



DRILL EXERCISES IN ENGLISH FOR GRADE 4 LEARNERS

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Abstract :

This study sought to assess the level of performance in English of the Grade 4 learners in Camposanto Elementary School, Moncada South District, Tarlac Province during the school year 2023-2024 through the quantitative-descriptive research design. The quantitative-descriptive research design was employed to determine the level of performance in English of the Grade 4 learners based on their final rating for school year 2023-2024. It was also utilized to look into the weaknesses in English of the Grade 4 learners. Based on the findings, drill exercises in English were developed to enhance the level of performance in English of the Grade 4 learners. The developed drill exercises were evaluated by experts as to their acceptability in terms of content, quality of presentation and physical make-up. The sources of data in this study were the English teachers in Camposanto Elementary School who provided data to answer the sub-problems raised in the study with 43 Grade 4 learners as subjects of the study. Percentage and weighted mean were utilized in the study to treat the data statistically.

Summary of Findings: 1.0 Level of Performance in English of the Grade 4 Learners There were 12 or 27.91% of the learners who obtained “advanced” level of performance or rating of 90-100%. There were 21 or 48.84% of the learners who obtained 85-89% rating described as “proficient” level of performance. There were 8 or 18.60% learners with 80-84% rating described as “approaching proficiency” performance. There were 2 learners or 4.65% with 75-79% rating described as developing performance. No learners obtained rating of below 75% described as “beginning” performance. 2.0 Weaknesses in English of the Grade 4 Learners The weaknesses in English of the Grade 4 learners are the following: Writing an editorial; Distinguishing among types of journalistic writing; Distinguishing fact from opinion in a narrative; Identifying the main idea, key sentences and supporting details from the text listened to; Distinguishing between general and specific statements; Using adverbs of manner, place and time in sentences; Using past forms of regular and irregular verbs; Identifying context words (denotation and connotation); Noting significant details of various text types; and Recognizing the parts of a simple paragraph 3.0 Proposed Drill Exercises in English for Grade 4 Learners Drill exercises in English for Grade 4 learners were proposed to enhance their level of performance. 4.0 Acceptability of the Proposed Drill Exercises in English for Grade 4 Learners In terms of content, both groups of respondents assessed the proposed drill exercises as “very acceptable” with weighted means of 4.55 to 5.00. In terms of quality of presentation, both groups gave “very acceptable” evaluation with weighted means of 4.50 to 4.55. In terms of physical make-up, the proposed drill exercises are “very acceptable with weighted means of 4.50. The overall WM was 4.67 from the school heads and 4.55 from the teachers for “very acceptable” assessment.

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn: 1. Most of the Grade 4 learners are proficient in English which indicates that they have high level of acquisition of the concepts and skills in English. 2. The weaknesses in English of the Grade 4 learners include writing an editorial, distinguishing among types of journalistic writing and distinguishing fact from opinion in a narrative. 3. Drill exercises in English were proposed for the Grade 4 learners to address their identified weaknesses in English and enhance their level of performance. 4. The developed drill exercises are very acceptable based on the evaluation of English teachers.

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were offered: 1. The developed drill exercises should be considered for use by the teachers of the Grade 4 learners to enhance their level of academic performance. 2. Teachers should be encouraged to develop instructional materials particularly on subjects/topics where most learners encounter difficulty. 3. The school administration should provide support in the production of the instructional materials developed by teachers. 4. Other researchers may conduct similar studies on a wider scope to validate the findings of the study.

Keywords: drill, exercises, Grade 4 learners

INTRODUCTION

Education is necessary for an economy to become more productive. It is an agent of change that contributes to economic

growth. In the 21st century, the new educational expectations for a graduate is to have the skills of critical thinking and problem solving, inter and intra cultural communication, innovation, digital knowledge, effective oral and written communication, collaboration and teamwork (Domingo, 2020).

In many countries, in addition to their own languages, English is used as a second language. It is used as the medium for teaching and learning in schools, and for official purposes in government and business sections. In many other countries, English is neither a home language nor official language, but rather is taught and learned in schools as a foreign language to prepare students to communicate with foreigners. These countries have extended the time for learning English, and English language teaching has started at the lower levels in primary schools.

