

Exploring Writing Challenges: A Mix Method Analysis Of Senior High School Students Essay Performance

Mae Kristine G. Ediang¹ and Marie Concepcion L. Celesio, EdD²

¹Saint Columban College, Pagadian City, Philippines
mgediang.cteas@sccpag.edu.ph

²Saint Columban College, Pagadian City, Philippines
marieconcepcion.celesio@deped.gov.ph

Abstract: This mixed-method study explored the writing challenges, reasons behind poor performance, perceptions toward writing, and strategies to improve writing among Senior High School students. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used to better understand the students' essay writing skills and experiences. Participants were students from the ABM, HUMSS, and STEM strands. Findings of the study revealed the following: (a) students from the three strands (ABM, HUMSS, and STEM) showed varied levels of proficiency based on rubric assessments in grammar and mechanics, organization and coherence, idea development, and vocabulary usage. ABM students scored an overall mean of 7.93 ("Proficient"), HUMSS students scored 7.38 ("Proficient"), and STEM students achieved the highest mean of 8.30 ("Excellent"). STEM students performed best in Organization and Coherence with a mean score of 8.59; (b) specific writing criteria where students performed poorly included vocabulary usage and grammar and mechanics. ABM and STEM students struggled with vocabulary usage, as they often used the same words and had difficulty selecting more precise words to express their ideas, while HUMSS students had the lowest mean in Grammar and Mechanics, struggling with grammar rules, punctuation, and clarity of sentences; (c) common writing errors committed by students included confusion in structuring ideas and difficulties with grammar and spelling; (d) reasons behind students' poor writing performance included time constraints, writing practice deficiency, time pressure and rushed writing, low confidence, and fear of judgment; (e) students' perceptions of their writing skills indicated they needed improvement in writing, word finding difficulties, lacking confidence, and reducing redundancy in writing; (f) students believed that practicing more, recognizing the value of reading, and drafting as a tool for better writing. The findings of this study give teachers a better understanding of the real struggles students face in writing and highlight the need for stronger writing support programs to help students become better and more confident writers.

Keywords: Writing challenges, essay writing, senior high school, writing strategies

INTRODUCTION

Writing played a vital role in both school and work. It was more than just a skill and it was a way for students to tell their stories and share their ideas. However, many students still found it difficult to put their thoughts into words. They had trouble picking the right words, using good grammar, and organizing their ideas. These challenges make it more difficult for students to write engaging stories, impacting their grades and future job chances. Much research has focused on the issues students face when writing. Previous studies have emphasized how students' writing proficiency is shaped by their lack of exposure to efficient writing techniques, their lack of practice, and their lack of feedback (Smith et., 2019).

Additionally, a more comprehensive knowledge of students' challenges has been made possible by using numerous evaluators to assess their writing abilities (Johnson, 2020; White, 2021). According to studies, students' difficulties are caused by cognitive load, worry, and a lack of motivation, impairing their writing ability (Garcia, 2020; Parker, 2020). Focusing on these issues is key because writing is essential for doing well in school and work. Many studies have looked at the writing problems students struggle with. Some of the common issues are grammar, organizing ideas, developing thoughts, and picking the right words (Brown & Larson, 2019). Studies also explain that grammar and mechanical problems often happen because students are not exposed enough to the proper writing rules and do not get enough practice in school (Jones, 2020). Similarly, a lack of clear structure in writing happens because students struggle to organize their ideas logically and connectively (Taylor, 2019; Johnson, 2020). In narrative writing, vocabulary is essential because it enables pupils to articulate their ideas precisely and clearly. Research shows that students with a small vocabulary struggle to express their ideas clearly, which makes it harder for them to develop their thoughts (Anderson & Lee, 2019; Kim, 2020). Also, common writing mistakes like broken sentences, incorrect verb tenses, and repeating the same ideas make it even harder for students to improve their skills (Garcia, 2020; Williams & Carter, 2021).

Numerous research studies have examined the function of writing assessments, focusing on the significance of employing standardized rubrics for evaluation (Davis, 2019; Lewis & Martin, 2019). According to research, multi-rater tests offer a more thorough examination of students' writing abilities while minimizing biases and inconsistencies (Miller, 2020; Harris, 2018). Students' judgments of writing difficulties also show that anxiety, motivation, and self-efficacy greatly

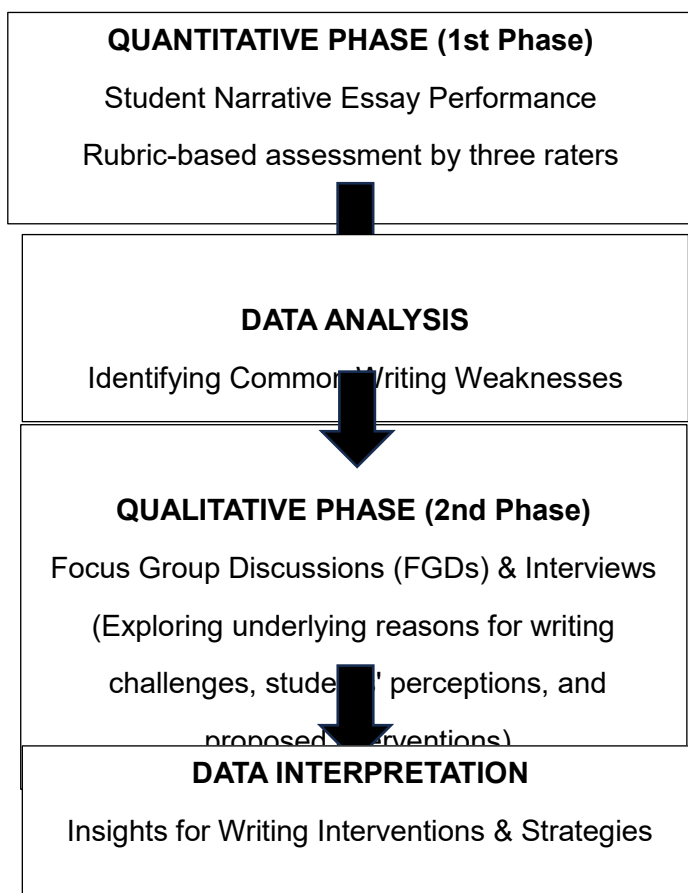
influence their writing skills (Parker, 2020; Brown, 2021). Peer review, writing workshops, and teacher-led teaching are among the interventions to increase writing proficiency (Rodriguez, 2019; Morgan, 2020). It has been discovered that peer review improves students' capacity to evaluate and polish their writing, which raises performance levels overall (Scott, 2021; Clark, 2020). Furthermore, it has been proposed that digital resources and differentiated training are good ways to remediate writing deficits (Chen, 2020; Hernandez, 2021).

