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EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION IN SOFTBALL THROWING FOR GRADE 8 MAPEH

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ABSTRACT

Explicit instruction is a structured, teacher-led approach in which concepts and skills are taught directly and unambiguously. It breaks learning into manageable steps and avoids guesswork by relying on clear explanations, active modeling, and guided practice. Traditional physical education often relies on discovery-based learning, which can lead to the development of improper mechanics in complex motor tasks such as the overhand throw. This study investigated the effectiveness of explicit instruction in developing the fundamental softball throwing skills (grip, stance and set-up, arm and body motion, and follow-through) of Grade 8 students within the MAPEH (Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health) curriculum, explored students' experiences of the approach, and used the findings as the basis for a teaching guide. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was used at Montealegre National High School, Tuburan, Cebu, Philippines, during School Year 2025–2026. Thirty-five (35) Grade 8 students, selected through convenience sampling, took a pre-test, took part in a six-week explicit instruction intervention characterized by clear modeling, guided practice, and immediate corrective feedback, and then took a post-test. Performance was rated with a researcher-made, expert-validated 4-point rubric. Frequency, percentage, weighted mean, and standard deviation described performance; a paired-samples t-test and Cohen's d tested the pre–post difference; and focus group discussion data were analyzed thematically. Pre-test performance was Fair in all four skills (weighted means 1.89–2.14). Post-test performance was Very Good in all four skills (weighted means 3.54–3.80), and no student was rated Poor. The improvements were statistically significant for every skill, $t(34) = 10.8–14.0$, $p < .001$, with very large effects (Cohen's $d = 1.82–2.37$; largest for stance and set-up). Students reported motivation through peer collaboration, personal progress, enjoyment, teacher support, future goals, and a sense of achievement. Breaking complex athletic movements into discrete, manageable parts through explicit instruction was associated with significant improvement in the technical execution of the overhand throw and with positive student experiences, which suggests that it helps learners overcome coordination barriers and build self-efficacy in team sports. A one-group design limits causal claims; controlled and follow-up studies are recommended.

Keywords: *Explicit Instruction, Softball Throwing, MAPEH, Grade 8, Teaching Guide, Montealegre National High School, Physical Education, Motor Skills*

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INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Throwing is one of the fundamental skills in softball and serves as the foundation for effective participation in the game. The competence that is most important to develop among students through softball is motor skill competence, specifically throwing skill, coordination, accuracy, and body control. Mastery of these fundamental skills enables students to participate effectively and safely in softball activities, and developing these competencies also enhances their physical fitness, confidence, and overall performance in sports. Softball further helps students acquire important life skills such as teamwork, communication, discipline, and sportsmanship. These competencies encourage students to work cooperatively with others, follow rules, and develop a sense of responsibility and respect, and they are essential not only in sports but also in students' academic and social lives.

However, many students encounter difficulties in performing the proper techniques involved in throwing, namely grip, stance and set-up, arm and body motion, and follow-through. These difficulties may affect their overall performance and confidence during physical education activities. Traditional physical education often relies on discovery-based learning, which can lead to the development of improper mechanics in complex motor tasks such as the overhand throw. There is therefore a need to employ appropriate teaching strategies that can effectively enhance students' competence in softball throwing.

This study is anchored on explicit instruction as an approach to develop students' knowledge, skills, and understanding of proper throwing techniques. Through clear explanations, teacher demonstrations, guided practice, and immediate feedback, students are expected to acquire the competencies required in softball. Explicit instruction gives learners opportunities to practice skills systematically, allowing them to improve their accuracy, coordination, and confidence in softball throwing. The findings may contribute to the improvement of instructional practices in Physical Education by providing teachers with evidence on the effectiveness of explicit instruction in enhancing students' skill development and competence. They may also benefit students by promoting active participation, increasing self-confidence, and fostering mastery of fundamental softball skills, and ultimately support the development of physically competent learners and the attainment of quality Physical Education instruction.

Related literature and research gap

Although numerous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of explicit instruction in improving students' learning outcomes and motor skills (Kok et al., 2021), limited research has focused specifically on its application in teaching basic softball throwing skills among Grade 8 students. Existing studies have generally examined explicit instruction in broader physical education settings or in other sports disciplines, leaving a gap in understanding its impact on the development of softball-specific competencies. There is also a scarcity of studies that investigate how explicit instruction contributes to students' competence in softball throwing, particularly in grip, stance and set-up, arm and body motion, and follow-through. Most previous research has concentrated on skill performance and academic achievement, with less attention to how these fundamental competencies influence students' confidence, participation, and overall development. In addition, few studies have been conducted in the local context, particularly among junior high school students in the Philippines, and there is a lack of empirical evidence within the Philippine context on the use of explicit instruction to enhance students' softball performance.

To address this gap, the present study investigates the effectiveness of explicit instruction in developing the softball throwing competence of Grade 8 students. Specifically, it examines how a structured teaching approach involving clear explanations, demonstrations, guided practice, and immediate feedback contributes to the improvement of students' throwing skills. By focusing on softball-specific competencies among junior high school learners, the

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research seeks to provide evidence-based information that may strengthen instructional practices in Physical Education and contribute to the existing body of knowledge on sports skill development, and that may serve as a basis for improving the quality of Physical Education teaching.

Theoretical and legal framework

This study assumes that the explicit instruction learning method enhances the softball throwing skills of Grade 8 students. Teaching motor skills in physical education, such as basic softball throwing, requires structured, clear, and purposeful instruction to ensure students' skill acquisition and performance improvement. One of the most effective pedagogical approaches for this purpose is explicit instruction, a teacher-centered model that emphasizes clear demonstration, guided practice, and immediate feedback.

Vygotsky's sociocultural theory

According to McLeod (2025), Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) explains that learners can accomplish tasks with guidance from a more knowledgeable person, such as a teacher or peer. Key concepts include the ZPD, where learning happens just beyond a child's current abilities with support, and the importance of language in shaping thought. Vygotsky's social development theory asserts that a child's cognitive development and learning ability can be guided and mediated by social interactions (McLeod, 2025), and that cognitive development is shaped through social interaction and collaboration with others (Vygotsky, 1978).

Learning thus happens best through social interaction, guidance, and collaboration with more knowledgeable peers or teachers. In teaching softball, the theory can be applied when the teacher demonstrates proper throwing, catching, or batting techniques and then guides students as they practice these skills with teammates. Through peer cooperation, verbal feedback, and teacher support, learners perform tasks within their ZPD, the learning stage in which students can develop and perform softball skills with teacher or peer guidance before mastering them independently. For example, beginners in softball may initially struggle with throwing, but with the teacher's modeling, peer encouragement, and step-by-step scaffolding, they gradually gain confidence and skill mastery (McLeod, 2025; Mercadal, 2021; Vygotsky, 1978).

Skinner's operant conditioning theory

Operant conditioning theory, developed by B. F. Skinner, provides an important foundation in behavioral psychology by describing how consequences influence the development and modification of voluntary behaviors. Understanding operant conditioning equips educators with evidence-based strategies for enhancing student learning, managing classroom behavior, and creating supportive educational environments; the theory's enduring influence reflects its empirical rigor, practical utility, and capacity for integration with emerging educational technologies and pedagogical approaches (Sprague, 2024). Operant conditioning is a learning process in which behavior is influenced by its consequences: behaviors followed by positive reinforcement are more likely to be repeated, while behaviors followed by punishment are less likely to occur in the future (Skinner, 1938). The term "operant" signifies that organisms actively operate on their environment to produce consequences, which distinguishes the process from respondent (classical) conditioning, where stimuli elicit automatic responses (Skinner, 1953). Skinner conceptualized behavior as lawful and predictable, governed by environmental contingencies rather than internal mental constructs, and he argued that observable behavior–environment relationships constitute the proper subject matter of psychology (Skinner, 1974). Operant conditioning focuses on three-term contingencies: antecedent stimuli (discriminative stimuli), behavioral responses, and consequent stimuli (reinforcers or punishers). This ABC (Antecedent–Behavior–Consequence) model provides a functional analysis framework for understanding behavioral control (Sprague, 2024).

