



Remediating the writing performance of struggling writers through a self-regulated strategy development approach

Rodny Giverson V. Garcia¹ & Zayda S. Asuncion²

¹Uddiawan National High School, Philippines & ²Saint Mary's University, Philippines

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Article history: Received Nov 30, 2021 Revised Dec 20, 2022 Accepted Jan 30, 2022	This study explored the writing difficulties of struggling writers and attempted to improve their performance in argumentative writing using Self-Regulated Strategy Development approach (SRSD). Using a diagnostic writing test, 39 senior high school students were identified as struggling writers in a secondary school. The participants were involved in a four-week writing intervention. During the process, they were trained to write using two writing strategies. The scoring of the outputs in the diagnostic and post-tests was mediated by two inter-raters following the criteria on writing performance (Jacobs et al., 1981). Initial results showed that struggling writers tend to perform poorly in all areas of writing performance. But after the intervention, the essay of the participants improved in terms of scores and characteristics. The study further explores the activities that worked during the intervention and the perception of participants towards their writing performance. Finally, implications to teaching argumentative writing to struggling writers are provided based on the intervention process.
Keywords: Argumentative Writing Remedial Writing Struggling Writers Writing Performance	
Conflict of Interest: None	
Funding: None	
Corresponding Author: Zayda S. Asuncion, lecturer at Saint Mary's University, Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya. E-mail: zjasuncion@yahoo.com	
 © Rodny Giverson V. Garcia, Zayda S. Asuncion This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA 4.0 international license.	

1. Introduction

Having proficient writing skills is not an option but a requirement in the current times. Aside from it being a precursor to academic success, writing allows individuals to participate in civic discourse. However, a majority of second language (L2) learners seem to struggle with writing which might affect their performance in school and eventually in the workplace. This problem may be attributed to the cognitive demands and complexity of the writing process. Poor writing skills may not only affect how they are assessed academically but it can be a detriment on how they comprehend what they learn. Among the identified factors contributing to this issue is that schools are claimed to be inadequate in addressing the poor writing performance of learners (Graham & Perin, 2007). Moreover, language teachers often struggle in teaching this skill which may be due to their poor pedagogic and content knowledge of L2 writing. Further, writing is previously thought of as an innate ability and not a skill that can be improved. Currently, there is an upsurge of efforts in research which seeks effective L2 writing instruction.

In the Philippines, the K to 12 Curriculum develops this skill starting from the elementary and enriches it in the secondary level. In the senior high school, the specialized English courses demand a production various academic text. However, it is a common observation in the researcher's locale that the writing skills of incoming senior students seem to be insufficient to match the demands of the curriculum. This is evidenced by their problematic written outputs which lack accuracy and content. This phenomenon is disturbingly similar to a few local studies on the writing production of ESL writers. Pablo and Lasaten (2018) found that essays of students have problems in content, organization, word choice, referencing, and formality. Previous studies also found errors and weaknesses in the outputs of L2 learners (Gustilo & Magno, 2012; Manuel & Acha, 2019; Mabuan, 2015).

While there are various studies conducted to address issues on L2 writing, another identifiable gap in this field is the scarce local literature on writing interventions specifically designed for struggling writers. Local studies

on writing in English tend to be descriptive in nature (Castro, 2004; Mojica, 2006; Gustilo, 2016; Alarcon, 2013; Gustilo & Magno, 2015). Meanwhile, a minority of the conducted studies were experimental in design (Cequena, 2013; Barrot, 2016; Mabuan & Ebron, 2016). However, these experimental studies apparently focused on introducing innovative teaching methods to average students and none of the methods were specifically designed for struggling writers. Clearly, there are few local studies which focused on interventions for struggling writers.

One specific strategy instruction that has gained recognition is the Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD) approach. SRSD focuses on several aspects of writing development like the writer's cognitive, behavioral and affective states (Graham & Harris, 1996). It features writing strategies which appear as mnemonics and these guide students write a specific text. Several studies showed that SRSD approach improves writing quality in argumentative writing (Malpique & Simão, 2019; Fajriani et al., 2019; Prata et al., 2019). Interestingly, this method is recognized as an evidence-based practice in the writing classroom as supported by the quality of studies that used the approach in other contexts (Baker, et al., 2009). In a meta-analysis, it also has a moderate effect compared to non-SRSD interventions (Graham & Perrin, 2007). Yet, the use of this approach in remedial writing for senior high school students remains unexplored.

