

Improving Low Academic Performance of Grade 9 Learners in the Novel Noli Me Tangere through Differentiated Game-Based Instruction

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Abstract

This study investigated the effectiveness of Differentiated Game-Based Instruction (DGBI) in improving the academic performance of Grade 9 learners in the Filipino novel *Noli Me Tangere* at Kapatagan National High School during the School Year 2024–2025. Using a one-group pre-test and post-test pre-experimental research design, 50 students were assessed before and after the intervention. Results revealed a substantial

improvement in learners' performance, with the Mean Percentage Score increasing from 38.67% (Beginning level) to 81.33% (Approaching Proficiency level). A paired t-test confirmed a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between pre-test and post-test scores. Findings suggest that DGBI is an effective instructional strategy for enhancing student engagement, comprehension, and mastery of literary content.

Keywords: *Differentiated Game-Based Instruction, Noli Me Tangere, academic performance, Grade 9 learners, Filipino literature*

INTRODUCTION

The integration of game-based learning in education has been widely promoted as an innovative approach to improve student engagement and academic performance. In Filipino literature instruction, particularly in teaching José Rizal's novel *Noli Me Tangere*, many learners demonstrate low motivation and comprehension due to unfamiliar vocabulary, limited historical context, and preference for digital entertainment. This study explores the use of Differentiated Game-Based Instruction (DGBI) to address these challenges.

The objective of this study was to determine the effectiveness of DGBI in improving the performance of Grade 9 learners by addressing the following research questions: (1) What is the level of learners' performance before and after using DGBI? (2) Is there a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores after implementing DGBI?



METHODOLOGY

This study employed a one-group pre-test and post-test pre-experimental design involving 50 Grade 9 students from Section Faraday at Kapatagan National High School. Total population sampling was used. A 30-item multiple-choice test served as both pre-test and post-test. The intervention involved DGBI activities such as MathFilBingo, Pick Your Emotion, and interactive PowerPoint-based assessments. Data were analyzed using mean scores and paired t-test.

RESULTS

Before the intervention, all 50 students were classified under the Beginning level with an average score of 38.67%, and none reached the 75% passing threshold. After applying DGBI, the average score rose to 81.33%, with 42 learners reaching or exceeding 75%. This indicates a substantial improvement of 42.66 percentage points. Statistical analysis using the paired t-test yielded a p-value less than 0.05, confirming that the difference between pre-test and post-test scores was significant.

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that DGBI effectively improved student comprehension and engagement in literary instruction. The significant increase in post-test scores aligns with previous research suggesting that game-based learning promotes motivation, critical thinking, and retention. Learners responded positively to interactive activities, which transformed traditional lecture-based lessons into participatory experiences.

However, eight learners remained within the Beginning level, suggesting that additional scaffolding or remediation may be necessary for struggling students. Future studies may incorporate longer intervention periods or blended learning approaches.

Conclusion

Differentiated Game-Based Instruction proved to be an effective strategy in enhancing the academic performance of Grade 9 learners in Noli Me Tangere. The significant improvement in test scores demonstrates its potential as a recommended pedagogical

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