills. It is only because of their languid approach to the writing process. The expression of language through words in writing is a hallmark for all the effective writers. After diagnosing the problem through the pre-test, the investigator applied the proper action strategies. The improvement was analyzed through post-test. So their problem of developing writing skills are minimized through the advanced teaching method and activities. These are the solutions to their problems by the investigator.

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