

# Creative Writing

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## **Analysing Students' Needs in Creative Writing Course: An Exploratory Case Study in an Indonesian Higher Education**

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims at investigating what students expect when taking a Creative Writing course. To obtain the required data, an exploratory case study was utilized by distributing a questionnaire to the students and conducting interviews with the writing lecturer and the head of the study program. 60 students, one writing lecturer, and the head of the Indonesian Language Study Program were involved in this study. Findings in this study indicated that students expected to learn by having more practice in Writing. Four emergent topics were discussed, namely building creativity and accuracy in Writing, effective learning methods, available learning resources, and considering students' ability and interest in Writing. They wished to write by following the writing process explained by the lecturer. This study concluded that it is required to design a learning model which facilitates students to learn in Creative Writing course in a better way. The learning model is expected to provide students with the writing process and grammar.

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

One of the challenges that students experience when learning a language is insufficient writing abilities. Writing is regarded as difficult since it demands complicated cognitive and physical actions to generate and combine letters and display specific linguistic features such as words, spelling, sentence structure, and so on (Alfaki, 2015). Furthermore, there are issues when pupils fail to acquire grammar, syntactic structure, vocabulary, rhetorical frameworks, and new language idioms (Nik et al., 2010). These difficulties also occur in the Creative Writing course, in which the students have to perform the verbal arts in written forms (Morley, 2007). This course requires students' creativity in arranging their ideas in a

good order and in a good manner. Therefore, it is crucial to facilitate students with supportive learning circumstances to achieve that goal.

Several studies have demonstrated that a variety of circumstances causes lack of student writing abilities. One of the variables influencing these situations is adopting unsuitable learning practices (Babalola & Litinin, 2012; Ivanic & Lea, 2006). Some professors were unable to optimize their learning, therefore, pupils' writing abilities remained below the desired quality (Heffernan, 2006). Some students stated that they had never been trained to write properly before entering college, therefore, they found it difficult to communicate their thoughts and ideas in Writing (Keong, 2015). Meanwhile, according to a preliminary study performed at a higher education institution, the students said that the professors' learning method in the writing class was rather monotonous. The students stated that they require a more diverse and demanding learning strategy in order for studying to be more enjoyable and their learning desire to rise. Finally, it was discovered that the instructor did not provide enough feedback on the students' papers.

Given the difficulties that students have experienced, there is a need to create acceptable learning models that can meet the learning objectives as well as the students' expectations in the writing class. Teachers and lecturers must create a learning model that will improve the effectiveness and meaning of the learning process. Harmer (2004) agrees, suggesting that instructors should discover relevant models and methodological ideas to guide their teaching practice. Furthermore, if proper approaches and models are used, it will be possible to transform students' attitudes toward writing to become an exciting, simple, and joyful activity. Based on the reasoning above, it is proposed that a suitable model for teaching writing in a language classroom be developed.

The first step in building a learning model is conducting a needs analysis. It refers to a sequence of activities performed to discover and search for information relevant to original needs prior to making adjustments or building a learning product. Many academics believe that needs analysis, or assessing students' requirements, is the critical first step in building an acceptable learning model (Hyland, 2006; Kavaliauskas, 2003). Needs analysis is regarded as the most appropriate approach since it may reveal a great deal about the type and content of the students' target language requirements (Hutchinson, 1988).

In general, a course designer must acquire information about students' current and target situations throughout this stage (Evans, 1998), using present situation analysis (PSA) and target situation analysis (TSA). Hutchinson and Waters (1987) combined TSA and PSA into a more manageable framework used in the current study. They recognized three components of target needs: necessity (needs defined by target scenario requirements), lack (the required competency for the target situation in comparison to what the students currently know), and wishes (what the students desire to learn).

Hutchinson and Waters (1987) distinguish between target and learning demands. What the learner needs to know in order to perform in the target setting, what they currently know, and what they need to know are referred to as target needs. Ensure that the course includes relevant and helpful information to learn. It is more effective to consider the goal scenario regarding needs, deficiencies, and desires. The term 'necessities' refers to what the learners must understand to operate effectively in the goal-setting. The difference between the goal competence and the present proficiency is referred to as a lack. Wants, on the other hand, pertain to what the student would want to learn.