The reasons for teaching English to younger children vary. It is believed that many young children are more likely to adapt the sound system and acquire phonological patterns of a new language than adults. There has been a call for early commencement of English teaching and learning because of the public disappointment with the poor English learning outcomes of students at secondary and tertiary levels.

However, the successful implementation of English teaching and learning at lower school levels in other countries is challenging, particularly in terms of teaching methods, teachers' proficiency and the facilitation of teaching and learning improvement. In keeping with international trends, countries where people learn and use English as a foreign language and which has mandated teaching and learning English in schools for more than a hundred years, has realized the importance of the English language. Thus, English teaching and learning has recently been developed and expanded to include a wide range of people including younger children.

The English language education in the Philippines is frequently faced with low academic performance among Filipino students. This is due to many factors, such as poverty, lack of school facilities, qualified teachers, and learning resources. Likewise, scholars imply that these factors contributed to the low results in functional literacy skills which are apparent in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) data (Talidong and Liu, 2020).

According to Valerio (2015), English remains as the language of international communication and interaction. In the face of great diversity in the languages of the modern world as well as the diversity in ideology, ideas and disposition and the gaining complexity of life, the only common link in the world is the English language.

The importance of English in one's life is very evident. It is through this language that we get our formal education since it is the medium of instruction particularly in all levels of the educational system. Thus, the English language is used in intellectual and social life as well as in professional and international communication. English in our link to the outside world since it is a universal language.

Teaching at any level requires that the students be exposed to some form of simulation. When students are given the chance to learn through more senses than one, they can learn faster and easier. The use of instructional materials provides the teachers with interesting and compelling platforms for conveying information since they motivate learners to learn more. Furthermore, the teacher is assisted in overcoming physical difficulties that could have hindered his effective presentation of a given topic.

The use of electronically mediated instruction to duplicate the traditional face to face classroom has resulted in a shift from teacher to student-centered classes. In this situation the responsibility for learning is shifted to the students. The teacher facilitates the learning by acting as a coach, resource guide and companion in learning. The use of instructional materials does not only encourage teachers and students to work collaboratively but also results in more cooperative learning activities among the students.

Racca (2016) suggested that teachers of the English language should pursue professional development and update themselves with new teaching methods in teaching the English language. Teaching strategies in order to draw conclusions about the extent to which strategies are linked with the pedagogy of teaching English is vital considering many skills that students need to learn in schools. As such, aspects of teachers' teaching strategies should be emphasized that can be incorporated into students' learning practice.

Teachers may use or may have variety of teaching materials during instruction. There are instructional materials that are aids to teaching and learning which increase the effectiveness of the teacher. They stimulate interest, simplify, clarify subject matter, and increase understanding and motivate the learner to learn. These are tools of the teacher, the amusement of the learners and the catalytic agent that transforms interest, curiosity and experimentation into knowledge. Many practical outcomes can be achieved when high quality instructional materials and resources are used as integral part of classroom instruction. They are selected by teachers to help achieve very specific instructional objectives.

Students' learning occurs primarily through interactions with people (teachers and peers) and instructional materials (textbooks, workbooks, instructional software, web-based content, homework, projects, quizzes and tests). The contexts within which these interactions occur are surely important. The effectiveness of teachers, the behavior of peers, and the instructional materials with which students have the opportunity to interact are affected by layers of influences that range from circumstances in the home, to leadership in the school, to the international macro-economy and everything in between (Wheeler, 2020).

Moreover, according to Espino (2020), students do not engage in instructional interactions with the governance mechanism for their school or with state standards or with a school district's evaluation system for teachers or with collective bargaining agreements or with the leadership qualities of their school principal; they learn by engaging in cognitive processes that are triggered and shaped by interactions with people and instructional materials.

