

Using the Genre-Based Approach in Enriching the Writing Proficiency of Communication Students at Bulacan State University

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effectiveness of the genre-based approach in enhancing the writing proficiency of freshman mass communication students. Specifically, it examined improvements in five key areas of writing: organization, content, grammar, mechanics, and style. Using a pre-test and post-test design, the students were first tasked to write an essay titled "The Relevance of Writing to My Profession," which was followed by a six-week intervention focused on editorial writing. The intervention included lectures on the structural features and communicative purposes of editorials, analysis of sample texts, and student activities such as research, interviews, and discussions on the issue of charter change. A second composition, an editorial expressing the students' stance on the issue, served as the post-test. The compositions were evaluated by three experienced language teachers using the Analytic Scale for Rating Composition Tasks by Brown and Bailey (1984). Results showed significant improvements across all five components of writing, with style showing the most progress and grammar the least. The findings affirm the effectiveness of the genre-based approach in improving students' overall writing proficiency, particularly in helping them convey meaning more clearly and use structural conventions effectively. The study recommends further integration of genre-based instruction in writing courses across disciplines and educational levels.

Keywords: genre-based approach; text types; structural features; writing proficiency; English language arts

INTRODUCTION

There are already six language macroskills, namely: speaking, listening, viewing, reading, and representing, reflecting the expanded nature of language learning and communication in the digital age (Barrot, 2015). Finichiaro and Bonoms (1973) maintain that among the activities or skills taught and done in the classrooms, one of the most difficult skills is writing; far more difficult is the mastery of it or achieving proficiency. That is why Celce-Murcia (2006) has all the reasons to assert that the ability to express one's ideas in writing in a second or foreign language and to do so with reasonable coherence and accuracy is a major achievement. She goes further in maintaining that many native speakers of English never truly master this skill.

Writing, to Widdowson (1983), is an interactive process or interaction, as Murray (1970) earlier opined. It is "a complex, cognitive process that requires sustained intellectual effort over a considerable period of time," White and Arndt (1991) underscored (in Nunan, 2009). Thus, learning or mastering the writing skill is not an easy task for "the ability to write requires syntactic, lexical, semantic, and rhetorical knowledge" (Gayeta, 2002). Aside from these requirements, Wingersky et al. (1995) articulate that student-writers also have to gain control over their ideas and manage to get them down to paper.

Teaching writing is equally difficult, if not more complicated and laborious, than learning of the skill. It is for this reason that Sibayan (1976) emphasizes that language arts teachers should remember that one of their foremost concerns is to assist the students in developing skills in writing.





Writing is introduced to learners from the very beginning of their formal education. Both in primary and secondary levels, learners are expected to produce written texts which are in their expected level of proficiency. The teaching of writing in basic education, though, seems to be problematic. While listening remains the 'Cinderella skill' because it is often neglected among the four macro skills in language arts classes as Nunan (2009) pointed out, writing, on the other hand, is usually taught in an ineffective way (Villamin, et al., 1994). The focus of teaching writing seems to rest on the accuracy of form, which is grammar which undermines the students' ability and creativity to generate and express ideas. Many language arts teachers seem to believe that if students could master the prescriptive rules of grammar, it would also follow that they could produce effective written compositions. But the condition in the field seems to prove something else, as the observation of Villamin, et al. (1994), that "The students may do the composition without experience, without confidence, with minimal ideas or even with zero ideas, a slender vocabulary, skewed grammar, and the vaguest notion of punctuation" (p. 71). Usually, the students are just asked to write, yet they are not taught how to do it effectively. To further complicate the matter, the same students who were taught writing ineffectively will enter higher institutions of learning and bring with them their ill-bred attitude towards the skill which they consider as boring and even traumatic. Eventually, college instructors of writing will have to face the challenging task of bridging the gap between the students' level of writing proficiency which is usually below than the expected level they should have reached and writing the different genres they will have to produce while they are working for their degrees and once they join the professional world.

This research is concerned about investigating the use of the genre-based approach in teaching writing in a college classroom and its significant effects to the writing proficiency of Mass Communication students. The researcher used 30 Mass Communication majoring in Journalism students as his respondents and chose the state university, i.e. Bulacan State University, where he is teaching writing courses as the setting of this study.

Bulacan State University (BulSU) started as a technical school established in 1904. It now has five satellite campuses in the province and its main campus in Malolos City houses about 35,958 students taking technical, undergraduate, and post-graduate courses. The College of Arts and Letters is one of the thirteen colleges in the main campus of this university which offers courses on Mass Communication.

At BulSU, the Mass Communication course has two majors namely: broadcasting and journalism. Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication major in Broadcasting was first offered in 2004, and only after four years in 2008 when Bachelor of Arts in Mass Communication major in Journalism accepted enrollees.

The researcher used the 30 first year journalism majoring students. They had taken their English 113 (Oral Communication) during the first semester, and they took English 123 (Composition Writing) with the researcher in the second semester. Although in their curriculum, major subjects will be offered in their second year of study, the researcher would like to introduce them to the genre of editorial, one of the journalistic genres they will be expected to produce, in their writing class and in so doing incorporate the genre-based approach to teaching writing.

Moreover, the researcher would like to determine if using the genre-based approach to teaching writing will have significant effect to enhance the writing proficiency of the student-respondents in writing the genre of editorial.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study has its foundations on the studies of Swales (1990), Bhatia (1993), and Dudley-Evans (1986) which emphasize the significance of incorporating linguistic analysis to language teaching. Corollary to these studies is not just describing the linguistic features of a discourse, but more of a linguistic explanation why a specific genre is used by a group in a specific field or discipline.

Since the mid-1980s, considerable attention has been paid to the genre-based approach to teaching writing. In terms of writing in a second language, The Routledge Encyclopedia of Language Teaching and Learning has defined the genre approach as "a framework for language instruction based on examples of a particular genre" (Byram, 2004; p. 234). The genre framework supports the premise that students' writing with generalized, systematic guiding principles produces meaningful passages.





Swales (1990) defines genre as "a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes." His definition offers the basic idea that there are certain conventions or rules which are generally associated with a writer's purpose. For example, personal letters tell us about (their writers') private stories, film reviews analyze movies for potential viewers, and police reports describe what happened in a crime. Most genres use conventions related to communicative purposes; a personal letter starts with a cordial question in a friendly mood because its purpose is to maintain good relationships with friends, and an argument essay emphasizes its thesis since it aims at making an argument (Kim & Kim, 2005).

