

# Pre-Service ESL Teachers' Reflections on their Feelings toward Action Research Writing

**Ma. Joahna Mante-Estacio, Ph.D.**

*De La Salle University-Manila*

**Gina B. Ugalingan**

*De La Salle University-Manila*

## Abstract

---

A productive skill, writing has also been viewed as a demanding process, especially in a second language setting mainly due to the students' difficulty in using a second language in expressing their thoughts. Since writing requirements at the college level are more complex, many college students are more anxious as they are initiated into library research for instance (Mellon, 1986) because the activity is something new to them (Daly & Hailey, 1980). The task is likewise deemed demanding (Rose, 1980), and at the same time, compulsory (Powers, Cook & Meyer, 1979). To make it worse, negative attitudes about writing appear to be self-fulfilling (Daly, 1977). This study is motivated by the need to further understand what students feel about the research process as they do a research proposal and their reflection about their own emotions toward doing research. Participants were 25 Education (major in English) students who were in their junior year in the program at the time of data gathering. Data came from four sets of reflective logs written by the students after each major research task (finding a research focus, planning the methodology, consulting with the professor, revising and presenting the proposal) in their pre-thesis writing class. Analyzing the reflective logs using thematic analysis, the researchers were able to identify emerging themes which were evaluated and subsequently confirmed by two inter coders with 95% agreement. Results show that the students reported both positive and negative emotions focused on themselves as researchers (feeling good about themselves and their skills), on the particular research task (perceived ease or difficulty and usefulness), or of other people (frustration and appreciation of their group mates and of the teacher). Their emotions at various stages of four research writing tasks were reported as well.

---

**Keywords:** pre-service teachers, feelings, affect, research writing

---

## Introduction

Writing is perhaps the most important skill that learners must possess for it requires certain level of linguistic competence (Erkan & Saban, 2011) and because students' level of English proficiency is mainly evaluated based on how they could express their thoughts in written discourse. These requirements are not easily fulfilled by many, especially by ESL/EFL students because they need to remember and observe many rules of a language which is not their own. ESL/EFL students who have not mastered the English language usually struggle to meet the expectations to produce well-constructed and meaningful academic written outputs. Their writing skills are seemingly deficient since some may not be familiar on how to translate their ideas in the target language, observe grammatical rules, present evidence, cite credible sources using the library and online resources, and arrange their arguments or ideas in a logical and coherent manner (Powers, Cook & Meyer, 1979; Daly & Hailey, 1980; Rose, 1980; Mellon, 1986).

Due to its demanding process, writing has caused many negative emotions among ESL/EFL students when they write. Moreover, they experience writing apprehension which hinders students to perform well since their level of anxiety is very high (Daly & Miller, 1975, as cited in Erkan & Saban, 2011). This feeling toward the activity negatively contribute to how they perform in any written academic task.

One specific group of students who experience writing apprehension is the EFL/ESL pre-service teachers (PSTs hereafter) (Gurbuz, 2012). They are group of learners who are transitioning from being learners to becoming teachers. It is expected that as future teachers, they are competent if not excellent writers. However, as any other learners, PSTs do not always meet this assumption that they are already skilled writers. Most PSTs, like any other learners, feel

insecure about their writing abilities (Gurbuz, 2012; Butt & Shams, 2013; Elmas & Aydin, 2017). There may be PSTs who have reached a certain level of confidence as writers, but there are those who still experience negative emotions toward writing.

Because of these mixed emotions toward writing, EFL/ESL PSTs' feeling must be examined to further understand how they will teach writing in the future. Their experiences as writers are factors that shape their set of writing beliefs that they will carry on in their classroom as teachers. Borg (2009) explains that this belief system may not be seen but manifested in classroom practices. Moreover, these belief systems are personal stance of PSTs shaped by their own academic background, training, culture, and personal experiences. For example, when a PST holds a positive belief that writing is important, her emotions are mostly positive like being excited and confident in completing a written task. This is why it is important to foster positive writing environment especially to PSTs as high writing anxiety might negatively affect their teaching practices in the future (Atay & Kurt, 2006). This set of beliefs will likely reflect how s/he provides positive writing environment and opportunities to his/her students.

