

Research Article

Assessment of Journalism Competence: Basis for a Journalism Clinic for Intermediate Learners

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Abstract : This study aimed to assess the journalistic skills of Grades 3 to 6 pupils of Capitan Elementary School, Iguig District. It likewise described their profile in terms of grade level, age, language spoken at home, parents' occupation, favorite social media platform, and preferred television program. A descriptive research design was employed, with 22 pupils selected as respondents. Data were collected using a 15-item questionnaire and analyzed through frequency count, percentage, mean, and rank. Findings revealed that the respondents were almost equally distributed across grade levels; most were 11 years old, and three-fourths spoke Ilocano at home. Nearly half of the pupils identified TikTok as their favorite social media platform, while cartoons emerged as the most preferred television program, followed by news. The parents' primary occupations were housekeeping and farming. In terms of their assessment of knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward journalism, results indicated negative feedback, suggesting that the pupils are still beginners in the field..

Keywords : knowledge; skills; attitude; journalism clinic; extension project

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1. Introduction

One of the key thrusts of higher education, aside from instruction, research, and production, is the

extension. Extension provides services such as seminars, training, continuing education, and the like for the community's development, especially for the underserved. It plays a great role in knowledge building.

In the Philippines, universities and colleges have been mandated by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) to extend their educational and civic services to the communities. Extension programs in higher education institutions provide the space to discover practical, evidence-based, and science-based answers that can address real-world social, economic, and environmental challenges of partner citizens and communities (CHED Memorandum Order 52, Series of 2016).

The Cagayan State University is one of the pioneer institutions in Region 02, Philippines, and the only state university in the province of Cagayan. Through its mandates, it serves as a catalyst for regional development through the provision of quality educational services, and the conduct of scientific research, packaging, transfer, and commercialization of technology through extension services to the community.

The Communication Enhancement Training (CET) extension program under the Department of Arts and Humanities of the College of Arts and Sciences, CSU-Carig Campus, was conceptualized to elevate the skills of the learners in language,

communication, and journalism. It equips learners with the needed skills in the real world of communication. Phase 1 of the CET extension program was shared with the Senior High School students of Gammad, Iguig, Cagayan.

Journalism, being one of its components, is considered the most sensitive area because one has to deal with young minds; however, starting these learners is rewarding when they begin expressing their thoughts. The Capitan Elementary School of Iguig District is committed to continuously delivering quality education and engaging learners in meaningful and challenging experiences, like in the field of journalism, despite being in a remote area and having limited resources; thus, its Phase 2 is dubbed the “Journalism Clinic for Intermediate Learners”.

In this premise, the proponent is motivated to assess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the learners towards journalism. The results of the study would serve as a basis to conceptualize extension activities to address the needs of the partner school in developing learners’ journalistic skills.

2. Statement of the Problem

Generally, this study aimed to assess the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the learners of Capitan Elementary School of Iguig District towards journalism as the basis to formulate extension activities of the Department of Arts and Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences of Cagayan State University-Carig Campus.

1. What is the profile of the respondents in terms of:
 - a. Grade level
 - b. Age
 - c. Language Used at Home
 - d. Favorite Social Media
 - e. Favorite TV Program
2. What is the baseline level of assessment of respondents in journalism in terms of:
 - a. Knowledge
 - b. Skills
 - c. Attitude
3. What intervention program can be proposed to address the needs of the respondents to increase knowledge, skills, and attitude towards journalism?

3. Research Methodology

A. Research Design

A descriptive research method was used in the study. It described the respondents’ profile, which includes grade level, age, language used at home, parents’ occupation, favorite TV program, and favorite social media, as well as the three domains, such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes of journalism.

B. Locale of the Study

Capitan Elementary School of Iguig District is the adopted extension community of the College of Arts and Sciences, Cagayan State University-Carig Campus.