These inadequacies in the area of L2 writing prompted the researcher to diagnose the current writing performance and identify the needs of struggling writers to improve their skill in writing. This study is crafted to improve the writing performance of students with identified writing difficulties. It aims to explore the use of SRSD approach to enhance the language output of students.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Struggling writers

While there is no sole definition for struggling writers, various research has contributed to describe the challenges they are commonly facing. Even with or without learning disabilities, struggling writers have common writing behavior and attitude. According to Fearn and Farnan (2008), struggling writers are deficient in both the skill and knowledge in writing, hesitant to engage in the writing process, and doubtful about their competence in writing. At the textual level, struggling writers, compared to the skilled writers, produce shorter texts that are poorly organized and weaker in quality (Saddler & Graham, 2007; Liberty & Conderman, 2018). At the sentential level, struggling writers construct shorter and simpler sentences in terms of syntax and word choice (Saddler et al., 2008).

In terms of writing knowledge, struggling writers are unfamiliar with the different composing processes (Saddler & Graham, 2007). Furthermore, executing these writing processes was found to be an arduous task for them (McCutchen, 1995; Liberty & Conderman, 2018). They spent less time in planning and wrote shorter and half-finished stories (Saddler, et al., 2004). It was also reported that many students with writing difficulties were challenged when revising their compositions because they focus on rectifying their errors in mechanics rather than improving the overall quality of their output (McCutchen, 1995; MacArthur et al., 1991).

In terms of using techniques, struggling writers tend to display poor execution of writing strategies and basic writing skills (Graham et al., 1992). As regards their lower-level writing skills, they are challenged with poor spelling and handwriting, which affect their performance (Graham & Harris, 2000).

2.2. Self-regulated strategy development approach

The development of the writing performance of the students has been documented in a number of studies that used SRSD approach. Harris et. al (2008) state that SRSD approach consists of six stages. The first stage is developing the learners' background knowledge. The second stage is a discussion of the strategy being taught. In the third stage, the teacher demonstrates the use of the writing strategy using Think-Aloud techniques. In the fourth stage, the students memorize the writing strategy and they are given time to internalize their writing goals. In the fifth stage, teacher provides enough support such as self-statements, collaborative writing and goal-setting until the students can manifest independence. Finally, the sixth stage is devoted to the development of independence in writing as seen in the gradual removal of writing scaffolds. After this stage, the teacher may already give modified and challenging writing tasks.

There are several studies that support the effectiveness of SRSD approach in improving the writing skills of students of varying backgrounds (Fajriani et al., 2019; De La Paz & Graham, 2002; Malpique & Simão, 2019; Prata et al., 2019). In a meta-analysis, it was found that strategy instruction via SRSD approach significantly improved the writing performance of students with learning disabilities (Gillespie & Graham, 2014). However, Graham et al. (2006) also saw the potential of SRSD instruction in improving the report writing of elementary students. It was found then that SRSD was effective in teaching writing in mainstream classes. A follow-up meta-analysis was performed by Graham (2006) involving studies that used strategy instruction as an intervention. Strategy instruction using SRSD approach yielded a larger effect size than other kinds of strategy

instruction. It is good to note that these meta-analyses included studies which has participants from primary and middle school. Meanwhile, Graham and Perin (2007) found that SRSD instruction has a moderate effect compared to non-SRSD interventions.

Although SRSD instruction was found to be effective in several studies, Al Shammari (2018) contends that it only improves the vocabulary and length of compositions as compared to a control group. Another opposition as claimed by Galbraith (2014) is the exclusivity of SRSD instruction to younger students

2.3. Conceptual framework

In laying the foundations of this study, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) Theory provides a strong overarching support. The ZPD is interpreted as the distance between the learner's current level of development and another achievable level of development that can only be realized through the use of various learning inputs like guided practice from a skilled person. One offshoot of this theory is the concept of scaffolding. According to Gonulal and Lowen (2018), scaffolding is a purposeful support given to students to enable them to operate at an advanced level.

Another useful theoretical foundation is Krashen's comprehensible input hypothesis which belongs to the general second language acquisition (SLA) theories. According to Krashen (1985), L2 learning is more effective if the learners are exposed to inputs such as materials, tasks, and tests that are relatively beyond their current level of competence. This hypothesis is relevant to the current study especially in identifying the baseline performance of the struggling writers to adjust the activities in the intervention.

