

Interventions Addressing Writing Anxiety and Its Factors

Janine B. Baesa
Agdangan National High School
janine.baesa@deped.gov.ph

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ABSTRACT

This study examined writing anxiety and its contributory factors among Grade 8 learners at Agdangan National High School and used the findings to develop a school-based writing intervention module. A descriptive-developmental approach was employed with 20 Grade 8 students purposively nominated by their English teachers because they exhibited signs of writing anxiety. Data were gathered through a researcher-made questionnaire, interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and writing-task observations; the proposed module was subsequently evaluated by five school-based validators using the LRMDs Evaluation Sheet 6.4. Descriptive mean scores and qualitative coding were used, while Fleiss' kappa described response agreement and the source manuscript reports acceptable internal consistency at the recommended Cronbach's

alpha threshold of .70. All four dimensions of writing anxiety were rated moderately high. Behavioral hesitation and rushing obtained means of 3.32, social concerns reached 3.28, emotional nervousness and feeling overwhelmed reached 3.20, and the leading cognitive concern, difficulty expressing thoughts clearly, obtained 3.16. Contributory factors were likewise moderately high across cognitive, behavioral, social, and emotional domains. The module, *Conquering Writing Anxiety through Comprehensive Strategies*, passed all LRMDs criteria, scoring 25.2/28 for content, 66.6/72 for format, 18.0/20 for presentation and organization, and 24/24 for accuracy and up-to-datedness. The findings support targeted instruction in writing processes, time management, stress regulation, supportive feedback, and confidence-building within a positive writing environment.

Keywords: *writing anxiety, Grade 8 learners, writing intervention, developmental research, writing confidence, LRMDs validation*

INTRODUCTION

Writing is a foundational academic skill through which learners communicate ideas, demonstrate understanding, and develop critical and creative thinking. When writing is accompanied by persistent apprehension, however, students may experience self-doubt, fear of failure, perfectionistic pressure, procrastination, and avoidance. Such writing anxiety can restrict idea generation, organization, revision, and willingness to participate in writing tasks. Philippine and international studies have similarly linked language and writing anxiety with weaker performance, reduced confidence, and less productive engagement in language learning (Kabigting et al., 2020; Jugo, 2020; Zhang, 2019).

The problem is especially relevant in secondary education, where students are expected to produce increasingly complex written outputs while still developing linguistic competence and self-regulation. Filipino learners have reported anxiety arising from fear of negative evaluation, communication apprehension, linguistic limitations, and difficulty organizing ideas (Gatcho & Hajan, 2019; Saavedra, 2020). The Department of Education has also emphasized learner mental health and the need to address literacy gaps through supportive school-based programs (Department of Education, 2012, 2021). These directions underscore the importance of treating writing anxiety as both an instructional and learner well-being concern.

At Agdangan National High School in Baao, Camarines Sur, teachers observed fear, hesitation, low confidence, and avoidance among some Grade 8 learners during English writing activities. These concerns created a practical need to determine not only the degree to which anxiety was manifested but also the cognitive, behavioral, social, and emotional factors associated with it. Although prior research has examined writing anxiety among college, EFL, and ESL populations, fewer studies in the source literature focused on a small, school-based Grade 8 group and directly translated the assessment into a locally validated instructional resource.

Accordingly, the study examined the cognitive, behavioral, social, and emotional levels of writing anxiety among selected Grade 8 students, identified contributory factors across the same domains, and developed an intervention module responsive to the findings. The developmental output was designed to strengthen writing knowledge and language proficiency while addressing mental blocks, confidence, time management, feedback, and stress in writing. The study therefore sought to connect diagnosis with practical intervention in a context-specific and learner-centered manner.