Instructional materials enhance learning and through these, pupils develop independence when provided high quality instructional materials. They can affect learners in many ways. These are use in motivating the students, contribute on their understanding, provide varied learning experiences, reinforce learning, allow opportunities for different interests, encourage students' participation, and provide meaningful experience.

English teachers should provide for students' experiences with English that are understandable and meaningful and enable the students to communicate with peers and adults and thereby participate fully in academic program. Student begins by learning basic social conventions, rudimentary classroom vocabulary, and ways to express personal and safety needs. They participate in language study in a variety of contexts ranging from informal classroom conversations to teacher directed instruction in language forms and structures. Effective teachers use a variety of activities to introduce and reinforce language concepts.

Most important, teachers plan opportunities, supported by appropriate instructional materials, for students to produce the language they have acquired, use language in academic interactions with peers and adults, and monitor and correct their oral and

written language. Teachers create an environment in which students feel comfortable in risking the use of new and unfamiliar language.

Instructional materials describe for teachers the linguistic features of the most commonly spoken languages as they differ from English. Teachers apply the understanding of similarities and differences among the languages in planning instruction and use questioning and other strategies to foster substantive student discussion and participation. Emphasis is placed on the students' producing language in a variety of context and the teachers eliciting student participation and thought (Manuel, 2022).

Quality instructional materials especially the printed ones stimulate learner. They enhance the quality of instruction. To achieve this therefore, there is a need for adequate and appropriate instructional materials. Effective teaching depends on the quality of materials in the hands of truly dedicated and knowledgeable teachers in an environment conducive to learning.

In line with the aforementioned, the researcher embarked on the study to develop drill exercises in the teaching of English to Grade 4 learners in Camposanto Elementary School, Moncada South District, Division of Tarlac Province during the school year 2023-2024.

Statement of the Problem

This study on assessing the level of performance in English of Grade 4 learners in Camposanto Elementary School, Moncada South District, Division of Tarlac Province during the school year 2023-2024 served as basis in developing drill exercises. Specifically, it sought to answer the following sub-problems:

1. How is the level of performance in English of the Grade 4 learners described?
2. What are the weaknesses of the Grade 4 learners in English?
3. What drill exercises in English for Grade 4 learners may be developed?
4. How acceptable are the proposed drill exercises in terms of the criteria as evaluated by English teachers and the school head?

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methods and procedures adopted in the conduct of the study which includes the research design, sources of data, instrumentation and data collection, and tools for data analysis.

Research Design

This study assessed the level of performance in English of Grade 4 learners. The results served as basis in developing drill exercises in English for Grade 4 learners in Camposanto Elementary School, Moncada South District, Division of Tarlac Province during the school year 2023-2024 through the use of the quantitative-descriptive research design.

The quantitative-descriptive research design was employed to assess the level of performance in English of the Grade 4 learners based on the final rating for school year 2023-2024. It was also utilized to determine the weaknesses in English of the Grade 4 learners based on the results of teacher-made tests. Based on the findings, drill exercises in English were proposed for the Grade 4 learners. The developed drill exercises were evaluated by the school head and the English teachers as to their acceptability in terms of content, quality of presentation and physical make-up.

Sources of Data

For the purpose of this study, the sources of data were the teachers of English and their school head in Camposanto Elementary School. They evaluated the proposed drill exercises on the basis of their acceptability in terms of content, quality of presentation and physical make-up with 43 Grade 4 learners as subjects of the study.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The main instrument used in determining the level of performance in English of the Grade 4 learners in Camposanto Elementary School were their final ratings in English during the school year 2023-2024. The weaknesses of the Grade 4 learners in English were determined based on the analysis of their performance in teacher-made tests where the 10 least mastered competencies were based on the percentage of learners who answered the items incorrectly.

A questionnaire was the data gathering tool to assess the acceptability of the developed drill exercises based on evaluation of English teachers and the school head. The questionnaire for acceptability is adopted from Espinar (2017).

Tools for Data Analysis

The following tools were used to treat the data statistically:

1. Frequency and Percentage

These were utilized to answer sub-problem number 1.