Swales (1990) and Martin (1984), as cited in Kay and Dudley-Evans (1998), share an essential viewpoint that all genres control a set of communicative purposes within certain social situations and that each genre has its own structural quality according to those communicative purposes. Hence, the communicative purposes and the structural features should be identified when genres are used in writing classes.

The structural features that genres are made up of include both standards of organization structure and linguistic features. Standards of organizational structure refer to how the text is sequenced. For instance, Hammond (1992), as cited in Paltridge (1996), describes the common organizational structure in a formal letter which purpose is to file a complaint and suggest a proper action to solve the problem as follows: "sender's address, receiver's address, greetings, identification of complaint, justification of complaint, demand action, sign-off, and sender's name."

Common sets of linguistic features can constitute a text type. Text type is defined by Biber (1988), as cited in Paltridge (1996), as a class of texts having similarities in linguistic forms regardless of the genres. The phrase 'text type' is a way of classifying and defining different types of language interaction both spoken and written. It refers to the purpose of a text and the way it is written. Text types may be classified as instruction, explanation, recounts, information reports, exposition, and narrative. In considering a text, one has to think about its context, (i.e., topic, purpose, and audience) and language, (i.e., text structure, grammatical features, and vocabulary). For example, Hammond (1992), cited in Paltridge (1996), examines the characteristics of several genres and categorized them according to similarities in text types: recipes are known to have the text type of procedure, personal letters are used to tell private anecdotes, advertisements deal with description, news articles have the text type of recounting, scientific papers prefer passive voice over active voice in presenting reports and academic papers are likely to have embedded clauses. This means that different text types integrate distinctive knowledge and different sets of skills, so teachers should introduce a variety of genres to have students understand and practice different sets of skills.

While these issues are considered by writing teachers, they cannot simply dismiss the fact that one of the most serious challenges is that most of the students in their classes, particularly in tertiary level, consider to practice a specific career that is why students weigh the importance of writing to their future profession. Consequently, their idea of the role of writing to their field tends to influence their attitude towards learning of how to write.

Having this crisis at hand, Bizzell (1982) reminds the teachers that student writing in colleges and universities should not be viewed solely as an individually-oriented, inner-directed cognitive process, but as much as an acquired response to the discourse conventions which arise from preferred ways of creating and communicating knowledge within their particular communities. In the same vein, if teaching of writing will be viewed from this perspective, there will be small room for doubt that writing will be a meaningful task for the students and gradually they will realize that it is more of a socially-situated act as Faigley and Hansen (1985) maintain. As what they pointed out as primary research agenda for Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC):

If teachers of English are to offer courses that truly prepare students to write in other disciplines, they will have to explore why those disciplines study certain subjects, why certain methods of inquiry are sanctioned, how the conventions of a discipline shape a text in the discipline, how individual writers represent themselves in the text, how a text is read and disseminated, and how one text influences subsequent texts. In short, teachers of English will have to adopt a rhetorical approach to the study of writing in the disciplines, an approach that examines the negotiation of meaning among writers, readers, and subject matters (Faigley and Hansen, 1985: 149 in Swales, 1990).



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Thus, the most important question the genre approach would like to address is why do members of specific discourse communities use the language the way they do? Experts agree that communicative purpose is one of the key characteristics of a genre; that "genres are how things get done when language is used to accomplish them" (Martin, 1985).

Genre approach in language teaching is supported by the works of Halliday (1985), Swales (1990), and Bhatia (1993), which seek to identify the communicative purposes and linguistic features employed by expert users of a particular genre and explain these choices in terms of social and psychological contexts (Henry & Roseberry, 1998). The primary aim of the genre-based approach to teaching writing is "to raise the students' awareness of both the rhetorical organization and the linguistic features closely associated with the genre" (Henry & Roseberry, 1998).

Taking off from this viewpoint, the researcher would like to see if acquainting his mass communication students majoring in journalism with the genre of editorial would have any significant effect on their proficiency in writing this type of article. The premise is that the familiarity with a genre that learners gain from analytical reading of examples of it and exposure to its structural features will assist them in producing examples of the genre themselves (Malmkjar, 1991).

Essential to the study of genres is the analysis of turns known as moves. In the seminal work of Swales on the genre of article introductions and the subsequent studies by other scholars (Dudley-Evans, 1986; McKinlay, 1982; Peng, 1987), moves are seen as textual elements that are rudiments that seem to be indispensable in writing a text to be accepted as a type of genre.

Swales (1981) suggested that there are four basic moves writers of articles use in writing their introductions, which include move 1: establishing the field; move 2: summarizing previous research; move 3: preparing for present research (often by identifying a gap in previous research); and move 4: introducing present research. Swales found that these four moves are present in the majority of article introductions that he analyzed.

Conceptual Framework

In order to determine if using the genre-based approach to teaching writing would enhance the writing proficiency of the first-year Mass Communication students at Bulacan State University, this study used the following conceptual framework. Figure 1 illustrates the flow of the study.

In the paradigm, the pretest was done primarily to determine the threshold level or the level of proficiency of the respondents before the intervention of the treatment in the form of the genre-based approach to teaching writing. It gave the researcher an idea of how learners write, which could be a reflection of how they viewed writing and how they were taught to write in the past. The Analytic Scale for Rating Composition Tasks developed by Brown and Bailey (1984) was used to gauge the respondents' compositions. It focuses evaluation on the five rudiments of writing, namely, organization, content, grammar, mechanics, and style.

The intervention of the genre-based approach followed and served as the second step in the paradigm. A genre-based approach ensures that respondents understand three important points, i.e., writing is a process; it is a communication; and it serves a purpose in a social context in which it is used.

The use of the genre-based approach lasted for six weeks, which started off with the modeling part, which included exposing the learners to the genre of editorial by providing them examples of such, lectures on the functions and purposes of editorial, and basic analysis of the genre's structural features and language; joint negation by the teacher and learners was the next phase of the approach in which the respondents were asked to perform some activities that encouraged manipulation of language forms like construction of a lead for an editorial, the use of transitional devices, and how to express agreement or disagreement on some issues. The respondents were also asked to conduct a series of research and interviews regarding charter change, which students used as their springboard in writing editorials. The last phase of the genre-based approach was the learners' independent construction of the editorial, which started with drafting or the outlining of the paper, writing, and the peer and teacher editing of the written compositions.