This study aims to understand students' writing challenges better and provide focused treatments to improve their performance on narrative essays by analyzing these issues using an explanatory sequential design.

Even though much research has been done on writing challenges, we still need to understand the specific problems senior high school students face in writing stories. Traditional evaluations only focus on numbers to measure writing skills but do not examine the real reasons behind students' struggles. Furthermore, although specific treatments have been put out to help students become better writers, many fail to consider their unique experiences and viewpoints. Writing workshops and peer review sessions are two examples of student-centered techniques that have been shown to dramatically improve students' writing skills (Rodriguez, 2019; Morgan, 2020). However, these solutions will only work if we truly understand the specific problems students are dealing with. Knowing how students see their writing problems helps teachers develop better ways to assist them. It is essential to look closely at these challenges to improve their writing.

This study aims to explore the writing challenges of senior high school students using an explanatory sequential design. In the first Phase, students will write a narrative essay, assessed by three independent raters using a standardized rubric. The quantitative data from this assessment will identify areas where students struggle the most. In the second part, information will be gathered through group talks and one-on-one interviews with students who struggle with specific writing skills. By combining the results from numbers and personal stories, this study aims to find out why students struggle with writing and come up with ways to help them improve their narrative writing skills.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



This study follows the Explanatory Sequential Design, a mixed-method approach introduced by Creswell (2014); this means gathering and studying numbers first, then using personal stories or interviews to understand the results better. The framework has two parts: First, in the quantitative Phase, students' narrative essays are graded using a rubric. Then, in the qualitative Phase, a group of students will participate in discussions and interviews to look closely at their writing problems.

The study's first Phase begins with evaluating students' narrative essay performance using a rubric-based assessment conducted by three raters. The rubric, adapted from the Georgia Department of Education (2015), assesses key aspects of writing, including grammar and mechanics; this study looks at organization, clarity, idea development, and word choice. It provides measurable information about students' writing abilities and highlights common problem areas. Ferris (2018) explains that using rubrics to grade writing helps because it ensures fairness, consistency, and a straightforward way to identify what students do well and where they struggle. In this study, the identified weaknesses in students' essays will be the basis for selecting low-performing students for further investigation. Following the quantitative assessment, the study will move to the qualitative Phase, where group discussions and interviews will be held with 15 students (5 from ABM, five from HUMSS, and five from STEM). These students will be selected because of their low writing scores. The discussions aim to understand the reasons behind their writing problems, how they view these difficulties, and what support might help improve their writing skills. Studies show that qualitative methods like FGDs and one-on-one interviews help uncover profound insights into students' writing difficulties (Hyland, 2019). Everyday struggles include limited vocabulary, poor grammatical knowledge, difficulty organizing ideas, and lack of confidence in writing (Rao, 2017). Using this approach, the study seeks to give students a voice in expressing their writing struggles and gather insights for developing effective teaching strategies.

This framework combines data from numbers and personal experiences to understand students' writing challenges better. Rubrics help assess their writing fairly, while group discussions and interviews provide insight into their difficulties and views. The results from both parts will help create focused writing support and teaching methods that meet students' individual needs.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This study looked into the writing skills of senior high school students, mainly how they write narrative essays, to find common problems and understand why students struggle.

It particularly examined responses to the following questions:

1. What were the levels of writing proficiency of senior high school students when grouped according to academic strand based on the rubric assessment in terms of:
 - 1.1. Grammar and Mechanics
 - 1.2. Organization and Coherence
 - 1.3. Idea Development
 - 1.4. Vocabulary Usage
2. Which specific writing criteria did students perform poorly in based on the rubric scores?
3. What were the students' narrative essays' most common errors and weaknesses?
4. What were the underlying reasons behind students' poor performance in the identified writing criteria based on focus group discussions (FGDs) and individual interviews?
5. How did students perceive their writing challenges?
6. What insights from students' responses could be used to develop strategies and interventions to improve their narrative writing skills?

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed an Explanatory Sequential Design, a mixed-method research approach introduced by Creswell (2014). In this design, the researcher first gathers and studies numerical data to find patterns, trends, or

connections between different factors. After looking at the numbers, the researcher collects qualitative data to explain, add to, or better understand the results from the first part. This method breaks things down step by step, helping us better understand the research problem because numbers alone might not fully explain why specific patterns happen (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The explanatory sequential design is beneficial in studies that seek numerical evidence and personal perspectives to explore a research problem in depth. The quantitative Phase provides measurable results, while the qualitative Phase gives meaning to those results by exploring students' experiences, opinions, and struggles in their own words. This approach is beneficial when researchers want to explain unexpected results or understand the reasons behind the numbers (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). By using both methods together, the study provides a more complete and balanced analysis.

This design was chosen because it best fits the purpose of the study, which examines the writing proficiency of senior high school students. This can help create specific solutions to improve their writing skills. The structured, two-phase approach of the explanatory sequential design ensures that the research findings are both data-driven and contextually meaningful.

RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

This study will be conducted in one of the private schools in Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur. The chosen school offers Senior High School programs, including the Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM); Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS); and Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) strands. The school provides a structured academic environment where students develop their communication and writing skills through various subjects, particularly in English. Since writing skills are crucial for academic success, the school is a great place to look at students' writing abilities and find areas that need improvement.