C. Respondents and Sampling Procedures

The 22 respondents were purposively chosen, coming from Grades 3 to 6. They were the potential future budding journalists of Capitan Elementary School of Iguig District.

D. Research Instrument

The study used a questionnaire covering three (3) domains such as knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Each domain was composed of five (5) indicators to objectively assess the respondents. The Filipino translation of the instrument was provided to better

understand the statements. Pre-testing was done as well, and content validation was made by language experts.

E. Data Gathering Procedures

Before the conduct of the study, the proponent made a consultation with the school head of Capitan Elementary of Iguig District, with some faculty members. Upon knowing the needs of the school and its target, the proponent immediately prepared the needed materials for the conduct of the study.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the proponent followed the basic health protocols by coordinating them with the school head, teachers concerned, and even the barangay chairman. The respondents went to the barangay gymnasium by Grade level to answer the questionnaire. It was explained to them personally by the proponent with the provided Filipino translation.

F. Analysis of Data

The respondents' profile was analyzed using frequency count and percentage. In determining the level of assessment of the three domains of journalism, weighted mean and rank were used. The given scale was used to interpret the results of the study. 3.50-4.00- Strongly Agree(SA), 2.50-3.49-Agree(A); 1.50-2.49-(Disagree); and 1.00-1.49-Strongly Disagree (SD).

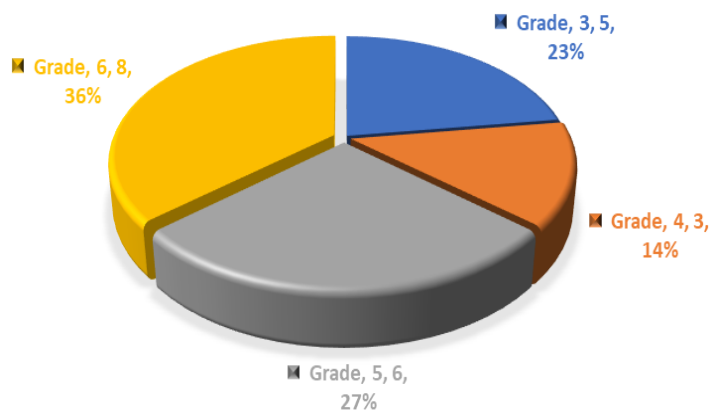
4. Results and Discussion

Pie Graph 1. Grade Level

The data present that out of the 22 respondents, 8(36%) belong to Grade 6, followed by Grade 5 with a frequency of 6(27%), Grade 3 - 5(23%), and Grade 4-3(14%).

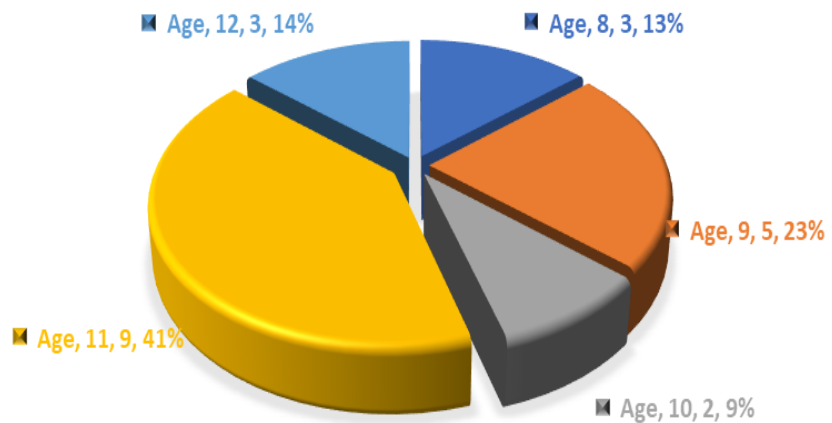
anipur has a total area of 22,327 sq. kms as of present with population of 37.56 Lakhs (Population Census. n.d.). Manipur lies in the latitude of 23° 68'N - 25° 68' N and in a longitude of 93° 03'E - 94° 78'E, with an elevation of 795 meters above the sea level (Geography of Manipur State, n.d.), and surrounded by hills from all sides. Imphal is the capital of the state with an area of about 700 square miles, located at an altitude of 790 meters above the sea level. It has 352 km long international boundary with Myanmar (Indra Kumar, 2010). The state Physiography can be classified into two distinctive regions (Geography of Manipur State, n.d.):

1. A remote area which consist of rugged hills and slender valleys.
2. The central area of flat plain with the entire allied land forms.