Previous studies have discussed similar issues related to needs' analysis in writing class (Marlina & Narius, 2020; Yundayani et al., 2017). Both studies were conducted in the scientific writing class and literature class. None of the studies has been conducted in a Creative Writing course. Therefore, this current study is conducted to fill the gap. The primary goal of this study was to look at the best way to learn at the Creative Writing course at a university in Indonesia. In order to achieve the goal, the study tries to answer the question, "What are the to that end, the requirements analysis undertaken in this study attempted to uncover challenges encountered by students and instructors in the Creative Writing course, as well as students' expectations in the Creative Writing Course.

## 2. METHODS

The exploratory case study was used in this investigation since this type of qualitative research design aims to explore the major aspects of under-researched problems. This research included 60 students, one writing professor, and the head of the Indonesia Language Education Department. The desired data were gathered using a questionnaire and an interview protocol developed in accordance with Hutchinson and Waters' needs analysis indicators (1987). The questionnaire was given to fifth-semester students, and the interview was performed with the writing instructor and the director of the Indonesian Language Department. The questionnaire data were then examined using Sudjana and Ibrahim's (2007) algorithm and graded as low, medium, or high. The data from the interview were then utilized to back up the questionnaire answers. To analyze the data gained from the interviews, a thematic analysis was conducted so that the research findings could be withdrawn.

## 3. FINDINGS

This section describes what students require and expect from the Creative Writing course. Four emergent subtitles appeared as the analysis results, namely building creativity and accuracy in Writing, effective learning methods, available learning resources, and considering students' ability and desire in Writing.

### 3.1 Building Creativity and Accuracy in Writing

The questionnaire answers revealed the reasons why students chose creative writing classes. The first reason was that they attended Creative writing courses to improve their ability to write creatively in Indonesian. Students also attended creative writing classes so that they might compose different Indonesian works. Table 1 displays the proportion of students' replies to questions regarding why they attended creative writing classes.

**Table 1.** Purposes of Taking Essay Writing Course

No.	Purposes of Taking Essay Writing Course	Percentage	Classification
1	To help students write creatively in Indonesian well.	95.2%	High
2	To help students write other Indonesian texts well.	91.2%	High

Furthermore, the interview findings suggested that students took creative writing courses to develop and produce various sorts of creative Writing, such as poetry, novels, film screenplays, etc. The following table summarizes the writing lecturers' perspectives:

**Table 2.** Lecturer's View of Creative Writing Learning Objectives

**Writing Lecturer :** *"This course aims to facilitate students to develop and produce several types of Creative texts such as poetry, novels, film scripts, etc."*

Based on the data obtained from the questionnaire and interview as described above, it is determined that Creative writing learning is meant to assist students to create a variety of creativity. Senel (2018) argues that creative Writing has been successful in improving students' writing skills. In relation to this argument, the results of the survey mentioned that the majority of the students stated that

they took creative writing classes to improve their abilities to produce Indonesian texts. With this in mind, Creative Writing lecturers have to provide diverse activities that can trigger students' creativity in Writing.

### 3.2 Effective Learning Methods

This is intended to identify methods that are attractive to students and the types of techniques that students expect in learning Creative Writing, as in the description of the following questionnaire data:

**Table 3.** Learning Methodology

No.	The Way Students Learn	Percentage	Classification
1	Creative Writing is taught by the lecture method.	45.0%	Low
2	Creative Writing is taught by setting a good Creative example.	92.8%	High
3	Creative Writing is taught with discussion groups.	70.8%	High
4	Creative Writing is taught by practicing writing techniques.	93.2%	High
5	Creative Writing is taught by providing detailed guidance.	96.6%	High
6	Students are given a big role in learning.	86.4%	High
7	Creative writing learning takes the topic of problems that occur in the real world.	94.6%	High
8	Creative writing learning is centered on problem solving.	86.2%	High
9	Creative writing learning is done individually.	42%	Low
10	Creative writing learning produces products and displays the product.	84.5%	High
11	Creative writing practice is given a larger portion in the classroom.	95.4%	High