The students come from different educational backgrounds, which allows the study to explore how writing skills differ across various subjects. This study will examine how students write stories and check their grammar, ideas, and words. The goal is to see what is hard for them and help them improve.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The participants of this study will be Grade 11 Senior High School students from one of the private schools in Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur. The researcher will use random sampling to select the participants. One hundred seventy students will be chosen from the entire group to participate in this study. The sample consists of students from different academic strands: 46 students from the Accountancy, Business, and Management (ABM) strand, There are 53 students from The Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS) strand has 53 students, and the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) strand has 71 students. This study will investigate students' writing skills from many academic backgrounds. It will focus on how well they write narrative essays, paying attention to their grammar, organization, idea development, and word choice.

The researcher picked Grade 11 students because they are just starting Senior High School. Writing is very important for school and future jobs. The study wants to find out what makes writing hard for them so teachers can help them before they move to Grade 12.

Table 1

The Participants'

Demographic Profile Based on Gender.

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	75	44.1
Female	95	55.9
Total	170	100

Table 1 shows that 170 senior high school students participated in the study. Of this number, 95 students, or 55.9%, were female, while 75 students, or 44.1%, were male. This shows that female students slightly outnumbered male students in this study. The results suggest that more girls participated in the writing assessment, possibly due to the natural distribution of students in the classes or a greater interest among female students in participating in language-related tasks. Understanding the balance between male and female participants helps provide context when interpreting the results of the writing performance later on, especially if specific trends appear to be influenced by gender.

Table 2

The Participants' Demographic Profile Based on their

Academic Strand.	Grade 11 Students	
	N	n
ABM	46	46
HUMSS	53	53
STEM	301	71
Total	400	170

Table 2 shows that the participants in this study came from three different academic strands: ABM, HUMSS, and STEM. The majority of the students, 71 out of 170 (or about 41.8%), were from the STEM strand, followed by 53 students (31.2%) from HUMSS and 46 students (27%) from ABM.

The participants were introduced using pseudonyms. They were named Greek Gods and Goddesses: *Zeus, Hera, Poseidon, Athena, Hades, Apollo, Artemis, Ares, Hephaestus, Hermes, Aphrodite, Demeter, Dionysus, Cronus, and Eros.*

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This chapter presents the writing proficiency levels of the students, as measured by a rubric-based assessment focusing on four key domains: Grammar and Mechanics, Organization and Coherence, Idea Development, and Vocabulary Usage. This study also looks into the writing problems that Senior High School students face based on their shared experiences and struggles in writing essays. It uses numbers and personal stories to understand better how they write narrative essays. The quantitative data showed how well students performed in different areas, while the interviews and group discussions revealed their everyday struggles and how they tried to overcome them. Many students also shared their thoughts on how they write and gave suggestions to help improve their writing skills. The interview results revealed four main themes that helped explain why students struggle with writing. These insights helped suggest better writing activities and ways teachers can support students.

Table 3

Level of Writing Proficiency of ABM Students

Rubric Assessment	n	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Grammar and Mechanics	46	7.8913	Proficient
Organization and Coherence	46	7.9348	Proficient
Idea Development	46	8.1087	Proficient
Vocabulary Usage	46	7.7826	Proficient
<i>Overall Weighted Mean</i>	46	7.9294	Proficient
<i>Legend:</i>		4.5986 - 6.3978 – Developing	
1.00 - 2.7992 – Needs Improvement		6.3979 - 8.1971 – Proficient	
2.7993 - 4.5985 – Beginning		8.1972 – 10.00 – Excellent	

Table 3 shows the writing proficiency level of ABM students across all four areas—Grammar and Mechanics (7.8913), Organization and Coherence (7.9348), Idea Development (8.1087), and Vocabulary Usage (7.7826) falls under the "Proficient" category. Out of all the components, Idea Development got the highest average score. This means that ABM students can clearly explain and support their ideas. On the other hand, Vocabulary Usage had the lowest score, which shows that students still find it hard to choose the right words and use a variety of expressions. Even though all

the areas reached the "Proficient" level, the data shows that ABM students still have space to grow toward "Excellent" proficiency, especially in refining their vocabulary and sentence structure. The results show that ABM students can organize their ideas well and follow basic writing rules. However, their writing still

needs improvement in terms of using better words and writing with more style. This means teachers should focus more on helping students build a stronger vocabulary. A good vocabulary helps make writing more precise, detailed, and easier to understand. Nation (2001) said that when students know more words, they can share their ideas more clearly and correctly in different types of writing. Schmitt (2008) also pointed out that building vocabulary takes time and needs regular practice and exposure to new words. Teachers can support students by using different kinds of reading materials, teaching new words through real examples, and giving writing activities encouraging them to try using higher-level vocabulary. This will improve their writing in school and help them prepare for future business and communication tasks, which are essential in the ABM strand.

Table 4

Level of Writing Proficiency of HUMSS Students

Rubric Assessment	<i>n</i>	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Grammar and Mechanics	53	7.1509	Proficient
Organization and Coherence	53	7.4340	Proficient
Idea Development	53	7.5849	Proficient
Vocabulary Usage	53	7.3585	Proficient
<i>Overall Weighted Mean</i>	53	7.3821	Proficient

Legend: 4.5986 - 6.3978 – Developing

1.00 - 2.7992 – Needs Improvement 6.3979 - 8.1971 – Proficient

2.7993 - 4.5985 – Beginning 8.1972 – 10.00 – Excellent

Table 4 presents the writing proficiency level of HUMSS students. The results show that they fall under the "Proficient" level across all four areas: Grammar and Mechanics (7.1509), Organization and Coherence (7.4340), Idea Development (7.5849), and Vocabulary Usage (7.3585), with an overall weighted mean of 7.3821. Among the components, Idea Development scored the highest, this means HUMSS students are good at sharing their ideas. But they still make small mistakes in writing like using capital letters, punctuation, and correct grammar. They can tell their thoughts well, but their writing needs more fixing. While there is potential, it also highlights the need for regular practice and more focus on grammar to improve their writing.