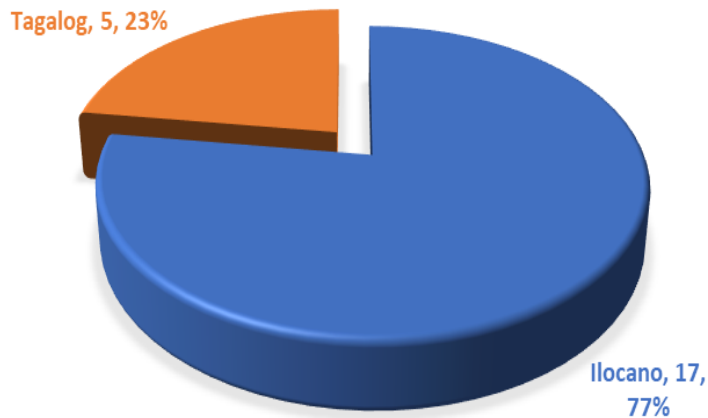
Pie Graph 2. Age

The data present that the majority of the respondents belong to age 11 with a frequency of 9(41%), followed by 9 with a frequency of 5(23%), the same frequency of 3(13%) on age 8 and 12, while the least is 10 with a frequency of 2(9%)



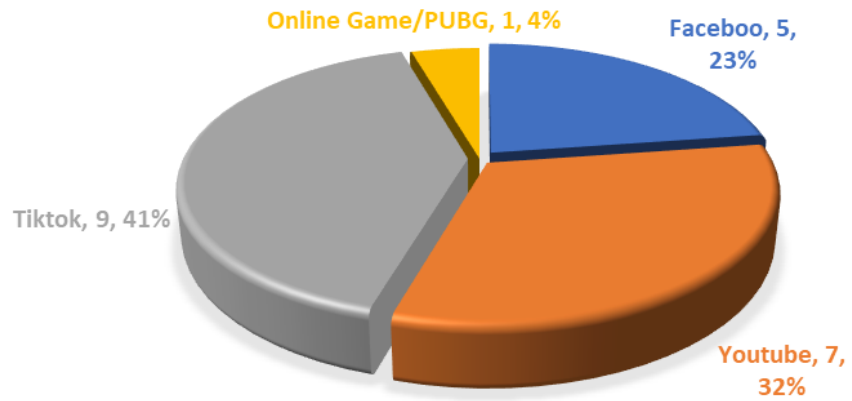
Pie Graph 3. Language Used at Home

The data present that more than three-fourths of the respondents speak Ilocano with a frequency of 17(77%), while the remaining percentage belongs to Tagalog with a frequency of 5(23%). This shows that Ilocano is still the dominant language spoken in the province of Cagayan, composing 67.3% of the total population.