At the last part of the paradigm, the respondents were asked to write an editorial regarding their stand about the issue of charter change, which would serve as the post-test of the study after the intervention of the treatment. It is expected that the focus of student-respondents would shift from grammar and mechanics, which are the focus of the traditional approach to teaching writing, to style, content, and organization, which the genre-based

approach zeroes in on. The scores in the pre-test and in the post-test were compared and interpreted from the statistical point of view and used to determine if the intervention of the genre-based approach enhanced the writing proficiency of the respondents.

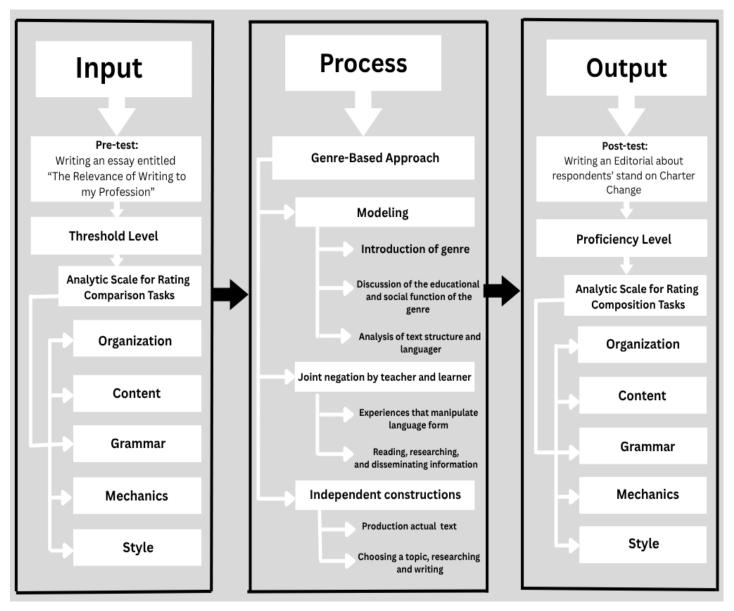


Figure 1. The Research Paradigm

Research Questions

This study used the genre-based approach to teaching writing to see its effect on the writing proficiency of firstyear AB Journalism students at Bulacan State University, Malolos City.

Specifically, the researcher sought to answer the following questions:

- What were the scores of the respondents prior to the implementation of the genre-based approach in terms of the following writing criteria:
 - a) organization, b) content, c) grammar, d) mechanics, and e) style?
- How may the written compositions be described in light of the five given criteria?
- What were the scores of the respondents after the intervention of the treatment in light of the five criteria?



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- 4. To what extent can the writing proficiency of the respondents be related to their exposure to the genre-based approach?
- 5. How may the difference between the pre- and post-test scores be interpreted?
- 6. What are the pedagogical implications of using a genre-based approach in improving writing proficiency?

LITERATURE REVIEW

This part presents the researcher's readings on relevant writings and studies on the topic under study that are closely related to or have some bearing upon the problem to serve as support to the concept of the study.

Purposes and Academic Foundations of Writing in Genre-Based Approach

Writing is one of the main activities students do inside the class. Raimes (1987) wrote of six pedagogical issues of why teachers ask their students to write. She found out that teachers ask their students to write for purposes of reinforcement, training, imitation, communication, fluency, and learning. She noted, however, that though the ends are clearly determined by the teachers, the means have to be reinforced still to have the students write.

The current study is related to the aforementioned research because basically a genre-based approach is a goaloriented method of teaching writing. The researcher would like to examine to what extent the knowledge of the purposes in writing could influence the proficiency level of the respondents in writing texts. "Genres are how things are done when language is used to accomplish them" (Martin, 1985), and this situation is only possible if the communicative purposes for why a specific genre is used are clearly specified. However, the present research will be different from the former because it will not aim to determine the purposes of writing the genre of editorial but will focus on the effect of knowing those purposes to enhance the respondents' proficiency in producing the texts.

Amat study (2002) on the application of alternative strategies in teaching writing cited specific reasons of writing difficulties with teachers. Among these reasons are the students' lack of interest, knowledge, and abilities of the people they are writing for and the purpose for which they are writing; materials were not related to students' interest, students did not see the usefulness of writing, writing models were not made available to them, and the students had difficulty in organizing ideas about the specific topic and also in analyzing and classifying any background knowledge.

Relative to this study, the present research aims to investigate if using the genre-based approach to teaching writing will in any way improve the conditions that were observed by Amat in her study. The introduction of the genre will not just acquaint the learners with the structural features of editorials but also the communicative purposes why do journalists write one. Nonetheless, the current study differs from the former in nature; a corollary to Amat's study (2002) is identifying the problems and looking for possible solutions, while this study starts by pointing out solutions and seeing their possible effect on the problems.

Students' Exposure to Genre and Structural Elements and their Role in Writing Proficiency

In the same vein, Cayat (1994), as quoted by Sampang (2005), enumerates the factors affecting the writing performance of the learners as perceived by the teacher. These factors include physical, mental, psychological, emotional, social, school environment, teacher-related, and student-related. This will bring about the realization that writing is not a simple task for the students, and in performing this skill, varied, complicated, and interrelated aspects come into play that teachers have to take into consideration if they want the teaching of writing to be an effective and productive endeavor.

In response to this, Tanumtanum (1995) recommends that teachers can help students hone their writing skills through skillful questions that help students discover more details and think about facts and ideas related to the subject, use of pictures that stimulate students to think and create ideas, situations generating a process whereby students discover and reformulate their ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning, and a positive workshop environment for students.





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Schema-based pre-writing and interactional feedback-based pre-revising strategies are what Gayeta (2002) found effective to aid students in producing compositions that exhibited more substance, better organization, and more sophisticated vocabulary. When the students were exposed to different reading materials and when they had interactional feedback, significant improvement was observed in their compositions because student-writers had more background from which to draw materials for writing, and they were informed of their specific errors and their locations.

A genre-based approach in teaching writing encourages the use of modelling or the exposure of the learners to samples of the genre they will be expected to produce. It is for this reason that the current study is related to the two aforementioned researches. Technically, the genre-based approach paradigm of modelling, joint negotiation of learners and teacher, and independent construction of the learners serve as the guide of what the teacher must do, while the process approach, which includes the pre-writing activities Tanumtanum (1995) and Gayeta (2002) found to be effective, is what the learners do. Nonetheless, the genre-based approach goes beyond the principles of the process approach because it also orients the learners with the structural features of the text, which includes the "moves" or the certain fixed form of a genre, and the specialist lexis, or the mode of expression used by people in the field they wish to join.