The results imply that while HUMSS students can express their ideas clearly and organize them well, there is a clear need to strengthen their command of grammar and sentence mechanics. Strong grammar skills are essential because they directly affect how well the reader understands messages. According to Ferris (2006), students who receive explicit instruction and feedback on grammar tend to improve significantly over time, mainly when teachers focus on common writing errors. In addition, writing competence is not just about creativity or ideas—it also requires technical accuracy (Hyland, 2003). Teachers can support this improvement by incorporating more focused grammar lessons into writing tasks, offering revision opportunities, and using peer feedback strategies. As HUMSS students often aim for careers in education, communication, and social sciences, mastering both content and form in writing will help them succeed academically and professionally.

Table 5

Level of Writing Proficiency of STEM Students

Rubric Assessment	<i>n</i>	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Grammar and Mechanics	71	8.2535	Excellent
Organization and Coherence	71	8.5915	Excellent
Idea Development	71	8.4648	Excellent
Vocabulary Usage	71	7.8732	Proficient
<i>Overall Weighted Mean</i>	71	8.2958	Excellent

Legend: 4.5986 - 6.3978 – Developing

1.00 - 2.7992 – Needs Improvement 6.3979 - 8.1971 – Proficient

2.7993 - 4.5985 – Beginning 8.1972 – 10.00 – Excellent

Table 5 shows STEM students' writing proficiency, revealing impressive results. The students achieved an "Excellent" rating in three of the four writing components: Grammar and Mechanics (8.2535), Organization and Coherence (8.5915), and Idea Development (8.4648). Only Vocabulary Usage (7.8732) was rated as "Proficient," but still relatively high. The weighted mean is 8.2958, which falls under the "Excellent" category. This shows that STEM

students are good at writing clearly. They know how to put their ideas in order and explain them well. This means they follow rules, notice small things, and can share what they know in a good way.

The results show that STEM students have the writing skills they need to succeed in school and their future careers in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Strong writing, especially in organizing and developing ideas, is critical in communicating research, lab reports, and technical findings. Schleppegrell (2004) explains that students in science-related fields must learn to use language to construct logical arguments, describe processes, and explain outcomes skills demonstrated in these results. While vocabulary usage is slightly lower than other components, it still shows proficiency, which can be improved further through exposure to discipline-specific texts and writing tasks. Supporting this, Fang and Schleppegrell (2008) emphasized that integrating writing instruction into content areas like science helps students build language and subject knowledge. These findings imply that STEM education should continue highlighting numerical or analytical skills and communication because great ideas deserve to be clearly and effectively shared.

Students Performed Poorly in Specific Writing Criteria Based on the Rubric Scores

Based on the result, the ABM strand, where students performed the lowest, was in Vocabulary Usage, with a weighted mean of 7.7826. ABM students did a good job, but they had a hard time using different words. They often used the same words again and again or could not find the best words to say what they mean. Their vocabulary might be limited, affecting how their ideas come across to the reader. This means ABM students need more lessons to help them use better and different words in their writing.

HUMSS students got a score of 7.1509 in Grammar and Mechanics. They did okay, but they had some trouble with grammar, punctuation, and making good sentences. Some students used the wrong tense, forgot punctuation, or wrote long or incomplete sentences. These minor errors can affect the overall clarity and quality of their writing. Since this is the lowest score among the three strands, teachers need to strengthen the grammar foundation of HUMSS students so they can express their ideas more clearly and correctly in writing.

For STEM students, their weakest area was also Vocabulary Usage, with a weighted mean of 7.8732. Even though it is the highest score among the three strands, it still shows they need to work on vocabulary. Similar to the ABM strand, STEM students may have relied on basic or repetitive words in their writing, which could make their ideas sound less engaging or expressive. This suggests that while STEM students may be good at organizing their thoughts and explaining their ideas clearly, they may still need help expanding their word choices to make their writing more effective and enjoyable.

Based on the results, it is clear that each strand has specific areas where students need support in writing. ABM and STEM students struggled the most with Vocabulary Usage, while HUMSS students struggled harder with Grammar and Mechanics. These results show that even though all strands reached the "Proficient" level, skills still need to be improved. Vocabulary development and grammar instruction should be given more focus in writing lessons. Understanding which areas students are weak in will help teachers plan better activities and provide the right kind of support. With the proper guidance and enough practice, students can improve their writing skills and perform better in future writing tasks.

Common Writing Errors and Weaknesses Among Students

Many students face challenges when writing, and one of the most common problems is confusion of ideas. This happens when students have difficulty organizing their thoughts clearly, making it hard for readers to follow their points. Sometimes, ideas seem jumbled together, or the writing does not flow smoothly from one point to the next.

Confusion in Structuring Ideas. A common problem that many students face when writing essays is struggling to organize their ideas. They often feel confused about how to arrange their thoughts clearly and logically. This can happen when they cannot decide which idea should come first or how to connect them smoothly. They asserted:

"Akoa maam kay mag kay di nako arranged akong idea. Kung ako man gud mag sulat maam kay daghan kog ideas pero mag rumble na sya maam. Dili nako btaw sya ma arrange ug tarong btaw maam kay indecisive kayo ko. Gusto ko nga dapat kani nga idea ang iuna para ma catch dayon ang attention sa mu basa, pero murag di man sya mag make sense do dapat dili ni iuna kay naa ni sya sa tunga2 dapat sa

akong sentence. Dayon, diha nako mag struggle maam kay maglibog nako kung unsa akong unahon kay feel nako pareha sila ug weight. Pareha sila mga highlight. Dayon usahay maam mawala nako sa topic sa ka daghan nakog gihuna2 nga idea." [For me, ma'am, my problem is that I can't arrange my ideas properly. When I start writing, I have a lot of ideas, but they get all jumbled up. I can't really organize them well because I'm very indecisive. I want to start with an idea that can catch the reader's attention, but then I realize it might not make sense at the beginning and should actually be placed in the middle. That's where I start to struggle, ma'am, because I get confused about which idea to start with since I feel like they're all equally important they all seem like highlights. And sometimes, ma'am, I even go off-topic because I'm thinking about too many ideas at once.] Hera

