

Utilizing Social Media in Improving Creative Writing Skills of Grade 7 Students in English

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Abstract: *The study identified the performance of Grade 7 students enrolled in Umingan Central National High School across their academic performance in English under creative writing skill. In gathering the profile of the students and their performance in identifying morphological and syntactical errors, descriptive and correlational research designs with the use of rubrics and standard deviation were used in the treatment of data. In answering the relationship between the students' profile variables and their performance in identifying morphological and syntactical errors, Pearson R and Spearman Rho were used. It disclosed that most of the students achieved an overall rating of "good" in identifying morphological errors while "fair" in identifying syntactical errors. There was a significant relationship between the students' academic performance in English and their performance in identifying syntactical errors. Further, the computed significance value 0.00 which was less than the level of alpha 0.05, the r value reflected a moderately positive correlation between English grade and controlled group. The experimental group was found out to have no significant relationship to the ability to identify performance of students in creative writing skill.*

Keywords—social media, creative writing skills, grade 7 students

1. INTRODUCTION

The low level of writing skills among Filipino students reveals issues with underlying writing proficiency. A wide variety of studies suggest that as many as 85% of students testing low in core writing skills also have weak underlying cognitive skills. Thus, for many students, successful writing pieces mean a return to the basic mental tools that create a firm cognitive foundation.

The four C's in the K to 12 Curriculum are Communication, Collaboration, Creativity and Critical Thinking (DepEd Order No.8, series 2015. Classroom Assessment of K to 12). In that way, students were able to prepare for lessons and relax in learning lessons while boosting their own critical and creative thinking, their skill in translating curriculum content into relevant learning activities also grows. This also tested the student learning into a systematic and a better contextualized to the learning needs of students. With that, the researcher conducted a controlled training to the Grade 7-Mabini of the Umingan Central National High School for the School Year 2017-2018, entitled "Best Practices in Creative Writing." The resource speaker was a Palanca Winner and Fellow Writer from the University of the Philippines. The possible topics were the following: The English Proficiency (mechanics of writing, usage of writing and sentence formation), Multiversal Seeing as Creative Framework, Fundamentals of Creative Writing, The Centrality of Language in Creative Writing, Creative Writing as Pedagogical Tool, and Practical Tips and Recommendations on Creative Writing. These were intended to help the students organize their thoughts and give them enough knowledge in improving their writing skills.

Moreover, there were activities like Cliniquing of Creative Works, Revision of Works, and Presentation of Outputs. The output of the said Seminar-Workshop will be a Literary Folio composing the things they think, observe and feel (TOF) in the form of critical/personal essay, haiku, feature writing and prose poetry blended with arts signifying their craft in writing. If this would successfully happen, students would make their passion in writing broadly and deeply. To sustain the said activity, the said participants were monitored through pen and paper wherein they could freely edit their literary pieces as suggested and can share and give comments and/or feedback constructively with their classmates.

2. RELATED WORKS

As an English language teacher teaching Grade VII at Umingan Central National High School, the researcher observed that there are more students who hate writing, most especially the creative writings. Everytime that the topic is on discussing specific writing, they are having hard time to organize their thoughts most probably in expressing what is on their minds.

Writing refers to the medium of communication that represents language through the inscription of signs and symbols. In written language, it refers to the collective body of important features established by the authors in the creation of literature. With that, it provides students proceed into new information in their own words. It is particularly an avenue where they can freely write insightful and imaginative way. It also appeals to students who prefer to learn independently.

Today, one of the well-known social media to students is the Facebook. It is an important means of motivation and

interest for them. Advocates of social constructivism prove that learners should constantly be challenged with tasks that refer to skills and knowledge just beyond their current level of mastery. This captures their motivation and builds on previous successes to enhance learners' confidence [1][2]. This is in line with Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, which can be described as the distance between the actual developmental level (as determined by independent problem-solving) and the level of potential development (as determined through problem-solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers). Based on some topics inclined in writing, students are not meticulous or unconscious in their vocabulary. In that way, problems arise if the given activity is writing. This is one of the reasons why many students use websites and other computer programs to improve their vocabulary, and doing so can increase a person's ability to communicate through written language. Also, this is in line to the competency of Grade 7 students that is the writing and composition. One of which is to compose and revise a piece of narrative writing in terms of content, style, mechanics collaboratively and independently.

