

The Level of Writing Skills of BS Office Administration Second Year Students in Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges, Philippines

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ABSTRACT This study assessed the writing skills of second-year Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA-2) students enrolled in Business Report Writing and Business Communication courses at Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges. A descriptive research design was used to examine students' writing performance in terms of organisation, formatting, referencing, and development of ideas, as well as the writing difficulties they encountered and their awareness of written report rubric criteria. 60 BSOA-2 students participated in the study, with data gathered through questionnaires and writing assessment rubrics. Results showed that students demonstrated an intermediate level of writing skills, with common difficulties in sentence structure, idea development, and grammatical accuracy. Students were found to be moderately aware of writing standards and rubric criteria. Based on the findings, instructional modules were developed to enhance students' business writing and communication skills.

INTRODUCTION

Writing proficiency is widely recognised as a foundational academic skill in higher education, essential for effective communication, critical thinking, and professional readiness. College students are frequently required to produce complex texts across disciplines, especially in courses that emphasise formal communication such as business report writing and business communication. Academic writing tasks, whether in English as a Second Language (ESL) or English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, demand mastery of organisation, grammar, purpose, and audience awareness, are skills that many learners find challenging to develop without structured support (Azmar and Razali 2024; Esperanzate 2025; Almi 2024).

Despite the centrality of writing in tertiary curricula, recent empirical literature continues to highlight persistent barriers that hinder students' development of coherent and well-structured academic and professional writing. Jimenez et al. (2024) found that college students struggle with grammar, organisation, source integration, vocabulary, and time constraints, which collectively impede their ability to produce quality written work. Similarly, process-based interventions have been shown to improve coher-

ence and cohesion, underscoring how deficiencies in structuring ideas can be remediated through targeted pedagogical approaches (Karatayeva 2025). Baldrich et al. (2025) further support the need for strategic writing support, as validated instruments to assess academic writing practices remain underdeveloped, especially in the context of evolving technological integration. Wei and Liu (2024) also identified implementation challenges associated with peer feedback in academic writing, suggesting that feedback mechanisms must be carefully designed to maximise cognitive and behavioural benefits. Within professional writing contexts, studies of EFL learners reveal that vocabulary control, paraphrasing, grammar, and referencing continue to be areas of significant difficulty, affecting students' ability to meet disciplinary genre expectations (Alzahrani 2025; Bin Dahmash 2025). Finally, holistic bibliometric analyses of academic writing research indicate sustained and growing interest in academic literacy development, particularly in relation to digital tools and ethical practices, which further illuminate the multifaceted nature of writing challenges in higher education (Zubir et al. 2025).

In Philippine higher education contexts such as Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges, instructors have observed variability in BSOA stu-

dents' writing performance in Business Report Writing and Business Communication. While some students demonstrate proficiency in basic aspects of language use and content expression, many struggle with higher-order skills such as idea development, document formatting, and accurate referencing. Descriptive analysis in this study revealed intermediate to proficient levels of writing performance among both control and intervention groups, yet notable difficulties persisted in sentence structure and organisational coherence. These findings reflect patterns identified in broader academic writing research, where learners require structured practice and feedback to progress beyond rudimentary writing competence (Esperanzate 2025).

Theoretical framing for this study is provided by the State of Learning Theory (Lleris 2007, 2009; Giannoukos 2024), which posits that learners transition through progressive stages of competence when provided with quality instruction, structured learning materials, and opportunities for practice and feedback. According to this perspective, proficiency is not an innate end state but a developmental process responsive to instructional design. By situating the research within this theoretical lens, the present investigation emphasises the role of targeted instructional materials in facilitating student movement from intermediate to proficient levels of writing performance, particularly through enhanced awareness of writing criteria and structured engagement with performance indicators.

Guided by these insights, the current study sets out to determine the levels of writing skills exhibited by BSOA-2 students, to identify the specific problems they encounter in written communication, to assess their awareness of rubric-based performance criteria, and to develop a practical instructional module to support improvement in business report and business communication writing. Through addressing these objectives, the study aims not only to contribute to the empirical literature on writing instruction in higher education but also to provide a tangible pedagogical resource aligned with the course outcomes of the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration program.