The formula is:

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100$$

Where:

P = Percentage

f = frequency

N = number of respondents

2. Weighted Mean

This was used to answer sub-problem number 3.

The formula is:

$$WM = \frac{\sum fx}{N}$$

\Where:

WM = Weighted Mean

Σfx = the sum of the products per column

N = the number of respondents

To interpret the data, the following reference was used:

Point Value	Statistical Limit	Descriptive Equivalent (DE)
5	4.50-5.00	Highly Acceptable (HA)
4	3.50-4.49	Very Acceptable (VA)
3	2.50-3.49	Moderately Acceptable (MA)
2	1.50-2.49	Slightly Acceptable (SA)
1	1.00-1.49	Not Acceptable (NA)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the data gathered and their analysis and interpretation to answer the sub-problems raised in the study.

Level of Performance in English of the Grade 4 Learners

This section presents the level of performance in English of the Grade 4 learners in Camposanto Elementary School, Moncada South District, Tarlac Province based on the final rating in English for school year 2023-2024 to answer sub-problem number 1.

All learners are expected to perform well in school. In English, the ratings of the Grade 4 learners are shown as follows: Advanced (90-100%); Proficient (85-89%); Approaching Proficiency (80-84%); Developing (75-79%); and Beginning (Below 75%).

In line with this, Table 1 presents the level of performance in English of the Grade 4 learners in Camposanto Elementary School.

TABLE 1
Level of Performance in English of the Grade 4 Learners

Performance Rating	f	%
Advanced (90-100%)	12	27.91
Proficient (85-89%)	21	48.84
Approaching Proficiency (80-84%)	8	18.60
Developing (75-79%)	2	4.65
Beginning (Below 75%)	0	0
TOTAL	43	100%

As presented in Table 1, there are 12 or 27.91% of the Grade 4 learners who have advanced level of performance in English which means they have very high level of understanding of concepts and skills, followed by 21 or 48.84% who are proficient in English which indicates a high level of understanding of concepts and skills. Eight learners or 18.60% are approaching proficiency which indicates that the learners have a good grasp of concepts and skills. There are 2 or 4.65% learners who have developing level of performance which indicates weak acquisition of concepts and skills. Lastly, no one among those left behind are considered to have beginning level of performance. This means they have little understanding of concepts and skills.

These results imply the need to develop drill exercises in English for the Grade 4 learners to enhance their level of performance in the subject since drill exercises can play an important role in the teaching and learning process. They can be used to support and supplement the content of a lesson, help the pupils learn new concepts, and provide practice opportunities. The drill exercises give focus on developing the least mastered skills of the learners as identified in the teacher-made test results.

Weaknesses in English of the Grade 4 Learners

This section presents the weaknesses in English of the Grade 4 learners in Camposanto Elementary School during the school year 2023-2024 to answer sub-problem number 2. Table 2 presents the data.

TABLE 2
Weaknesses in English of the Grade 4 Learners

Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs)	Score %
• Writing an editorial	73.26
• Distinguishing among types of journalistic writing	70.10
• Distinguishing fact from opinion in a narrative	66.32
• Identifying the main idea, key sentence and supporting details from the text listened to	65.00
• Distinguishing between general and specific statement	60.80
• Using adverbs of manner, place and time in sentences	59.36
• Using past forms of regular and irregular verbs	58.10
• Identifying content words (denotation and connotation)	

• Noting significant details of various text types	55.28
• Recognizing the parts of a simple paragraph	54.62
	50.26

The Most Essential Learning Competencies (MELCs) maintain core learning objectives in English. In defining MELCs, the standard of enduring lifelong learning was used – knowledge that remains for a long time that learners can use in their lives.

The weaknesses in English of the Grade 4 learners were based on results of teacher-made test based on the number or percentages of learners answering the items incorrectly. As presented in Table 2, rank 1 of the weaknesses was “Writing an editorial” with score percentage of 73.26%, followed by “Distinguishing among type of journalistic writing” with 70.10%. Third was “Distinguishing fact from opinion in a narrative” with 66.32%. The last three weaknesses were “Identifying content words (denotation and connotation)”, “Noting significant details of various text types” and “Recognizing the parts of a simple paragraph” with score percentages of 55.28%, 54.62% and 50.26%, respectively.