Literature Review

Writing Anxiety and Academic Performance

Writing anxiety has consistently been associated with difficulties in language performance. Kabigting et al. (2020) reported high anxiety among Filipino ESL learners and a negative association between anxiety and writing ability, while Jugo (2020) found that language anxiety sources were negatively related to English proficiency among Filipino teacher-education students. Macayan et al. (2019) likewise showed that language-learning anxiety significantly influenced second-language writing and speaking performance, although the direction of its influence varied across skills. These studies establish writing anxiety as a multidimensional academic concern rather than a simple lack of writing knowledge.

Broader evidence also supports the anxiety-performance relationship. Sabti et al. (2019) found writing anxiety negatively related to performance and to self-efficacy and achievement motivation, whereas Zhang's (2019) meta-analysis identified a general negative relationship between foreign-language anxiety and performance. In classroom contexts, anxiety may fluctuate according to task demands and learner perceptions, showing that writing apprehension can change across activities and learning conditions rather than remain fixed (Kruk, 2019).

Cognitive, Linguistic, and Behavioral Sources of Anxiety

Difficulties in language knowledge and writing processes frequently contribute to apprehension. Saavedra (2020) identified limited vocabulary, problems organizing ideas, low motivation, and spelling and grammar difficulties among learners with weak writing skills. Salikin (2019) similarly found linguistic competence to be an important source of writing anxiety, while Toba and Noor (2019) documented challenges in content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, practice, and time during writing tasks. These findings suggest that anxiety can emerge when learners perceive a mismatch between task demands and their current writing resources.

Behavioral responses may further reinforce anxiety. Avoidance, procrastination, rushing, giving up, and reluctance to revise can reduce opportunities for successful practice and feedback. Pabro-Maquidato (2021) described emotional tension and mental challenges among anxious second-language writers, but also noted coping strategies such as brainstorming, outlining, and seeking feedback. This supports instructional approaches that explicitly teach manageable writing routines while providing repeated, low-threat opportunities to plan, draft, revise, and complete written work.

Social, Emotional, and Feedback-Related Dimensions

Writing occurs within a social environment where students may compare their performance with peers, anticipate teacher judgment, or fear negative evaluation. Gatcho and Hajan (2019) identified negative evaluation and communication apprehension as major sources of English-language anxiety among Filipino learners. Jiang and Dewaele (2019) likewise showed that classroom anxiety is shaped by learner-internal and teacher-related

variables, while Kruk (2019) demonstrated that anxiety changes in response to classroom experiences. These findings emphasize the role of classroom climate, instructional practices, and peer interaction in shaping learners' emotional responses to writing.

Supportive feedback and interpersonal assistance can help counter these pressures. Russell-Pinson and Harris (2019) stressed the importance of attending to writers' stress and providing structured support, while Smith and López (2021) reported that constructive teacher feedback can strengthen confidence and reduce writing anxiety. Peer and teacher support are therefore not merely supplementary; they can create the psychological safety needed for students to take risks, accept revision, and develop a more positive identity as writers.

Interventions for Reducing Writing Anxiety

Research has proposed multiple intervention pathways. Interactive writing can improve writing proficiency through collaborative and scaffolded practice (Coloquit et al., 2020), while self-regulated strategies such as goal setting and self-monitoring can reduce anxiety and support performance (Woodrow, 2021). Abolhasani et al. (2022) emphasized self-efficacy and self-regulation, and Rasool et al. (2021) highlighted cognitive-behavioral strategies such as mindfulness and stress reduction. Together, these approaches support interventions that combine writing-skill development with emotional regulation and confidence-building.

Technology, collaboration, and structured feedback also offer useful supports. Taffs and Holt (2021) described digital resources as confidence-building tools, Nguyen and Habók (2022) reported benefits from collaborative writing, and Al-Shehri and Gitsaki (2022) used digital storytelling to make writing more engaging and less anxiety-provoking. Metacognitive strategy training has likewise been associated with lower writing anxiety (Zarei & Farahian, 2021). The present study drew on this intervention-oriented literature while grounding its module in the specific anxiety levels and contributory factors reported by Grade 8 learners at Agdangan National High School.