#### *Pre-service Teachers and Action Research*

Among the academic genres that PSTs need to accomplish, action research is one of the written outputs that they have to be familiar with. Action Research has been a tool to validate or contradict existing practices and trends in language teaching-learning process as it allows teachers to gain evidence-based knowledge to become better (Palak, 2013; Willemse & Boie, 2013; Blakemore, 2012; Conroy, 2017; Yan, 2017). It paves way for teachers and future teachers to keep discovering and reflecting ways on how to help their students learn better. In addition, language teachers engage in research outputs as part of their academic requirement, professional development, group collaboration, or personal pursuit (Ubaque & Castaneda-Pena, 2017; Ulla, Barrerra, & Acompañado, 2017; Bai, 2018; Burns & Westmacott, 2018).

Despite the many benefits of writing and doing an Action Research, PSTs avoid it due to their feeling of inadequacy (Gurbuz, 2012; Butt & Shams, 2013; Elmas & Aydin, 2017). Most PSTs feel that the discipline and requirements involved are too burdensome (Butt & Shams, 2013). To accomplish the task of writing a research paper entails reading and writing skills, personal or group discipline, time management, patience, and collaboration. The steps in accomplishing this academic genre involves reading related literature, writing a comprehensive review, formulating a question, choosing a sound methodology, implementing an intervention, analyzing the data, and reporting the results. Even after presenting the results, PSTs may still be required to revise the content and/or structure of the paper; these requirements may be overwhelming for novice writers like the PSTs (Butt & Shams, 2013; Elmas & Aydin, 2017).

To address the concerns mentioned, various teacher education curricula have allotted specific research courses to PSTs to prepare, train, immerse, and empower them to do research in the future (Medwell & Wray, 2014; Guilbert, Lane, & Van Bergen, 2016). They are aimed to help PSTs acquire, develop, and improve the necessary research skills. When they become teachers, they might encounter issues and challenges in their own classrooms and conducting an action research will be one of the tools to resolve them. These courses also foster the opportunity for PSTs to be actively engaged in the research community which is strongly encouraged in many educational institutions. Moreover, research courses allow PSTs to appreciate and make the connection of the theories and principles of teaching-learning process into actual classroom scenarios (Medwell & Wray, 2014). Guilbert, et al. (2016) suggest that providing research experience to PSTs allows them to overcome their fears and reservations of research.

#### *Related Studies of Pre-service Teachers and Action Research*

A number of studies (Butt & Shams, 2013; Medwell & Wray, 2014; Demirbulak, 2011; Guilbert et al., 2016; Conroy, 2017; Elmas & Aydin, 2017; Yan, 2017; Yancovic-Allen, 2018) examined the beliefs, perceptions, and feelings of PSTs toward research writing as they provide information on how they valued classroom research.

Butt and Shams (2013) and Yancovic-Allen (2018) examined how PSTs perceived and felt toward research. On one hand, some PSTs find it too difficult that they would have no time to conduct it in the future (Yancovic-Allen, 2018).

They have negative feelings toward research since most perceive it as a difficult process, not relevant to their lives, and is a stressful experience (Butt & Shams, 2013). On the other hand, there are those who view research positively and find it useful as source of information to help them address future classroom issues, a tool to help them solve classroom problems, and a powerful activity to generate new knowledge (Yancovic-Allen, 2018).

Some studies (Demirbulak, 2011; Medwell & Wray, 2014; Conroy, 2017; Yan, 2017) were conducted while PSTs were doing actual classroom research. Providing Actual Research activities allowed them to discover the usefulness of data-based practices. Results showed that through actual Action Research, they understood the importance of the said type of research as they realize what it meant to be a reflective teacher. They became intentional with their teaching in improving students' learning outcomes as they perceive Action Research as a valuable and practical activity (Demirbulak, 2011; Medwell & Wray, 2014; Conroy, 2017; Yan, 2017). They also realize the importance of collaboration as they accomplish the research project with others (Yan, 2017).

In addition, there were some studies (Guilbert et al., 2016; Elmas & Aydin, 2017) that focused on how PSTs perceived their own research skills. Results show that pre-service teachers believe that research activities allow them to gain knowledge about their research topic, learn to perform the steps of a scientific research, improve their grammar, vocabulary, and reading skills. They also realize how to collaborate and cooperate with their peers. Results also show that there were PSTs who have positive feelings and are intrinsically-motivated toward research. A number of participants support the idea that PSTs should participate on research projects in their undergraduate studies (Guilbert et al., 2016). However, some PSTs experienced problems during the process like their lack of information about their topic, heavy workload, time pressure, lack of collaboration with peers/advisors, and personal problems with their group members (Elmas & Aydin, 2017).