Proposed Drill Exercises in English for Grade 4 Learners

Drill exercises in English were proposed for the Grade 4 learners to answer sub-problem number 3.

The proposed drill exercises were based on the weaknesses in English of the Grade 4 learners determined from the results of teacher-made tests.

Acceptability of the Developed Drill Exercises in English for Grade 4 Learners

This section is concerned with the acceptability of the developed drill exercises in English for Grade 4 learners to answer sub-problem number 3. The criteria for acceptability were adapted from Espinar (2017). Table 3 presents the data.

TABLE 3

Acceptability of the Developed Drill Exercises in English for Grade 4 Learners

Criteria for Acceptability	School Heads		English Teachers	
	WM	DE	WM	DE
A. Content				
1. The terms and content are suitable to the level of Grade 4 learners.	5.00	VA	4.50	VA
2. The exercises/activities are arranged in the order familiar to Grade 4 learners.	5.00	VA	4.50	VA
3. The instructions are clear and easy to follow.	5.00	VA	4.55	VA
4. The concepts are within the Grade 4 learners' level of experience.	5.00	VA	4.54	VA
5. The number of exercises/activities is limited so as not to overload or confuse the learners.	5.00	VA	4.65	VA
WM	5.00	VA	4.55	VA
B. Quality of Presentation				
1. The illustrations are clear and interesting.	4.50	VA	4.50	VA
2. The lay-out of the materials can elicit the learners' attention.	4.50	VA	4.55	VA
3. The materials are simple and possess imaginative quality.	4.50	VA	4.60	VA
WM	4.50	VA	4.55	VA
C. Physical Make-Up				
1. The instructional design of individual tasks is carefully planned.	4.50	VA	4.55	VA
2. The size of the type and print is proper for the age level of Grade 4.	4.50	VA	4.50	VA
3. The lay-out of the pages is appropriate for Grade 4 learners.	4.50	VA	4.60	VA
WM	4.50	VA	4.55	VA
Overall WM	4.67	VA	4.55	VA
Legend: WM = Weighted mean				
Relative Values	Statistical Limit	Descriptive Equivalent (DE)		
5	4.50-5.00	Highly Acceptable (HA)		
4	3.50-4.49	Very Acceptable (VA)		
3	2.50-3.49	Moderately Acceptable (MA)		
2	1.50-2.49	Slightly Acceptable (SA)		
1	1.00-1.49	Not Acceptable (NA)		

Along content, both groups of respondents (school head and English teachers) rated the activities as “very acceptable” relative to all items: (1) The terms and content are suitable to the level of Grade 4 learners (WM = 5.00; 4.50); (2) The exercises/activities are arranged in the order familiar to Grade 4 learners (WM = 5.00; 4.50); (3) The instructions are clear and easy to follow (WM = 5.00; 4.55); (4) The concepts are within the Grade 4 learners' level of experience (WM = 5.00; 4.54); and (5) The number of exercises/activities are limited so as not to overload or confuse the learners (WM = 5.00 – 4.65). The weighted mean for content was 5.00 from the school head and 4.55 from the English teachers.

Along quality of presentation, the school head rated all the criteria as “very acceptable” with WM of 4.50. For the English teachers, “The illustrations are clear and interesting,” “The lay-out of the materials can elicit children’s attention,” and “The materials are simple and possess imaginative quality,” had WM of 4.50, 4.55 and 4.60, respectively.

Along physical make-up, the school head again rated all of the criteria with WM of 4.50 for a descriptive equivalent of “very acceptable.” Similarly, the English teachers rated the criteria as “very acceptable” with WM of 4.55. These were on “The instructional design of individual tasks is carefully planned,” “The size of the type and print is proper for the age level of Grade 4,” and “The lay-out of the paper has combined attractiveness with utility” with WM of 4.55, 4.50 and 4.60, respectively.