The baseline of this study was the poor performance of the students in creative writing. Specifically, it would take the common genre like poetry and personal essay. As a creative writer, just as important as their final product is the process by which that product comes to be—how you develop your own personal toolbox of skills, strategies, and styles is going to have an impact on the form of your final product would take. It could be (and should be) argued that this is all, to some extent, true of writing in English language; —however, here it focused on the tools that might be helpful specifically in a creative writing class. While it is important to be creative in such a class, it is equally important to keep in mind the skills or techniques being practiced in a given topic. That it further needed to develop their writing prowess for them to be good communicators in the present, might as well in the future. The development and demonstration of these skills was a necessary step; therefore, though it some room for experimentation and improvement, it's important to follow the necessary pointers and reminders. This was where writing as an art form could be truly appreciated. In this study, the students compiled some tips to help them learn and practice the tools they have in a classroom setting. Furthermore, this was used to motivate students with low performance in creative writing class and help them widen their thinking skills to come up with organized thoughts slotted at the right context of a specific genre [3].

In the context of the foregoing insights, this study determined the use of social media in improving creative writing skills of Grade 7 students under section Mabini at the Umingan Central National High School for the School Year 2017-2018.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study determined the use of social media in improving creative writing skills of Grade 7-Mabini students

in English at the Umingan Central National High School for the S.Y 2017-2018.

Specifically, the study aimed to answer the following questions:

- (1) What is the effect of using social media in improving students' creative writing skills in English?
- (2) Is there a significant difference that exists in the performance using social media in improving students' creative writing skills in English between the pen and paper group and the Facebook group?

4. METHODOLOGY

The participants were the chosen thirty students from Grade 7- Mabini students who were enrolled for the School Year 2017-2018 with a grade of 80 below in English. The condition for them to be qualified was their grades in English for the First Quarter. It was accompanied with the cooperation of the advisers to the researcher to have a fair selection for the Controlled Training and Workshop. The chosen participants brought any literary text of their choice as their identification entry. Participants were informed that the tangible output will be included in a literary folio of Umingan Central National High School

The researcher sought the permission of the School Principal in administering the study to the Grade 7- Mabini students of Umingan Central National High School for the School Year 2017-2018.

First, in order to ensure the validity and reliability of the study, the researcher consulted the help of the three English experts who were the validators of the instrument. The three (3) validators were (1) Secondary School Head Teacher in English Department from the Junior High School, another Head Teacher in English Department from the Senior High School and a Master Teacher I in English Department from the Junior High School.

The model of criteria by Ferris' Analysis of Error Model (2005) was used in order to limit the types of errors presented in their essays. Based on this model, the common English as a Second Language (ESL) writing errors fall into two major categories: morphological and syntactic errors. This model was based upon the "description of the major error categories", which covered tense and forms, subject-verb agreement, articles, plurals, possessives, sentence structures, fragments and run-ons. According to James (1998) as cited in Kato (2006), this error analysis model is well-developed, highly elaborated and self-explanatory.

There was also an experimental group denoting the Group Chat from Facebook as electronic output. The students received an intensive training of correcting others' mistakes and given some suggestions to improve writing in terms of conventions of writing like mechanics, usage, and sentence

formation through pen and paper, consisting of thirty (30) students as controlled group.

Afterwards, the improved essays were administered to the students for them to identify the morphological and syntactical errors. Lastly, all the data gathered using the different research instruments were analyzed and interpreted.

The researcher used a creative writing activity using rubrics for evaluating the level of the students and for noticing the difference in the students' performance in writing quality paper. Likert scale was also employed in the effect of using social media in improving students' creative writing skills in English both experimental and controlled group. The statistical measures used were the following: mean and standard deviation to check the differences on the controlled and experimental group, to check the internal reliability of the activity, and independent sample t-tests to check equivalence between the experimental and the control groups. The statistical test is still the same to find the impact of treatment.

5. RESULTS

The results were presented based from sequence and order of the questions raised:

Problem 1: What is the effect of using social media in improving students' creative writing skills in English?

The highest mean percentage on the manifestation of emotional and aesthetic quality which was 4.96 respectively.