Objectives of the Study

This research paper will evaluate the writing ability of BSOA students in Business Report

Writing and Business Communication courses. Precisely, it aims to respond to the following goals:

1. Determine the level of writing skills of BSOA-2 students in terms of:
 - A. Organisation of ideas
 - B. Formatting
 - C. Referencing
 - D. Development of ideas
2. Identify the writing problems that BSOA-2 students are facing in their written works.
3. Determine how much the students are aware of written report rubric criteria, in particular, in relation to:
 - A. English in written communication
 - B. Writing performance standards knowledge
4. Develop instructional material based on the gathered data focused on Business Report Writing and Business Communication.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This study utilised a descriptive to provide a clear and comprehensive understanding of the writing skills of BSOA-2 students. The descriptive component of the design focused on identifying the students' profiles, assessing their level of writing skills, determining common writing problems, and examining their awareness of written report rubric criteria.

The study was conducted at Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges (CSPC), which served as the research locale. CSPC was selected because it offers the Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA) program and provides an appropriate academic environment for assessing students' competencies in business report writing and business communication. The respondents of the study were identified through stratified sampling, which consisted of 60 BSOA-2 students enrolled at Camarines Sur Polytechnic Colleges.

To gather the necessary data, questionnaires were used as the primary research instrument. In addition, writing assessment tools and rubrics were utilised to evaluate the students' writing skills in terms of organisation, formatting, referencing, and development of ideas. These instruments also aided in identifying common writing problems, particularly those related to organisation of ideas and sentence structure, as

well as in assessing students' level of awareness of written report rubric criteria, including their use of English and understanding of writing performance standards.

Before the actual data collection, formal permission to conduct the study was secured from the appropriate school authorities. The respondents were properly oriented on the purpose of the study and were assured that all information gathered would be treated with confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes.

The data collected were carefully organised, tabulated, and analysed using appropriate descriptive statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarise the respondents' profiles and levels of writing skills.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the descriptive results on the level of writing skills of BSOA-2 students in terms of organisation, formatting, references, and development of ideas.

Table 1: Level of writing skills of BSOA-2 students

<i>Writing skills indicator</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Verbal interpretation</i>
Organisation of ideas	2.64	Intermediate
Formatting	2.7	Intermediate
References	2.77	Proficient
Development of ideas	2.66	Intermediate
Overall mean	2.69	Intermediate

*Data presented is based on the gathered data from 2017-2018

The respondents obtained mean scores ranging from 2.64 to 2.77, reflecting an intermediate level of writing performance. This suggests that while students demonstrated basic familiarity with business report writing conventions, they experienced difficulty in organising ideas, maintaining coherence, and developing content effectively. Such limitations are consistent with findings that higher education students often struggle with academic and professional writing when explicit genre instruction and structured support are limited (Bhatia 2017; Wingate 2018; Nguyen and Truong 2024). Overall, the findings underscore the importance of systematic and explicit instructional interventions in improving students' writing competence in Business Report Writing and Business Communication courses.

Furthermore, while the results indicate an intermediate level of performance, it is important to question whether this level is sufficient for the demands of academic and professional business communication. The ability to follow basic conventions does not necessarily equate to effective communication, particularly in business contexts where clarity, persuasion, and precision are essential. The observed difficulties in organizing ideas and maintaining coherence may suggest that students' learning remains surface-level, focusing more on form than on the strategic and rhetorical aspects of writing. This raises concerns about the alignment between instructional practices and desired learning outcomes, as students may not be adequately equipped to transfer their writing skills to real-world tasks. Consequently, the findings not only highlight gaps in student competence but also point to potential limitations in current pedagogical approaches, emphasizing the need to re-examine how business writing is taught, practiced, and assessed in higher education.