In the same light, Baula (1996) found that writers' abilities were developed and improved through providing oral interactions of the language to use in a composition lesson and conducting intensive drills on language use through reading and spelling lessons. This study stressed the provision of oral interaction, which involves finding ideas about the topic; thinking about the topic; letting ideas interact, develop, and organize themselves; and thinking about the audience and the purpose of the writing task.

In an academic setting where students are required to write different compositions, they should be introduced to different types of writing. It is believed that it is almost impossible to survive in the educational and professional world without proficiency in writing. Writing a paper, i.e., a term paper, seminar, thesis, or dissertation, remains a major requirement before students obtain a degree from any academic institution.

Genre-Based Approach in Enhancing Student's Writing Performance

It is found out by Kim & Kim (2005) in their studies with Korean students' writing proficiency that the genrebased approach works best when used with the process approach. In the combined process called the processgenre approach, the learners were not only informed of the structural and the linguistic features of a particular text, but there was also a significant improvement because of the teachers' facilitation in the form of appropriate inputs of knowledge and skills throughout the process of writing. The study concluded by recognizing the immense help to the writing proficiency of second language learners, in this case Koreans, if they are provided with a model that will amplify their awareness of the organizational structure and linguistic features of a genre. The present study is patterned after the study of Kim & Kim (2005) and will try to probe if the intervention of the genre-based approach will also work with students in the Philippine classroom setting. But the current study zeroes in on the genre of editorial and used Filipino mass communication students as student-respondents. In her study, Cabigao (2007) reviewed the winning pieces of journalistic articles of high school student-journalists and tried to investigate the recurring elements among them from the perspective of genre analysis. She found out that the distinct lexico-grammatical features present in the winning news, editorial, feature, and sport articles were the tense aspect and voice of the verbs, conjunctions, and the grammatical elements such as nouns, pronouns, adjectives, and adverbs. She pointed out further that the journalistic articles reviewed seemingly observed common move structures in the organization of ideas and indicated similarities in the choice of words that were also used as markers to attain communicative functions such as personal, representational, and regulatory. At the completion of the study, Cabigao (2007) concluded that the knowledge and skills in using idiomatic and figurative expressions, writing different types of sentences, proper sequencing of those, and putting them together in a coherent paragraph are essential factors in producing effective journalistic articles.

In the same vein, the current study would like to determine if introducing the genre of editorial to mass communication students would eventually have significant effects in enhancing their proficiency in writing the said journalistic article. The respondents to this study were first-year students who, though majoring in





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journalism, had not yet taken any major subject in their field of specialization. Similarly, Cabigao's respondents were high school students who did not have formal training in journalism in college. Nevertheless, the present study is unlike the previous study because the corpora of data and the manner in which they would be gathered would be entirely different. Moreover, Cabigao's study focused on content analysis-based genre, while this one is on teaching using the genre-based approach. The current study would use the findings of the study of Cabigao (2007) on genre analysis and borrow much on the principles of the moves she found present in the winning pieces of editorials.

In analyzing the major difference between articles that appear in journals and magazines, Arayata (2004) concluded that there are indeed significant discrepancies between the two types of articles from the point of view of genre analysis. She discovered that they differ in point of view in writing; while journal articles remain objective in the presentation of their points, magazine articles appear to be subjective. The current study is related to the one mentioned above in the sense that the genre of editorial, which would be introduced to the respondents of this study, should also display characteristics that are found in journal articles, i.e., the objectivity and directness. It is different, however, from the aforementioned study because it would not analyze the genre of the editorial but would look into the effect of a teaching approach in introducing editorial that is based on the results of such analysis.

Mercado (2006) tried to investigate the distinct features in the research articles with regard to lexico-grammatical, text patterning, and cognitive structures. The dissertation was primarily interested to examine the rhetorical style of Filipino writers of the genre under study and the use of cohesion and hedges that revealed the rhetorical styles of Filipino writers of research in linguistics, mathematics, and science. In this study, the researcher determined tense-aspect and voice of the verb, dependent clause tokens and their structural positions, and conjunctions and their structural positions as the most dominant lexico-grammatical features of research articles in linguistics, mathematics, and science prepared by Filipino writers. He further affirmed that the length development appeared as the most dominant features of text-patterning of research articles in linguistics, mathematics, and science prepared by Filipino writers. Non-verbal materials such as tables and figures, mathematical symbols and referencing also characterize the text-patterning of the genre examined.

The recent study is related to the abovementioned study because both focus on the study of genre, one of which centers on the analysis of the distinct features of research articles written by Filipino writers and the other zeroes in on teaching the structural features and communicative purposes of editorial. The studies differed though on the extent of the study; the dissertation covered research articles across the disciplines of linguistics, mathematics, and science as the examined genres while this paper is limited to introducing the genre of editorial to Mass Communication students and looking into its result in improving the respondents' writing proficiency.

Using the two approaches in teaching writing namely process and genre, Villanueva (2007) developed instructional materials in teaching correspondence. Process approach focuses on the processes of writing where students are encouraged to become involved in planning, organizing, drafting, revising and editing of a paper, while genre approach acknowledges that writing takes place in a social situation. Process approach views writing as a recursive and interactive rather than a fixed linear activity, whereas analysis and imitation are the key features of the genre approach according to Badger and White (2000). In her study, "Using the Process-Genre Approach in Teaching Business Correspondence," Villanueva (2007) concluded that the teaching strategy best suited to the teaching of business correspondence is the inductive method, where samples are presented to the students for easy understanding, collaborative learning, and interactive and communicative learning. She added that the text type to be used in writing business correspondence is persuasive and expository since the genre, i.e., business correspondence, calls for a structure of presentation that is convincing and appealing to the readers of letters of that kind.

Manguerra (2006) in her paper "Instructional Materials in Teaching Technical Writing to College Students of De La Salle University-Dasmariñas" prepared modules as instructional materials for her classes in technical writing, which are based on process and genre approaches. She found out in her research that many teachers emphasized the use of the authentic and semi-authentic texts to be used in developing instructional materials.



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According to teachers who were interviewed in the progress of this study, having a model for the students to follow provides great help for them to write technical compositions. She concluded that the process-genre approach when combined, produced better performance in writing tasks than using the traditional approach.