"Kay usahay man gud maam kay kana bitawng while nag continue ko ug surat pero wala ko kabalo kung sakto na ba to iyang sequence ug kung na arrange ra ba nako ug sakto ma'am based sa pinaka importante. Lisod kayo sya sa akoo maam kay murag confused ko sa akong gisulat." [Ma'am, sometimes while I'm writing, I don't really know if the sequence is correct or if I arranged the ideas properly based on what's most important. It's really hard for me, ma'am, because I feel confused about what I've written.] Hades

"Perme nakong sayop kung mag surat ko ug essay ma'am kay mag lisod ko mag-arrange sa akong mga ideas ma'am. Usahay, murag sige ko ug balhin-balhin og topic ma'am ba, nya walay klaro nga agi mao nang makalibog basahon." [Most of my mistakes when writing an essay, ma'am, are about organizing my ideas. Sometimes, I tend to jump from one topic to another, and there's no clear flow, which makes it confusing to read.] Hermes

"Usa sa mga common errors nako ma'am kay ang pagkasunod-sunod sa mga ideas, mura'g malibog ko usahay sa pag-organize sa akong thoughts jud ma'am. Usahay pud, dili kaayo klaro ang akong statement, which makes it hard for the reader to follow the main point. Also, ma'am, I tend to overcomplicate sentences, which makes them harder to understand." [One of my common errors, ma'am, is the order of my ideas; I sometimes get confused when organizing my thoughts. Sometimes, my statements are unclear, making it hard for the reader to follow the main point. Also, ma'am, I tend to make my sentences too complicated, which makes them harder to understand.] Demeter

"My prominent common errors gyud maam kay ang pag sequence sa akong mga ideas since magka mixed up sila sakong huna2 then maglibog nako unsaon siya pag structure in text na..." [My most prominent standard error, ma'am, is the sequencing of my ideas. They get mixed up in my mind, and then I get confused about how to structure them in the text.] Cronus

When students jump from one idea to another without a clear plan, their writing can become hard to follow. Experts like Flower and Hayes (1981) explain that writing is a complicated process that involves planning, writing, and reviewing. If students do not plan their ideas properly at the start, their writing might be disorganized. Kellogg (2008) also points out that when students have trouble organizing their thoughts, it makes it harder for them to communicate their main points. Teachers can help by showing students how to arrange their ideas step-by-step, making their writing easier to understand. With practice and the proper guidance, students can improve how they structure their essays and make their writing flow more smoothly.

Difficulties with Grammar and Spelling. Many students have trouble with grammar and spelling when they write. These problems make it hard for them to share their ideas clearly. For example, students sometimes don't know how to

put words in the right order or worry about grammar. This makes them afraid to write. They also worry about spelling and if they are using the words the right way, which makes their writing confusing. This can result in awkward sentences or ideas that are hard to follow. They asserted:

"Okay sya gamay teacher, pero ang pag start lang jud nako ug pag arrange sa mga words in order na dili sya ma wrong grammar." [It is okay for me, teacher, but my real struggle is starting and arranging the words correctly so grammar will not be wrong.] Poseidon

"For me, ma'am is kanang mga spelling and grammar maam mag duha2x ko if correct ba..." [For me, ma'am, it is the spelling and grammar I often hesitate or doubt if it is correct...] Zeus

Studies have found that students who often worry about these writing issues tend to feel more anxious, making it harder for them to express themselves clearly (Graham & Perin, 2007). To get better, students need regular practice and support to help them feel more confident in using the language.

Reasons Behind Students' Poor Performance

Students often find it hard to do well in school because of problems that are not always easy to notice. Poor time management, insufficient resources, or personal issues can make learning more difficult. Knowing these hidden reasons is essential so we can find better ways to help students do well in their studies and reach their full potential.

Time Constraints. Many students struggle with poor performance in writing tasks due to a lack of time. Students often feel rushed when given only a short time to complete essays, hindering their ability to plan, organize, and refine their thoughts. They asserted:

"Sa ako maam kay possible maam nga kanang gamay rag oras gi hatag sa teacher. Dili na kaayo nako masabtan akong gisulat kay nagdali-dali." [For me, ma'am, maybe it is because the teacher gave only a short amount of time. I could not understand what I wrote because I was rushing. Zeus

"For me, jud ma'am kay little time given by the teacher jud ma'am to make an essay mao jud ni usa sa akong mga common underlying reason ma'am..." [For me, ma'am, it is the short time the teacher gave to make the essay—that is one of my common underlying reasons.] Hera

"Ma'am akoo jud kay kulang sa oras para magplano ug mag-edit sa akong gi sulat..." [Ma'am, for me, it's really the lack of time to plan and edit what I've written.] Hermes

Studies show that when students are in a rush, the quality of their writing can suffer. They do not have enough time to think carefully, revise, or check their work, which are all important for writing clearly and in an organized way (Graham & Perin, 2007). Without enough time to plan and arrange their thoughts, their writing may turn out messy and complicated to understand. Feeling rushed by time can make students anxious, making it even more difficult to write correctly. Giving them extra time to organize and improve their work can help lower their stress and improve their writing skills.