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In teaching softball throwing, the theory can be applied by giving positive reinforcement such as praise, points, or encouragement whenever students demonstrate proper throwing technique, such as correct grip, body position, and follow-through. For example, when a student performs an accurate throw, the teacher may provide immediate verbal praise such as "Excellent throw!" to reinforce the correct movement and increase the likelihood that the student will repeat it. Corrective feedback, on the other hand, helps students adjust improper techniques and improve performance. This approach motivates learners to participate actively and gradually master the throwing skill through repetition and reinforcement. Studies have shown that positive reinforcement improves motor skill learning and student motivation in physical education, making operant conditioning an effective strategy for teaching softball throwing (Koka & Hein, 2015; Goodyear et al., 2019).

Integration of the two theories

In the context of Grade 8 MAPEH, integrating Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and Skinner's operant conditioning theory through explicit instruction helps students develop an understanding of both the proper execution of basic softball throwing skills and the value of learning these techniques. The structured modeling, clear explanation, and feedback loop provided by the teacher create an environment conducive to both skill mastery and a positive attitude toward physical activity. By observing and imitating both the teacher and peers, students also develop social and cooperative skills, which are essential elements of physical education. Overall, Vygotsky's theory emphasizes the importance of social interaction and guidance in learning, while Skinner's work explains how reinforcement influences behavior; together, these perspectives support the use of explicit instruction in developing motor skills such as softball throwing. Through teacher modeling, guided practice, feedback, and reinforcement, learners can develop physical competencies while strengthening their motivation and confidence.

MAPEH and the curriculum context

Physical Education, as a component of MAPEH, provides learners with opportunities to develop movement competencies, physical fitness, and skills through participation in physical activities and sports (Department of Education, 2023). MAPEH (Music, Arts, Physical Education, and Health) is an integrated learning area in Philippine basic education that contributes to the holistic development of learners. It brings together four interconnected components through which students develop artistic expression, cultural appreciation, physical fitness, healthy behaviors, and other skills needed for their overall development. Current Department of Education curriculum materials emphasize the progression of knowledge and skills across these areas and highlight active participation and developmentally appropriate learning experiences. The Grade 8 MAPEH learning materials include Physical Education lessons on sports and skill development, which demonstrate the role of PE within the integrated learning area. The four components serve complementary purposes: Music develops learners' abilities in musical performance, listening, and creative expression; Arts promotes artistic skills and cultural understanding; Physical Education develops movement competence, physical fitness, and participation in physical activities; and Health provides knowledge and skills related to personal well-being, healthy behaviors, safety, and disease prevention. The integration of these components thus supports the development of learners who are physically active, creatively expressive, culturally aware, and knowledgeable about their health.

Division Memorandum No. 308, s. 2025, on Division Strategic Planning for Physical Education and Sports Development Programs, demonstrates the continuing institutional attention given to Physical Education and sports development in the Philippine education system. The integration of the explicit instruction method into the MAPEH 8 curriculum is in line with the guidelines of that memorandum, which emphasizes the importance of alternative teaching methods, a rich student learning experience, and holistic development. By incorporating an explicit instructional approach, MAPEH 8 aims to enhance learners' softball throwing skills in an interactive and enjoyable

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way. The approach supports teamwork, critical thinking, and skill acquisition, which are important components of the DepEd-defined physical education curriculum.

Constitutional, international, and statutory foundations

The constitutional and international recognition of Physical Education provides a strong foundation for developing students' physical competencies through structured sports instruction and makes effective teaching strategies such as explicit instruction relevant to the development of basic softball throwing skills (Republic of the Philippines, 1987; UNESCO, 1978). Physical Education plays an important role in the development of healthy, disciplined, and socially responsible individuals. The 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines (Article XIV, Section 19) directs the State to promote physical education and support sports programs, competitions, and amateur sports, including training for international competitions. These initiatives are intended to develop self-discipline, teamwork, excellence, and a healthy and alert citizenry, and the Constitution further provides that educational institutions should conduct regular sports activities in cooperation with athletic organizations and other sectors (Republic of the Philippines, 1987).

At the international level, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) recognizes physical education and sport as a fundamental right. Article 1 of the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport states that every person should have access to physical education and sport as part of their development. The Charter further emphasizes that participation in physical education and sport can contribute to physical, intellectual, and moral development, and it recognizes physical education and sport as an essential component of lifelong education that supports health, self-discipline, social relationships, and overall development (UNESCO, 1978). In the Philippine educational context, these principles demonstrate the role of Physical Education in developing learners beyond academic knowledge: through structured physical activities, sports, and guided learning experiences, students can develop movement competencies, physical fitness, teamwork, discipline, and positive social relationships. The constitutional mandate therefore provides a strong foundation for the continued integration of Physical Education and sports programs in schools. For studies involving sports instruction, such as the teaching of basic softball throwing, these principles emphasize the importance of giving students meaningful opportunities to develop physical competencies while reinforcing values such as discipline, cooperation, perseverance, and teamwork.

Republic Act No. 5708, the "Schools Physical Education and Sports Development Act of 1969," established an integrated physical education and sports development program for schools in the Philippines. The law emphasizes that Physical Education should contribute to both the physical and mental development of young people and should give students opportunities to develop athletic abilities, coordination, stamina, strength, discipline, and social skills. It recognizes the importance of organized planning, adequate facilities, training, and sustained financial support in implementing school-based sports programs, and it directs the development of programs that promote physical fitness, health education, nutrition, competitive athletics, and intramural and inter-school competitions. It also provides for opportunities to identify and develop promising young athletes while encouraging participation in physical activities among pupils and students in general, and for the establishment of sports centers and the development of trained coaches to strengthen school Physical Education and sports programs (Republic Act No. 5708, 1969). These provisions demonstrate the importance the Philippine government places on Physical Education as part of learners' educational development and highlight the need for appropriate facilities, qualified personnel, organized activities, and continuous support. In addition, Republic Act No. 10533, the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013 (K–12 Law), integrates PE into the core curriculum to ensure lifelong wellness and motor skills (Figure 1).