Study Framework for Intervention Development

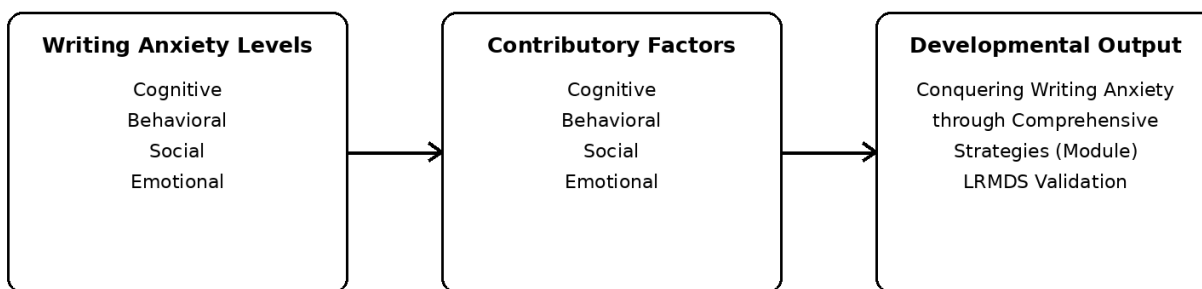


Figure 1. *Study framework based on the source manuscript: writing-anxiety levels and contributory factors inform the developmental module.*

METHODS

Research Design

The study employed a descriptive-developmental approach. The descriptive component documented the levels of writing anxiety and the cognitive, behavioral, social, and emotional factors associated with the students' writing experiences. Survey data were complemented by interviews, focus group discussions, writing-task observations, and classroom observations. The developmental component used the findings to formulate the module *Conquering Writing Anxiety through Comprehensive Strategies* and to subject the material to expert curricular evaluation.

Research Locale

The research was conducted at Agdangan National High School, a public secondary school under the Department of Education, Schools Division of Camarines Sur, in Barangay Agdangan, Baao, Camarines Sur, Philippines. The locale was selected because Grade 8 English teachers had observed fear, hesitation, low confidence, and avoidance among learners during writing activities, making the setting directly relevant to the study's instructional concern.

Participants and Sampling Technique

The primary participants were 20 Grade 8 learners during Academic Year 2023-2024. They were purposively nominated by their English teachers on the basis of observed writing anxiety and difficulties in writing tasks. For validation of the developed module, the study also involved five school-based evaluators: one OIC/principal with a doctoral degree and four English teachers with graduate-level qualifications. These validators assessed the print material using the LRMDs Evaluation Sheet 6.4.

Research Instrument

A researcher-made questionnaire was developed from the relevant literature and expert consultation to assess writing-anxiety levels and contributory factors across cognitive, behavioral, social, and emotional domains. The manuscript reports that internal consistency met the recommended Cronbach's alpha threshold of .70. Content, construct, and criterion validity procedures were described, and Fleiss' kappa was used to summarize agreement across responses. Qualitative information was obtained through interviews, focus group discussions, direct observations, and examination of writing-task behaviors. The intervention module was evaluated using the Department of Education LRMDs Evaluation Sheet 6.4 for print materials.

Data Gathering Procedure

Approval was first obtained from the Graduate School of Bicol University and from the principal of Agdangan National High School. The researcher then coordinated with Grade 8 English teachers regarding the selection and scheduling of participants. Because the participants were minors, parental or guardian consent and student assent were secured before data collection. The validated questionnaire was administered under researcher supervision, followed by interviews, focus group discussions, and classroom observations. Completed responses were checked, encoded, tabulated, and analyzed, after which the module was developed, piloted, refined, and submitted for LRMDs evaluation.

Data Analysis

Descriptive mean scores and qualitative interpretations were used to summarize the level of agreement and corresponding level of anxiety for each indicator. Fleiss' kappa described the degree of agreement reported for the four anxiety dimensions and four contributory-factor domains. Interview and focus-group information was organized through content analysis and coding to identify recurring explanations and possible intervention directions. LRMDs scores were compared with the prescribed passing thresholds for content, format, presentation and organization, and accuracy and up-to-datedness.

