Theme Writing Skills of Pangasinan State University (PSU) Education Students

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Abstract

This study was conducted to determine the theme writing skills of Bachelor of Secondary Education (BSEd) students in Pangasinan State University – Lingayen Campus, Philippines. Its specific problems centered on: (1) the profile of students; (2) the extent of observance of the characteristics of an effective theme to the students as perceived by the teachers; (3) the extent of contribution of pre-writing activities to the development of the theme writing skills of the students as perceived by them; (4) the extent of seriousness of the problems encountered by the students and the teachers in theme writing; and (5) the significant difference in the extent of observance of the characteristics of an effective theme to the students as perceived by the teachers across their profile variables. The descriptive-correlational method of research was utilized in this study. The questionnaire was employed in gathering the data. The data gathered were analyzed and interpreted using frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation, independent sample t-test, one-way ANOVA and two-way ANOVA. Salient findings of the study were as follows: (1) the extent of observance of the characteristics of an effective theme to the students is moderately high; (2) the extent of contribution of pre-writing activities to development of theme writing skills of the students is also moderately high; and (3) there is no significant difference in the extent of observance of characteristics of an effective theme to the students across their profile variables.

Keywords: theme writing, theme writing skills, characteristics of effective theme, pre-writing activities

Introduction

Theme Writing

Theme-writing refers to the conventional writing assignments required in many composition classes since the late-19th century according to Nordquist (2018). It is also called school writing. In the book The Plural I: The Teaching of Writing by Coles, Jr. (1978), the term themewriting (one word) was used to characterize empty, formulaic writing that is not meant to be read but corrected. Coles, Jr. (1978) further said that textbook authors present writing as a trick that can be played, a device that can be put into operation just as one can be taught or learn to run an adding machine or pour concrete.

Characteristics of an Effective Theme

Skill in writing is somehow manifested in students' outputs such as themes or essays. Langan (2003) disclosed that an effective theme or brief essay is characterized by unity, support, coherence and sentence construction. To make this happen, one should follow the steps in writing such as (1) begin with a point or thesis, (2) support the thesis with specific, (3) organize and connect the specific evidence, and (4) write clear sentences.

The first characteristic of a good theme is unity. According to Wasko (2012), unity means oneness. It describes writing that sticks to a central idea, theme, or story. Good writing doesn't wander around like gossip at a dinner party, it stays focused like an astronomer at his telescope.

The second characteristic is support. It means supporting an idea or thesis for specific reasons or details. Specific details are valuable because it excites the reader's interest and explains the writer's points. To make the support adequate, the student write down a brief version of thesis idea and work out and jot down the three points that will support the thesis. Planning out the steps that logically supports the thesis will make an excellent position to go on to write an effective theme (Langan, 2003).

The third characteristic is coherence. According to Noorda (n.d.), coherence in writing is the logical bridge between words, sentences, and paragraphs. Coherent writing uses devices to connect ideas within each sentence and paragraph. Main ideas and meaning can be difficult for the reader to follow if the writing lacks coherence.

The last characteristic is sentence construction. The last step in writing is to make the sentence flows smoothly and clearly by checking the sentence construction. The strategies to help the students write a theme effectively are to use parallelism, a consistent point of view, active verbs, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation. Parallelism in writing a theme means a balanced series of –ing words, descriptive words, and to verbs. The consistent verb tenses and pronouns. The use of active verbs is also important to give the writing a simpler and more vigorous style. When the subject of a sentence acts as the verb, the verb is in the active voice (Langan, 2003).

Pre-writing Activities
Another possible thing that may affect the theme writing skills of a student is the pre-writing activities being integrated such as freewriting, collaborative brainstorming, clustering and idea mapping. According to Lahl (2008), prewriting is a term that describes any kind of preliminary work that precedes the actual paper writing. It doesn't necessarily have to be writing. In fact, prewriting can just be concentrated thinking about what you want to write your paper on.