Taking off from the same perspective, the current research would like to establish the connection between the use of a genre-based approach to teaching writing and improvement in the learners' writing proficiency. Authentic materials in the form of editorials found in two national newspapers (Philippine Daily Inquirer and Manila Bulletin) were used as models for the students to analyze before writing their own editorials. The present study, though, limits itself to the genre of editorial and will not include other journalistic articles like news, features, and sports, unlike the aforesaid study that included various genres in technical writing.

METHOD

This research study employed the descriptive method in describing and analyzing the data gathered through the pre- and post-tests and written compositions. The three experienced language teachers who served as rater-evaluators used the Analytic Scale for Rating Composition Task developed by Brown & Bailey (1984) in gauging the respondents' written compositions in terms of the five rudiments of writing, namely, organization, content, grammar, mechanics, and style. The data gathered thereof were used to determine if the genre-based approach affected the writing proficiency of the respondents.

Research Design

This research is a descriptive study reporting on the student-writers' development in writing compositions employing the genre-based approach. Basically, the aim of the study was to see if there would be significant improvement in the respondents' writing after the researcher employed the genre-based approach in his writing class. Descriptive research, as Mason and Bramble (1997) define, "represents a broad spectrum of research activities having the common purpose of describing situations, events, or phenomena." It is conducted to develop knowledge that could be used as a foundation and springboard on which the problems and explanations of subsequent research will be based. In this study, the researcher attempted to determine and describe the proficiency level in writing of the respondents before and after the implementation of the genre-based approach to teaching writing in terms of the five rudiments of writing. This was made possible by asking the respondents to write two compositions, which served as the pre- and post-tests in the study. The Analytic Scale for Rating Composition Tasks (Brown & Bailey, 1984) was used to gauge the two compositions, and the data gathered are interpreted through a statistical instrument.

A. Population and Samples of the Study

The respondents in this study are thirty (30) first-year Mass Communication Major in Journalism students at Bulacan State University (BulSU), Malolos City. There were five sections of first year who were taking Mass Communication at Bulacan State University-College of Arts and Letters in which the four sections were majoring in broadcasting and one in journalism. The researcher handled all these sections in his Communication Arts (Writing Course), but he deliberately chose the journalism class because they would be the ones expected to write comparatively more than the broadcasting counterparts once they join the field.

Evaluation Method

The respondents' written outputs were checked individually employing the analytic scoring patterned after Brown & Bailey (1984:39). The researcher invited three experienced language teachers to serve as raters of respondents' compositions. The first two are Ph.D. holders in Linguistics from the Philippine Normal University and the last one is a candidate for a Ph.D. in Language Education from the University of Santo Tomas.

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	20-18 Excellent to Good	17–15 Good to Adequate	14–12 Adequate to Fair	11–6 Unacceptable–not	5–1 college-level work		
I. Organization: Introduction, Body, and Conclusion	Appropriate title, effective introductory paragraph, topic is stated, leads to body; transitional expressions used; arrangement of material shows plan (could be outlined by reader); supporting evidence given for generalizations; conclusion logical and complete	Adequate title, introduction, and conclusion; body of essay is acceptable, but some evidence may be lacking, some ideas aren't fully developed; sequence is logical but transitional expressions may be absent or misused	Mediocre or scant introduction or conclusion; problems with the order of ideas in body; the generalizations may not be fully supported by the evidence given; problems of organization interfere	Shaky or minimally recognizable introduction; organization can barely be seen; severe problems with ordering of ideas; lack of supporting evidence; conclusion weak or illogical; inadequate effort at organization	Absence of introduction or conclusion; no apparent organization of body; severe lack of supporting evidence; writer has not made any effort to organize the composition (could not be outlined by reader)		
II. Logical development of ideas: Content	Essay addresses the assigned topic; the ideas are concrete and thoroughly developed; no extraneous material; essay reflects thought	Essay addresses the issues but misses some points; ideas could be more fully developed; some extraneous material is present	Development of ideas not complete or essay is somewhat off the topic; paragraphs aren't divided exactly right	Ideas incomplete; essay does not reflect careful thinking or was hurriedly written; inadequate effort in area of content	Essay is completely inadequate and does not reflect college-level work; no apparent effort to consider the topic carefully		
ll. Grammar	Native-like fluency in English grammar; correct use of relative clauses, prepositions, modals, articles, verb forms, and tense sequencing; no fragments or run-on sentences	Advanced proficiency in English grammar; some grammar problems don't influence communication, although the reader is aware of them; no fragments or run-on sentences	Ideas are getting through to the reader, but grammar problems are apparent and have a negative effect on communication; run-on sentences or fragments present	Numerous serious grammar problems interfere with communication of the writer's ideas; grammar review of some areas clearly needed; difficult to read sentences	Severe grammar problems interfere greatly with the message; reader can't understand what the writer was trying to say; unintelligible sentence structure		
V. Punctuation, spelling, and mechanics	Correct use of English writing conventions: left and right margins, all needed capitals, paragraphs indented, punctuation and spelling; very neat	Some problems with writing conventions or punctuation; occasional spelling errors; left margin correct; paper is neat and legible	Uses general writing conventions but has errors; spelling problems distract reader; punctuation errors interfere with ideas	Serious problems with format of paper; parts of essay not legible; errors in sentence punctuation and final punctuation; unacceptable to educated readers	Complete disregard for English writing conventions; paper illegible; obvious capitals missing, no margins, severe spelling problems		
V. Style and quality of expression	Precise vocabulary usage; use of parallel structures; concise; register good	Attempts variety; good vocabulary; not wordy; register OK; style fairly concise	Some vocabulary misused; lacks awareness of register; may be too wordy	Poor expression of ideas; problems in vocabulary; lacks variety of structure	Inappropriate use of vocabulary; no concept of register or sentence variety		

Figure 2. Analytical Scale for Rating Composition Tasks (Brown & Bailey, 1984; pp. 39-41) in Brown, H.D., 2004; 244-245

Research Instrument

The researcher used the Analytic Scale for Rating Composition Tasks to rate the respondents' compositions. This was developed by Brown & Bailey in 1984 to give teachers a more effective way of gauging students' composition. This instrument was used because its range of scoring is wider and has equal distribution to the five components of writing. The rating will cover the five writing rudiments, namely organization, content, grammar, mechanics, and style.