Writing Practice Deficiency. When students do not get to practice writing often, their writing skills can suffer, leading to low performance. Studies show that writing improves little by little with regular and consistent practice. According to Graham and Perin (2007), writing improves when students engage in consistent writing activities, which help them develop better organization, clarity, and cohesion in their written work. The more students write, the more familiar they become with sentence structures, vocabulary, and organizing ideas effectively. They asserted:

"Isa sa mga rason sa akong poor performance jud ma'am kay kulang sa practice sa writing." [One of the reasons for my poor performance, ma'am, is the lack of practice in writing.] Hephaestus

"Mura'g usa sa mga rason nako ma'am kay lack of practice jud ma'am. Dili ko kaayo makasulat regularly, which makes my writing less fluid and clear." [One of my

reasons, ma'am, is the lack of practice. I do not write often, which makes my writing less smooth and more complex to understand.] Demeter

A study by Ferris (2011) shows that writing exercises often help students improve their grammar and style, making their writing smoother and more complex. Without regular practice, students might have trouble expressing their ideas clearly, causing their writing to feel disconnected and hard to follow. Writing practice helps students get better at writing and feel less scared about it. Writing often helps them think better and solve problems because it helps them organize their ideas. When students write more, they learn how to put their thoughts in the right order, which helps them do better in school and talk more clearly.

Time pressure and rushed writing are common problems that many students face when working on writing tasks. When there is little time to finish an essay or assignment, students often have trouble organizing their thoughts and clearly expressing their ideas. They asserted:

"Sa ako maam kay possible maam nga kanang gamay rag oras gi hatag sa teacher. Dili na kaayo nako masabtan akong gisulat kay nagdali-dali" [For me, ma'am, it's possibly because the teacher gave us only a short amount of time. I could not understand what I had written anymore because I was rushing. Apollo

"Sa akona ma'am kay ang main problem jud nako kay gamay ra ug oras gihatag ang teacher sa among pag answer sa essay. Ka gets ko maam kung unsa akong isulat pero murag mawala ko sa akong mga ghuna² nga thought or answer kay tungod sa oras. Ma conscious jud ko sa oras maam" [For me, ma'am, my main problem is that the teacher gives us only a short time to answer the essay. I understand what I want to write but lose my thoughts or answers because of the limited time. I get conscious of the time, ma'am.] Zeus

"Usahay jud ma'am kay ma bati akong essay kay dali-dalion ra nako ug sulat maam kay tungod sa oras gamay ra man ud ang gihatag nga oras maam nya dili nako matarong ug sulat ang akong gusto nga idea jud ma'am. Mao nga maglibog nako sa akong sinulat ma'am." [Sometimes, ma'am, my essay turns out badly because I rush to finish it due to the limited time given. I can't properly write down the idea I really want to say, ma'am. That's why I end up getting confused with what I've written.] Hera

The pressure to finish quickly can cause mistakes, unfinished arguments, or disorganized writing. Research has shown that time constraints can reduce writing quality because students cannot carefully plan, revise, or reflect on their work (Graham & Perin, 2007). When students feel pressured by time, they may become anxious, further hindering their ability to express their thoughts clearly. In these situations, students may feel rushed through their writing, leaving them unhappy with their work and less confident. Teachers can help by giving students enough time for writing tasks and stressing the importance of revising so students can improve and better express their ideas.

Low confidence and Fear of Judgment. A common challenge many students face in their writing is a lack of trust and the fear of being judged. This can make them feel insecure about sharing their ideas and opinions. Often, students worry about making mistakes, especially when they think their work has to be perfect. This fear can lead to mental blocks, where they struggle to express their thoughts clearly because they are too focused on potential criticism. They asserted:

"Ma mental block ko usahay teacher like kadugayan ug hunan² ma wala na ko murag ma amnesia, and I'm afraid pud teacher na basin e judge nila akong opinion." [Sometimes I get a mental block, teacher, like when I think for too long, everything disappears, like I get amnesia. Moreover, I am also afraid, teacher, that they might judge my opinion.] Poseidon

"Like, kabalo ko sa content pero usahay ma-intimidate ko or grounded ko teacher sa thought nga dapat perfect. Maka-affect pud ang fear of being judged." [Like, I know the content, but sometimes I get intimidated or stuck, teacher, by the thought that everything has to be perfect. The fear of being judged also affects me.] Athena

Studies show that students afraid of being judged might feel less motivated and unsure of themselves, which can worsen their work. This fear can make it difficult for students to focus on their job because they are worried about how others will judge their writing. Students can face their fears and feel better about their skills in a friendly classroom. Teachers can help by giving good advice and reminding them that improving is more important than perfection.

Students' Perceptions of Their Writing Challenges

Writing can be difficult for some kids. Some might have trouble putting their ideas in order, while others might have trouble with spelling, grammar, or finding the right words. It's important for teachers to know what is hard for each student so they can help them more. By recognizing these challenges from the students' perspective, teachers can develop better strategies to guide them toward improving their writing skills.

Needs Improvements in Writing. Many students recognize the need to improve their writing, often acknowledging that while they have good ideas, the clarity and effectiveness of their writing still need work. They asserted:

"I think okay-okay ra siya teacher, pero it needs improvement gyud..." [I think it is okay, teacher, but it needs improvement.] Athena

"Sa ako ma'am kay n a koy mga maayong ideya, pero kinahanglan pa jud nako ug improvement ma'am..." [For me, ma'am, I have good ideas, but I still need improvement...] Hermes

"Sa aka ma'am kay, I perceived my writing as a work in progress. However, I know ma'am nga needs a lot of improvement pa jud, but I also see it as a reflection of my thoughts and ideas. Sometimes, I feel frustrated, jud ma'am, because I know I can do better, pero usa pud ka challenge para nako nga mag-improve pa sa akong writing." [For me, ma'am, my writing is a work in progress. However, I know, ma'am, that it still needs much improvement. However, it also reflects my thoughts and ideas. Sometimes, I feel frustrated, ma'am, because I know I can do better, but it is also a challenge for me to improve my writing.] Demeter

This self-awareness is crucial in the training development process, as it shows students' understanding of the areas they need to grow. Writing is an ongoing process of refining thoughts and ideas, and the notion of "work in progress" is an essential part of the learning process (Flower, 2011).