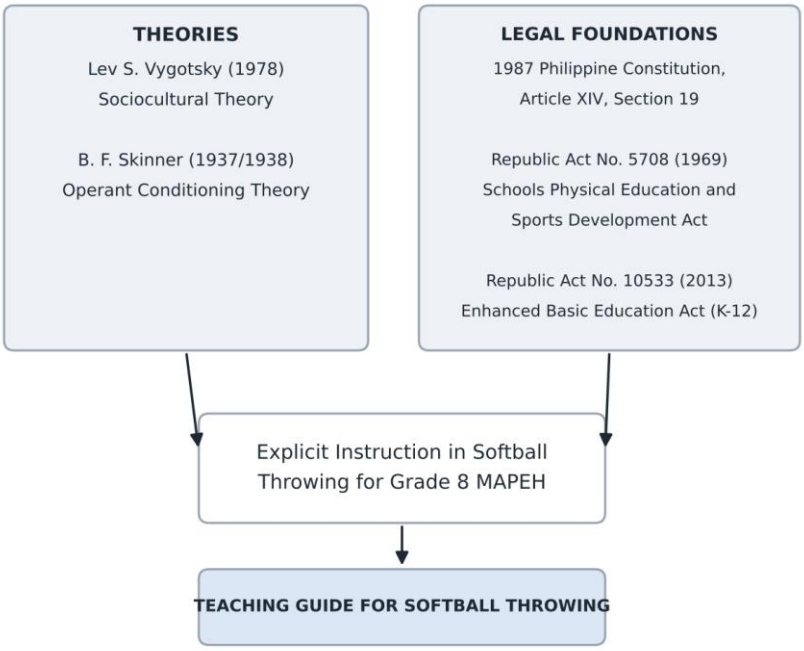
In relation to the present study, the objectives of RA 5708 provide a legal foundation for promoting physical activity and sports skill development among students. The emphasis on physical development, athletic skills, coordination, stamina, strength, discipline, and organized sports participation supports the importance of effective instruction in

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Physical Education. In particular, structured teaching strategies can help students develop fundamental sports skills, such as the basic softball throwing techniques examined in this study.

Figure 1. Theoretical and legal framework of the study



Statement of the problem and hypothesis

This research determined the effectiveness of explicit instruction in teaching basic softball throwing among MAPEH 8 students of Montealegre National High School, Montealegre, Tuburan, Cebu, for School Year 2025–2026, as a basis for crafting a teaching guide for softball throwing. Specifically, it answered the following questions:

1. What is the pre-test performance of the students in the following competencies: (1.1) grip/gripping; (1.2) stance and set-up; (1.3) arm and body motion; and (1.4) follow-through?
2. After using the strategy, what is the post-test performance of the students in the above-mentioned competencies?
3. What is the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test performance of the students?
4. What are the students' experiences after utilizing the explicit instruction strategy in softball throwing?
5. Based on the findings, what teaching guide can be presented?

The following null hypothesis was tested: **H_{01}:** There is no statistically significant difference in the throwing skills performance of Grade 8 MAPEH students between their pre-test and post-test results following the implementation of the explicit instruction method.

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Significance of the study

The results of this research may be significant for the following individuals and organizations, serving as a point of reference on how to improve instructional and management techniques when utilizing explicit instruction.

Department of Education (DepEd). The findings may serve as a conceptual foundation for strengthening student-centered and experiential approaches in Physical Education. The study supports Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education) by emphasizing learning experiences that promote students' motor and social skills. Through effective, learner-centered instruction, the findings may contribute to teaching practices that encourage active participation, skill development, and meaningful learning in Physical Education.

School administrators. The study can benefit administrators by introducing a new strategy for teaching softball in PE/MAPEH that enhances students' individual skills and teamwork. It can also be promoted and introduced to other higher education institutions (HEIs) through training and seminars on softball skills enhancement programs.

PE teachers. The study offers a new teaching strategy through a softball drill program that responds to the interests and needs of learners. It will also guide PE teachers in current trends in drills, exercises, and group activities within PE courses, and a standardized and tested PE program for softball throwing skills will be made available.

Learners. Learners are the direct beneficiaries of the explicit instruction method. It will provide them with new ideas for performing softball drills and exercises in indoor or outdoor settings, at school or at home. Learners will also be exposed to more hands-on activities and meaningful experiences that make them independent and self-directed in performing appropriate softball throwing exercises.

Researcher. The concepts and results of the study give the researcher new ideas in teaching physical education, and the results provide recommendations and beneficial findings for education, PE, and sports development.

Future researchers. The study may serve as a valuable reference for researchers who intend to investigate the effectiveness of explicit instruction in teaching sports skills and physical education.

Definition of terms

The following conceptual and operational definitions clarify the terms used in this study.

Explicit instruction refers to a step-by-step "I do, We do, You do" framework that ensures students understand exactly what to do and why before working independently.

Pre-test performance refers to the initial assessment of students' proficiency in the throwing skills (gripping, stance and set-up, arm and body motion, and follow-through) before engaging in the explicit instruction method; it establishes a baseline level of ability for each student.

Post-test performance refers to the evaluation of students' abilities in the aforementioned throwing skills following the explicit instruction approach; it measures changes or improvements after the instructional intervention and provides data on the effectiveness of the method.

Softball throwing refers to the fundamental motor skill of propelling the ball with proper grip, body coordination, and arm movement to achieve accuracy and distance.

Students' experiences refers to the subjective perceptions, emotions, and psychological responses of students during their engagement in the explicit instruction process.

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Teaching guide for softball throwing refers to a structured set of instructional strategies, activities, and learning materials designed to facilitate effective teaching and enhance students' acquisition of basic softball throwing skills through explicit instruction.

Grip/gripping refers to the proper way of holding the softball to ensure control and accuracy; operationally, the students' ability to correctly position their fingers and hand on the ball during the throwing activity.

Stance and set-up refer to the body position and preparation before executing a throw; operationally, the students' ability to assume proper body alignment and balance prior to throwing the ball.

Arm and body motion refers to the coordinated movement of the arm, shoulders, hips, and legs during the throwing process; operationally, the students' execution of proper body mechanics and arm action while performing the throw.

Follow-through refers to the continuation of movement after releasing the ball to ensure accuracy and prevent injury; operationally, the students' ability to complete the throwing motion correctly after releasing the softball.

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METHODS

This section describes the methodology used to examine the effectiveness of explicit instruction in teaching softball throwing: the research design, the flow of the study, the research environment, the participants, the instruments and scoring procedure, the intervention, the data-gathering procedure, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

Research design

The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design to address its research questions. In the first, quantitative phase, students' performance in four basic throwing skills was assessed before and after implementation of the explicit instruction method, using a single group of participants (a one-group pretest–posttest design) and a rubric-based scoring procedure. The scoring rubric provided a systematic and standardized way to assess throwing skills, supporting accuracy and objectivity, and yielded numerical scores that could be statistically analyzed to identify significant differences in performance between the pre-test and post-test phases. In the second, qualitative phase, students' experiences with the explicit instruction strategy were explored through a focus group discussion (FGD). Findings from both phases were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research questions and of the implications for practice, including a proposed teaching guide for optimizing the use of explicit instruction in enhancing throwing skills.

Flow of the study

The Input–Process–Output (IPO) model (Figure 2) was used as the conceptual framework for organizing the components of the study and the relationship among its inputs, processes, and output.

Input. The input includes the Grade 8 MAPEH students' performance in the pre-test and post-test before and after implementation of the explicit instruction method. The assessment focuses on four basic softball throwing skills: grip, stance and set-up, arm and body motion, and follow-through. The input also includes the students' experiences and perceptions after participating in the explicit instruction strategy, and the comparison between pre-test and post-test performance to determine whether significant improvement occurred after the intervention.