Research Procedure

The following steps were carried out in conducting the research:

Identification of the Participants and Initial Writing (Pre-test)

After obtaining permission from his adviser, the researcher used his Journalism majoring students as respondents for the study. To serve as the pre-test, the respondents were asked to write an essay entitled 'The Relevance of



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Writing to My Profession.' They were given two weeks (six class hours) to produce the written composition, and the results provided the researcher data as regards the level of the respondents' writing proficiency before the treatment was given.

Implementation of the Genre-Based Approach

The treatment in the form of introducing the genre-based approach to teaching writing was given to the group after they submitted the first composition. It included two-week (six hours) lectures on editorial, its purposes, and structures. Students were provided some examples of the genre, i.e. editorial, for them to be acquainted with the text type, and particular attention was given on the mode of expression of editorial writers, namely what words are used and what are not. Another week was given to the respondents to conduct research on charter change. Specifically, they were asked to obtain some clippings from newspapers, download some materials from the internet, read parts of Constitution books that discuss the aforementioned topic, and lastly, interview a Political Science or Law graduate or professor about charter change and their personal views and stands on it. After all these were accomplished, the respondents gathered in the class, formed five (5) groups and were asked to share materials and information they have accumulated. During the process, the respondents were enjoined to scrutinize their group mates' arguments, to make necessary comments and questions while it is in progress, and arrive at a conclusion after weighing all the cons and pros of the issue whether they are in favor or against charter change.

Writing after the Intervention (Post-test)

Writing the editorial was done; the respondents were given another week to work on their editorial. After the student-writers finished their first draft, they were invited to look for a partner who would serve as their editor. This is to give them an impression that their works would be read by other people; therefore, it is their job to clarify their points. Editors were given a checklist (Villamin, et al.,1994; 73-74) to serve as guidelines in editing their partner's work. Student-editors were reminded that their job as editor was not to change their partner's works, but just to make them clear and comprehensible.

Rating and Evaluating of the Pre- and Post-tests

Both compositions, the pre-test essay and editorial, were rated by the three experienced language teachers invited by the researcher to take part in this study. They were Ph.D. holders in Linguistics from the Philippine Normal University and the other is a Ph.D. in Language Education from the University of Santo Tomas.

Statistical Analysis

The researcher used descriptive statistics: Mean and Standard Deviation, to find the mean scores of the respondents in the five rudiments of writing namely: organization, content, grammar, mechanics, and style both in pre and post-tests; and t-test for Dependent Samples, to test the difference and the significant level between the pre- and post-test scores.

RESULTS

The following data were obtained:

Table 1: Comparison of the Means and t-values of the Five Writing Rudiments

	A	В	С	D	Е	Overall Mean
Post-test	13.87	13.61	14.64	15.01	13.00	70.12
Pre-test	11.45	10.92	12.52	12.72	11.18	58.79
t-value	6.17***	6.10***	6.70***	7.19***	8.10***	7.76***

A- Organization

C – Grammar

E - Style

B- Content

D – Mechanics

*** p < .001



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A. Organization (how the topic was stated, how sentences and paragraphs were arranged in a composition, and how transitional words were used to establish coherence in composition)

The mean score of the group is 11.45 during the pre-test, which is verbally interpreted as unacceptable—not college-level work. This means that the respondents' composition had a shaky or minimally recognizable introduction; organization could be barely seen; there were severe problems with the ordering of ideas; there was a lack of supporting evidence; the conclusion was weak or illogical; and there was inadequate effort at organization, which in the post-test increased to 13.87. Using the t-test for dependent samples, the scores obtained a *t*-value of 6.17, which is greater than the critical value of 3.659 at the 0.001 level of significance, which provides some empirical evidence that the respondents greatly improved in terms of organization.

B. Content (how concrete ideas were and how thoroughly they developed in writing)

The group recorded a mean score of 10.92 during the pre-test, which is verbally interpreted as unacceptable—not college-level work. This means that ideas were incomplete; the essay did not reflect careful thinking or was hurriedly written and reflected inadequate effort in content, which improved to 13.61 in the post-test. The t-test value of 6.10 was recorded, which is higher than the critical value of 3.659 at the 0.001 level of significance, which indicates significant improvement in terms of content.

C. Grammar (how effectively the writer got his/her message across the readers through the use of language in a native-like fluency in English grammar)

The respondents garnered a mean score of 12.52, which is verbally interpreted as adequate to fair. This denotes that the respondents' compositions contained ideas that were getting through to the readers, but grammar problems were apparent and had negative effects on communication. From a mean score of 12.52 in the pre-test, the respondents' scores have improved to 14.64 during the post-test. From the statistical perspective, the scores obtained a t-value of 6.7, which is higher than the critical value of 3.659 at 0.001 level of significance, which denotes significant improvement in terms of grammar. Among the five rudiments of writing used as a basis for rating compositions, grammar improved the least, as shown by the data gathered.

D. Mechanics (the correct use of English writing conventions, i.e., margins, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling)

The students got a mean score of 12.72, which is verbally interpreted as adequate to fair. This signifies that respondents' compositions used general writing conventions but have errors; spelling problems distracted the readers, and punctuation errors interfered with ideas. It rose to 15.01 after the intervention of the genre-based approach. The scores obtained a t-value of 7.19, which is higher than the critical value of 3.659 at the 0.001 level of significance, which shows significant improvement in terms of mechanics.

E. Style (the way the writer chose his/her words to express an idea, opinion, or feelings in written composition, and the use of parallel structures and concise and effective expressions)

The student-writers recorded a mean score of 11.18, which is verbally interpreted as unacceptable—not college-level work. This denotes that students' compositions displayed poor expression of ideas; there were problems in vocabulary; and they lacked variety of structure, which improved to 13.0 during the post-test. In terms of statistics, the scores obtained a t-value of 8.10, which is higher than the critical value of 3.659 at the 0.001 level of significance, which points out significant improvement in terms of style. Among the five rudiments of writing, style improves the most after the intervention.

F. Overall Proficiency/Mean Score

From an overall mean of 58.79 in the pre-test, the respondents' overall post-mean score rose to 70.12, interpreted verbally as an increase from unacceptable to adequate. In terms of statistics, the scores obtained a t-value of 7.76 which is higher than the critical value of 3.659 at the 0.001 level of significance, which points out significant improvement in all the rudiments of writing. This indicates that the genre-based approach has enhanced the writing proficiency of the respondents.