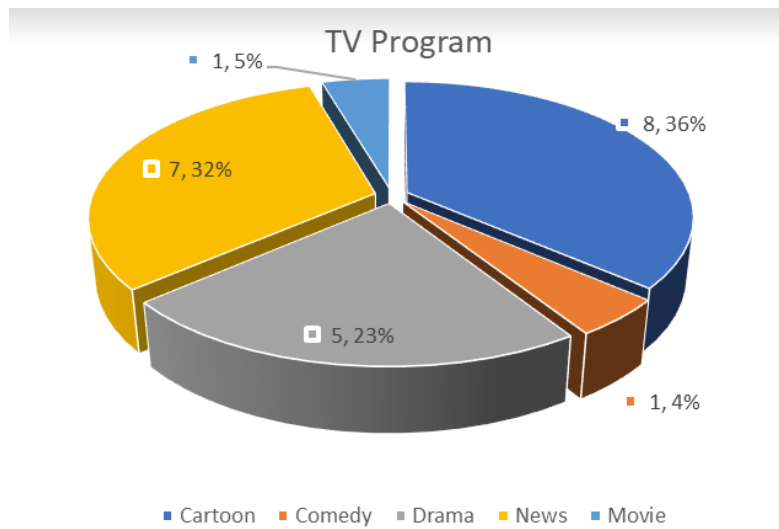
Pie Graph 4. Favorite Social Media

The data present that almost half of the respondents' favorite social media is TikTok with a frequency of 9 (41%), followed by YouTube with a frequency of 7(32%), Facebook with 5(23%), and online with 1 (4%). This was supported by the recent data, which reveals that TikTok has become a popular app in the Philippines, surpassing well-known social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. According to We Are Social, the majority of Filipino internet users belong to the 18-24 age group, making it an excellent platform to target the younger generation. (<https://socialmediamastersph.com/guide-tiktok-marketing-in-the-philippines-reaching-and-engaging-the-filipino-audience/>).



Pie Grsph 5. Favorite TV Program

The data present that among the 22 respondents, 8(36%) prefer to watch cartoons, 7(32%) for news, 5(23%) for drama, and same frequency of 1(4%) for movie and comedy. This shows that young children are still developing abstract thinking and critical reasoning. They struggle to follow complex news stories, but they can easily follow a cartoon’s simple plot. Giles (2003) indicated that children have difficulties in discerning some TV programs, like the news. He asserted that the media tries to make what is real and what is imaginary similar. Piaget (1929) claims that this confusion goes on until the age of 12. Morison and Gardner (1978), in a study that they carried out, confirmed that this confusion continues even for fourth and sixth graders.

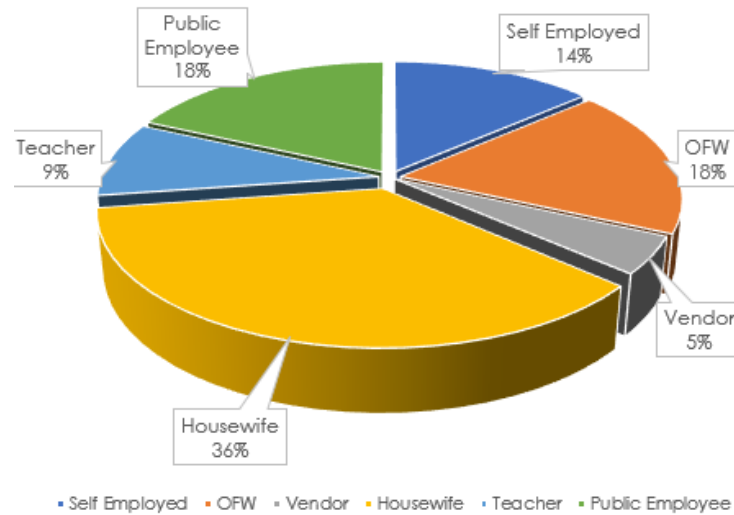


Pie Graph 6. Parents’ Occupation

A. Mother’s Occupation

The data present that most of the respondents’ mothers are housewives with a frequency of 8(36%), followed by public employees and OFW with the same frequency of 4(18%), self-employed with 4(14%), teacher with 2 (9%), and vendor with 1(5%), respectively.

Mother's Occupation



B. Father's Occupation

The data present that most of the respondents' occupation are farming with a frequency of 8(36%), followed by public employee and carpenter with the same frequency of 4(18%), self-employed with a frequency of 3(14%), and for electrician, driver, and OFW, they have the same frequency of 1(5%).