On the contrary, 3.96 got the lowest score on the delivery to capture the interest of the audience or reader. It shows here that learning the writing process is important for the students as it enables students to express their thoughts, knowledge and feelings efficiently. The more the students learn the writing process, the more they will be able to express themselves efficiently.

Data indicated that it was "effective" or 3.90 points on the poem written based on the form assigned. With that, the writing process on poetry resembles a road map. Through this, the students effectively follow the right form from the beginning till the end. In order to make the students think creatively, they should be given opportunity to see world of poetry through windows and observe it and they can write creatively with any fear.

Further, the lowest points dealt with the proper use of punctuations, correct spelling and correct grammar with 3.05 mean percentage. Students must be aware with these technicalities in writing because these serve as foundation in their writing skills. Therefore this study aimed at describing the difficulties pertaining to composition writing and strategies to develop writing abilities of the students to write creatively.

Problem 2: Is there a significant difference that exists in the performance using social media in improving students' creative writing skills in English between the pen and paper group and the Facebook group?

The data disclosed the significant difference between the experimental and controlled group with their profile variables, namely: grade in English, and performance in creative writing.

The relationship between variables was analyzed using Pearson R and Spearman Rho. This was done in order to determine whether the profile variables are significant with the performance of the students in the experimental and controlled group.

The performance of students in creative writing as reflected in their grade in English has a significant relationship to their ability to identify the controlled group since the computed significance value is 0.00 which is less than the level of alpha 0.05, the r value reflects a moderately positive correlation between English grade and controlled group. The positive correlation indicates that the higher is the grade in English, the more syntactical errors are identified.

On the other hand, the experimental group was found out to have no significant relationship to the ability to identify performance of students in creative writing skill. This supports the contention that the students' ability to identify morphological and syntactical errors had no statistical impact to their academic performances. This is due to the fact that the components of the students' grades were not only confined to such skills such that a large parcel of the grade percentage is on performance tasks which include outputs and performances which do not necessarily put emphasis on morphological and syntactical skills of the students in social media.

Furthermore, the findings also show that the profile variables of the students and their performance in creative writing were not significantly correlated.

6. DISCUSSION

The Grade 7- Mabini students of Umingan Central National High School were assessed in their performance in creative writing skill using the experimental and controlled group. On the basis of the significant findings of the study, it is concluded that essentially, students should improve their skills in identifying syntactical errors, specifically on sentence structure, fragments and run-ons.

Proposed practice exercises are prepared by the researcher which when used appropriately, will bolster students' syntactical and morphological skills. The researcher designed a set of practice exercises focusing on syntactical errors as these would help students identify short, choppy sentences leading them to combine their ideas in more fluid and sophisticated ways as they utilize the English language. As students generate more complex sentences from shorter ones, it would help them discover how the arrangement of phrases and clauses impact their linguistic competence. These practice exercises (essays) reflect different topics lifted from varied English books and downloaded from the internet and some additional material. Generally, the essays include topics

on writing, social media, general sciences, and personal reflections.

As can be seen from the findings, there has been a difference noted in the respondents of the study. The intervention has been proved to be fruitful where reflection is required for those who did not progress. The intervention proved to bring out significant improvement in enhancing the creative writing skills of the students. This research also provides guidelines to the teachers as to which pedagogies should they adopt to improve their students' creative writing skills. Based on the empirical observations of the study, every stage of the writing process should be studied and demonstrated by both, teachers and the students in order to develop the writing abilities. In collaboration with school principals with their ability to transform and teachers with their professionalism at work, such endeavours would really be actualized and eventually re-shape the school climate not just in English but holistically [4][5][6].

7. CONCLUSIONS

The students were found effective in experimental group and very effective in controlled group. They performed well in identifying morphological errors while fairly performing in identifying syntactical errors. The academic performance in English and the students' performance in identifying syntactical errors were found to be significantly correlated. Lastly, a set of practice exercises were proposed in order to enhance the linguistic competence of the students.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers must help students to work out the best English learning style that suits their students that would help them excel in creative writing in English. Also, students are encouraged to read more English books to be properly acquainted with the proper use and arrangement of words, sentences and paragraphs. Students must learn more about syntax, specifically about sentence structure, fragments and run-ons. Teachers must continuously strive hard in order to help students to do their best in their English subjects. Practice exercises highlighting syntactical errors must be prepared in order to improve the performance of the students in identifying syntactical errors.

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