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DISCUSSION

The study revealed significant improvements in students' writing proficiency across all assessed areas organization, content, grammar, mechanics, and style—after the implementation of the genre-based approach. In terms of organization, students initially produced poorly structured compositions with weak introductions and minimal coherence, as reflected in their pre-test mean score of 11.45. Post-intervention, their scores improved to 13.87, with a t-value of 6.17, indicating a statistically significant enhancement in how ideas were ordered and connected. For content, the initial mean score of 10.92 suggested underdeveloped and rushed ideas. After the intervention, the score increased to 13.61, supported by a t-value of 6.10, signifying better idea development and clarity. Although grammar showed the least improvement, students still progressed from a mean of 12.52 to 14.64, with a t-value of 6.7 indicating a meaningful reduction in grammar-related issues affecting communication. In mechanics, which includes punctuation, capitalization, and spelling, students' scores rose from 12.72 to 15.01, and a t-value of 7.19 confirmed notable improvement in following writing conventions. The most significant gain was seen in style, with scores increasing from 11.18 to 13.0. This improvement, backed by a t-value of 8.10, demonstrated enhanced vocabulary use, sentence variation, and expression. Overall, the total mean score increased from 58.79 to 70.12, marking a shift from unacceptable to adequate writing proficiency. The t-value of 7.76 for the overall score confirmed that the genre-based approach significantly improved the students' writing skills across all measured components.

Furthermore, the study also reveals that students do not usually plan what they are about to write in their compositions. They tend to write whatever comes in their minds, which they believe to be relevant to the topic they are developing in their paper. Thus, their papers lack structure and display poor organization because most of them do not prepare an outline before writing. Familiarity with the topic they are expected to write about is an important factor for students to write more successfully. Activities that promote generation of more ideas and information about the topic could encourage the students to produce better written outputs. When they are asked to engage themselves in reading, researching, interviewing, and brainstorming, they gain a considerable amount of confidence that they know what to do when they are eventually asked to write.

When an example of a genre they are asked to produce is introduced to them, students feel they have a guide to follow, and the feeling of being lost is lessened or eradicated from them during the process of writing. They tend to write better if they are provided with samples of the genre they are asked to write to serve as their pattern in producing a written text. Students seem to write more effectively if they have clear writing goals. They seem to view writing as a boring, tedious, traumatic experience because of the way it was introduced to them during the basic education levels, i.e., primary and secondary. Because they were just asked to write compositions without explanation of why they have to or for what purposes they have to do it, they tend to view writing as an activity devoid of meaning, if not a punishment from the teacher. When intended readers, be they imaginary or real, are considered by students, it is observable that students become more careful not only on how they express themselves but also on what they put in their writing.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, several conclusions were drawn regarding the effectiveness of the genre-based approach in enhancing students' writing proficiency. First, the genre-based approach proved to be effective in improving students' writing skills, particularly in the areas of organization, content, grammar, mechanics, and style. Second, the respondents' written compositions demonstrated strength in grammar and mechanics, while weaknesses were observed in content development and writing style. Third, it was noted that students often struggled to produce meaningful compositions because they focused more on grammatical accuracy than on effectively conveying their intended message. Fourth, grammar showed the least improvement among the five writing elements, which may be attributed to the genre-based approach's emphasis on the communicative purpose of writing rather than on linguistic accuracy. Lastly, the genre-based approach successfully introduced the structural features of editorial writing, enabling students to select precise words and express their ideas more effectively.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Guided by the results of the study, several recommendations are proposed to further explore and enhance the effectiveness of the genre-based approach to teaching writing. First, the genre-based approach may yield even more significant results if integrated with other instructional methods, such as the process approach. Second, further research should examine the effects of the genre-based approach on students' writing proficiency across various academic disciplines. Third, similar studies may be conducted using mass communication students as respondents but focusing on other genres like news, feature articles, and sports writing. Fourth, a genre analysis of editorials written by student journalists from different school publications in the Philippines could offer additional insights related to this study. Fifth, researchers should consider genre analysis as a foundation for investigating contrastive rhetoric in students' technical writing across fields of study.

In addition, the genre-based approach should be adapted for Academic Writing courses at the tertiary level, helping students become familiar with the types of writing they are likely to produce in their future professional fields. It is also recommended that this approach be introduced at the basic education level to prepare students for more complex writing tasks in higher education and the workplace. Furthermore, in writing instruction, educators should shift the focus from form—such as grammar and mechanics—to meaning and discourse, emphasizing organization, content, and style. Writing should be taught in the context of culture and specific situations to make it more meaningful and relevant to learners. Finally, writing instruction should go beyond form and structure to support intercultural communication, helping students become more effective communicators in a global context.