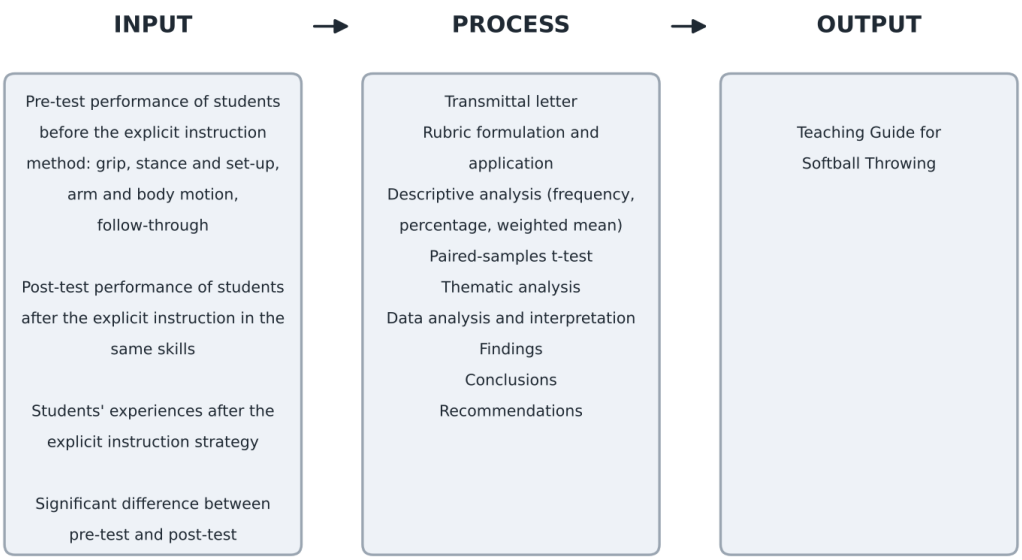
Process. The process comprises the systematic procedures undertaken in conducting the study: securing and distributing transmittal letters, developing and administering the assessment rubric, conducting the pre-test and post-test, and implementing the explicit instruction method. The quantitative data were analyzed using frequency and percentage for descriptive analysis and the paired-samples t-test to determine whether there was a significant difference between pre-test and post-test results; students' experiences were analyzed through thematic analysis. The results were then interpreted to formulate the findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Output. The output of the study is a proposed teaching guide for basic softball throwing, developed from the research findings, to provide MAPEH teachers with a structured resource for teaching and improving students' basic softball throwing skills through explicit instruction.

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Figure 2. Flow of the study (Input–Process–Output)



Research environment

The research was conducted at Montealegre National High School, Tuburan, Cebu (Figure 3), a public secondary school in the Division of Cebu Province. The school provides education under the K–12 Basic Education Curriculum and offers a supportive environment for both academic and physical education programs. The study took place in the school's Physical Education field, or open play area, where students regularly perform sports and physical activities. The area has basic sports facilities and sufficient space for softball drills, particularly throwing exercises.

Montealegre National High School was chosen as the research setting because it represents a typical learning environment for Filipino junior high school students and offers an opportunity to enhance students' motor skills, coordination, and interest in sports. Conducting the study in a familiar and safe school environment allowed students to learn and practice effectively under the guidance of their Physical Education teacher. The positive and supportive atmosphere of the school contributed to an engaging learning experience, so that the teaching intervention on softball throwing could be implemented successfully and observed accurately.

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Figure 3. Location map of the research environment: Montealegre National High School, Tuburan, Cebu



Participants

The participants were 35 Grade 8 students enrolled in the class for School Year 2025–2026 at Montealegre National High School, Tuburan, Cebu (Table 1). They were selected through convenience sampling: they were the researcher's own students, which was appropriate given their accessibility and relevance to the research objectives of assessing softball throwing skills before and after the intervention.

Table 1. Participants of the study

Section	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Amethyst	21	60.00
Sapphire	14	40.00
Total	**35**	**100.00**

Eligibility criteria established the requirements students had to meet to be included. The inclusion criteria ensured that participants were appropriately informed, willing, and physically capable of taking part in the research activities: participants had to provide valid informed consent and voluntarily agree to participate after receiving sufficient

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information on the purpose, procedures, possible risks, and potential benefits of the study. The exclusion criteria identified conditions that could prevent individuals from participating; they were established to protect the safety and well-being of participants, to uphold the ethical standards of the study, and to ensure the reliability of the results. Together, these criteria contributed to the credibility and consistency of the findings while maintaining ethical standards for studies involving human participants.

Instruments and scoring

A researcher-made assessment instrument was used to determine the effectiveness of explicit instruction in developing the basic softball throwing skills of Grade 8 students. A performance rubric evaluated students' level of competence in each component of the throwing skill. The rubric contained specific indicators describing correct execution of each skill and a rating scale to classify performance levels, which enabled the researcher to assess students' mastery of the basic throwing skills objectively before and after the intervention. The assessment proceeded in three parts. First, before the pre-test, students were instructed to do warm-up exercises and were then given gloves and balls to perform the pre-test, which was recorded. Second, the researcher discussed what softball is and demonstrated how softball throwing is performed in terms of grip/gripping, stance and set-up, arm and body motion, and follow-through. Third, after the instruction, students performed the post-test, which measured their competence in the four fundamental components of softball throwing. To determine the initial level of competence, the pre-test was administered before the intervention; after several sessions of explicit instruction, a post-test using the same instrument measured students' improvement. The results of both tests served as the basis for determining the effectiveness of the approach.

To establish the validity and reliability of the instrument, the researcher requested the assessment and recommendations of experts in Physical Education and research methodology. Their feedback was considered and incorporated to enhance the clarity, relevance, and suitability of the indicators, and the finalized instrument was then administered to gather the data needed to address the study's objectives.

A 4-point rating scale was used to score performance in each of the four skills, with the same descriptors applied to grip, stance and set-up, arm and body motion, and follow-through (Table 2). The rating form is reproduced in Appendix B.

Table 2. Four-point scoring scale used for each throwing skill

Score	Range	Category	Verbal description (applied to each skill)
4	3.26 – 4.00	Very Good	The students perform the skill perfectly.
3	2.51 – 3.25	Good	The students perform the skill with 1–2 errors.
2	1.76 – 2.50	Fair	The students perform the skill fairly with 3–4 errors.
1	1.00 – 1.75	Poor	The students perform the skill poorly with 5 or more errors.

Note. The skill descriptor was worded identically for grip/gripping, stance and set-up, arm and body motion, and follow-through.

Intervention: explicit instruction in softball throwing

The explicit instruction method followed a step-by-step "I do, We do, You do" framework in face-to-face sessions conducted by the researcher over six weeks, using clear explanations, teacher modeling, guided practice, and immediate corrective feedback. Weekly monitoring sheets served as formative assessment to track students' progress.

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Each lesson followed the detailed lesson plan format shown in Appendix A (introductory activity, activity, analysis, abstraction, application, assessment, and assignment). The sessions addressed the four skill components in sequence:

Grip. The first activity introduced the correct way to hold the softball. The teacher demonstrated proper finger placement on the ball and explained the importance of a firm yet relaxed grip for better control and accuracy. Students observed the demonstration and practiced the gripping technique repeatedly under the teacher's guidance until they could perform it correctly.

Stance and set-up. The teacher modeled the appropriate body position: a shoulder-width stance, slightly bent knees, and evenly distributed weight to promote balance and stability. Students were guided to face the target, align the non-throwing shoulder toward the intended direction, and properly position the softball in preparation for the throw. Through demonstration, guided practice, and repeated drills, learners gradually improved their posture, body alignment, and preparation, establishing a stable foundation for an accurate and controlled throw.

Arm and body motion. The teacher demonstrated proper throwing mechanics, emphasizing coordination of the throwing arm with body movement. Students rotated their shoulders and hips toward the target while moving the throwing arm backward and then forward in a smooth, controlled manner, with particular attention to transferring body weight from the back foot to the front foot to generate sufficient power and improve accuracy. Guided practice, repeated drills, and immediate corrective feedback gradually improved arm–body coordination.

Follow-through. The teacher demonstrated that the throwing arm should continue its motion naturally across the body after the ball is released. Students shifted their body weight completely onto the front foot, maintained balance, and allowed the back foot to move forward naturally to complete the throwing motion. The importance of a proper follow-through for accuracy, power, and reduced injury risk was explained. Repeated practice, teacher guidance, and constructive feedback helped students develop a smooth and controlled follow-through.