The findings of these studies show the importance of examining PSTs' feelings toward Action Research. As future writing-teachers, their writing beliefs, confidence, and motivation are shaped and/or influenced by their personal experiences and interaction with their peers and teachers. Examining these feelings would provide rich information in helping them become better writers, teachers, and eventually, researchers.

Moreover, the use of reflections is found to be an effective methodology in examining the feelings of the PSTs (Medwell & Wray, 2014; Conroy, 2017; Elmas & Aydin, 2017; Yan, 2017). Medwell and Wray (2014) utilized weekly reflections, while Conroy (2017) utilized daily reflective journal during a project. Similarly, this current study utilizes reflections as its data gathering method. As future writing-teachers, their reflections would provide information as to how they feel toward writing a research paper.

### *Theoretical Framework*

In research education, affect is a broad term to describe emotions, beliefs, and moods and that the term emotion is synonymous to feelings (McLeod, 1991). In the current study, the term emotions and feelings are used interchangeably to describe the subjective quality of the experiences reported by the PSTs in their journals. These feelings are believed to have the ability to enable or disable writers in the different stages of research writing (Brand & Powell, 2015). These positive or negative feelings are factors that influence the subjective judgment of PSTs about their ability toward writing.

One theory that best describes the principle behind the relationship of feelings and beliefs is Bandura's self-efficacy theory (1997). The concept of self-belief, self-efficacy, and confidence are terms used interchangeably to explain the emotions or feelings that enable a learner to accomplish a given task. The term feelings as used in this paper are the emotions that Bandura (1997) points out as a source of self-efficacy. The terms emotions and feelings are used interchangeably in this paper as the "unseen" belief system that explains "why" learners do what they do (Borg, 2009). These beliefs influence how one's feelings, thoughts, and actions toward a given task like research writing. Self-efficacy beliefs are created and strengthened through these four main sources, namely: mastery experiences, positive similar experiences from others, social persuasion, and one's physiological and emotional conditions (Bandura, 1997).

First, PSTs' self-efficacy beliefs toward research writing are created and strengthened by their previous experiences, like past success in writing a research paper. Achieving success in academic writing does not come easy since the tasks of formulating a question, reading related literature, drafting, and revising may be overwhelming to hurdle. When negative emotions are too high, PSTs question and doubt their capacity to write. However, when positive emotions are intensified, they may gain positive experience toward research writing. If these tasks are completed successfully, their self-efficacy increases. As a result, PSTs' self-efficacy is strengthened and that they feel more confident to write future Action Research.

Another source of self-efficacy is the vicarious experience of observing their models like peers, teachers, and other student-researchers. When PSTs have low self-efficacy and limited experiences in research writing, they gain confidence especially if they feel that their models have similar capabilities as theirs. In a group collaboration, PSTs tend to admire and emulate their peers who could accomplish the tasks successfully. As PSTs observe their models, they learn how to use their own specific skills and strategies when faced with similar tasks. The positive desire to emulate the success of their models enables PST to accomplish their task as well.

The third source of self-efficacy is the social persuasion they receive from their peers, group mates, and teachers. Receiving verbal and written praises, encouragement and motivation help PSTs strengthen their self-belief that they are capable writers. Because of these, PSTs' confidence increases to combat the doubts that they feel toward their abilities to finish the research tasks. When they feel discouraged toward their outputs, these social persuasions are effective source as they improve, change, or revise. Positive encouragements are powerful sources to boost the moral and self-efficacy of both novice and expert writers.

Lastly, PSTs' positive physiological and emotional conditions help them create and strengthen their self-efficacy beliefs toward research writing. The positive and negative emotions that they go through in the entire process of research writing allow them to strengthen or weaken their self-efficacy beliefs. The negative writing environment triggers negative emotions that might negatively affect their writing, while fostering positive environment generates positive emotions that enable PSTs to write better (Brand & Powell, 2015). For example, feeling confident in choosing a topic leads to a stronger self-efficacy that will enable them to accomplish it, while feeling anxious in formulating a research question leads to a lower self-efficacy that hinders good writing performance.