Self-Regulated Strategy Development model is another concept used in the study. The model seeks to help struggling writers to learn and use strategies that are used by skilled writers. The STOP and DARE strategies were used as planning and drafting strategy, respectively.

Finally, a writing scale was used to measure the improvement in writing. The analytic writing scale of Jacobs et al. (1981) evaluates a written composition using five criteria. Based on the rubrics, content refers to the substantial ideas in the composition. Organization refers to how the ideas are clearly stated and how they are logically structured. Vocabulary means the choice of sophisticated and appropriate words or idioms. Language use refers to the syntactic complexity and grammaticality of the sentences. Finally, mechanics refers to the observance of rules particularly in capitalization, mechanics and spelling.

3. Method

3.1. Research design

This study adopted a mixed methodology approach in exploring the writing difficulties of the participants and measuring the effectiveness of SRSD approach in improving their performance. Mixed methodology allows a study to see if there is concurrent triangulation. Concurrent triangulation is when the researcher collects qualitative and quantitative data. Then, by comparing the two data, the researcher can check for convergences, discrepancies or combined results (Creswell, 2009).

A quasi-experiment was then conducted using one group pretest-post-test design. This method is practiced when one would like to investigate the value of an intervention by comparing the results between the pretest scores and post-test scores (Cohen et al., 2007). Using this design, quantitative data were derived from the participants' scores in the writing tests. Meanwhile, qualitative data were culled from the essays, the responses in the interview and observations of the teacher-researcher to support the numeric findings of the study.

3.2. Research setting and participant

The participants of the study were Grade 11 students in the senior high school department of a public secondary school in Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines. Purposive sampling was utilized because the intervention was intended for participants who manifested difficulties in writing. After conducting the diagnostic test, there were 39 participants whose outputs scored low based on the writing scale. There were 15 male and 24 female adolescent participants with age ranging from 17 to 20 years old. It is good to note that all of the participants had prior experience in writing an argumentative essay because it was a required competency in the previous grade levels.

3.3. Research instruments

A writing test was used in the diagnostic test and post-test of the study. The prompt was based on Querol and Madrunio's (2020) argumentative essay test. In the diagnostic test, the students were asked to write their stand about prohibiting schools from giving assignments. In the post-test, they were asked to argue on the implementation of a school uniform policy. The two topics were chosen for their relevance to students' interests and these did not demand specific knowledge that may confound the results of the study. To ensure the validity and administrability of the test, a pilot study of the writing prompts was conducted.

A rating scale was used in scoring the compositions of the participants in the diagnostic test and post-test. This analytic rubric of the study was adopted from Jacobs et al. (1981). The rubric includes five criteria in assessing the quality of compositions namely content, organization, language use, vocabulary, and mechanics.

Semi-structured interviews were also conducted in the study to obtain qualitative data regarding their beliefs, background, writing needs, and perception regarding the intervention. Furthermore, the participants were asked follow-up questions to discuss their answers further in pursuit of information that is significant to the study

3.4. The intervention

A diagnostic writing test was administered to the Grade 11 classes comprising 50 students. In adhering to the ethical policy of research, the teacher-researcher explained the purpose of the writing test. Students who were willing to participate signed a written consent form expressing their willingness to disclose necessary information about their actual writing performance for the purpose of the study. The students took the test for 60 minutes. After conducting the diagnostic test, two experts helped the teacher-researcher in scoring the compositions. Ultimately, there were 39 students who failed to obtain the passing score of 60 points and they were considered as participants of the remedial instruction. Participants were interviewed to provide data on their writing skills and needs.

After the diagnostic test, careful planning was devoted in crafting the lessons during the remedial instruction. The lesson plans and materials adhered to the guidelines provided by Harris et al. (2008). Further, the information from the interview and from the content analysis of their papers were also used to enrich the instruction.

The 39 students were asked to accomplish a form to signify their consent in participating in the intervention. The intervention spanned for four weeks with a total of 16 sessions. It followed the Self-Regulated Strategy Development Approach in teaching strategies in writing an argumentative essay. Each session lasted for an hour.