Data-gathering procedure

To ensure the integrity of the study, approval was obtained from the relevant authorities, including the School Head and the MAPEH coordinator and teachers, before the study began. A formal transmittal letter (dated December 10, 2025), approved by the school principal and noted by the researcher's adviser, secured permission to conduct the study during the second grading period of School Year 2025–2026. Before participation, the researcher obtained informed consent from all students so that they understood the study's benefits and potential risks, and orientation sessions familiarized the Grade 8 students with the study's objectives and procedures.

Following the pre-test, the researcher implemented the explicit instruction method in face-to-face sessions, with weekly monitoring sheets as formative assessment. After six weeks, a post-test using the same instrument evaluated changes in students' throwing skills. Different PE teachers were selected to ensure an unbiased assessment of student performance, and the scores were given by experts using the rubric. Subsequently, the MAPEH/PE teacher conducted a focus group discussion among the students to share their experiences during the explicit instruction of softball throwing; the researcher documented the discussion. The responses were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed to provide additional insight into the quantitative findings.

Data analysis

Appropriate statistical tools were selected for the objectives and nature of the data:

1. **Percentage** summarized the distribution of participants and of performance ratings across the identified categories.

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2. **Weighted mean and standard deviation** determined the overall level of students' performance, and its dispersion, in each basic softball throwing skill before and after the intervention, interpreted with the scale in Table 2.

3. **Paired-samples t-test** determined whether there was a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test performance. This test is appropriate because the same group of students was assessed before and after the intervention. The test was evaluated at the .05 level of significance (degrees of freedom = 34).

4. **Cohen's d** estimated the magnitude of the pre–post difference: 0.20–0.49, small; 0.50–0.79, medium; 0.80–1.29, large; and 1.30 and above, very large.

5. **Thematic analysis** was applied to the transcribed FGD responses to identify themes in students' experiences of the explicit instruction strategy.

Ethical considerations

Permission was secured from the school administration; participation was voluntary and based on valid informed consent; and the privacy and confidentiality of participants were strictly maintained, with data used solely for research purposes. The inclusion and exclusion criteria (Section 2.4) were applied to protect participants from possible harm. In reporting the qualitative findings, participants are identified only by respondent numbers.

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RESULTS

This section presents the quantitative results, beginning with descriptive statistics of the pre-test and post-test performance, followed by the test of the null hypothesis, and then the qualitative findings on students' experiences. The distributions show both strengths and areas for improvement in the students' skills.

Pre-test performance before explicit instruction

The pre-test was administered to determine the initial level of students' performance in basic softball throwing before the explicit instruction strategy was implemented. It served as the baseline assessment of the participants' competencies in grip, stance and set-up, arm and body motion, and follow-through, and identified the areas that required improvement (Table 3).

Table 3. Pre-test performance of the students in the four softball throwing skills (*N* = 35)

	Grip		**Stance and set-up**		**Arm and body motion**		**Follow-through**	
Score (level)	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**
4 (Very Good)	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	5.71
3 (Good)	8	22.86	8	22.86	9	25.71	5	14.29
2 (Fair)	21	60.00	19	54.29	22	62.86	15	42.86
1 (Poor)	6	17.14	8	22.86	4	11.43	13	37.14
Total	**35**	**100.00**	**35**	**100.00**	**35**	**100.00**	**35**	**100.00**
Weighted mean	2.06		2.00		2.14		1.89	
Standard deviation	0.64		0.69		0.60		0.87	
Interpretation	**Fair**		**Fair**		**Fair**		**Fair**	

Note. Score ranges: 3.26–4.00 = Very Good; 2.51–3.25 = Good; 1.76–2.50 = Fair; 1.00–1.75 = Poor.

Grip. Most of the 35 students (21, or 60.00%) obtained a score of 2 (Fair), 8 students (22.86%) scored 3 (Good), and 6 students (17.14%) scored 1 (Poor). No student achieved the highest score of 4 (Very Good). The weighted mean of 2.06 falls within the Fair range (1.76–2.50), and the standard deviation of 0.64 shows that scores were relatively close to the mean: performances did not vary greatly, most students performed at the Fair level, and only a few performed markedly higher or lower than the majority.

Stance and set-up. Nineteen students (54.29%) scored 2 (Fair), 8 students (22.86%) scored 3 (Good), and another 8 (22.86%) scored 1 (Poor); none scored 4. The weighted mean of 2.00 is Fair, and the standard deviation of 0.69 indicates scores that were moderately close to the mean, with only slight differences among most participants, who shared a common level of performance before the intervention.

Arm and body motion. Twenty-two students (62.86%) scored 2 (Fair), 9 students (25.71%) scored 3 (Good), and 4 students (11.43%) scored 1 (Poor); none scored 4. The weighted mean of 2.14 is Fair, and the standard deviation of

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0.60 indicates that scores were not widely spread, so most students performed at a similar level. This was the highest pre-test mean among the four skills.

Follow-through. Fifteen students (42.86%) scored 2 (Fair), 13 students (37.14%) scored 1 (Poor), 5 students (14.29%) scored 3 (Good), and 2 students (5.71%) scored 4 (Very Good). The weighted mean of 1.89 is Fair, and the standard deviation of 0.87 shows moderately spread scores and differences in the learners' levels of performance. Follow-through had the lowest pre-test mean, the largest share of Poor ratings, the greatest variability, and was the only skill in which any student reached Very Good.

Post-test performance after explicit instruction

The post-test was conducted after implementation of the explicit instruction strategy to assess students' performance in the four skills and the extent to which the intervention improved their competencies (Table 4). Post-test results were compared with the pre-test findings to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.

Table 4. Post-test performance of the students in the four softball throwing skills (*N* = 35)

	Grip		**Stance and set-up**		**Arm and body motion**		**Follow-through**	
Score (level)	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**	**f**	**%**
4 (Very Good)	26	74.29	28	80.00	19	54.29	23	65.71
3 (Good)	8	22.86	7	20.00	16	45.71	12	34.29
2 (Fair)	1	2.86	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
1 (Poor)	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total	**35**	**100.00**	**35**	**100.00**	**35**	**100.00**	**35**	**100.00**
Weighted mean	3.71		3.80		3.54		3.66	
Standard deviation	0.52		0.41		0.51		0.48	
Interpretation	**Very Good**		**Very Good**		**Very Good**		**Very Good**	

Note. Score ranges: 3.26–4.00 = Very Good; 2.51–3.25 = Good; 1.76–2.50 = Fair; 1.00–1.75 = Poor.

Grip. Twenty-six students (74.29%) obtained a score of 4 (Very Good), 8 students (22.86%) scored 3 (Good), and 1 student (2.86%) scored 2 (Fair); no student scored 1 (Poor). The weighted mean of 3.71 is Very Good, and the standard deviation of 0.52 shows scores are closely grouped around the mean.

Stance and set-up. Twenty-eight students (80.00%) scored 4 (Very Good), and 7 students (20.00%) scored 3 (Good); no student scored below Good. The weighted mean of 3.80, the highest post-test mean, is Very Good, and the standard deviation of 0.41, the smallest, reflects a high degree of consistency.

Arm and body motion. Nineteen students (54.29%) scored 4 (Very Good), and 16 students (45.71%) scored 3 (Good); none scored Fair or Poor. The weighted mean of 3.54 is Very Good (the lowest of the four post-test means), with a standard deviation of 0.51.