In the current study, these four sources especially feelings and emotions are examined as they create and strengthen self-efficacy beliefs of PSTs. Their positive or negative feelings toward the different research writing tasks provide information on how these emotions enable or hinder them as good writers. Identifying these different emotions would allow teachers and institutions to take appropriate steps to address issues and ensure that PSTs are being prepared, trained, immersed, and empowered to become skilled writing teachers and researchers.

#### *Research Goal*

The current study aims to present themes/patterns emerging from the participants' reflections on their emotions as they proceed with each research task leading to an Action Research proposal. The researchers aim to identify and describe the emotions disclosed in the different stages (before, during, and after) of each task.

### **Methodology**

#### *Participants*

Participants were 25 Education (major in English) students (17 female, 8 male) in a private university in Manila who were in their junior year in the program at the time of data gathering. They were between 18-20 years old. On the average, the participants have at least 12 years of formal ESL instruction.

#### *Procedure*

Data came from four sets of reflective logs written by the students after each major research task (finding a research focus, planning the methodology, consulting with the professor, revising and presenting the proposal) in their class SPTOPC1. This subject introduces the students to the nature and process of Action Research, and the final requirement

in this class is to write an Action Research proposal in groups. One of the researchers is their professor in this subject. The prompt given to the students at the start of every journal writing is *What are your thoughts and feelings before, during, and after \_\_\_\_\_ (research task)? Give details to explain these thoughts and feelings.* This open-ended prompt allowed the participants to recall and reflect as much ideas and feelings as possible that they have had from the very beginning until the end of the research task. The journals was done outside the class and were submitted in class a week after the prompts were given.

### Data Analysis

The reflective logs were read several times by one of the researchers to note the statements that reveal the participants' reflections on their feelings as they do the research tasks. From the statements, codes were created. The codes were then organized and sorted that enabled the researcher to identify emerging themes. These codes and themes were evaluated and subsequently confirmed by two inter coders (the other researcher and one colleague) with 95% agreement.

## Results and Discussion

1. *There are feelings which are focused on how the students feel about themselves* as they do the action research proposal. These are the students' reflections about their personal feelings which reveal their sentiments related to their self-efficacy, self-concept, self-beliefs, and motivation in relation to the various tasks included in the research proposal writing. How a student feels about his writing abilities (research writing in this case) may very well affect how he/she looks at the task and his performance later on which makes this theme significant as previous studies point to self-efficacy beliefs as strong predictors of academic success (Lent, Brown, & Larkin, 1984, in Erkan & Saban, 2011). Moreover, self-efficacy is affected by one's self evaluation of his or her personal accomplishments, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and physiological indicators (Schunk, 2010). From the data, it could be seen that positive feelings about themselves include optimism and hopefulness that they will get through the task, determination to produce a good output, and enjoyment as one is doing the task. It has to be noted too that from their journals, the participants seem to be constantly doing self-evaluation of their writing skills throughout the writing process. The positive feelings related to this are feeling accomplished, happy, and successful. However, it appears that this happiness is a calculated one because most of the reflections reveal that they expect the next steps to be more difficult than the one they have just done. The negative self-evaluation feelings are that of sadness, worry, failure, and disappointment that they are not skilled enough to accomplish the task. Below are excerpts from some journals related to this discussion.

Monique: I'm *excited* since I get to apply what I have learned from my previous subjects.

Rianne: I'm *hopeful* that I would improve in the succeeding activities and I feel motivated to explore our topic (grammar). I'm excited to write again though I must say, I feel that I'm having a hard time warming up.

Cheska: I *doubt* if I could finish my part of the paper on time.

Lily: I was *uncertain* of what I was writing.

2. *There are feelings which are focused on their experiences of action research and of particular research writing task at hand.* These reflect the participants' sentiments related to the value of the task, appreciation, dislike, difficulty, and manageability of the task, enjoyment, patience, and interest on the task. Therefore, these may be considered collectively as activity-related feelings. The importance of this group of feelings comes from results of previous studies like that of McLeod (1987, in Erkan & Saban, 2011) who argued that the affective components of writing strongly influence all phases of the writing process (McLeod, 1987, in Erkan & Saban, 2011), Ho (2016) who explains that the different patterns required by the various research paper sections result to different anxiety levels among the writers, and Beswick (2006, in Hall & Grisham-Brown (2011) who reports that negative attitudes toward writing among college students may decrease when they encounter positive experiences. Below are excerpts from the students' journals showing their feelings related to the research tasks.