Overall, the weighted mean of the school heads’ rating was 4.67 and that of the English teachers was 4.55 for a descriptive equivalent for both of “very acceptable.”

These results imply that along the three categories of set criteria (content, quality of presentation and physical make-up), the two groups of respondents considered the proposed drill exercises as “very acceptable” and therefore, capable of addressing the weaknesses in English of the Grade 4 learners.

SUMMARY

This study sought to assess the level of performance in English of the Grade 4 learners in Camposanto Elementary School, Moncada South District, Tarlac Province during the school year 2023-2024 through the quantitative-descriptive research design.

The quantitative-descriptive research design was employed to determine the level of performance in English of the Grade 4 learners based on their final rating for school year 2023-2024. It was also utilized to look into the weaknesses in English of the Grade 4 learners. Based on the findings, drill exercises in English were developed to enhance the level of performance in English of the Grade 4 learners. The developed drill exercises were evaluated by experts as to their acceptability in terms of content, quality of presentation and physical make-up.

The sources of data in this study were the English teachers in Camposanto Elementary School who provided data to answer the sub-problems raised in the study with 43 Grade 4 learners as subjects of the study.

Percentage and weighted mean were utilized in the study to treat the data statistically.

Summary of Findings:

1.0 Level of Performance in English of the Grade 4 Learners

- 1.1 There were 12 or 27.91% of the learners who obtained “advanced” level of performance or rating of 90-100%.
- 1.2 There were 21 or 48.84% of the learners who obtained 85-89% rating described as “proficient” level of performance.
- 1.3 There were 8 or 18.60% learners with 80-84% rating described as “approaching proficiency” performance.
- 1.4 There were 2 learners or 4.65% with 75-79% rating described as developing performance.
- 1.5 No learners obtained rating of below 75% described as “beginning” performance.

2.0 Weaknesses in English of the Grade 4 Learners

The weaknesses in English of the Grade 4 learners are the following:

- 2.1 Writing an editorial;
- 2.2 Distinguishing among types of journalistic writing;
- 2.3 Distinguishing fact from opinion in a narrative;
- 2.4 Identifying the main idea, key sentences and supporting details from the text listened to;
- 2.5 Distinguishing between general and specific statements;
- 2.6 Using adverbs of manner, place and time in sentences;
- 2.7 Using past forms of regular and irregular verbs;
- 2.8 Identifying context words (denotation and connotation);
- 2.9 Noting significant details of various text types; and
- 2.10 Recognizing the parts of a simple paragraph

3.0 Proposed Drill Exercises in English for Grade 4 Learners

Drill exercises in English for Grade 4 learners were proposed to enhance their level of performance.

4.0 Acceptability of the Proposed Drill Exercises in English for Grade 4 Learners

In terms of content, both groups of respondents assessed the proposed drill exercises as “very acceptable” with weighted means of 4.55 to 5.00.

- 1.1 In terms of quality of presentation, both groups gave “very acceptable” evaluation with weighted means of 4.50 to 4.55.
- 1.2 In terms of physical make-up, the proposed drill exercises are “very acceptable with weighted means of 4.50.
- 1.3 The overall WM was 4.67 from the school heads and 4.55 from the teachers for “very acceptable” assessment.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Most of the Grade 4 learners are proficient in English which indicates that they have high level of acquisition of the concepts and skills in English.
2. The weaknesses in English of the Grade 4 learners include writing an editorial, distinguishing among types of journalistic writing and distinguishing fact from opinion in a narrative.
3. Drill exercises in English were proposed for the Grade 4 learners to address their identified weaknesses in English and enhance their level of performance.
4. The developed drill exercises are very acceptable based on the evaluation of English teachers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were offered:

1. The developed drill exercises should be considered for use by the teachers of the Grade 4 learners to enhance their level of academic performance.
2. Teachers should be encouraged to develop instructional materials particularly on subjects/topics where most learners encounter difficulty.
3. The school administration should provide support in the production of the instructional materials developed by teachers.
4. Other researchers may conduct similar studies on a wider scope to validate the findings of the study.

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