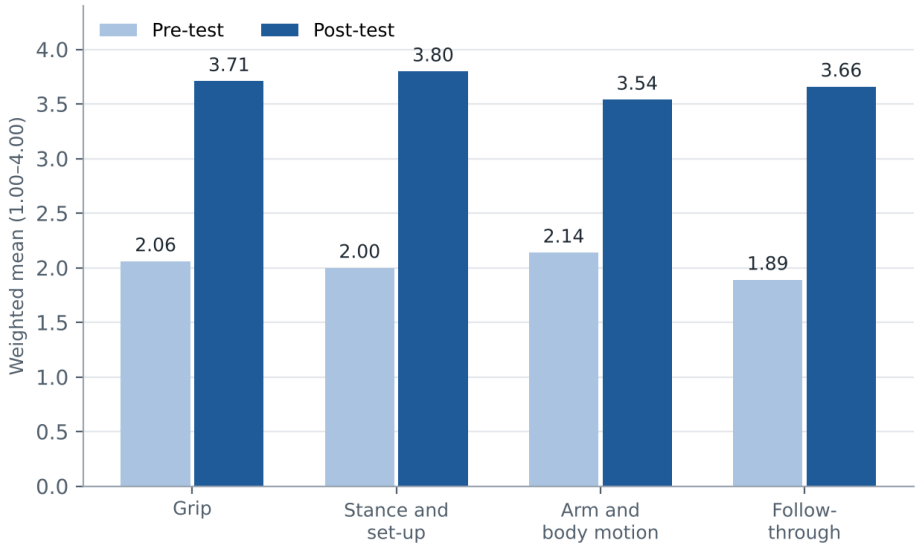
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Follow-through. Twenty-three students (65.71%) scored 4 (Very Good), and 12 students (34.29%) scored 3 (Good); none were classified as Fair or Poor. The weighted mean of 3.66 is Very Good, with a standard deviation of 0.48.

Across the four skills, every student was rated Good or Very Good except one student rated Fair in grip, and no student was rated Poor in any skill.

Figure 4. Weighted mean scores of the students before and after explicit instruction, by skill



Significant difference between pre-test and post-test performance

Table 5. Paired-samples t-test of pre-test and post-test performance ($N = 35$, $df = 34$)

Skill	Pre-test mean	Post-test mean	Mean difference	t	p	Cohen's d	Decision/interpretation
Grip	2.06	3.71	1.66	13.5	< .001	2.28	Reject H_0; significant difference
Stance and set-up	2.00	3.80	1.80	14.0	< .001	2.37	Reject H_0; significant difference
Arm and body motion	2.14	3.54	1.40	11.3	< .001	1.90	Reject H_0; significant difference
Follow-through	1.89	3.66	1.77	10.8	< .001	1.82	Reject H_0; significant difference

Note. $p < .05$ indicates a significant difference. Effect sizes (Cohen's d): 0.20–0.49 = small; 0.50–0.79 = medium; 0.80–1.29 = large; 1.30 and above = very large.

All post-test mean scores were higher than the pre-test means (Table 5; Figure 4). In grip, the mean increased from 2.06 to 3.71 (mean difference = 1.66); in stance and set-up, from 2.00 to 3.80 (1.80); in arm and body motion, from

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2.14 to 3.54 (1.40); and in follow-through, from 1.89 to 3.66 (1.77). The computed *t*-values ranged from 10.8 to 14.0, with *p*-values below .001, indicating a statistically significant difference between pre-test and post-test performance in all four throwing skills. Because every *p*-value was below the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected for all skill areas. The effect sizes, ranging from 1.82 to 2.37, correspond to a very large effect on Cohen's scale. Among the four skills, stance and set-up obtained the highest effect size ($d = 2.37$).

Students' experiences during the implementation of explicit instruction

Analysis of the focus group responses yielded six themes: motivation through collaboration, personal progress, enjoyment, teacher influence, future goals, and sense of achievement (Table 6). Collectively, they show that explicit instruction in throwing helped participants improve their technical skills and also kept them engaged through social interaction, enjoyment, and a sense of personal and collective achievement.

Table 6. Themes and sub-themes in students' experiences of explicit instruction

Theme	Sub-theme(s)	Respondents quoted
1. Motivation through group support and collaboration	1.1 Teamwork and collective effort 1.2 Peer encouragement and positive reinforcement	R1, R2, R10
2. Personal progress and skill improvement	2.1 Sense of accomplishment through improvement 2.2 Overcoming challenges and difficulties	R11, R16, R8, R9
3. Enjoyment and fun in learning	3.1 Enjoyable learning experience 3.2 Positive emotional responses to learning	R21, R18, R22, R25
4. Teacher's role in motivation	4.1 Positive influence of the teacher	R25, R32
5. Aspirations and future goals	5.1 Motivation for future activities/competitions	R33, R26
6. Sense of achievement	6.1 Pride in skill mastery	R34, R30

Theme 1: Motivation through group support and collaboration

This emerged as an important theme in the implementation of explicit instruction in softball throwing. Students reported feeling more confident and motivated when they practiced with their peers, received encouragement, and worked together toward common learning goals. Through collaborative activities, learners observed correct techniques, gave one another feedback, and developed a shared responsibility for improvement. Explicit instruction provided clear demonstrations and guided practice, while peer support reinforced learning and increased engagement in the activities.

Sub-theme 1.1: Teamwork and collective effort. Participants emphasized how teamwork inspired and motivated them, reinforcing the idea that collective effort enhances the learning experience. The collaborative approach fostered individual accountability and a culture of empathy and mutual respect among learners.

"I felt inspired while performing softball throwing because my classmates encouraged me, and the clear instructions helped me improve my skills and confidence." (Respondent #1)

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"I felt motivated to improve my throwing skills because everyone in the group was helping each other learn." (Respondent #2)

Sub-theme 1.2: Peer encouragement and positive reinforcement. Respondents described how their peers' encouragement, such as "GOOD JOB" or "KEEP IT UP," motivated them during the activity. The mutual reinforcement fostered camaraderie and helped participants stay motivated to improve their skills.

"Hearing encouraging words like 'Keep it up' gave me confidence while performing the activity." (Respondent #10)

Theme 2: Personal progress and skill improvement

Personal development and seeing improvement in their throwing skills emerged as a key motivator for many respondents. Several participants shared that they were inspired by their own progress, particularly after practicing for some time and noticing tangible improvements in their ability to handle the ball.

Sub-theme 2.1: Sense of accomplishment through improvement. Participants were inspired by the noticeable improvement in their throwing skills. This was especially motivating because they could track their progress from struggling with basic skills to becoming more proficient, which reinforced the benefits of the activity.

"Improving my throwing skills made me feel proud of my effort and motivated me to continue learning." (Respondent #11)

"I was inspired because I noticed that my throwing became more accurate after practicing the techniques." (Respondent #16)

Sub-theme 2.2: Overcoming challenges and difficulties. Respondents also highlighted how overcoming initial challenges kept them motivated. Many found the activity difficult at first, but with time, practice, the step-by-step teaching guide, and the support of their peers, they managed to get better, which inspired continued engagement.

"At first, I found softball throwing difficult, but continuous practice helped me improve my performance." (Respondent #8)

"Although I struggled at the beginning, seeing my improvement encouraged me to keep practicing." (Respondent #9)

Theme 3: Enjoyment and fun in learning

A recurring theme was the enjoyment participants experienced during the explicit instruction activities. Many respondents noted that the learning process was fun, particularly when they engaged in more dynamic or challenging aspects of throwing, such as follow-through. This enjoyment helped participants stay motivated throughout the activity.

Sub-theme 3.1: Enjoyable learning experience. Respondents expressed that the activities were enjoyable and engaging. By incorporating fun elements into practice, such as games and collaborative learning, the explicit instruction made throwing more accessible and less intimidating.