Father's Occupation

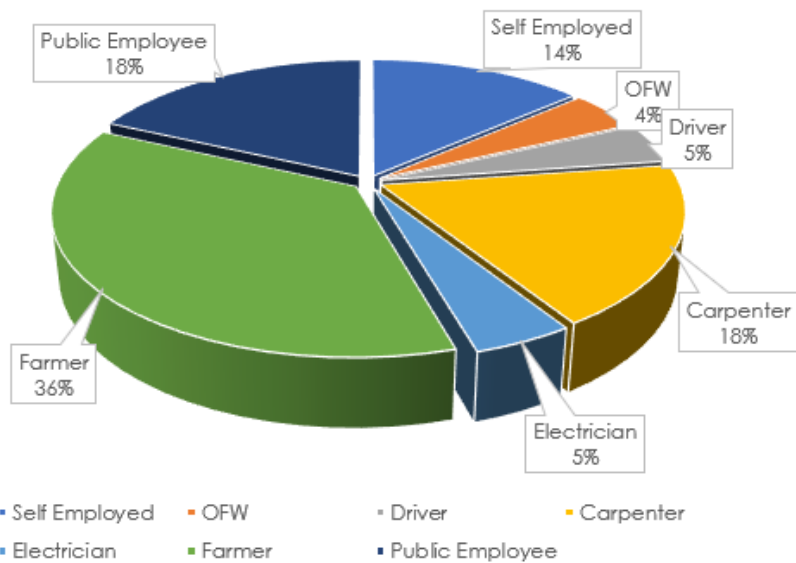


Table 7. Assessment of Knowledge

Knowledge	Mean	DV
1. I can identify which among the 5Ws (What? Who? Where? When? Why?) and 1H(How?) to be my lead.	1.36	Strongly Disagree
2. I can distinguish the structure in writing news features, editorials, sports, news, and columns.	1.00	Strongly Disagree

3. I can identify appropriate terms to be used and not to be used in a specific type of journalistic article.	1.23	Strongly Disagree
4. I can distinguish relevant and irrelevant ideas to be included in a certain topic.	1.59	Disagree
5. I can point out the meaningful/s symbols to be used.	1.18	Strongly Disagree
Weighted Mean	1.27	Strongly Disagree

Table 7 presents the assessment of the respondents' knowledge of journalism. The overall weighted mean is 1.27, interpreted as *Strongly Disagree*. This suggests that the respondents have little to no prior knowledge of journalism. Most of the terms and jargon associated with the field are unfamiliar to them and are difficult to comprehend. Among the indicators, Item 4, "I can distinguish relevant and irrelevant ideas to be included in a certain topic," obtained the highest mean of 1.59 (*Agree*). The rest of the items were rated *Strongly Disagree* with weighted means of 1.36 (Item 4), 1.23 (Item 23), 1.18 (Item 5), and 1.00 (Item 2). These results indicate that while the respondents are capable of recognizing general concepts, they lack knowledge and understanding of the specific concepts and practices of journalism.

Table 8. Assessment of Skills

Skills	Mean	DV
1. I can construct simple sentences correctly.	2.09	Disagree
2. I can write a well-organized paragraph.	1.55	Disagree
3. I can formulate an effective lead.	1.23	Strongly Disagree
4. I can use appropriate connectors	1.18	Disagree
5. I can write different types of journalistic articles.	1.18	Disagree
Weighted Mean	1.45	Strongly Disagree

Table 8 presents the assessment of the respondents' skills in journalism. The computed general weighted mean is 1.45, interpreted as *Strongly Agree*. This indicates that the respondents have not yet developed the necessary competencies to engage effectively in various journalistic writing activities. While some items suggest that they can perform general writing tasks to a certain extent, their skills are not specifically aligned with the demands of journalism.