According to studies, students who view their writing as a continuous improvement journey tend to be more open to feedback and more motivated to enhance their skills (Graham & Perin, 2007). Some kids feel upset about their writing because they want to do better than they can now. To feel better, kids must keep practicing and fixing their work, as writing is inherently a skill that develops over time with effort and patience (Troia et al., 2013). As students continue to practice and receive constructive feedback, they become more adept at expressing their ideas in clearer, more structured ways, ultimately improving their writing.

Word-Finding Difficulties. Some kids find it hard to say what they think, even if they have ideas. They do not have trouble knowing what to say, but it is hard to find the right words. This makes them feel unsure and frustrated when writing. They asserted:

"like, I know ju ma'am on what I want to say pero di ko kabalo usahay unsaon pag-put into words jud ma'am" [Like, ma'am, I really know what I want to say, b t sometimes I don't know how to put it into words.] Athena

"Kanang feel nako ma'am kay kulang jud ko of expressing words maong dili jud ko sure sa akong sinulat ma'am. Dayon hesitant na dayon ko ma'am mu"

put into words." [Ma'am, I lack the words to express myself, so I am not confident about my writing. Then I become hesitant to put my thoughts into words.] Apollo

"Ako ma'am kay struggle jud nako ng manga ug right words ma'am to express my thoughts ma'am maglisod ko" [For me, ma'am, I struggle to find the right words to express my thoughts. I find it difficult.] Aphrodite

According to Richards and Renandya (2002), vocabulary limitations are among the biggest challenges for second language learners, especially when expressing complex ideas. Without enough vocabulary, students may feel stuck or unsure if they are using the right words, which affects the flow and clarity of their writing. Hyland (2003) also emphasized that learning to write is not only about grammar or structure but also about being able to choose the right words to express meaning effectively. This shows that helping students expand their vocabulary and gain confidence in word usage is essential for improving their writing skills.

Lacking Confidence. Some student feel unsure about their writing when they think it is not finished or good enough. They might know what is missing but do not know how to fix it, which makes them feel less confident. They asserted:

"Para pud nako ma'am kay di kaayo sya okay jud kay abalo ko na kulang pjud to mao na dili ko confident gyud ma'am." [For me too, ma'am, it did not turn out okay because I know it was lacking; that is why I am not very confident.] Zeus

"Dili lang kaayo ko confident ma'am, especially if akong nang ipakita or i-submit ang akoang sinulat." [I'm not very confident, ma'am, especially when I have to show or submit what I've written.] Hephaestus

As defined by Bandura (1997), self-efficacy is believing in yourself and helping you do tasks well. In writing, this belief helps students want to try harder and get better. Students lacking confidence may hesitate to share or submit their work, fearing that they will notice its imperfections. Pajares (2003) also emphasizes that self-efficacy in writing leads to avoidance behaviors, where students delay or avoid completing writing tasks altogether. To improve at writing, students need to believe in themselves and see mistakes as ways to learn, not failures. To get better at writing, students need to believe in themselves and see mistakes as ways to learn, not as failures. Supporting students through positive feedback and offering strategies to improve their writing can help enhance their confidence and, in turn, improve their performance.

Reducing Redundancy in Writing. Many students focus on avoiding the repetition of words in their writing because they believe it can help improve both the quality of their work and their writing skills. Repetition, if not intentional, can make writing sound monotonous and less engaging. They asserted:

"Maningkamot jud ko ma'am nga likayan nga ibalik-balik ang mga words gan ma'am..." [I really try, ma'am, to avoid repeating the exact words.] Dionysus

"Ako ma' m, kay pirme gyud ko magbantay nga dili magbalik-balik akong mga words jud ma'am. Dili ko ganahan magsige'g usab-usab og terms ma'am kay feel nako ma'am murag makatabang na siya nga mahasa pa ko ug mas ma broaden akong huna-huna." [For me ma'am, I try not to say the same words again and again. I think it helps me improve and think better.] Hades

Researchers found that using different words helps keep the reader interested and helps the writer think better (Liu & Zhang, 2014). When students use many words, they learn more words and can say their ideas better (Davis, 2015). By not using the exact words again and again, students can get better at thinking and speaking. This can help them write better and feel more sure of their writing.

Many students understand that improving their narrative writing skills takes time, effort, and the right strategies. Their experiences give them ideas on how they can become better writers. Some believe regular practice helps them

organize their thoughts more clearly, while others say reading more stories or essays gives them new ideas and improves their vocabulary. Listening to students' perspectives gives us helpful insights into what strategies really work for them. These insights can guide teachers in creating better ways to support students in writing more effectively.

The Importance of Practice in Improving Writing Skills. The importance of consistent practice in improving writing skills is a common realization among students. Many express that regularly practicing writing and reading more essays are essential steps toward enhancing their ability to express ideas clearly and coherently. They asserted:

"Maybe mas helpful jud m'am if mag-practice ko regularly..." [Maybe it would really be helpful, ma'am, if I practice regularly...] Athena

"For me ma'am kay mas na real zed nako nga dapat mag practice jud ko kay mas essential sya para mas m improve ko ma'am" [For me, ma'am, I realized that I really need to practice because it's essential for me to improve.] Apollo

"Siguro ma'am I should also practice writing ma'am ron aron ma get used nako siya maam ug ma mas ma share nako akong ideas." [Maybe, ma'am, I should also practice writing so I can get used to it and be able to share my ideas better.] Aphrodite

"Sa ako ma'am kay usa sa mga strategies nako is to practice regularly jud ma'am aron mas ma ka focus ko more on the clarity of my ideas kaysa sa perfection sa grammar." [For me, one of my strategies is to practice regularly so I can focus more on the clarity of my ideas rather than just perfecting my grammar.] Demeter

"For me, just ma'am kay, the most important thing is just to keep writing, ma'am." [For me, ma'am, the most important thing is to keep writing.] Eros

Research shows that writing often helps students get better at writing and sharing their ideas (Graham & Perin, 2007). Writing a lot helps students practice, try new ways to write, and feel better about their writing. Reading different stories and essays also helps students learn new words and ways to write. The more students write and read, the better they get at writing and feeling sure about it.