Samantha: I'm *overwhelmed* by the many things that has to be changed, the things that have to be removed,

and the ones we need to add.

Jan: I was *worried* about the proposal presentation.

John: I feel *confident* with the way we organized and wrote our review of related literature.

Adrienne: I felt *relieved* hearing that we have a chance to have a consultation before we present our proposal.

There were reflections revealing obvious connections between activity-related feelings and personal feelings which could mean that some students' feelings are caused both by the task at hand and how they view themselves. Below are some examples:

Clara: I was *anxious* during the proposal presentation because I'm not a good speaker and I know we will be graded at that time.

Nicole: I was *excited* to write the intervention because my previous writing was successful.

3. *There are feelings which are focused on other people who work with them and the persons who have a say on their performance.* These reflect their sentiments of confidence, disappointment toward their groupmate/s, happiness over the comments received from the professor, confusion with comments given, fear during consultation, feeling lost during discussions. Collectively, these may be labeled as social feelings. Previous studies argue that teachers need to provide positive writing experiences that promote student enjoyment, as well as to help students to express themselves with clarity and power (Elbow, 2000, in Daisey, 2009). Likewise, the potential value of peer interaction and feedback in improving learning has been established in research as well. For instance, Johnson and Johnson (2005) argue that collaborative learning maximizes students' learning. Here are examples of the feelings toward other people expressed by the participants.

Clara: I really *appreciate* my group mates because they helped me at times when I was discouraged to do research.

Cheska: I *felt* more relaxed because our professor was not intimidating.

Fernando: We were *nervous* that we will not meet the expectations of our professor.

Angela: I'm *frustrated* over a group mate who did not give much effort to our paper.

It is worthy to mention that there are emotions which could not be labeled immediately as positive or negative, but may be classified instead as facilitating emotions such as feeling challenged and wonders if the next task would be manageable. Similar to facilitating anxiety defined by Williams, (2008, p.1) as "the type of anxiety which has a positive effect", facilitating emotions by the students allow them to accept the tasks as challenges and parts of the course requirements. Knowing this, they were able to convert the negative view and emotion to something productive.

Arianna: We felt *challenged* to write a good paper as a group.

Alexia: It was *challenging* to consider many possible interventions for our topic.

Betty: I *wonder* at the thought of presenting a proposal in front of a panel.

John: I *wonder* if the next step is like this one.

Aside from identifying and describing the participants' feelings based on their focus, it is likewise interesting to discuss the patterns emerging from the students' reflections of how they felt in the various stages (pre, during, and after) of each research task. As Brand and Powell (1986) put it

writer's emotions change significantly when they write. Typically, positive feelings of writers intensify over the course of composing. Positive emotions most amenable to increase are inspiration, satisfaction, and relief. Negative Active emotions stay relatively constant or weaken slightly during writing (p.283).

Therefore, it would be interesting to know the current participants' affective experiences in the various stages of the research writing process to further solidify the claim that although writing is mainly a cognitive activity, it is

to a considerable extent, influenced by affect. Moreover, previous studies looking at the role of affect in writing have mainly focused on writer's block, self-efficacy, anxiety, and apprehension, but only very few aimed to report emotions at different stages of writing.

To further appreciate the feelings reflected upon by the participants, it is good to briefly discuss first the four major research tasks covered by this research.

1. *Finding research focus*- The first major research activity is finding the research literature review and proposing research questions.
  2. *Planning the Methodology*- The second reflective journal of the participants included the class activities connected with proposing a sound and appropriate methodology for their research focus. Here, they have visualized how the questions may be answered in the best way possible by triangulation, which is a key element of an Action Research. They have likewise described their target participants, the instruments they will use to gather data, the procedure to be undertaken, and the method/s of data analysis to be used.
  3. *Consultation*- This activity is when the professor commented on the draft of every group. This was a face-to-face, one-group-at-a-time dialogue where the students and the professor exchanged ideas in order to improve the paper in its current format and content. Students had a chance to clarify on various points related to the writing requirement and to explain certain parts of their proposal to the professor.
  4. *Presentation and Revising the proposal*- The last in-class activity requires the students to show and describe to the entire class, professor and a guest panel member (a former professor of English of the students). Each group was given 15-20 minutes to present which was followed by a 10-minute Question and Answer. The students were instructed to divide their presentation equally among the members of a group and that every member should answer a question during the Q&A.
1. *Feelings before starting a major research task are mainly those that relate to how the students perceive the task (difficulty and importance), and their efficacy to accomplish it (based on their assessment of their relevant knowledge, skills and previous experiences)*. Excitement and willingness to learn are the dominant positive feelings while anxiety and lack of confidence are the top negative feelings at this stage. At this stage too, there were reflections focused on the participants' feeling toward other people who work with them and those who have a say on their performance.