During the first two weeks, the participants were asked to share their background about argumentative writing. The STOP and DARE strategies were then introduced to the participants. Appearing as mnemonics, the STOP strategy consists of four steps namely Suspend your judgement, Take a side, Organize your ideas and Plan as you write. This strategy was used as a planning strategy for writing argumentative essays. The STOP strategy was discussed in detail using a visual presentation. Then, the DARE strategy was introduced. The DARE strategy stands for four processes used in drafting a text: Develop a thesis statement, Add supporting details, Reject the other side, and End with a conclusion. There was an actual demonstration of these strategies in writing an argumentative essay. During the second and third week, the participants engaged in an actual writing task. Throughout the writing tasks, participants received feedback and guidance from the teacher-researcher. In the final week, students were asked to write another argumentative text with minimal guidance.

After the intervention, a post-test was administered to the group. The post-test is an argumentative writing test similar to the diagnostic test under the same time frame. After the post-test, the same inter-raters separately scored the compositions of the participants. A meeting with the inter-raters was held to check for consistency and reliability in scoring.

It is important to mention that the intervention transpired before the COVID-19 pandemic and the participants were not at risk. However, when additional qualitative data were needed and face-to-face interviews were not possible due to the community lockdown, online interviews were done using communication apps.

3.5. Treatment of the data

Descriptive statistics was used to determine the average scores of the participants in the diagnostic test and post-test. The study employed a paired-sample t-test to compare the diagnostic and post-test scores of the participants. This tool determines if the compositions of the participants before and after the intervention have differences at a 5% significance level. For the qualitative data, content analysis was used to determine the features in the outputs of the participants. Thematic analysis was also used to identify the recurring themes from the interview as regards their writing needs and their perception of the intervention.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Result

Table 1 shows the writing performance of the participants prior to the writing intervention. As shown by the data, the respondents demonstrate very poor skills in terms of content (M=14.53), organization (M=8.99), vocabulary (M=8.86), language use (M=8.39) and mechanics (M=2.35). While the participants scored very low in all areas of writing, it is equally alarming to note that the mean score of the participants is barely half of the perfect score. This implies that the participants' writing competence appears to be underdeveloped, despite learning the said genre from the previous grade levels.

Table 1. The Initial Writing Performance of the Struggling Writers

Criteria (Jacobs et al., 1981)	Diagnostic Test		
	Mean	SD	QD
Content (30)	14.53	1.48	Very Poor
Organization (20)	8.99	1.73	Very Poor
Vocabulary (20)	8.86	1.72	Very Poor
Language Use (25)	8.39	2.81	Very Poor
Mechanics (5)	2.35	0.36	Very Poor
Total (100)	43.12	7.74	Very Poor

Table 2 highlights the difference in the writing performance of the struggling writers before and after the writing intervention. After the writing intervention, the mean score of the students in the post-test is higher than the mean score in the diagnostic test. Specifically, there is an increase in all areas of writing performance namely content (M=16.08), organization (M=11.38), vocabulary (M=11.05), language use (M=11.2) and mechanics (M=2.47). In the t-test, the p-value shows that there is a significant difference in the average score of the students before and after the writing intervention ($p=.000$). This implies that SRSD instruction has a very significant impact towards the participants' writing performance with regard to content ($p=.000$), organization ($p=.000$), vocabulary ($p=.000$), and language use ($p=.000$). It is good to note that while the average score of students in content is described to be very poor, the t-test suggests positive result. Meanwhile, the average score of the participants in the area of mechanics may have increased in the post-test, but the t-test revealed that the increase may not be significant.

Table 2. A Comparison of the Students' Scores in the Diagnostic and Post-test with the Results of the Paired-Sample T-test

Criteria	Diagnostic Test			Post Test			p-value
	Mean	SD	QD	Mean	SD	QD	
Content (30)	14.53	1.48	Very Poor	16.08	2.1	Very Poor	.000*
Organization (20)	8.99	1.73	Very Poor	11.38	1.89	Fair	.000*
Vocabulary (20)	8.86	1.72	Very Poor	11.05	2.18	Fair	.000*
Language Use (25)	8.39	2.81	Very Poor	11.2	2.61	Fair	.000*
Mechanics (5)	2.35	0.36	Very Poor	2.47	0.34	Fair	.061
Total	43.12	7.74	Very Poor	52.18	8.72	Fair	.000*

Note. p-value with asterisks indicate significant difference at 5% significance level.

