

# WRITING OUTSIDE THE BOX STRATEGY (WOBS): AN INTERVENTION TO IMPROVE CREATIVE WRITING SKILLS OF GRADE 12 STUDENTS (A CASE STUDY)

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**ABSTRACT:** *This study aimed to improve the Creative Writing Skills of the Grade 12 Students of Gumabon National High School- Senior High School by the use of Writing Outside the Box Strategy (WOBS). The researchers used the performance task of the students in their course, Reading and Writing Skills as a Pre-Test. In the activity, students were asked to write their story composition. The Pre-Test was assessed using the Analytical Rubric for Assessing Creativity in the Creative Writing of Mozaffari [1]. From the data obtained, the teacher observed that 59% (14 students) of the students got a Poor mark which means that they did not meet the criterion in any respect. Based on the outputs and their scores, the teacher-researcher used WOBS in the course, Creative Writing. The teacher collected in a box the desired topics of the students. From the topics the students dropped, students drew what topic they would write about. The Writing Activity was scheduled for Thursdays. The teacher gave one-on-one feedback to the students and helped them to express themselves creatively. It was conducted on the fourteen (14) students who had poor performance. This served as the post-test. After the conduct of the Intervention, a t-test for the dependent sample was done to check its effectiveness. Results revealed that two (2) students marked Good and the other twelve (12) students marked Excellent. This study concluded that the use of Writing Outside the Box Strategy (WOBS) improved the creative writing skills of Grade 12 Students. Thus, the researchers recommend that a similar study will be conducted on a bigger population to assume the generalizability of the present result, and for teachers to use WOBS as it proved to be effective in enhancing students' creative thinking.*

**Keywords:** *Writing Outside the Box Strategy (WOBS), writing skills, creative writing*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The art of making things up is what creative writing has traditionally been thought of as. It is writing that appeals to a readership without being scholarly or technical. Most writing that is original and expressive of oneself can be categorized as creative writing [2].

According to Panorama Magazine [3] in their article *Benefits of Creative Writing*, engaging in creative writing extends beyond enhancing grammar, spelling, and vocabulary skills. It enables the cultivation of a distinct voice, unrestricted expression of personal perspectives on internal and external realms, and the articulation of emotions. Creative writing fosters imaginative stimulation and encourages thinking beyond conventional boundaries, fostering innovative thought processes and valuable skills. Glatch [4] added that the importance of creative writing lies in its ability to describe the world through an honest and unfiltered lens. Anyone who engages in creative writing, no matter the genre or style, helps us explore the human experience, share new ideas, and advocate for a better society. Whether you write your stories for yourself or share them with a wide audience, creative writing makes the world a better place.

Writing is a skill that not only helps with writing in English but also helps to significantly improve other skills. The teacher's goal in an English-learning classroom is to help students improve their four communication skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Although writing ability is listed last in this sequence, it does not imply that it is the least significant. As an elaboration, Abdelazim *et al.* [5] state that many students have negative attitudes towards writing, consequently, they acquire unproductive writing habits as memorizing some sentences that can be used in any topic, since writing is regarded as a complex activity and students generally have discouraging experiences with writing. For the same reason, writing is an activity that students are tired of, have difficulty with, and feel reluctant about. Many students

consider writing as a challenging skill because of the strict rules in writing, focusing on legible and neat sentences as well as the form, besides, the rules of writing and grammar and having students write similar texts that explain proverbial statements would not help students fancy writing. With the aforementioned, the Grade 12 Faith Students of Gumabon National High School are living in these pools of problems. The teacher assigned a Performance Task during the Fourth Quarter of the School Year 2021-2022 where students are tasked to write their own short story. Fourteen (14) out of Twenty-Four (24) students were marked *Poor*. It is observed that these students are not creative enough to write their story composition. The use of Writing Outside the Box Strategy (WOBS) was used by the teacher as an intervention to address this issue. Writing Outside the Box Strategy (WOBS) is a Six-week Intervention Program designed by the Researcher to address one of the problems of Grade 12 Students which is their Creative Writing Skills.

Writing Outside the Box Strategy (WOBS) was a Six-Week Program designed for Grade 12 Students who were marked *Poor* based on the *Analytical Rubric for Assessing Creativity in Creative Writing of Mozaffari* [1] for the School Year 2022-2023.

WOBS was anchored on Walker's [6] concept about teaching creative writing which is designed to showcase practical approaches developed by practitioners in the ever-growing community of writers in higher education. Aimed at enabling those who teach the subject to review, borrow, and adapt ideas, the emphasis throughout is on diversity. Contributions from an international team of writers cover a variety of forms and genres and include traditional and innovative components of creative writing courses.

