Strategies for Improving Self-Efficacy in Creative Writing for English Majors in the Bachelor of Secondary Education Program

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ABSTRACT :

This aimed to assess the levels of self-efficacy in creative writing among English majors in the Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) program at Divine Word College of Calapan and identify strategies they perceive as helpful in enhancing their writing confidence. Using a self-report questionnaire and guided interviews, data were gathered from 21 third-year English majors enrolled in the Creative Writing course. Results revealed that most students had moderate levels of self-efficacy, often struggling with idea generation, fear of judgment, and writing anxiety. Students identified peer feedback, constructive instructor comments, goal-setting, and exposure to model texts as effective strategies for building writing confidence. The study highlights the importance of classroom practices that support student engagement and growth in creative writing.

Keywords: self-efficacy, creative writing, English majors, descriptive study, writing strategies, education

Introduction

Creative writing is a cornerstone that helps learners develop their academic and creative skills, particularly the learners who will take a Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) Major in English. As learners delve into the complexities of character development, narrative production, and expressive language usage, the need for a strong sense of self-efficacy becomes evident.

The significance of self-efficacy in the learning process has been underlined by researchers more and more over time, especially in disciplines like writing that require subjective and creative skills. Learners with high levels of self-efficacy were more likely to take chances with their writing and ask for feedback to improve their craft, according to a study by Lee and Lee (2019) that examined the impact of self-efficacy on learners' writing growth. They concluded that self-efficacy significantly predicted academic engagement in writing courses and creative writing achievement. Similarly, Martínez and Gutiérrez (2018) discovered that learners are more likely to approach writing assignments with zeal and persistence when they have confidence in their skills, which results in improved writing output.

Despite these findings, self-doubt, impostor syndrome, and failure-related anxiety are common problems among learners in creative writing classes. This can be particularly difficult for English majors, who are expected to produce unique and inventive work frequently under the pressure of academic evaluation. According to Jones et al. (2020), who looked at the obstacles to creative writing achievement, learners usually struggled emotionally with how they saw themselves as writers, which can erode learners' confidence in their writing skills and hinder advancement, especially when paired with the subjective nature of creative writing grading.

Considering these difficulties, current research has focused on valuable techniques for raising creative writing self-efficacy. Wilson and Kim (2021) examined how writing workshops and peer feedback sessions affected learners' self-efficacy in writing classes. They discovered that learners' confidence in their writing abilities was much increased and that collaborative writing exercises, in which they discuss and comment on each other's work, also contributed to a positive learning atmosphere. Furthermore, Nguyen and Patel (2022) investigated the usefulness of goal-setting and formative feedback when they established specific, attainable writing objectives and got helpful criticism from instructors and peers.

This study seeks to identify effective strategies for enhancing self-efficacy in creative writing among English majors in the BSEd program. It aims to assess their self-perception, explore contributing experiences, and determine the impact of self-efficacy on academic performance.

Research Objectives

This study aims to describe the self-efficacy levels in creative writing among English majors in the BSEd program and identify effective strategies to enhance it. Specifically, it seeks to:

1. Describe the profile of the respondents in terms of:
   o Age
   o Gender
   o Year level

2. Assess the current level of self-efficacy in creative writing among the respondents based on:
    o Confidence in writing tasks
    o Past writing experiences
    o Perceived challenges in writing
3. Identify the strategies perceived by students as effective in improving their self-efficacy in creative writing.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a *descriptive research design*, which aims to systematically present the self-efficacy levels of students in creative writing and describe the strategies they believe help improve their writing confidence.

Respondents

The respondents were *21 third-year BSEd English majors* from Divine Word College of Calapan enrolled in the Creative Writing course during the *Academic Year 2021–2022*. The entire block section was chosen as the study group due to their direct involvement with the subject matter.

Instrument

1. *Self-Efficacy in Writing Questionnaire (SEWQ)* – A researcher-developed instrument using a 5-point Likert scale that measured:

    * Writing confidence
    * Past writing experiences
    * Perceived challenges

2. *Interview Guide* – Semi-structured interview questions were used with five randomly selected students to gather qualitative data on the strategies they used or found effective in improving their writing self-efficacy.

Data Gathering Procedure

The questionnaire was administered in person during class hours. Participants were informed of the study's purpose and assured of confidentiality. Following the survey, interviews were conducted with five students in a quiet and private setting. Responses were recorded with consent and transcribed for analysis.
Quantitative data were tallied and summarized using frequencies and percentages, while qualitative responses were analyzed thematically.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical standards in research. Approval was obtained from the academic research committee of Divine Word College of Calapan. Informed consent was secured from all participants before the data collection. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty. All information was treated with confidentiality, and personal identifiers were removed from data sets. Audio recordings of interviews were deleted after transcription, ensuring participants' privacy was protected throughout the research process.

Results and Discussion

1. Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	19–21	18	85.7%
	22–24	3	14.3%
Gender	Female	15	71.4%
	Male	6	28.6%
Year Level	3rd Year	21	100%

The majority of respondents were aged 19 to 21 and predominantly female. All were enrolled in their third year, consistent with the course structure.

2. Levels of Self-Efficacy in Creative Writing

Students rated their confidence in completing various creative writing tasks. The results showed:

Self-Efficacy Level	Frequency	Percentage
High	6	28.6%
Moderate	13	61.9%
Low	2	9.5%

The majority of students had *moderate levels of self-efficacy*, indicating they were somewhat confident but still experienced notable challenges in their writing process.

Common Challenges Reported:

- Difficulty in starting or organizing ideas (67%)
- Anxiety about grammar or vocabulary accuracy (57%)
- Fear of being judged or misunderstood (48%)

These findings suggest that even students with prior writing experience face emotional and cognitive obstacles, consistent with Jones et al. (2020), who found that low self-perception negatively affects writing engagement.

3. Strategies to Improve Self-Efficacy

Interviews revealed five recurring themes among students regarding effective strategies to build self-efficacy:

Strategy	Description
Peer Feedback	Helped students view writing from different perspectives and gain constructive suggestions.
Instructor Comments	Specific, supportive feedback guided revisions and boosted confidence.
Goal-Setting	Breaking writing tasks into smaller goals made projects feel more manageable.
Reading Model Texts	Analyzing well-written texts helped students understand style and structure.
Freewriting Exercises	Encouraged idea generation without fear of judgment.

These findings align with previous literature (Wilson & Kim, 2021; Nguyen & Patel, 2022), supporting the idea that supportive and structured classroom practices foster writing confidence.

Conclusion

The study revealed that most BSEd English majors in the Creative Writing course exhibited *moderate self-efficacy***,** with a few reporting high or low confidence. Students cited challenges such as writer's block, grammar concerns, and fear of criticism. The most effective strategies identified to improve self-efficacy included peer and instructor feedback, goal-setting, and reading model texts. These approaches contributed to a more encouraging and productive writing environment.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following are recommended:
1. *Encourage Peer Feedback* – Foster structured peer-review sessions to build collaborative support systems.
2. *Enhance Instructor Feedback* – Offer consistent, detailed, and positive feedback to nurture writing growth.
3. *Promote Goal-Setting* – Help students develop short-term writing goals to improve task management.
4. *Use Model Texts Regularly* – Include analysis of exemplary works in lessons to inspire and instruct.
5. *Integrate Freewriting* – Begin sessions with low-stakes freewriting to reduce anxiety and unlock creativity.

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