The first activity in pre-writing is freewriting. According to Firestone (n.d.), freewriting is the practice of writing down all your thoughts without stopping, and without regard for spelling, grammar, or any of the usual rules for writing. It might include a topic as a general guide, or it might not. The purpose of the exercise varies, but it can be used to generate ideas and to clear out distracting thoughts. There are various possible forms of freewriting, such as journals, essays, and fiction writing.

The second activity is collaborative brainstorming. Rouse (2017) defines brainstorming as a group problem-solving method that involves the spontaneous contribution of creative ideas and solutions. This technique requires intensive, freewheeling discussion in which every member of the group is encouraged to think aloud and suggest as many ideas as possible based on their diverse knowledge. Further, it combines an informal approach to problem-solving with lateral thinking, which is a method for developing new concepts to solve problems by looking at them in innovative ways. Some of these ideas can be built into original, creative solutions to a problem, while others can generate additional ideas.

The third activity is clustering. Clustering is a method of invention more visual and nonlinear than freewriting. It generates material for a theme and helps writers who like to do their thinking in a visual way (Langan, 2003).
The fourth and final activity is idea mapping. Idea mapping is a powerful whole-brained visual thinking tool that enhances memory, note-taking skills, thought organization, planning, creativity, and communication. It uses color, keywords, lines, and images to connect thoughts associatively. Idea Maps are the natural expression of the way the brain processes information associatively ("Idea mapping success," 2006).

The Contribution of Theme Writing
In general, good writing makes a special contribution to success in college and on the job. The students who write confidently will learn more and earn better grades. Their writing skills are often one of the bases of which instructors have for evaluation. After graduation, students who are now employees must be able to communicate effectively with their employers and customers. Indeed, whatever career paths the students choose, they will need strong writing and critical thinking skills. The students need to look at the importance of developing their skill in writing.

Further, writing makes a special contribution to the way people think. When the students write, they compose meanings. They put together facts and ideas and make something new. They create an intricate web of meaning in which sentences have special relationships with each other.

Advanced writing skills are an important aspect of academic performance as well as of subsequent work-related

performance. Hence, it is in the hands of the teachers on how they will execute the teaching-learning process as far as theme writing skills are concerned. (Kellogg & Raulerson, 2007).

Objectives of the Study

This study determined the theme writing skills of Pangasinan State University education students. Specifically, the study was conducted to determine the: (1) profile of the students in terms of the following: type of high school they graduated from; parents' average monthly salary; grades in English subject; materials read at home; and exposure to various media; (2) extent of observance of the following characteristics of an effective theme by the students in terms of: unity; support; coherence; and sentence construction; (3) extent of contribution of pre-writing activities to the development of theme writing skills of the students, such as: freewriting; collaborative brainstorming; clustering; and idea mapping; (4) the extent of seriousness of the problems encountered by the students and the teachers in theme writing; and (5) the significant difference in the observance of the characteristics of an effective theme to the students across their profile variables.

Methodology

The descriptive-correlational method of research was employed in this study. Descriptive research is designed to create a snapshot of the current thoughts, feelings, or behavior of individuals. It provides a relatively complete picture of what is occurring at a given time, and it allows the development of questions for further study (Stangor, 2011). On the other hand, correlational research is designed to assess the relationships between and among two or more variable. It allows testing of expected relationships between and among variables and the making of predictions and it can assess these relationships in everyday life events (Stangor, 2011).

Quantitative data collection method is used in the study particularly questionnaire. Quantitative data collection methods are based on random sampling and structured data collection instruments. Findings of quantitative studies are usually easy to present, summarize, compare and generalize (Research Methodology, 2018). The data gathered were analyzed and interpreted using frequency counts, percentages, mean, standard deviation, independent sample t-test, one-way ANOVA and two-way ANOVA.

Results and Discussion

Profile of Faculty Members

The findings of the study disclosed that majority of the students graduated from public high schools. Most of their parents' average monthly salary ranges from five – ten thousand pesos (P5,000 – P10,000). Most of their English subject grades range from 88-90 (1.75). In addition, most of them read magazines at home and are exposed to media through the internet and television.