Recognizing the Value of Reading. Reading plays a significant role in helping students become better writers. When students read stories, essays, or articles, they are not only exposed to new words but also to different ways of organizing ideas and using sentence structures. They asserted:

"Para nako teacher kay mag basa² lang jud ug mga stories para pud ma practice ug ma master ang pag structure sa essay nako." [For me, teacher, I need to read more stories so I can practice and master how to structure my essays.] Poseidon

"For me, teacher, insights are that siguro kay it is necessary just to read a lot of articles or essays teachers aron mas ma exposed pa ko to different styles and formats sa pagsulat..." [For me, teacher, one of the insights is that it is really necessary to read more articles or essays so I can be more exposed to different writing styles and formats...] Hephaestus

"Magbasa gyud dapat ma'am ug bisan unsa nga mga sa sulat gani ma'am aron mas makatabang pa sya pagdugang sa oocabulary ma'am ug pagsabot sa structure ba ma'am." [We really need to read anything that's written, ma'am, because it can help improve our vocabulary and understanding of structure.] Hermes

"Mag read jud ug books ma'am kay maka hel sya sa ako to learn new words ma'am and para makita pod nako ma'am kun unsaon jud ng mga maayo ug sulat ma'am." [I really need to read books, ma'am, because it helps me learn new words and also see how good writing is done.] Aphrodite

"Magbasa pud ko ug more quality essays ma'am or articles gani para makita ang structure and flow." [I also read more quality essays or articles, ma'am, so that I can see the structure and flow.] Demeter

This kind of exposure helps them understand how writing works and gives them models they can follow. According to Krashen (2004), reading a lot—especially for pleasure—greatly improves writing skills, vocabulary, and grammar because learners absorb language patterns naturally. In fact, reading widely allows students to internalize the rhythm and logic of good writing, which they can then use when creating their own work (Grabe & Zhang, 2016). Reading also helps students become more familiar with different styles, tones, and formats, which are essential when writing essays or any text. As they encounter a variety of texts, they begin to recognize how compelling arguments are built, how transitions guide readers, and how ideas are supported with examples. This kind of understanding can only be developed through regular reading practice. Reading every day is essential. It helps you understand better and become a better, more confident writer

. Many students find that making a draft before writing helps them think clearly. A draft helps them plan what to say and how to say it, so writing is easier. They asserted:

"Sa ako kay mag draft sa jud maam para ma sunod2x siya..." [For me, ma'am, I need to make a draft first so that my ideas will be more organized and connected.] Zeus

"Para sa ako ma'am kay ma-improve pa n ko akong writing, kay siguro dapat mag draft ko daan ma'am sa akong isulat. Dili nako sya e diretso sulat ma'am. Mas maayo nga klaro daan akong idea ma'am aron mas sayon dayon han ay ma'am." [For me, ma'am, I can improve my writing if I make a draft first before writing. I shouldn't write right away, ma'am. It's better if my idea is clear from the start so it's easier to organize everything.] Dionysus

Drafting gives them a chance to see the flow of their ideas and make changes before they finalize their work. According to Flower and Hayes (1981), writing is a process. First, you plan. Then, you write your ideas. Finally, you check and fix your work. Making a draft helps you turn your ideas into clear writing. When students take time to draft, they become more confident in expressing their thoughts and are able to improve the quality of their writing through revision (Grabe & Kaplan, 2014). This shows that drafting is not just about writing a rough version—it is a step that helps students think and write better.

The responses shared by the students give us a clear picture of the common problems they face when it comes to writing. Many of them mentioned that they find it hard to use correct grammar and spelling, and they often struggle to organize their thoughts, especially when they are given very little time to finish their work. Because they do not write or read regularly, they also find it hard to express what they really want to say in their essays. These issues affect their confidence, and sometimes, they are not proud or sure of the things they have written. Aside from these, students also shared other challenges that are often not seen right away. Some students said they find it hard to look for the right words to say what is on their minds. Others said they are afraid their work is not good enough, so they become hesitant or shy to show their writing to others. Some students tend to repeat words or ideas because they feel they do not have enough vocabulary. Some students do not plan their ideas first. This makes their writing messy and hard to understand. They also repeat words, feel unsure, and have trouble finding the right words, which makes their writing not as good.

Even with all these struggles, it is clear that students want to improve. They know that if they keep practicing and if they get the right help, they can become better writers. Many of them said they needed more time to plan and organize their thoughts. They believe that reading more books, stories, and articles can help them learn new words and understand how to write in a more precise and organized way. Most of all, they want support and feedback from their teachers to help them grow and feel more confident in writing.

This study helps us understand that students face different writing problems, and it reminds us how important it is to create a learning environment where they feel supported, guided, and encouraged. Teachers and school leaders can use these insights to make better strategies like giving students more time to write, enabling them to read more, helping them build their vocabulary, teaching them how to draft properly, and reminding them that making mistakes is part of learning. In the end, when we listen to students and understand what they are going through, we can create better ways to help them, not just in writing but in becoming better communicators in school and life. This study shows us that students' voices are essential, and by listening to them, we can make learning and teaching better for everyone.

CONCLUSION

Senior High School students in ABM, HUMSS, and STEM have different skills when it comes to writing. Each group faces its own problems. For example, STEM students are good at organizing their ideas, but ABM and STEM students have trouble with finding the right words. HUMSS students struggle more with grammar and sentence building. All the students agree that practicing, reading, and making drafts can help them get better at writing.

This study looks at the things that make writing hard for students, like time limits, not writing enough, and being afraid of what others think. The study shows that writing well depends not just on ability but also on things like pressure and fear. The students said that getting more support and practice could help. The study helps teachers understand how to help students feel better about their writing and improve their skills.

In conclusion, becoming a better writer is not just about knowing grammar and words, but also about facing personal and school challenges. This study shows that teachers should be kind, encouraging, and use good teaching methods to help students become better writers and succeed in the future.

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