Appendix A. Tally Sheet of Pre-test Scores of the Three Rater-Evaluators

		(1) E	. Cun	anan			(2) M. Lopez							(3) A. Bernardo						
Student Code	A	В	c	D	E	Total	A	В	С	D	E	Total	A	В	c	D	E	Total	Score	
M1 .	12	11	10	11	12	56.0	13	8.5	13	16	13	63.5	12	11	14	14	12	63.0	60.83	
M2	13	12	12	12	13	62.0	13	13	13	16	13	68.0	12	7	12	11	7	49.0	59.67	
M4	14	15	11	11	13	64.0	8.5	13	13	8.5	13	56.0	12	8	10	12	8	50.0	56.67	
M5	14	14	. 14	14	13	69.0	8.5	8.5	13	16	13	59.0	10	7	14	14	10	55.0	61.00	
M6	13	13	10	12	12	60.0	13	8.5	13	8.5	13	56.0	12	8	10	12	8	50.0	55.33	
M7	14	12	13.	15	15	69.0	16	16	19	16	16	83.0	15	15	15	16	16	77.0	76.33	
M8	14	14	12	14	15	69.0	16	16	16	16	13	77.0	13	9	12	12	10	56.0	67.33	
Mg	13	13	13	13	13	65.0	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	42.5	10	. 8	10	10	8	46.0	51.17	
M10	18	17	18	18	18	89.0	16	13	16	16	16	77.0	_12	12	17	14	16	71.0	79.00	
M11	12	12	11	10	12	57.0	8.5	8.5	8.5	13	8.5	47.0	8	8	12	12	7	47.0	50.33	
M12	13	13	11	14	14	65.0	8.5	8.5	13	13	8.5	51.5	8	8	14	12	7	49.0	55.17	
F1	14	13	13	14	14	68.0	13	8.5	13	16	13	63.5	8	.8	14	12	8	50.0	60.50	
· F2	18	17	18	17	18	88.0	8.5	8.5	13	13	8.5	51.5	8	8	12	12	8	48.0	62.50	
F3	16	17	15	15	17	80.0	16	19	19	19	19	92.0	17	17	19	19	18	90.0	87.33	
F4	18	19	18	18	.18	91.0	16	16	16	16	.16	80.0	10	10	12	12	8	52.0	74.33	
F5	14	15	13	13	14	69.0	8.5	8.5	. 13	13	13	56.0	8	8	8	10	6	40.0	55.00	
F6	15	14	14	12	13	68.0	13	13	13	16	16	71.0	8	8	10	10	6	42.0	60.33	
F7	14	14	13	11	13	65.0	8.5	8.5	13	13	8.5	51.5	8	8	11	10	7	44.0	53.50	
F8	14	14	13	12	13	66.0	16	16	19	16	13	80.0	10	10	12	13	12	57.0	67.67	
F9	13	13	12	11	10	59.0	3	3	8.5	8.5	3	26.0	5	5	5	10	5	30.0	38.33	
F10	12	11	11	10	10	54.0	13	8.5	13	13	13	60.5	8	9	12	12	8	49.0	54.50	
F11	11	11	10	10	10	52.0	13	13	13	13	13	65.0	10	9	12	12	7	50.0	55.67	
F12	11	11	10	10	10	52.0	8.5	8.5	13	13	8.5	51.5	9	9	12	10	7	47.0	50.17	
F13	12	11	11	11	11	56.0	8.5	8.5	8.5	13	8.5	47.0	8	8	11	12	7	46.0	49.67	
F14	12	11	12	12	12	59.0	13	13	13	13	16	68.0	8	. 8	12	11	8	47.0	58.00	
F15.	12	12	11	11	11	57.0	8.5	8.5	13	13	8.5	51.5	9	. 9.	12	13	9	52.0	53.50	
F16	11	11	10	10	10	52.0	8.5	8.5	13	13	8.5	51.5	9	9	12	13	9	52.0	51.83	
F17	10	10	10	9	9	48.0	13	8.5	13	13	13	60.5	-8	8	12	9	7	44.0	50.83	
F19	12	12	11	12	11	58.0	13	13	13	13	13	65.0	9	9	12	13	8	51.0	58.00	
F20	10	10	10	11	11	52.0	8.5	8.5	8.5	13	8.5	47.0	8	8	12	12	8	48.0	49.00	
Average	13	13	12	12	13	64.0	11	11	13	14	12	60.7	10	9	12	12	9	51.7		



Appendix B. Tally Sheet of Post-test Scores of the Three Rater-Evaluators

Student Code			(1)	B. Cur	nanan			(2) M. Lopez							(3) A. Bernardo						
	A	В	с	D	E	Total	A	В	С	D	E	Total	A	В	c	D	E	Tot al	Score		
M1	17	17	15	13	16	- 78	13	13	16	16	16	74	15	15	15	17	14	76	76.00		
M2	18	18	16	15	16	83	13	13	13	19	13	71	15	15	14	15	14	73	75.6		
M4	14	14	14	13	14	69	16	16	16	19	16	83	12	12	12	12	10	58	70.0		
M5	18	18	17	18	. 17	88	16	16	16	19	19	86	17	17	18	18	17	87	87.0		
м6 .	18	17	18	17	18	88	13	13	13	13	8.5	60.5	11	11	12	11	11	56	68.1		
M7	18	18	18	18	. 16	88	19	19	16	19	16	89	17	18	18	18	17	88	88.3		
M8	18	19	18	19	18	. 92	13	13	13	19	16	74	17	17	16	16	15	81	82.3		
м9	17	17	16	15	16	81	8.5	8.5	16	16	13	62	12	12	13	14	12	63	68.6		
M10	15	16	15	12	14	72	8.5	8.5	13	- 16	13	59	14	15	15	14	17	75	68.6		
M11	18	17	17.	13	14	79:	8.5	8.5	13	13	13	56	14	14	14	12	12	66	67.0		
M12.	17	16	14	14	15	76	8.5	8.5	13	13	13	56	14	14	12-	12	12	- 64	65.3		
F1	18	18	16	17	17	86	13	13	13	13	13	. 65	15	14	15	15	14	73	74.6		
F2	18	18	18	17	16	87	13	13	16	16	13	71	14	14	14	14	14	70	76.0		
F3	18	18	18	18	18	90	13	13	19	19	19	83	18	18	19	19	18	92	88.3		
. F4	17	17	16	17	16	83	13	13	13	13	13	65	12	12	13	13	12	62	70.00		
F5	15	16	13	14	14	72	8.5	8.5	13	13	13	56	12	12	11	12	10	57	61.67		
F6	18	18	16	18	17	87	8.5	8.5	13	19	13	62	14	14	14	14	14	70	73.00		
F7	17	17	16	16	16	82	8.5	8.5	13	13	13	56	14	14	14	14	13	69	69.00		
F8	16	15	15	14	16	76	8.5	8.5	13	13	13	56	12	13	14	14	13	66	66.00		
F9	14	15	14	13	14	. 70	8.5	8.5	13	13	13	56	17	17	17	17	18	86	70.67		
F10	15	14	14	14	15	72	13	8.5	13	13	16	63.5	16	16	17	16	15	80	71.83		
F11	16	14	14	14	15	73	3	3	13	13	13	45	12	12	14	15	14	67	61.67		
F12	16	17	17	16	16	82	8.5	3	13	13	13	50.5	12	12	14	14	12	64	65.50		
F13	16	16	14	15	16	77	8.5	8.5	. 13	13	13	56	13	12	12	12	11	60	64.33		
F14	14	14	13	14	. 14.	. 69	8.5	3.	13	13.	13	50.5	14	.14	14.	15	14	71	63.50		
F15	15	14	14	14	14	71	16	16	16	. 19	19	86	16	17	18	18	17	86	81.00		
F16	17	17	16	16	17	83	13	13	13	16	13	68	16	16	15	17	15	79	76.67		
F17	16	16	16	17	16	81	8.5	8.5	13	13	13	56	14	14	15	13	14	70	69.00		
F19	15	14	15	14	15	73	8.5	8.5	13	13	13	56	16	16	14	15	14	75	68.00		
F20	12	12	12	13	13	62	8.5	3		13	13	50.5	14	14	13	14	13	68	60.17		
Average	16	16	16	15	16	79	11.	10	14	15	14	64.1	14	14	15	15	14	72			
								- Comment										95.00			



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