Extent of Observance of Unity to
the Themes Written by the Students

Table 1: *Extent of Observance of Unity to the Themes Written by the Students*

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. The theme contains one idea.	2.00	Moderately High
2. The theme is not a simple fact that does not require much support.	1.83	Moderately High
3. The theme is not narrow to need support of development.	1.83	Moderately High
4. The theme is not too broad to be adequately supported in the theme.	1.83	Moderately High
5. The theme advances a point about a limited subject.	1.67	Low
6. The theme can be found in the introductory paragraph.	1.67	Low
7. The theme is something that one would agree with just by reading it.	1.67	Low
8. The theme asserts something that can plausibly support in the next paragraphs.	1.67	Low
Weighted Mean	**1.77**	**Moderately High**

Scale: 2.31 – 3.00 = High; 1.71 – 2.30 = Moderately High; 1.00 – 1.70 = Low

Table 1 shows the perception of teachers on the extent of observance of unity to the themes written by the students which is moderately high with a weighted mean value of 1.77. Unity is one of the characteristics of an effective theme according to Langan (2003).

Specifically, the teachers perceived moderately high on the following indicators: *the theme contains one idea* with a mean value of 2.00; *the theme is not a simple fact that does not require much support* with a mean value of 1.83; *the theme is not narrow to need support of development* with a mean value of 1.83; and *the theme is not too broad to be adequately supported in the theme* with a mean value of 1.83. On the other hand, they perceived low on the following indicators, such as: *the theme advances a point about a limited subject* with a mean value of 1.67; *the theme can be found in the introductory paragraph* with a mean value of 1.67; *the theme is something that one would agree with just by reading it* with a mean value of 1.67; *the theme asserts something that can plausibly support in the next paragraphs* with a mean value of 1.76.

Extent of Observance of Support to
the Themes Written by the Students

Table 2: *Extent of Observance of Support to the Themes Written by the Students*

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. The details are enough.	2.00	Moderately High
2. The details support the point with specific evidence.	2.00	Moderately High
3. The specific details give the evidence needed for the readers to see and understand general ideas.	2.00	Moderately High
4. The shorter examples for each main point are present.	1.83	Low
5. The specific details are relevant.	1.67	Low
6. The supporting paragraphs have a clear topic sentence.	1.67	Low
7. The specific details make the theme pleasurable to read.	1.67	Low
Weighted Mean	**1.83**	**Moderately High**

Scale: 2.31 – 3.00 = High; 1.71 – 2.30 = Moderately High; 1.00 – 1.70 = Low

Table 2 presents the perception of teachers on the extent of observance of support to the themes written by the students which is moderately high with a weighted mean value of 1.83. Support is one of the characteristics of an effective theme according to Langan (2003).

Specifically, the teachers perceived moderately high on the following indicators: *the details are enough* with a mean value of 2.00; *the details support the point with specific evidence* with a mean value of 2.00; *and the specific details give the evidence needed for the readers to see and understand general ideas* with a mean value of 2.00. On the other hand, they perceived low on the following indicators, such as: *the shorter examples for each main point are present with a mean value of 1.86; the specific details are relevant with a mean value of 1.67; the supporting paragraphs*

have a clear topic sentence with a mean value of 1.67; and the specific details make the theme pleasurable to read with a mean value of 1.67

Extent of Observance of Coherence to
the Themes Written by the Students

Table 3: *Extent of Observance of Coherence to the Themes Written by the Students*

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. The transitions help readers follow the train of thought.	1.67	Low
2. The linking sentences between paragraphs help tie those paragraphs together.	1.67	Low
3. The introduction begins with broad and general statements.	1.50	Low
4. The introduction is inviting and raises expectations.	1.50	Low
5. The connecting words are there to help connect details.	1.50	Low
6. The theme uses time or emphatic order.	1.33	Low
7. The concluding paragraph provides a summary or final thought.	1.17	Low
8. The concluding paragraph captures interest and set up the right expectation.	1.17	Low
Weighted Mean	**1.44**	**Low**

Scale: 2.31 – 3.00 = High; 1.71 – 2.30 = Moderately High; 1.00 – 1.70 = Low

Table 3 reveals the perception of teachers on the extent of observance of coherence to the themes written by the students which is low with a mean value of 1.44. Coherence is one of the characteristics of an effective theme according to Langan (2003).