Table 2: Challenges encountered by BSOA-2 students on their report writing

<i>Writing difficulty area</i>	<i>Control group</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
Sentence structure	2.68	Intermediate
Idea development	2.64	Intermediate
Grammatical accuracy	2.77	Intermediate
Overall writing difficulty	2.70	Intermediate

*Data presented is based on the gathered data from 2017-2018

The data presented in Table 2 show that students experienced persistent difficulties in sentence structure, idea development, and grammatical accuracy. The gathered mean scores remained at an intermediate level, indicating that while students demonstrated basic awareness of writing conventions, they struggled to consistently organise ideas, construct grammatically accurate sentences, and maintain coherence throughout their written work. These findings reflect well-documented issues in higher education writing, where weaknesses in syntactic control and discourse organisation limit overall writing quality (Bhatia 2017; Wingate 2018). These difficulties are often associated with limited opportunities for guided practice, explicit modelling, and formative feedback.

However, these results should be interpreted with caution, as the use of mean scores may obscure important variations in students' individual writing abilities and specific areas of difficulty. It is also possible that the assessment tools used did not fully capture the complexity of writing performance, particularly higher-order skills such as argumentation and audience awareness. Furthermore, the persistence of these difficulties may not solely reflect student limitations but could also indicate gaps in instructional design, including insufficient scaffolding and limited integration of process-oriented writing approaches.

Recent studies further emphasise that writing difficulties are multifaceted, involving not only linguistic competence but also cognitive and organisational skills such as planning, idea integration, and audience awareness (Calle-Alvarez 2020). Collectively, the findings align with earlier assertions that effective writing instruction must explicitly address genre expectations, organisation, and language accuracy (Bhatia 2017; Wingate 2018).

Table 3: Level of student's awareness of written report rubric criteria

Awareness indicator	Mean	Interpretation
English in written communication	2.81	Moderately aware
Writing performance standards knowledge	2.63	Moderately aware
Overall mean	2.72	Moderately aware

*Data presented is based on the gathered data from 2017-2018

According to Table 3, BSOA-2 students were at the middle level of awareness of written report rubric criteria. There was a slightly higher score in the awareness of English in written communication, which means that students had a reasonable idea of the usage of the language and the grammatical rules. In the meantime, knowledge of writing performance standards comprising some writing performance expectations, for example, organisation of content and performance expectations was also moderately comprehended yet they were slightly lower as compared to language awareness.

The moderate level of awareness implies that although the students are familiar with the ru-

bric criteria to some extent, they might not understand how such criteria can help them to write effectively. This is consistent with the studies that suggest that rubrics are capable of enhancing the knowledge of the students about their writing expectations and assist in the clarification of criteria, yet such knowledge has not yet been brought to its full extent unless supported by clear instructions and practice (Bidna 2024).

Also, it has been found that when students participate in rubric-based assessment and self-assessment activities, their perception of performance standards and writing criteria improves, which may result in the development of better writing and self-control (Taylor et al. 2024; Bidna 2024). This substantiates the observation that moderate awareness might not be adequate to the high-quality writing performance, it needs to be supplemented by guided reflection, metacognitive training, and rubric-engaged instruction to enhance the comprehension and practice of students.

Modules in Business Report Writing and Business Communication: Communicate for Success

The researcher developed a set of instructional modules with the goal of enhancing the written and oral communication competencies of students enrolled in Business Report Writing and Business Communication courses. These modules are designed to strengthen essential professional communication skills, including clarity of expression, organisation of ideas, grammatical accuracy, audience awareness, and effective use of formal business formats. By integrating structured lessons, guided practice, and reflective activities, the modules aim to improve students' overall communication proficiency and readiness for academic and workplace demands.

The researcher introduces modules in *Business Report Writing and Business Communication: Communicate for Success*, a comprehensive instructional initiative intended to support students' academic and professional development through systematic and scaffolded learning experiences. The modules are carefully designed to address the common challenges faced by students in business writing and communication tasks, such as difficulty in organising ideas, applying appropriate tone and format, and

adhering to formal writing conventions. Each module incorporates clear learning objectives, sample models, rubric-based assessments, and opportunities for feedback to help students progressively build their skills.