"The enjoyable activities helped me feel more comfortable and interested in learning the skill." (Respondent #21)

"I enjoyed the activity because the games and exercises made learning softball throwing fun and exciting." (Respondent #18)

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Sub-theme 3.2: Positive emotional responses to learning. Participants connected the fun and enjoyment of the activity to a more positive emotional response, which reinforced the idea that learning in an enjoyable environment helps sustain motivation and improves retention.

"The fun learning environment made me more interested in participating in the softball activities." (Respondent #22)

"I felt happy and excited while learning because the activities were enjoyable and interactive." (Respondent #25)

Theme 4: Teacher's role in motivation

The presence and support of the teacher played a significant role in motivating students, particularly when they faced challenges. The teacher's guidance and encouragement helped participants stay motivated, especially when the activity became physically tiring or difficult.

Sub-theme 4.1: Positive influence of the teacher. Respondents mentioned that the teacher's support made them feel more confident and motivated, even when they made mistakes or struggled with throwing skills.

"I felt more comfortable learning because my teacher patiently explained and demonstrated the correct techniques." (Respondent #25)

"The positive feedback from my teacher inspired me to keep trying and not give up when the activity was difficult." (Respondent #32)

Theme 5: Aspirations and future goals

Some respondents shared that they were motivated by personal goals and aspirations, such as using their new throwing skills in an upcoming activity. This long-term motivation helped them stay focused on improving their skills during the explicit instruction activities.

Sub-theme 5.1: Motivation for future activities and competitions. Several respondents were motivated by the prospect of using their throwing skills in upcoming throwing-related activities. This forward-looking focus provided an additional incentive to put in effort and improve.

"Learning the correct throwing technique inspired me to prepare for upcoming school sports events." (Respondent #33)

"I felt motivated to continue practicing because I wanted to become more competitive in sports activities that are related to throwing." (Respondent #26)

Theme 6: Sense of achievement

The sense of achievement that participants felt as they progressed in their throwing skills was a strong motivational factor. Many respondents felt proud of their improvements, which gave them a sense of accomplishment.

Sub-theme 6.1: Pride in skill mastery. The ability to master new skills such as throwing was a significant motivator. Respondents expressed satisfaction in learning the correct techniques and mastering the throwing process, which made them feel accomplished.

"Being able to throw correctly after struggling at first made me feel successful." (Respondent #34)

"Mastering the proper way of throwing gave me a sense of accomplishment and confidence." (Respondent #30)

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Proposed teaching guide for softball throwing

Based on the findings, a structured teaching guide focused on explicit instruction in softball throwing was developed. It includes step-by-step lessons on grip, stance and set-up, arm and body motion, and follow-through to enhance students' skill development and performance in Physical Education. The guide's rationale, objectives, scheme of implementation, and a detailed lesson plan (DLP No. 2, 60 minutes, MAPEH 8) are presented in Appendix A, and the accompanying rating form is in Appendix B.

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DISCUSSION

Summary of principal findings

This study assessed the effectiveness of the explicit instruction method in enhancing the basic softball throwing skills of Grade 8 students in grip, stance and set-up, arm and body motion, and follow-through, using a pretest–posttest design with a performance rubric, and explored students' experiences of the method. Before the intervention, students' performance was Fair in all four competencies (weighted means 1.89–2.14), with limited mastery and none or few students at the Very Good level. After the intervention, performance was Very Good in all four (3.54–3.80), with students showing better execution of grip, improved body positioning in stance and set-up, more coordinated arm and body motion, and more effective follow-through. The difference was statistically significant for every skill, and the effects were very large. Students reported positive experiences: they said the step-by-step demonstrations, guided practice, and feedback helped them understand and perform the correct techniques, and they described gaining confidence and finding the learning process more engaging and easier to follow.

Baseline performance

The pre-test results show that students began the study with basic but undeveloped throwing skills. In grip, the absence of students in the Very Good category implies that none had fully mastered the proper grip at the start, and the 17.14% rated Poor suggests that some students had difficulty executing the correct grip, possibly because of a lack of prior training, insufficient practice, or unfamiliarity with the skill. In stance and set-up, the equal percentages in the Good and Poor categories (22.86% each) show that while some students demonstrated acceptable performance, others struggled with correct body positioning and preparation; students possessed basic knowledge of the skill but lacked consistency and mastery. In arm and body motion, the smaller number of students rated Good than Fair, and the 11.43% rated Poor, may point to limited coordination, insufficient understanding of the technique, or lack of previous experience, and these students may benefit from additional teacher guidance, repeated practice, and appropriate feedback. Follow-through, which contributes to the completion and control of a movement, was the weakest area, with 37.14% rated Poor; difficulties here may affect the overall execution of the throw and may reflect limited coordination, insufficient practice, or limited understanding of the movement process.

These baseline needs are consistent with the rationale for explicit instruction. Explicit instruction is a systematic teaching approach that combines clear explanations, modeling, guided practice, and corrective feedback to improve student learning outcomes (Hughes et al., 2017). Studies in other domains report that explicit instruction supports learning when teachers give direct explanations and structured guidance: an explicit instruction model assisted by teaching aids positively influenced students' learning interest, active participation, and learning outcomes in Grade VIII mathematics (Jannah & Lestari, 2026); explicit instruction improved students' acquisition of science inquiry skills (Kruit et al., 2016); and explicit instructional interactions helped students understand mathematical concepts because teachers continuously guided and monitored learning (Doabler et al., 2017). By analogy, learners practicing grip and stance benefit more from a teacher who clearly demonstrates hand positioning, foot placement, and preparation movements, and who gives continuous correction and reinforcement, than from discovering the skill independently. In motor learning specifically, consistent follow-through helps learners develop stronger motor memory and improve movement performance (Howard et al., 2015), explicit instructional approaches improve movement execution by providing clear guidance and feedback during practice (Gredin & Williams, 2016), and verbal and explicit instructions can positively influence motor learning when they are understandable and well organized (Bobrownicki et al., 2015). Studies cited above that come from mathematics and science are offered as supporting evidence for the general mechanism rather than as evidence about softball.

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Post-intervention performance

The post-test results indicate that the explicit instruction method was highly effective in enhancing the students' performance. The high percentages in the Very Good level (54.29%–80.00%) together with the Very Good weighted means (3.54–3.80) indicate that the method improved learners' mastery and confidence, and the absence of Fair and Poor ratings in stance and set-up, arm and body motion, and follow-through, and of Poor ratings in grip, suggests that learners were able to follow the lessons and activities successfully. The low standard deviations (0.41–0.52) show that scores were closely grouped, which suggests that most students benefited in a similar way and that the method supported improvement across the group rather than only a limited number of students. This consistency may indicate that explicit instruction is beneficial not only for high-performing students but also for average and struggling learners, because the teacher provides organized explanations and demonstrations before students perform the task independently, which reduces confusion.

These results agree with the literature. Explicit instruction is an evidence-based approach that improves student achievement because lessons are presented systematically and clearly, and teacher modeling and guided practice are essential in developing psychomotor and academic competencies (Archer & Hughes, 2011). Explicit instruction has consistently positive effects on learning outcomes across subjects and skill-based activities because it minimizes confusion and increases learner participation (Stockard et al., 2018), and effective explicit teaching involves clear explanations, checking for understanding, and continuous practice (Rosenshine, 2016). Explicit instructional interactions positively affect student achievement (Doabler et al., 2015), guided instruction improves learning outcomes and self-efficacy because learners clearly understand what is expected of them (Hushman & Marley, 2015), and the implementation of explicit instruction significantly improves both student activity and learning outcomes in the classroom (Rafiana et al., 2015). In the present study, the improvement in all softball skills shows that learners were able to understand and apply the correct techniques after systematic instruction, supporting the view that explicit instruction enhances mastery learning.