4.2. Discussion

4.2.1. The writing difficulties of struggling writers

The study found that the skills of the participants in writing argumentative essay were inadequate. In fact, students showed very poor performance in all five areas of writing. This finding in the diagnostic test coincides with the study of Pablo and Lasaten (2018) which also found that Filipino students produce inferior academic texts in terms of content, organization, word choice, referencing, and formality. Meanwhile, the respondent's ineffective vocabulary and mechanics find support in the findings of Gustilo and Magno (2012). The current result also concurs with the study of Gustilo (2016) which discovered that less proficient writers face difficulty in producing argumentative texts that have an acceptable length, appropriate linguistic resources and adequate topic knowledge. Because the participants were unsuccessful in writing a quality argumentative text, they may find writing sophisticated texts to be even more difficult.

A detailed look of their first essays using content analysis confirmed the weaknesses in their argumentative writing. In terms of content, both the current and previous studies found that there is a lack of variety of ideas and inadequate discussion of arguments. Concerning organization, the texts do not show a logical sequence of ideas and the structure of an argumentative text. Problems in language use and vocabulary found in the previous study are also reflected in the texts of the current participants. The grammatical lapses include violations in subject-verb agreement and pronoun-antecedent agreement among others. In terms of errors in vocabulary, there are incorrect verb conjugations, determiners, and pluralization of nouns. Upsettingly, the participants should have mastered or grasped, at the least, the skills needed in producing argumentative texts because this is a competency in the previous grade levels. More importantly, both the scores and outputs inform that struggling writer actually face a number of challenges. While it is common to associate struggles in writing to poor performance in grammar, the data actually suggest that struggling writers face several problems like providing adequate content, organizing ideas, using appropriate vocabulary and observing the conventions of mechanics.

Interviews revealed that the struggling writers' dilemma in writing may mostly be due to the lack of support in learning the skill. Primarily, most of the struggling writers recalled that much of their learning of English as a second language transpired only at the onset of their primary education. Some even reported that there had been no instances when their parents tutored them how to write in English. Magno (2009) stressed that the influence of parents facilitates the English language acquisition of Filipino children. Contributing to the dilemma of the struggling writers is their negative encounters while learning the language at home and in school. At home, the struggling writers disclosed that they are reproached by their parents very often. In Extract A, Writer 2 expressed her frustration of not being able to be taught by her parents on how to write in English. In Extract B, the writer recounts her negative experience in the L2 classroom. The struggling writers are often disheartened by the treatment of their parents upon learning the poor academic performance of their children.

Extract A

Writer 2: Pagpaguntan dak gamen idiyay balay ser nu nababa grades ko... Madi ser haandak surusurwan idiyay balay. Isu kastuy nga nakapuyak. (They get angry at me when my grades are low. They have not taught me at home which is why I am this incompetent.)

Extract B

Writer 9: Napagsabihan po ako na mahina ako magsulat tapos tumawa. (I was told that I am incompetent in writing and then they laughed.)

Aside from the writing difficulties they are facing, their disinterest may be intensified by their anxiety. The struggling writers reported their anxiety whenever they are asked to respond to the teacher's question. This nervousness may be caused by their fear of making mistakes. In one example, a participant recalled how her classmates and the language teacher laughed at her inability to express her ideas accurately in English. This made her feel reluctant whenever she is asked to recite in English.

Extract C

Writer 3: Baka kasi kung wrong yung answer ko. Nakakahiya. (I might say the wrong answer and it is embarrassing.)

From these recurring themes in the interview, the struggling writers appear to be disheartened. Embedded in their frustration of being an effective writer is their ambivalence towards writing. They hold a negative attitude towards writing and this is because they mostly find writing a difficult process.