Ethical Consideration

Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed of the study purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and their right to decline or withdraw without penalty. Parental or guardian consent and student assent were obtained for the Grade 8 learners. Names were replaced with codes, information was treated confidentially, and collected data were used only for academic and research purposes. The researcher also sought to maintain a supportive, non-threatening environment because the topic involved writing-related anxiety and allowed participants to discontinue participation if they experienced discomfort.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Levels of Writing Anxiety

The results showed a consistent pattern across the four dimensions: all listed indicators were interpreted as moderately high in writing anxiety. Behavioral manifestations were particularly salient, with hesitation and rushing during writing tasks each obtaining a mean of 3.32. Social pressures were also evident, as feeling left behind, a competitive academic environment, and teaching methods each obtained 3.28. Emotional nervousness and feeling overwhelmed both reached 3.20, while the highest cognitive indicator was worry about not expressing thoughts clearly ($M = 3.16$).

Table 1. *Salient Indicators Across the Four Levels of Writing Anxiety*

Dimension	Highest reported indicator(s)	Lowest item mean	Fleiss κ
Cognitive	Difficulty expressing thoughts clearly, $M = 3.16$	2.84	0.411 (Moderate)
Behavioral	Hesitating and rushing through writing tasks, $M = 3.32$	3.08	0.4210 (Moderate)
Social	Feeling left behind; competitive environment; teaching methods, $M = 3.28$	2.88	0.3770 (Fair)
Emotional	Nervousness and feeling overwhelmed, $M = 3.20$	2.92	0.3809 (Fair)

The findings indicate that writing anxiety was not confined to a single source. Students simultaneously experienced thought-related concerns, observable avoidance or rushing, interpersonal pressure, and emotional discomfort. This multidimensional pattern is consistent with research showing that writing anxiety is associated with linguistic difficulty, negative self-perception, classroom conditions, and performance concerns (Kabigting et al., 2020; Jugo, 2020; Salikin, 2019). The prominence of hesitation and rushing also suggests that writing anxiety affects how learners approach and complete tasks, not only how they feel before writing.

Contributory Factors to Writing Anxiety

The contributory-factor analysis also yielded moderately high ratings across cognitive, behavioral, social, and emotional domains. Cognitive items ranged from 3.08 to 3.24, with several concerns at 3.24, including understanding task requirements, developing coherent structure, maintaining focus, creativity, grammar and punctuation, revision, and vocabulary. Behavioral items ranged from 2.96 to 3.12, while the strongest social contributor was lack of support and encouragement ($M = 3.20$). Emotional factors ranged from 2.84 to 3.04, with nervousness during school writing tasks receiving the highest value.

Table 2. *Contributory Factors Associated with Writing Anxiety*

Domain	Item-mean range	Most salient reported issue	Fleiss κ
Cognitive	3.08-3.24	Several task/skill demands at $M = 3.24$	0.2356 (Fair)
Behavioral	2.96-3.12	Avoidance, rushing, worry-related neglect, and giving up at $M = 3.12$	0.031 (Poor)
Social	2.96-3.20	Lack of support and encouragement, $M = 3.20$	0.6010 (Moderate)
Emotional	2.84-3.04	Nervousness when writing for school, $M = 3.04$	0.353 (Fair)

The cognitive profile is consistent with studies that identify vocabulary, organization, grammar, mechanics, and limited practice as common barriers in writing (Saavedra, 2020; Toba & Noor, 2019). The social result is equally important: the highest social factor was lack of support and encouragement, reinforcing evidence that constructive feedback and a supportive learning environment can reduce apprehension and strengthen confidence (Smith & López, 2021). The variation in kappa values further indicates that students did not experience or interpret these factors uniformly, supporting differentiated rather than one-size-fits-all intervention.