WOBS was an intervention where the students were instructed to write on a piece of paper the topics of their choice. The researchers provided a box and let the students drop the paper the students wrote a free topic. Every

Thursday of the course, Creative Writing is considered as Creative Writing Day, the teacher will pick a topic from the box which will be the theme for the students' write-up. The teacher gave the students thirty (30) minutes to write their creative thoughts about the topic. After writing, the teacher called the students one by one to check their work. The teacher will then give feedbacking to the students about the write-up and coach the student on how he/she will improve his/her write-up on the next Creative Writing Day. Since the themes were suggested by the students and fell within their areas of interest, they were easier for them to write about creatively.

**2. MATERIAL AND METHODS**

This study used a pre-experimental pre-test-posttest design in determine the effectiveness of the Writing Outside the Box Strategy (WOBS) in improving student's creative writing skills. This study was conducted at Gumabon National High School - Senior High School under the supervision of the Department of Education, Division of Misamis Oriental.

The participants involved in the study were the students enrolled in Creative Writing in the first quarter of the first semester of the school year 2022-2023. A total of 14 students served as the participants in the study.

The final performance task of the Course, Reading and Writing Skills was used as the basis for the Pre-Test. The Final Performance Task adheres to the Performance Standards from the K to 12 Most Essential Learning Competencies with Corresponding CG Codes (MELCS) that states that the students generate various forms of academic and professional communication by adhering to the characteristics of well-crafted texts and employing a process-oriented approach to writing. After the six-week intervention post-test was administered. The topics of the student's choosing will be written on a piece of paper. The themes that the kids have written about will be placed inside the box that the teacher will supply. Every Thursday of the course is designated as "Creative Writing Day." The teacher will select a topic from a box, and that topic will serve as the basis for the student's written assignments. The instructor will allow the class thirty (30) minutes to write their original ideas on the subject. Following writing, the teacher will contact each student individually to check their written work. The teacher will then discuss the write-up with the class and give each student suggestions on how to make improvements for the forthcoming Creative Writing Day.

**3. Results and Discussion**

Table 1 illustrates the mean and standard deviation of problem one (1) which is *What is the Writing Level of Grade 12 Students based on the Analytical Rubric for Assessing Creativity in Creative Writing of Mozaffari [1] during the Pre-Test Stage?*

**Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of the Pre-test**

N	Mean	SD
20	81.80	7.33

Based on the table above, the researcher observed that the students' score is above 75% but it does not guarantee that all of the students passed the given task. This means that a lot of students can do better with their Own Short Stories since fourteen (14) of them scored *poorly* using the Rubric. The Standard Deviation is high and it indicates that students were not that knowledgeable in expressing themselves creatively in the form of writing.

Table 2 illustrates the mean and standard deviation of problem one (1) which is *What is the Writing Level of Grade 12 Students based on the Analytical Rubric for Assessing Creativity in Creative Writing of Mozaffari [1] during the Posttest Stage?*

**Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of the Posttest**

N	Mean	SD
20	96.35	3.76

Compared to the mean of the Pre-Test, this table shows that the mean goes up to 96.35% this means that students' score is much higher than the pretest. A standard deviation that is close to zero suggests that the data points are close to the mean, and that the data are more evenly distributed. This means that after the conduct of the Intervention to students, their scores went up because of the knowledge, suggestions, and tips they got from the Writing Activity of Every Thursday in the topics they had chosen. Their Creative Writing Skills improved from Poor to Good and Excellent.

Table 3 illustrates the significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test scores of the students.

**Table 3. Paired t-test between Pre and Post tests**

	N	SD	SE	Mean
Pre-test	20	7.33	1.64	81.80
Posttest	20	3.76	0.84	96.35
Difference	20	7.21	1.61	-14.55

*\*95% CI for mean difference: (-17.92, -11.18)*

*T-Test of mean difference = 0 (vs ≠ 0):*

*T-Value = -9.03 P-Value = 0.000*

Since the p-value which is 0.00 is lesser than the critical value of .05, reject the null hypothesis. This means that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores. Smith [7] notes that in the stage of coming up with ideas, dream writing can play a vital role in improving children's creative writing, making them warm up and useful to create new ideas and offer ample potential for expression. This is because the purpose is to let students write freely as they think of it without any such constraints during the planning stage. By freely interacting with others in the classroom, children can exchange opinions and get feedback on their work at any time. At times, they can venture outside the classroom and get stimulation from the environment to nurture their creativity [8]. If students are familiar with and choose their topics, their creativity in writing increases.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Usage of Writing Outside the Box Strategy (WOBS) enhanced the creative writing skills of Grade 12 Students. This is evident in the  $p$ -value result from the dependent t-test. This intervention proved to be effective. With this, the researchers recommend that teachers teaching writing utilize WOBS. Moreover, a similar study may be conducted on a bigger population to see if the same result still holds.

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