Specifically, the teachers perceived moderately high on the following indicators: t*he transitions help readers follow the train of thought* with a mean value of 1.67*; the linking sentences between paragraphs help tie those paragraphs together* with a mean value of 1.76*; the introduction begins with broad and general statements* with a mean value of 1.50*; the introduction is inviting and raises expectations* with a mean value of 1.50*; the connecting words are there to help connect details* with a mean value of 1.50*; the theme uses time or emphatic words* with a mean value of 1.33*; the concluding paragraph provides a summary or final thought* with a mean value of 1.17*; and the concluding paragraph captures interest and set up the right expectation* with a mean value of 1.17.

Extent of Observance of Sentence Construction
to the Themes Written by the Students

Table 4: *Extent of Observance of Sentence Construction to the Themes Written by the Students*

Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. There is right use of punctuation.	2.50	High
2. There is consistent use of pronouns.	2.50	High
3. There is correct use of capitalization.	2.33	High
4. There is correct spelling of words.	2.17	Moderately High
5. There is right subject-verb agreement.	1.83	Moderately High
6. There is consistent use of verb tenses.	1.67	Low
7. There is parallelism.	1.50	Low
8. There is correct use of active verbs	1.50	Low
Weighted Mean	**2.00**	**Moderately High**

Scale: 2.31 – 3.00 = High; 1.71 – 2.30 = Moderately High; 1.00 – 1.70 = Low

Table 4 exhibits the perception of teachers on the extent of observance of sentence construction to the themes written by the students which is high with a weighted mean value of 2.00. Sentence construction is one of the characteristics of an effective theme according to Langan (2003).

Specifically, the teachers perceived high on the following indicators: *there is right use of punctuation* with a mean value of 2.50; *there is consistent use of pronouns* with a mean value of 2.50; and *there is correct use of capitalization* with a mean value of 2.33. On the other hand, the teachers perceived moderately high on the following: *there is correct spelling of word* with a mean value of 2.17 and *there is right subject-verb agreement* with a mean value of 1.83. Further, the teachers perceived low on the following indicators: *there is consistent use of verb tenses* with a mean value of 1.67; *there is parallelism* with a mean value of 1.50; and *there is correct use of active verbs* with a mean value of 1.50.

The Extent of Observance of Characteristics
of an Effective Theme to Students

Table 5: *The Extent of Observance of Characteristics of Effective Theme to Students*

Characteristics of Effective Theme	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Sentence Construction	2.00	Moderately High
2. Support	1.83	Moderately High
3. Unity	1.77	Moderately High
4. Coherence	1.44	Low

Weighted Mean	**1.76**	**Moderately High**

Scale: 2.31 – 3.00 = High; 1.71 – 2.30 = Moderate; 1.00 – 1.70 = Low

Table 5 displays the perception of teachers on the extent of observance of the characteristics of an effective theme to the students which is moderately high with a weighted mean value of 1.76. Specifically, the teachers perceived moderately high on *sentence construction* with a mean value of 2.00, *support* with a mean value of 1.83; and *unity* with a mean value of 1.77. On the other hand, the teachers perceived low on *coherence* with a mean value of 1.44.