Table 9. Assessment of Attitudes

Attitude	Mean	DV
1. I feel confident in accomplishing all the written tasks.	1.23	Strongly Disagree
2. I look forward to learning new things.	2.23	Disagree
3. I am interested and active in doing and participating in classroom activities.	2.23	Disagree

4. I am proud of who I am.	1.95	Disagree
5. I am excited to be a part of sharing information with the school.	1.73	Disagree
Weighted Mean	1.87	Disagree

Table 9 presents the assessment of the respondents' attitude toward journalism. This reveals that they don't completely reject journalism, but they lack strong motivation or interest, as revealed in the weighted mean of 1.87(Disagree).

They have an interest to learn, but admittedly no idea at all, as they strongly disagree in Item 1. *I feel confident in accomplishing all the written tasks.* They might understand the basics but struggle with writing skills, format, or vocabulary. This makes them lose interest without fully rejecting the subject.

Proposed Journalism Clinic for Elementary Pupils

I. Rationale

Journalism plays a vital role in developing communication skills, critical thinking, and social awareness among learners. At the elementary level, pupils are at a formative stage where their curiosity, creativity, and ability to express ideas are continuously being developed. However, many young learners show limited knowledge and skills in journalism due to unfamiliarity with journalistic terms, lack of exposure to authentic media, and difficulties in writing beyond general classroom tasks. This often results in negative attitudes and low confidence in engaging in journalistic activities.

A Journalism Clinic provides an avenue for pupils to be introduced to the basics of news writing, feature writing, editorial work, and other related activities in a fun, interactive, and learner-friendly manner. Through structured yet enjoyable sessions, pupils are allowed to discover the relevance of journalism in their daily lives, enhance their writing and reporting skills, and build self-confidence in sharing information.

By conducting this clinic, the school not only addresses the learners' challenges in journalism but also fosters a culture of responsible communication and teamwork. In the long run, it prepares pupils to become future contributors to school publications, active participants in journalistic endeavors, and responsible consumers and producers of information in their community.

II. Objectives

By the end of the clinic, the participants will be able to:

1. Recognize the importance of journalism in school and community life;
2. Demonstrate understanding of the basic journalism terms and concepts;
3. Develop skills in basic journalistic writing (news, feature, editorial, and other); and
4. Demonstrate confidence in reporting and sharing information.

III. Proposed Contents:

Topic	Learning Objectives	Strategies	Assessment
News writing	Identify the basic parts of a news article (headline, lead, body, conclusion).	Guided lecture using examples from a school newsletter.	Short quiz: match parts of a news article.
	Write a simple news lead using the 5Ws and 1H (Who, What, When, Where, Why,	Lead-writing drill (fill-in-the-blanks style).	Pupils write a two-sentence lead about a familiar event.
		Pair activity: write a short	

	How).	lead about a class event.	
Copyreading	<p>Understand the role of a copyreader in journalism.</p> <p>Identify and correct basic errors in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization.</p> <p>Practice only using standard proofreading marks.</p>	<p><i>“Spot the Error”</i> game – show a short news sentence on the board with mistakes (e.g., <i>“the boy run fast in the race yesterday.”</i>) and let pupils correct it.</p> <p>Explain what copyreading means in child-friendly terms: <i>“Before a story is printed, someone checks it to make sure there are no mistakes. That person is called a copyreader.”</i></p> <p>Teach simple proofreading symbols (e.g., ^ for insert, / for new paragraph, underline twice for capitalization).</p> <p>Show a short paragraph with errors and guide pupils in correcting them. Pupils work in pairs to copyread a short article with 5–10 mistakes (spelling, capitalization, punctuation).</p>	<p>Pupils correct a 3–4 sentence news item with errors.</p> <p>Team copyreading challenge where groups compete to spot errors fastest.</p> <p>Scoring based on accuracy of corrections, neatness, and correct use of proofreading marks.</p>
Headline Writing	<p>Explain the purpose of a headline in a news article.</p> <p>Identify the qualities of a good headline (short, clear, catchy, factual).</p> <p>Write simple and appropriate headlines for short news stories</p>	<p>Show different real newspaper headlines (child-friendly) and ask: “What do you notice about these titles? Are they long or short? Do they tell what happened?”</p> <p>Explain the function of a headline: it grabs attention and tells the main idea in just a few words.</p> <p>Share simple tips: short, clear, uses action words, avoids unnecessary details.</p> <p>Provide a short news story (3–4 sentences) and ask pupils to suggest headlines.</p> <p>Do a “Guess the Headline” game – the teacher reads a</p>	<p>Pupils create at least 2–3 headlines for short articles given by the teacher.</p> <p>Each group is given a short news item and presents its headline; the class votes for the most effective one.</p> <p>Evaluate headlines based on clarity (main idea captured), brevity (few words), and creativity (catchy)</p>