Magnitude and pattern of improvement

The paired-samples t-tests (t = 10.8–14.0, $p < .001$) and the very large effect sizes (d = 1.82–2.37) show that the improvement was statistically significant and large in all four skills, so the null hypothesis was rejected. Stance and set-up obtained the highest effect size (d = 2.37) and the largest mean gain (1.80), with the highest post-test mean (3.80) and 80.00% of students rated Very Good; this indicates that learners benefited greatly from step-by-step demonstrations and teacher guidance in establishing a stable body position. Arm and body motion showed the smallest mean gain (1.40) and the lowest post-test mean (3.54), although it was still interpreted as Very Good; this skill requires coordination of the arm, shoulders, hips, and legs, which may account for the more modest gain. These differences among skills are descriptive and should be interpreted cautiously.

Students' experiences

The qualitative findings help explain the quantitative gains by showing how students experienced the method. Collaboration and peer support (Theme 1) are consistent with research showing that collaborative learning environments promote the regulation of motivation through peer interaction and help students sustain engagement and overcome learning challenges (Järvenoja et al., 2020), and that cooperative learning can enhance students' social relationships, interaction, and self-esteem (Johnson et al., 2007; Kyndt et al., 2013). Combining explicit instruction with collaborative learning experiences may therefore enhance both skill development and student motivation in physical education settings.

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Personal progress (Theme 2) is consistent with sociocultural theory, which posits that engagement in physical activity is driven by social interactions, cultural norms, institutional structures, and historical context, so that the most significant motivating factors are embedded in a person's immediate and broader environment (Vygotsky, 1978). The sense of accomplishment that students described as they tracked their progress from struggling with basic skills to becoming more proficient may be understood through Bandura's (1997) concept of mastery experiences, which holds that successful performance experiences strengthen learners' self-efficacy and confidence in performing a particular skill. Enjoyment (Theme 3), including the games and collaborative learning that made throwing less intimidating, aligns with findings that gamified learning environments can enhance motivation and foster a positive attitude toward skill acquisition (Deterding et al., 2011).

The teacher's role (Theme 4) is consistent with evidence that effective teacher support can enhance student motivation and engagement in physical activities (Ryan & Deci, 2000) and with the importance of teacher feedback in fostering a supportive learning environment (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Future goals (Theme 5) reflect findings that setting specific goals can significantly enhance motivation and performance in sports and physical activities (Locke & Latham, 2002) and that the anticipation of competition can motivate individuals to practice diligently and refine their skills (Weinberg & Gould, 2014). Finally, the sense of achievement (Theme 6) is consistent with research indicating that experiencing achievement can significantly enhance motivation and self-esteem and lead to greater engagement in activities (Schunk, 1991), and with Bandura's (1997) account of mastery experiences and self-efficacy.

Theoretical implications

The findings are consistent with B. F. Skinner's operant conditioning theory, which explains that behavior can be strengthened through reinforcement and the consequences that follow an action (Skinner, 1938). During the intervention, students received immediate corrective feedback, encouragement, and positive reinforcement, which helped them recognize and correct improper throwing movements, and the repeated application of these practices supported the development of their throwing skills.

The findings also support Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasizes social interaction and guidance from more knowledgeable individuals. Through teacher demonstrations, explanations, modeling, guided practice, and continuous support, students were assisted in performing skills within their Zone of Proximal Development; as they received appropriate guidance and opportunities to practice, they gradually developed greater independence in softball throwing (Vygotsky, 1978).

Furthermore, the improvement is consistent with motor learning theory, which explains that motor skills are developed through repeated practice, feedback, and progressive refinement of movement patterns. The explicit instruction approach gave students systematic opportunities to practice each component of softball throwing, allowing them to develop proper coordination, accuracy, control, and consistency.

Practical implications

The results support integrating explicit instruction into Physical Education classes to improve students' mastery of sports skills and contribute to higher-quality teaching and learning outcomes. Integrating clear instruction, teacher modeling, guided practice, reinforcement, and continuous feedback may enhance students' psychomotor performance while promoting active learning and confidence. Whether the gains are retained over the long term was not measured in this study and remains to be tested. The proposed teaching guide (Appendix A) gives MAPEH teachers a ready structure for such lessons. The findings may also help schools strengthen their teaching and learning programs through research-based instructional strategies, inform administrators in planning teacher training, seminars, and professional development in MAPEH teaching methodologies, and support the development of more structured lesson plans,

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learning activities, and assessment tools for student-centered, skill-focused teaching. Consistent with the guide's rationale, the approach is grounded in the principles of sociocultural theory (scaffolding, interaction, and guided learning), and it may be applicable to other MAPEH subjects as well.

Limitations

Several features of the design call for caution. First, there was no comparison or control group: the same 35 students were assessed before and after the intervention, so improvement cannot be attributed to explicit instruction alone, and maturation, additional practice, and familiarity with the test cannot be ruled out. Second, participants were a convenience sample of the researcher's own students from two sections in one school, which limits generalizability and may introduce expectancy effects. Third, the post-test followed the intervention directly, so retention of skills was not examined. Fourth, performance was scored with a researcher-made rubric whose validity was established through expert review; no reliability coefficient or inter-rater agreement is reported, and the scores are ordinal ratings. Future studies should address these points through controlled designs, larger and more varied samples, delayed post-tests, and formal reliability estimates.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Based on the results, the explicit instruction method is an effective teaching approach for enhancing the basic softball throwing skills of Grade 8 students. The findings showed a marked improvement in students' performance in grip, stance and set-up, arm and body motion, and follow-through from the pre-test to the post-test. Structured lessons, teacher demonstrations, guided practice, immediate feedback, and repeated opportunities to perform the skills enabled students to develop greater competence and confidence in the fundamental techniques of softball throwing. The findings are consistent with Skinner's operant conditioning theory, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, and motor learning theory.

Overall, the study concludes that explicit instruction is an effective, evidence-based approach for developing fundamental softball throwing skills among Grade 8 students. Integrating clear instruction, teacher modeling, guided practice, reinforcement, and continuous feedback enhances students' psychomotor performance and promotes active learning and confidence, and the findings support integrating explicit instruction into Physical Education classes. Given the one-group design, these conclusions apply to the participating students and should be confirmed in controlled studies.

Recommendations

Explicit instruction can significantly enhance learning by breaking complex skills into clear, manageable steps, allowing students to better understand and master basic softball throwing techniques. The following are recommended:

- **Physical Education teachers** should consistently apply explicit instruction in teaching motor skills such as grip, stance, and set-up, arm and body motion, and follow-through, to improve students' performance and skill acquisition. Lessons should be delivered with clear demonstrations, guided practice, and immediate feedback to correct errors and reinforce proper techniques, and regular practice activities and skill reinforcement exercises should be provided to sustain students' development and mastery.
- **School administrators** are encouraged to support the use of explicit instruction by providing adequate sports equipment, learning materials, and training opportunities for teachers to enhance instructional delivery in Physical Education.

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- **Students** are encouraged to participate actively in learning activities and engage in regular practice of the skills taught to strengthen their softball throwing performance and build greater confidence.
- **Future researchers** may undertake related studies with larger sample sizes or examine other sports skills to further investigate and establish the effectiveness of explicit instruction in improving students' learning and skill development, ideally with comparison groups and delayed post-tests.

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