Garing (2014) made a study on coherence. In his study, the textual features of coherence which consist of focus, organization, cohesion, support, and elaboration, and convention were analyzed in the argumentative essays of first-year College of Liberal Arts students at De La Salle University. The convention textual feature which consists of the command in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, grammar, usage, and sentence structure received the highest rating among the argumentative essays of the students. However, the support and elaboration textual feature which consist of the thoughtful or insightful presentation of ideas received the lowest rating among the argumentative essays of the first-year College of Liberal Arts students. On the other hand, the students' argumentative essays holistic rating are leaning towards comprehensible but are considered moderately comprehensible. Since textual features of coherence can affect the comprehensibility of students' essays, the ENGLCOM program should consider the areas to improve to promote higher comprehensibility among student writers. Both results suggest that continuous study on students' writing skills is encouraged for effective methods, strategies, and activities of teaching in theme writing.

The Extent of Contribution of Freewriting to the
Development of Theme Writing Skills of the Students

Table 6: *The Extent of Contribution of Freewriting to the Development of Theme Writing Skills of the Students.*

Freewriting Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. I understand the written ideas clearly.	2.28	Moderately High
2. I focus on one subject or topic.	2.15	Moderately High
3. I revise the ideas easily.	2.10	Moderately High
4. I write more ideas instantly.	2.03	Moderately High
5. I construct paragraph smoothly.	1.93	Moderately High
Weighted Mean	**2.20**	**Moderately High**

Scale: 2.31 – 3.00 = High; 1.71 – 2.30 = Moderately High 1.00 – 1.70 = Low

Table 6 shows the perception of the students of the extent of contribution of freewriting (one of the pre-writing activities) to the development of their theme writing skills which is moderately high with a weighted mean value of 2.20.

Specifically, the students perceived moderately high on the following indicators, as follows: *I understand the written ideas clearly* with a mean value of 2.28; *I focus on one subject or topic* with a mean value of 2.15; *I revise the ideas easily* with a mean value of 2.10; *I write more ideas* instantly with a mean value of 2.03; and *I construct paragraph smoothly* with a mean value of 1.93.

Freewriting have contributed to the development of the writing skills of the students because it really helps in concentrating the brain before they write their themes. Students simply write in rough sentences or phrase everything that comes out their mind a couple of attainable topic for 10 minutes or more. They do not worry about spelling or punctuating correctly, about erasing mistakes and organizing materials, or about finding exact words.

The Extent of Contribution of Collaborative Brainstorming
to the Development of Theme Writing Skills of the Students

Table 7: *The Extent of Contribution of Collaborative Brainstorming to the Development of Theme Writing Skills of the Students.*

Collaborative Brainstorming Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. We fix or correct mistakes directly.	2.45	High
2. We work in developing ideas in pairs or small groups efficiently.	2.43	High
3. We figure out major and minor ideas and details readily.	2.15	Moderately High
4. We organize ideas easily.	2.15	Moderately High
5. We solicit more observations and questions instantly.	2.03	Moderately High
Weighted Mean	**2.24**	**Moderately High**

Scale: 2.31 – 3.00 = High; 1.71 – 2.30 = Moderately High 1.00 – 1.70 = Low

Table 7 indicates the perception of the students of the extent of contribution of collaborative brainstorming (one of the pre-writing activities) to the development of their theme writing skills which is moderately high with a weighted mean value of 2.24.

Specifically, the students perceived high on the following indicators, such as: w*e fix or correct mistakes directly* with a mean value of 2.45 and *we work in developing ideas in pairs or small groups efficiently* with a mean value of 2.43. On the other hand, the students perceived moderately high on the following indicators, namely: we figure out major and minor ideas and details readily with a mean value of 2.15; we organize ideas easily with a mean value of 2.15; and we solicit more observations and questions instantly with a mean value of 2.03.

Collaborative brainstorming have contributed to the development of theme writing skills of the students as it brings the creativity and full experience of all the members of the group during the writing activity. Once individual group members mire with a plan, another member's ability and knowledge will take the thought to the subsequent stage. Therefore, group brainstorming can develop their skills and ideas in writing in more depth level.