		<p>short story and pupils compete to create the best headline.</p> <p>Pupils write headlines for sample articles about school events (sports day, field trip, spelling bee, class project).</p>	but factual).
Editorial Writing	<p>Understand that editorials express opinions on issues.</p> <p>Write a simple opinion about a school-related topic.</p>	<p>Class debate or discussion on a simple issue (e.g., “Should we have longer recess?”).</p> <p>The teacher shows short sample editorials written in simple language.</p> <p>Pupils write their opinion in 3–5 sentences.</p>	<p>Pupils submit a short opinion piece.</p> <p>Participation in group discussion or debate.</p>
Sports Writing	<p>Understand what sports writing is and how it differs from news writing.</p> <p>Identify the important elements in a sports article (teams, players, scores, highlights, outcome).</p> <p>Write a short sports news article about a recent game or physical activity in school.</p>	<p>Show short video clips or photos of popular sports events (e.g., basketball, volleyball, track and field). Ask: “<i>What do you see? What happened?</i>”</p> <p>Explain the basics of sports writing — it answers the <i>Who won? How did they win? What was the score?</i> Use a simple template:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headline: (Team A defeats Team B in ___) • Lead: Who played? What was the score? When/where was it held? • Body: Highlights of the game (biggest moments, best players). <p>Pupils watch a short game (can be a mini-class relay, basketball shootout, or video) and write a short sports article.</p>	<p>Pupils write a short sports news article (3–5 sentences for younger pupils; 1 paragraph for older ones).</p> <p>Evaluate based on clarity (facts included), accuracy (correct details), and creativity (headline and flow).</p>

IV. Methodology

To ensure that learners effectively acquire the expected competencies, the following methodologies will be employed:

Lecture Sessions. Key concepts and fundamental principles will be introduced through interactive lectures and discussions to provide learners with a solid theoretical foundation.

Workshops and Group Activities. Hands-on exercises, collaborative tasks, and peer learning activities will be conducted to reinforce understanding, encourage creativity, and enhance teamwork.

Use of Instructional Materials. Workbooks developed in the Instructional Materials class will serve as guides and references, supporting practice and mastery of skills through structured exercises.

VI. Expected Outputs, Outcomes, and Impact

Improved writing skills among elementary pupils;

Increased interest in journalism;

Readiness to participate in campus journalism competitions;

Enhanced confidence in journalistic writing.

5. Conclusion And Recommendations

Based on the assessment, the pupils of Capitan Elementary School of Iguig District, Cagayan, although beginners in journalism and initially showing limited skills, demonstrated interest in learning and willingness to participate in journalism-related activities and tasks.

With this, it is recommended that faculty members integrate journalism lessons with interactive strategies such as storytelling, role-playing (as reporters, anchors, or photographers), and educational games to make learning more enjoyable and engaging. Pupils should also be encouraged to write about topics of personal interest—such as school events, hobbies, or favorite shows—so that journalism becomes more meaningful and relevant to their lives. Finally, the implementation of the proposed Journalism Clinic will further support the development of journalism skills among intermediate learners.

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