This instructional program emphasises the development of both written and oral communication competencies by providing learners with practical, real-world tasks that simulate workplace communication scenarios. Through activities such as business report writing, professional correspondence, presentations, and collaborative discussions, students are encouraged to apply communication principles in meaningful contexts. The modular approach allows for flexibility in instruction, enabling teachers to adapt content to students' needs while ensuring consistent exposure to essential communication standards.

This project proposal outlines the key components of the instructional modules, including their objectives, implementation strategies, and anticipated outcomes. The successful implementation of these modules is expected to result in improved student performance in business writing and communication, increased confidence in professional interactions, and greater awareness of communication standards and expectations. Moreover, the use of structured modules promotes independent learning, self-regulation, and critical thinking among students.

Through this initiative, the *Communicate for Success* modules aim to create a supportive and engaging learning environment that fosters effective communication skills and professional readiness. While academic institutions often focus on technical and disciplinary knowledge, this project underscores the importance of equipping students with strong communication competencies that are essential for success in both academic and professional settings. By promoting clarity, organisation, and professionalism in communication, the modules contribute to the holistic development of learners and prepare them to succeed in their future careers.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the writing skills, writing challenges, and rubric awareness of BSOA-2 students in Business Report Writing and Business

Communication courses and evaluated the effectiveness of a structured instructional module as an intervention. The findings revealed clear and consistent differences between the control and experimental groups across all measured indicators.

Results from Table 1 showed that the control group demonstrated an intermediate level of writing performance in organisation, formatting, and development of ideas, while the experimental group attained a proficient level across all writing indicators after exposure to the instructional modules. These results indicate that although students possessed basic familiarity with business writing conventions, explicit and scaffold instruction significantly enhanced their ability to organise ideas, develop content, and apply formal writing standards effectively.

Table 2 further revealed that students encountered persistent challenges in sentence structure, grammatical accuracy, and idea development, particularly among those in the control group. The experimental group, however, showed marked improvement in all identified difficulty areas, suggesting that targeted instructional support reduced common writing problems and strengthened students' control over both language form and content. These findings affirm that writing difficulties are not solely linguistic in nature but are also influenced by cognitive and organisational skills that can be improved through structured instruction.

Moreover, findings from Table 3 indicated that students exhibited only moderate awareness of writing skill components and rubric criteria. While learners recognised individual elements such as grammar and organisation, their limited metacognitive understanding of how these components interact constrained their ability to self-regulate and improve their writing. The integration of rubric-based instruction and reflective activities within the modules contributed to increased awareness and alignment with writing standards.

Overall, the results confirm that the *Communicate for Success* modules were effective in improving students' writing performance, reducing writing challenges, and enhancing rubric awareness. The study underscores the importance of explicit, rubric-guided, and scaffolded instructional approaches in developing stu-

dents' academic and professional writing competence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that higher education institutions, particularly those offering business programs, integrate structured instructional modules in Business Report Writing and Business Communication courses to systematically address students' common writing challenges. Emphasis should be placed on scaffold and genre-based instruction, including explicit modelling, guided practice, and progressive writing tasks, to strengthen students' understanding of professional writing conventions and enhance their ability to organise ideas, develop content, and maintain grammatical accuracy. Incorporating rubric-guided assessment and reflective activities within writing instruction is also advised, as these strategies have been shown to promote metacognitive awareness, self-regulated learning, and alignment with academic standards. In addition, providing continuous formative feedback throughout the writing process can help students refine their skills and overcome persistent difficulties in sentence structure and coherence. Faculty development programs focusing on effective writing pedagogy, rubric design, and feedback strategies are recommended to ensure that instructors are well-equipped to deliver these modules effectively. Finally, future research is encouraged to examine the long-term impact of instructional modules on student writing performance and explore the application of similar approaches to oral and workplace communication skills, thereby extending the benefits of structured communication instruction across multiple contexts.

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