The Extent of Contribution of Clustering to the
Development of Theme Writing Skills of the Students

Table 8: *The Extent of Contribution of Clustering to the Development of Theme Writing Skills of the Students.*

Clustering Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. I think or imagine in a visual way.	2.45	High
2. I learn new ways of dividing or grouping information.	2.43	High
3. I discover possible relations among facts and ideas.	2.28	Moderately High
4. I see at a glance whether the plan is appropriate.	2.05	Moderately High
5. I use pattern in connected circles.	1.80	Moderately High
Weighted Mean	**2.20**	**Moderately High**

Scale: 2.31 – 3.00 = High; 1.71 – 2.30 = Moderately High 1.00 – 1.70 = Low

Table 8 reveals the perception of the students of the extent of contribution of clustering (one of the pre-writing activities) to the development of their theme writing skills which is moderately high with a weighted mean value of 2.20.

Specifically, the students perceived high on the following indicators, such as: *I think or imagine in a visual way* with a mean value of 2.45 and *I learn new ways of dividing or grouping information* with a mean value of 2.43. On the other hand, the students perceive moderately high on the following indicators, such as: I discover possible relations among facts and ideas with a mean value of 2.28; I see at a glance whether the plan is appropriate with a mean value of 2.05; and I use pattern in connected circles with a mean value of 1.80.

Clustering have contributed to the development of writing skills of the students as it is one of the best alternative ways in exploring ideas that reveals possible relations among facts. The students merely write a word or phrase within the set and closely study it. Then, they branch out, writing down new words and concepts as they go along.
Furthermore, Axelrod and Cooper (1991) stated that clustering can be useful for any kind of writing. It can be used in the early stages of planning an essay in order to find subtopics and to organize information that may contribute to students' writing skills.

The Extent of Contribution of Idea Mapping to the
Development of Theme Writing Skills of the Students

Table 9: *The Extent of Contribution of Idea Mapping to the Development of Theme Writing Skills of the Students.*

Idea Mapping Indicators	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. I observe ideas, details, and facts easily.	2.45	High
2. I associate ideas freely.	2.40	High
3. I sort the ideas physically.	2.30	Moderately High
4. I literally rearrange ideas to find the most effective format.	2.25	Moderately High
5. I notice an informal graphic display of ideas.	2.23	Moderately High
Weighted Mean	**2.33**	High

Scale: 2.31 – 3.00 = High; 1.71 – 2.30 = Moderately High 1.00 – 1.70 = Low

Table 9 discloses the perception of the students of the extent of contribution of idea mapping (one of the pre-writing activities) to the development of their theme writing skills which is high with a weighted mean value of 2.33.
Specifically, the students perceived high on the following indicators, such as: *I observe ideas, details, and facts easily with a mean value of 2.45 and I associate ideas freely with a mean value of 2.40*. On the other hand, *I sort the ideas physically* with a mean value of 2.30; *I literally rearrange ideas to find the most effective format* with a mean value of 2.25; and *I notice an informal graphic display of ideas* with a mean value of 2.23.

Axelrod and Cooper (1991) indeed put great emphasis on idea mapping which involves making a visual record on invention and inquiry as contributory to the development of the writing skills of the students. Many writers, also stressed, find that mapping helps think about a topic. They said too that in making maps, writers usually use key words and phrases to record material they want to remember, questions they need to answer, and even new sources of information they want to check.

The Extent of Contribution of Pre-Writing Activities to the
Development of Theme Writing Skills of the Students

Table 10: *The Extent of Contribution of Pre-Writing Activities to the Development of Theme Writing Skills of the Students.*

Pre-Writing Activities	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Idea Mapping	2.33	High
2. Collaborative Brainstorming	2.24	Moderately High
3. Clustering	2.20	Moderately High
4. Freewriting	2.10	Moderately High
Weighted Mean	**2.22**	**Moderately High**

Scale: 2.31 – 3.00 = High; 1.71 – 2.30 = Moderately High; 1.00 – 1.70 = Low

Table 10 shows the perception of students on the extent of contribution of pre-writing activities to the development of their writing skills which is moderately high with a weighted mean value of 2.22.
Specifically, the students perceived high on idea mapping with a mean value of 2.33. On the other hand, the students perceived moderately high on collaborative brainstorming with a mean vale of 2.24; clustering with a mean scale value of 2.20; and freewriting with a mean scale value of 2.10.