4.2.2.Improvement in the Writing Performance

Results showed that there is a significant difference in the writing performance of the participants before and after the intervention. The improvement in the writing performance supports the claim of Graham and Perin (2007) as regards strategy instruction which is discovered to be the most effective writing instruction from their meta-analysis. Strategy instruction such as the SRSD approach is found to be even more effective for low-achieving adolescent writers. The positive results of the study corroborate other studies that used SRSD approach particularly in teaching argumentative writing (Fajriani, Listia, & Arini, 2019; De La Paz & Graham, 2002; Malpique & Simão, 2019; Prata, et al., 2019). Among these research studies, it is worth mentioning that of Fajriani, Listia, and Arini's (2019) which found that teaching STOP and DARE strategies through an SRSD approach has a significant impact in the argumentative writing of the participants. Further, Malpique and Simão (2018) used similar strategies called PARA and IDEIA strategies and discovered that there is improvement in the persuasive writing of their participants. Meanwhile, the present findings partly conflict with that of Al Shammari's (2018) which found that SRSD instruction only improved the vocabulary and essay length of the students but yielded no significant difference when compared to the control group. The findings also refute the investigation of Galbraith (2014) which claimed that SRSD instruction was inefficient because it only worked for younger students. In the present study, SRSD instruction is seen as effective even for the senior high school students. However, the paper also presumes that the absence of a particular revising strategy may have affected the low achievement in mechanics. While the intervention contains drills on punctuation, spelling, and capitalization, these topics were not reinforced.

4.2.3.Perceptions Towards the Writing Intervention

Online written responses of the participants regarding their perception towards the writing intervention were culled. Based on their answers, there is an indication of positive attitude towards the treatment. Generally, a majority of them stated that their writing improved in general. Below is the verbatim response of Writer 12.

Extract D

Writer 12: "Yes, there's a lot of improvement. Why? because I thought that I know how to write before because Im matured enough. But no. After [the] workshop, I am very aware [of] what will I write. The grammar, spelling and also revising and using complex words that I've never used before."

While most participants provided a general positive response towards the writing intervention, some of them cited specific writing skills that they thought were enhanced. The participants claimed that they can already arrange the arguments in their essay. Finally, one mentioned how the intervention made her understand the different writing processes such as planning.

Extract E

Writer 9: Yes, because it helps me how to write an argumentative essay. Kung paano umpisahan like magplano pag magsusulat at mga hakbang sa pagsulat ng argumentative essay (Yes, because it helps me on how to write an argumentative essay especially when planning and the other steps of writing an argumentative essay.)

A final skill that was observed by the participant was their improved skill in generating ideas. Many of the participants expressed their frustration of producing ideas. This weakness is seen in their outputs which are short and devoid of elaboration. However, responses such as in Extract F suggest that it is now easier for the students to enumerate ideas which are relevant to the text.

Extract F

Writer 10: Oo, naimprove ko yung skills ko na magsulat ng english at natutunan ko mag brainstorming. (Yes, my skills in writing in English improved and I learned how to brainstorm.)

When asked about the intervention activities that assisted them during the post-test, many cited the effectiveness of the STOP and DARE strategies. According to them, the two writing strategies facilitated their construction of ideas. One participant recounted that before he learned STOP and DARE, his texts were short, messy, and unpleasant. Another participant attested to the usefulness of the STOP and DARE strategy in helping her organize her ideas.

Extract G

Writer 24: Yes, my writing skills improved. I can easily construct more ideas [when] using the Stop and Dare strategies. Before, my writing skill is very poor because I don't know how to handle my ideas that pop in my mind so my work ended as short, messy, and unpleasant.

Generally, satisfaction with their writing is observed to be one of the effects of the writing intervention, considering how it has helped them in their struggles in writing. Based on the verbatim extract below, their positive reception of the treatment is mainly anchored on the benefits that they gained from their participation. Notably, one respondent even declared that she is now confident in writing. Aside from their claims that they improved, many also attributed their satisfaction with how enjoyable the activities were.

Extract H

Writer 12: Satisfied because I've learned a lot with the writing workshop and it also enhance my writing skills. In addition, I also gained confidence when I write something like essays and everything.

4.2.4. Implications to Teaching L2 Writing to Struggling Writers

Data gathering is crucial to determine the current writing performance of L2 writers. In the classroom context, writing teachers need to employ needs analysis to determine the actual performance of the students and their needs. According to Flowerdew (2018), needs analysis is an exploration of students' needs which can be used for instructional purposes especially in designing contextualized materials. There is a substantial amount of literature that supports needs analysis as a staple in L2 writing instruction (Huang, 2010; Prior 1995; Hyland, 2007; Belcher & Lukkarila, 2011). Like the methods used in this study, it is recommended that needs analysis be used to gain a significant amount of information from the learners. The valuable data obtained from the needs analysis can be used in designing a classroom-based intervention, instructional materials, tests, or a modified syllabus.