Dwayne: "I'm *overwhelmed* by the task after the lecture/instructions given by the teacher."

Mylene: "I *don't feel confident* because I had problems with methodology in our previous research class.

DaHye: "We were *happy* with our new topic because all of us in the group are quite familiar with it, so we had a lot of ideas going on as we discussed our plans." "I'm interested to start our methodology now."

2. *Negative and positive feelings during the major research tasks were almost equal*. Many wrote in their journal how they struggled and grappled with the demands of the different tasks. They also felt pressured and frustrated especially when they compared their performance with other people (their group mates especially). On the other hand, most of the positive feelings point to the participants' appreciation of their group mates, those revealing confidence and motivation since their topic is interesting for them and because they have done the task successfully before, and from the participants' willingness to learn new and apply previously taught research concepts and skills and their interest with their specific topics.

Anna: "I felt that the load is lighter because there are more minds to think and different perspectives could generate a handful of ideas" "I feel *confident* and ready since I know that my research group mates are with me and supporting me along the way as I do for them."

Nicole: "I feel I *had an easier time* to do the task after I understood what triangulation is."

George: "I felt *frustrated* as I was listening to the many things we have to improve on."

John: "I was *not confident* while I was presenting."

3. *At the end of each major research task, it is very obvious that there were more positive feelings reported by the participants than the negative ones.* These emotions point to their satisfaction with their outputs, and of the support given by their group mates. There were those who enjoyed the task and that they look forward to the next task. There were students who wrote about their feelings of relief, thankfulness, and happiness that the stage is over and that new learning gained. The negative feeling expressed was mainly the feeling of exhaustion, worry and concern on the quantity and quality of revisions needed by their papers. Few students raised their frustration over the conflicts they had in the groups that affected their output.

Alexia: "I feel a sense of *relief* knowing that my group mates are with me along the way."

Anna: "I feel *exhausted*."

Arianne: "I'm *excited* to work on the next stages." "I'm confident and ready to work on the next part."

George: "I was *disappointed* with myself since I know that I am better than this."

### Conclusions

The present study was able to identify and discuss the emerging themes and patterns that describe the feelings of the student-participants as they write an Action Research proposal. Results reveal that their feelings are focused on themselves, the task at hand, and on people who are working with them and who have a say in the task and their performance. Also, there are feelings that are difficult to categorize as either positive or negative. These may be labeled as *facilitating feelings*. Furthermore, there are patterns that emerged as well based on the stage of the research process. Negative feelings have slightly prevailed over the positive ones at the pre-writing stage; positive and negative feelings were almost equal during writing; however, the former dominated the after writing stage. It is worthy to mention that many feelings were repeated throughout the research process, and that more sentiments were evident in the last two major research tasks.

### Pedagogical and Research Implications

Especially in ESL/EFL settings, the results of the current study point to various pedagogical implications that teachers and learning institutions must attend to. Pointing to the importance of having positive feelings as one writes research, the results pose a challenge to teachers to be aware of their role to facilitate activities that would mitigate the pressure, anxiety, and other negative emotions among their students. The researchers believe that this role begins when teachers plan and visualize concrete ways on how they could help their students to have positive research experiences. Knowing that writing (research writing in this case) is already a cognitively-demanding task, teachers need to present the task as something achievable and attainable. First, in teaching research and research writing in particular, teachers should ensure that students clearly understand and appreciate the entire research process; this way, "fear of the unknown" is decreased because misconceptions are corrected. Second, it seems essential too for teachers to know the prior research and research writing experiences of their students. By explicitly asking questions like "Have you synthesized journal articles before?" or by administering a teacher-made questionnaire on students' knowledge of basic research concepts and principles, teachers are doing simple diagnosis on what students already know and what they still need to know. This way, class time will be spent more productively on developing the skills needed by the students to produce decent research papers. Moreover, doing this allows the teacher to capitalize on the students' previous positive experiences and minimize the students' chances of experiencing negative experiences again. Third, technical concepts and procedures should also be explained at the start of every writing task and clarified again at any point when needed. Updating the students on where they are currently in the research cycle and on what is the goal for a particular class meeting is very likely to be appreciated.