Development and Validation of the Writing Intervention Module

The study translated the findings into the module *Conquering Writing Anxiety through Comprehensive Strategies*. The module was intended to address difficulties in organizing thoughts, completing writing tasks, managing time, coping with pressure, strengthening language proficiency, overcoming mental blocks, and

developing confidence. Its activities incorporated guided writing, engaging learning tasks, peer feedback, and stress-management strategies within a supportive classroom environment.

Table 3. *LRMDS Evaluation of the Developed Module*

Criterion	Obtained score	Passing requirement	Result
Content	25.2 / 28	$\geq 21 / 28$	Passed
Format	66.6 / 72	$\geq 54 / 72$	Passed
Presentation and organization	18.0 / 20	$\geq 15 / 20$	Passed
Accuracy and up-to-datedness	24 / 24	24 / 24	Passed

The module exceeded the stated LRMDS passing requirement in every criterion. The highest possible accuracy score indicates that the validators found no conceptual, factual, grammatical, computational, obsolete-information, or typographical issues under the evaluation checklist. Format and presentation scores also met the required standards, although the source evaluation recommended continued improvement in print quality, illustration clarity, labeling, color choices, and sentence length. The validation therefore supports the module's suitability as a print learning resource for the intended Grade 8 users.

Table 4. *Core Intervention Areas Reflected in the Developed Module*

Intervention area	Source-based instructional emphasis
Content knowledge and organization	Guided writing activities that help learners generate, organize, and develop ideas.
Language proficiency	Targeted writing practice addressing clarity, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics.
Mental blocks and task pressure	Stress-management strategies and supportive, manageable writing activities.
Confidence and feedback	Peer feedback and teacher support designed to reduce fear and strengthen self-assurance.
Task completion and time management	Structured pacing and guided tasks to reduce hesitation, rushing, and incomplete work.

These intervention areas are consistent with the literature supporting self-regulation, constructive feedback, collaboration, and stress-management strategies in anxious writers (Abolhasani et al., 2022; Rasool et al., 2021; Nguyen & Habók, 2022; Zarei & Farahian, 2021). They also respond directly to the study's most visible behavioral concerns: hesitation, rushing, and difficulty managing writing demands. In this sense, the developmental output connects the students' reported experiences with practical classroom supports rather than treating anxiety as an isolated psychological issue.

CONCLUSION

The study established that the selected Grade 8 learners experienced moderately high writing anxiety across cognitive, behavioral, social, and emotional dimensions. Anxiety was evident in concerns about expressing ideas, hesitation and rushing during tasks, classroom and peer-related pressures, and feelings of nervousness or being overwhelmed. Contributory factors likewise spanned writing-task demands, behavioral responses, support systems, and emotional reactions, demonstrating that the problem requires both instructional and psychosocial support. Based on these findings, the study developed Conquering Writing Anxiety through Comprehensive Strategies, a module designed to address writing knowledge, language proficiency, mental blocks, confidence, time management, feedback, and stress. Its successful LRMDS evaluation across content, format, presentation and organization, and accuracy supports its acceptability as a school-based learning resource for the intended Grade 8 context.

Recommendations

Agdangan National High School may implement the validated module as a structured support resource in Grade 8 English classes, with particular attention to idea organization, task completion, time management, supportive feedback, and stress-reduction practices. English teachers may use guided and collaborative writing activities, create low-threat opportunities for drafting and revision, and provide constructive feedback that strengthens confidence rather than intensifies fear of evaluation. The school may also monitor learner responses to the module and continue improving its format and presentation in line with the LRMDs evaluators' comments.

Future research may evaluate the module with larger and more diverse samples, examine changes in writing anxiety and writing performance before and after implementation, and determine which intervention components are most useful for specific anxiety profiles. Additional studies may also compare Grade levels, school contexts, or delivery modes while retaining attention to students' cognitive, behavioral, social, and emotional experiences of writing.

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