As seen in the study, there is a strong evidence that an intervention in writing supports learners in achieving L2 competence. One effective method used in the current study is the SRSD approach. In teaching argumentative writing to L2 learners, STOP and DARE strategies can be a helpful guide. There are other writing strategies found in the literature on SRSD approach which can be useful in writing other genres.

It may be essential to incorporate a variety of intervention activities in teaching writing to struggling writers. For instance, the study used explicit learning of vocabulary. During the vocabulary instruction, learners are taught synonyms as a strategy in writing. It may then be helpful for a writing program to integrate vocabulary instruction. Aside from this, noticing activities in introducing a grammatical element was used in the intervention. Noticing is considered crucial in second language acquisition. This inductive approach involves learning how language structures are formed and used. Learners are often guided towards rule discovery, which according to some researchers, may yield even a rewarding and meaningful experience (Long & Richards, 1987).

5. Conclusion

A disparity exists between the actual writing performance of ESL students and their expected competence in argumentative writing. Contrary to the presumption that writing difficulty is linked to skill in grammar, the problem faced by struggling writers in producing texts is much more intricate as they actually face a myriad of difficulties such as content, organization, vocabulary, language use and mechanics. These struggles may be associated with their experiences in learning the English language at home and in school. However, providing interventions can improve the writing performance of adolescent struggling writers. In particular, self-regulated development strategy approach as a scaffolding element may help struggling writers in writing an argumentative text to some extent. Yet, SRSD instruction may be far from being an absolute method and may need to be complemented with other teaching methods. Hence, a blend of intervention activities is still needed when remediating L2 writing performance. Nevertheless, this study demonstrates the importance of giving interventions in the educative process of language learning.

References

- Al Shammari, S. R. (2018). The effectiveness of STOP and DARE in planning and drafting argumentative writing: A case of Saudi college level students. *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)* 9 (1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3151123>
- Alarcon, J. (2013). Lexical cohesion in student's argumentative essay among a select group of Filipino college students. *Journal on English Language Teaching*, 3. 43-52. Retrieved from <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1068864>
- Barrot, J. S. (2016). Using Facebook-based e-portfolio in ESL writing classrooms: impact and challenges. *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, 29(3), 286-301. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07908318.2016.1143481>
- Belcher, D., & Lukkarila, L. (2011). Identity in the ESP context: Putting the learner front and center in needs analysis. In D. Belcher, A. Johns, & B. Paltridge (Eds.), *New directions in English for specific purposes research* (pp. 73-93). The University of Michigan. <https://doi.org/10.3998/mpub.371075>
- Castro, C. D. (2004). Cohesion and the social construction of meaning in the essays of Filipino college students writing in L2 English. *Asia Pacific Education Review*, 5(2), 215-225. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF03024959>
- Cequeña, M. B. (2013). Does blogging facilitate the development of students' writing skills? *Philippine ESL Journal* 10 (2013): 126-147.
- Cequeña, M. B., & Gustilo, L. (2014). Can weblogs reduce writing anxiety and facilitate improvement in writing skills?. *Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 2, 1-23. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304377072_Can_weblogs_reduce_writing_anxiety_and_facilitate_improvement_in_writing_skills
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). Observation. *Research methods in education*, 6, 396-412.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- De La Paz, S., & Graham, S. (2002). Explicitly teaching strategies, skills, and knowledge: Writing instruction in middle school classrooms. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 94(4), 687. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.94.4.687>
- Fajriani, A. Z., Listia, R., & Arini, D. N. (2019). The use of 'STOP' and 'DARE' strategy to improve students' achievement in writing analytical exposition text. *Lingua Educatia*, 1(1), 1-11. Retrieved from <http://103.81.100.242/index.php/gej/article/view/267>
- Fearn, L., & Farnan, N. (2008). Classroom instruction for struggling writers In Lenski, S & J Lewis (Eds), *Reading success for struggling adolescent learners*. The Guilford Press.
- Flowerdew, L. (2018). Needs analysis for the second language writing classroom. *The TESOL encyclopedia of English language teaching*, 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.eelt0523>
- Galbraith, J. (2014). *The effect of self-regulation writing strategies and gender on writing self-efficacy and persuasive writing achievement for secondary students* (Doctoral dissertation). <https://repository.wcsu.edu/educationdis/26>.