The results of the current study imply that research writing is made manageable when the entire task is broken into smaller, manageable tasks. Instead of requiring the students to produce a complete draft at an instant, asking them to submit one chapter at a time would most likely be more reasonable that will lessen the likelihood of negative feelings among students as they do the task. Grouping or pairing the students to work on a research paper appears to be appreciated than making students write research papers individually. In connection, allowing the

students to revise their paper teaches the students the important principle that writing is a recursive process and not something linear.

Along this line, formative assessment should be valued and stressed by the teachers and not just the summative evaluation (which is the final paper). Doing this teaches the students that the process of coming up with a decent research paper is as important (if not more important) than the end-product itself. Hopefully, this will also make them enjoy the various stages and phases of research writing. Still on assessment, it may also be good to consider both individual and group assessment in research writing classes. Some tasks like the presentation and gathering of references may be graded individually, while writing the research questions and proposing a methodology are likely to be assessed more accurately as a product of the group. Lastly, this paper was able to show that writing indeed is a social and collaborative activity; hence, the feelings of the persons involved must be valued and considered at all times. This may also mean that teachers should be approachable and sensitive to students' needs and problems as they are writing their research paper and must monitor that all students strive to contribute in accomplishing the writing task.

For future research, having other sources of data to complement those coming from journals such as questionnaires, FGDs, interviews, and observation could reveal more interesting phases of students' feelings toward research writing. Moreover, a longitudinal study on this topic is also interesting and fruitful to do. Using variables like interest in writing, gender, attitude toward writing, skills and aptitude in writing would likely provide valuable results as well.

### References

- Atay, D. & Kurt, G. (2006). Prospective Teachers and L2 Writing Anxiety. *Asian EFL Journal*, 8(4), 100-118. Retrieved from <https://www.asian-efl-journal.com/1217/quarterly-journal/prospective-teachers-and-l2-writing-anxiety/#squelch-taas-tab-content-0-3>
- Bai, L. (2018). Language teachers' beliefs about research: A comparative study of English teachers from two tertiary education institutions in China. *System*, 72, 114-123. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2017.11.004>
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. New York: Freeman.
- Blakemore, H. (2012). Emergent teacher-researchers: A reflection on the challenges faced when conducting research in the English classroom. *English Teaching: Practice and Critique*, 11(2), 59-69.
- Brand, A. G., & Powell, J. L. (1986). Emotions and the writing process: A description of apprentice writers. *Journal of Educational Research*, 79(5), 280-85.
- Borg, S. (2009). Introducing language teacher cognition. Retrieved September, 24, 2018, from <http://www.education.leeds.ac.uk/research/files/145.pdf>
- Burns, A., & Westmacott, A. (2018). Teacher to researcher: Reflections on a new action research program for university EFL teachers. *Profile: Issues in Teachers' Professional Development*, 20(1), 15-23.
- Butt, I.H., & Shams, J.A. (2013). Master in education student attitudes towards research: A comparison between two public sector universities in Punjab. *A Research Journal of South Asian Studies*, 28(1), 97-105.
- Conroy, P.W. (2017). Promoting reflective practices in special education through action research: Recommendations from preservice teachers. *Networks: An Online Journal for Teacher Research*, 16(2). <https://dx.doi.org/10.4148/2470-6353.1042>
- Daly, J. A. (1977). The effects of writing apprehension on message encoding. *Journalism Quarterly*, 54, 566-572.
- Daly, J. A. & Wilson, D. (1983). Writing apprehension: Self-esteem and personality. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 17(4), 327-341.
- Demirbulak, D. (2011) Training English language student teachers to become teacher-researchers. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 30, 491-496.
- Elmas, E., & Aydin, S. (2017). Pre-service foreign language teachers' perceptions of research skills: A qualitative study. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(12), 3088-3101.
- Erkan, D.Y. & Saban, A.I. (2011). Writing performance relative to writing apprehension, self-efficacy in writing, and attitudes towards writing: A correlational study in Turkish tertiary-level EFL. *Asian EFL Journal*, 13(1), 164-192. Retrieved from <https://www.asian-efl-journal.com/PDF/March-2011-dye.pdf>