The study of Mogahed (2013) somehow supported the findings. He found out that it is vital for learners to plan out prewriting correctly, whether invention activities or arrangement activities within the proposed framework. In such a way, prewriting would become a key stage in the writing process. Besides, learners should try more than one activity until they know what works well for them. It goes without saying that writing instructors should be fully aware of all these activities and how to teach them. There is a need for the suggested framework as beginning writers usually mix the invention section for generating ideas with the arrangement section for organizing these ideas. Both results imply that pre-writing activities are necessary and relevant to the development of students as far as writing skills are concerned.

On the other hand, a study of Parina (2011) contradicts to the findings. She found out that majority of the students agree that the pre-writing stage is useless (n=41) and/or rarely helpful (n=36), with only 17 viewing it as always helpful. Seven of the respondents even commented that the process approach should directly start with outlining for the prewriting stage did not help them at all in generating new ideas for some of them relied only with what they already know.

Nepomuceno (2011) suggests that blogging can be used as an additional or alternative writing activity which would motivate learners to view writing as a means of expressing meaning and not merely as a requirement in language classes. Blogging has the elements of all the characteristics of an effective theme. Another activity that enhances the writing skills of students is through online peer review. In a study conducted by Aydawati (2018), the results indicated that in conducting online peer review, students focused more on grammar than on content. Moreover, it improved students' writing skills, both grammar and content although they did not make of use all the comments. However, they made self-revisions which suggested that online peer review can help EFL students realize their potential effective revision in their final assignment.

The Extent of Seriousness of the Problems Encountered by the
Students in Theme Writing as Perceived by Themselves

Table 11: *The Extent of Seriousness of the Problems Encountered by the Students in Theme Writing as Perceived by Themselves.*

Problems	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. I am irritated because of congested and noisy classroom.	2.58	Serious
2. I am bothered because of limited or insufficient time in doing the theme.	2.18	Moderately Serious
3. I am unfocused because I'm sleepy.	2.00	Moderately Serious
4. I have complexity in choosing the right words.	2.00	Moderately Serious
5. I am distracted because I'm hungry.	1.80	Moderately Serious
6. I have intricacy in correct grammar.	1.80	Moderately Serious
7. I am troubled because of personal problems.	1.63	Slightly Serious
8. I have obscurity in spelling.	1.60	Slightly Serious
9. I am disturbed because I use a mobile phone and other portable gaming gadgets while writing.	1.60	Slightly Serious
10. I have difficulty in using punctuations.	1.45	Slightly Serious
Weighted Mean	**1.86**	**Moderately Serious**

Scale: 2.31 – 3.00 = High; 1.71 – 2.30 = Moderate High; 1.00 - 1.70 = Low

Table 11 indicates the extent of seriousness of the problems encountered by the students in theme writing as perceived by them which is moderately serious with a weighted mean value of 1.86.

In particular, the students perceived serious to the problem, *I am irritated because of congested and noisy classroom*, with the mean value of 2.58.

On the other hand, the students perceived moderately serious to the following problems, such as*: I am bothered because of limited or insufficient time in doing the theme; I am unfocused because I am sleep; I have complexity in choosing the right words; I am distracted because I'm hungry; and I have intricacy in correct grammar* with mean values of 2.18, 2.00, 2.00, 1.80 and 1.80 respectively.

Further, the students perceived slightly serious on the following problems, namely: *I am troubled because of personal problems; I have obscurity in spelling; I am disturbed because I use mobile phone and other portable gaming gadgets while writing; and I have difficulty in using punctuations* with mean values of 1.63, 1.60, 1.60, and 1.45 respectively.

The Extent of Seriousness of the Problems Encountered by the Students in Theme Writing as Perceived by Teachers
Table 12 indicates the extent of seriousness of the problems encountered by the students in theme writing as perceived by the teachers which is moderately serious with a weighted mean value of 2.00.

In particular, the teachers perceived serious on the following problems, namely: *students have problems in constructing supporting details; students have convolution in organizing and connecting details; and students have intricacy in the construction of unity* with mean values of 2.50, 2.50 and 2.33 respectively.

The table also reveals that the teachers perceived moderately serious to the following problems, such as: *students have a complication in the correct use of verb tenses; students have complexity in the use of parallelism; and students have inconvenience in writing neatly and presentably* with mean values of 2.17, 2.17, and 217 respectively.

Further, the table reveals perceived slightly serious to the following problems, such as: *students have obscurity in correct spelling of words; students have difficulty in the right use of punctuations; and students have difficulty in the use of pronouns* with mean values of 1.67, 1.17 and 1.33 respectively.

The findings above imply that the serious problems of the students in theme writing as perceived by the teachers were related to supporting, organizing and connecting details and construction of unity which are the main characteristics of an effective theme writing.

Table 12: *The Extent of Seriousness of the Problems Encountered by the Students in Theme Writing as Perceived by Teachers*

Problems	Mean	Descriptive Equivalent
1. Students have a problem in constructing supporting details.	2.50	Serious
2. Students have a convolution in organizing and connecting details.	2.50	Serious
3. Students have intricacy in the construction of unity.	2.33	Serious
4. Students have complexity in the use of parallelism.	2.17	Moderately Serious
5. Students have a complication in the correct use of verb tenses.	2.17	Moderately Serious
6. Students have inconvenience in writing neatly and presentably.	2.17	Moderately Serious
7. Students have obscurity in correct spelling of words.	1.67	Slightly Serious
8. Students have difficulty in the use of pronouns.	1.33	Slightly Serious
9. Students have difficulty in the right use of punctuations.	1.17	Slightly Serious
Weighted Mean	**2.00**	**Moderately Serious**

Scale: 2.31 – 3.00 = High; 1.71 – 2.30 = Moderate; 1.00 - 1.70 = Low

Based on the findings, the moderately serious problems of the students in theme writing as perceived by the teachers are related to sentence construction which is one of the characteristics of effective theme, such as: correct usage of verb tenses, use of parallelism and writing neatly and presentably. And still, based on the findings, the students have slightly serious problems dealing with the use of punctuations, correct spelling of words and use of pronouns.

Significant Difference in the Observance of the Characteristics
of an Effective Theme to the Students Across Their Profile Variables
There is no significant difference in the observance of characteristics of an effective theme to the students across profile variables, namely: type of high school they graduated from (0.749 Sig.), parents' monthly salary (0.505 Sig.), grades in the English subject (0.072 Sig.), materials read at home (0.505 Sig.) and exposure to various media (0.890 Sig.). This means that the difference is not significant at .05 level.

Conclusions

(1) There is no significant difference in the extent of observance of the characteristics of an effective theme to students across their profile variables, namely: type of high school they graduated from, parents' monthly salary, grades in the English subject, materials read at home and exposure to various media. (2) Education students are competent as far as theme writing skills particularly in the aspects of unity, support and sentence construction. (3) Primarily, idea mapping, one of the pre-writing activities, highly contributes to the development of the theme writing skills of students. On the other hand, freewriting, collaborative brainstorming, and clustering moderately contribute to the development of theme writing skills of the respondents. (4) The primary problem of the students perceived by students in theme writing was irritation because of the congested and noisy classroom. Alternatively, the major problems of the students perceived by the teachers in theme writing were related to supporting, organizing and connecting details and construction of unity.

Recommendations

Based on the findings mentioned above and conclusions, the following recommendations are hereby presented: (1) The English teachers should integrate more strategies, activities or exercises that will enhance the theme writing skills of the students most especially in coherence or the organization and connection of details. (2) The English teachers should always see to it that the students accomplish pre-writing activities, especially in idea mapping, before writing their themes as a requirement. (3) School administrators should maintain a healthy environment and conducive classroom for teachers and students. (4) Other studies should be conducted closely related to the development of theme writing skills of students.

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