- Guilbert, D., Lane, R., & Van Bergen, P. (2016). Understanding student engagement with research: A study of pre-service teachers' research perceptions, research experience, and motivation. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 44(2), 172-187.
- Gürbüz, N. (2012). What makes a language teacher competent? : A case study on pre-service English language teachers' reflections. *Ekev Academic Review*, 16(52), 219-230.
- Ho, M. (2016). Exploring writing anxiety and self-efficacy among EFL graduate students in Taiwan. *Higher Education Studies*, 6(1), 24–39.
- Johnson, D., & Johnson, R. (2005). Essential components of peace education. *Theory Into Practice*, 44(4), 280-292.
- McLeod, S.H. (1991). The affective domain and the writing process: Working definitions. *Journal of Advanced Composition*, 11(1), 95-105. Retrieved from [www.jaonlinejournal.com/archives/vol11.1/mcleod-affective.pdf](http://www.jaonlinejournal.com/archives/vol11.1/mcleod-affective.pdf)
- Medwell, J., & Wray, D. (2014). Pre-service teachers undertaking classroom research: developing reflection and enquiry skills. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 40, 65-77. doi: 10.1080/02607476.2013.864018
- Mellon, C. (1986). Library anxiety: A grounded theory and its development. *College Research & Libraries*, 47(2), 160-165.
- Palak, D. (2013). An Inquiry into Action Research: Teaching and Doing Action Research for the First-Time. *Inquiry in education*, 4(1). Retrieved from: <http://digitalcommons.nl.edu/ie/vol4/iss1/3>
- Postholm, M.B. (2009). Research and development work: Developing teachers as researchers or just teachers? *Educational Action Research*, 17(4), 551-565. doi:0.1080/0965079090330942
- Powers, W. G., Cook, J. A., & Meyers, R. (1979). The effect of compulsory writing on writing apprehension. *Research in Teaching of English*, 13, 225-230.
- Rose, M. (1980). Rigid rules, inflexible plans, and the stifling of language: A cognitivist analysis of writer's block. *Composition and Communication*, 31(4), 389-401.
- Ubaque, D.F., & Castaneda-Pena, H. (2017). Teacher research: Uncovering professional identities and trajectories of teacher researchers through narrative research- A Columbian case. *International Education Studies*, 10(3), 35-45.
- Ulla, M. B., Barrera, K. B., & Acompañado, M. M. (2017). Philippine classroom teachers as researchers: Teachers' perceptions, motivations, and challenges. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 42(11), 51-64. Retrieved from <http://ro.ecu.edu.au/ajte/vol42/iss11/4>
- Willemse, T.M., & Boei, F. (2013) Teacher educators' research practices: An explorative study of teacher educators' perceptions on research. *Journal of Education for Teaching*, 39(4), 354-369, doi: 10.1080/02607476.2013.797292
- Yan, C. (2017). 'You never know what research is like unless you've done it!' Action research to promote collaborative student-teacher research. *Educational Action Research*, 25(5), 704-719. doi: 10.1080/09650792.2016.1245155
- Yancovic-Allen, M. (2018). Pre-service elementary teachers' perceptions of conducting and consuming research in their future professional practice. *Teachers and Teaching*, 24(5), 487-499, doi: 10.1080/13540602.2018.1438389

## About the Authors

*Ma. Joahna Mante-Estacio, Ph.D.* is a faculty at De La Salle University-Manila teaching in the undergraduate and Graduate levels. She conducts teacher training, writes teacher and learning textbooks and modules and has conducted studies on reading, literacy, and teacher education which have been published and disseminated in scholarly journals and conferences. Email: [ma.joahna.mante@dlsu.edu.ph](mailto:ma.joahna.mante@dlsu.edu.ph)

*Ms. Gina B. Ugalingan* is a faculty of De La Salle University - Manila, Philippines since May 2007. She has handled research-related subjects to English majors. As a practicum supervisor to pre-service teachers, she is interested on their teaching and learning experiences during their practicum. Her research interests include language anxiety and teacher education. Email: [gina.ugalingan@dlsu.edu.ph](mailto:gina.ugalingan@dlsu.edu.ph)

Affiliation: De La Salle University-Manila 2401 Taft Avenue, Manila, Philippines