According to the chart above, students desired to study creative Writing in a variety of ways. First and foremost, students expect to participate in Creative writing sessions that set a positive example. They agreed that Creative Writing should be taught by offering specific Creative writing rules. Students desire to learn by actually practicing writing strategies as well. Students also wish that learning takes place in groups and is focused on real-world challenges. Students also want creative writing classes to focus on problem solving. Therefore, it becomes an onligatory requirement for teachers to find solutions for them (Adas & Bakir, 2013). They want Creative writing instruction to result in items that can be shown, and they want Creative writing practice to take up a larger percentage of classroom time. Furthermore, students want professors to educate through speaking Indonesian and studying creative Writing in Indonesian.

The questionnaire answers were supported by statements made by the Writing lecturer. According to interviews, pupils prefer to study in groups and through peer evaluation. According to the writing professor, students wanted to learn by seeing more creative examples; subsequently, they worked together with direction from the lecturer. The following table summarizes the findings of interviews with writing lecturers:

**Table 4.** Lecturer's View on the Learning Method

**Writing Lecturer :** *"Students want to learn through peer review and get feedback from lecturers. When they write, they can discuss the ideas they want to express in Creative. Then, the lecturer guides them and provides feedback."*

Based on the statistics shown above, it is clear that group work and lecturer feedback are effective strategies for students enrolled in creative writing programs. This activity leads students to share ideas with their partners (Corden, 2001; Ennen et al., 2015). By doing so, they learn more effectively when they can exchange ideas with their classmates as well as the professor who is leading them through the writing process. Finally, professors give feedback for creative enhancement.

### 3.3. Available Learning Resources

This is meant to highlight learning tools that are available to students who are learning creative Writing. There are eleven assertions about the quality of instructors, materials, and resources available to students learning creative Writing. The questionnaire description statistics are shown in Table 5:

*Table 5. Available Learning Resources*

No.	Available Learning Resources	Percentage	Classification
1	The number of writing lecturers is sufficient.	84.5%	High
2	In general, the lecturers have good qualifications in Writing.	94.6%	High
3	Only a few lecturers have good qualifications in Writing.	32.2%	Low
4	The material is specially designed for Creative writing learning.	84.2%	High
5	The material is obtained from a single textbook.	42.4%	Low
6	Materials are designed from various sources.	85.6%	High
7	Resources are provided by the lecturer.	82.2%	High
8	The lecturer gives creative examples that students want to write about.	86.8%	High
9	Lecturers present videos and pictures when delivering material.	88.2%	High
10	The lecturer asked the students to revise their Writing at home.	35.4%	Low

- 11 Lecturers provide digital learning resources for Creative writing learning. 85.6% High

In terms of content, the questionnaire findings suggested that students want Creative writing sessions in which lecturers use diverse media such as videos and photos to impart information and offer samples of texts that students desire to produce. In other words, the content provided for this study is drawn from a variety of sources rather than a single textbook, and lecturers should make available a variety of digital learning materials wherever feasible. Another finding from the questionnaire indicated that students desired learning materials that were especially intended for creative Writing. Finally, at the end of the writing process, the students wanted to edit their work in class together so that they were clear about their problems and how to correct them. Students will obtain more understanding about good creative Writing through the discussion (Anae, 2014). The findings of the questionnaire show that the percentage of statements "Lecturers ask pupils to rewrite their writing at home" is low.

Furthermore, the researcher conducted interviews with the Head of the Indonesian Language Study Program and the Writing instructor to obtain more in-depth information about the available learning tools for creative writing learning. The interview findings suggest that the learning materials supplied by a state university in Padang, Indonesia are still rather limited. The writing professor stated that he relied heavily on one book in particular. He does, however, occasionally download items from the internet. This is backed by a remark made by the Head of the Indonesian Language Study Program in the research field, who stated that lecturers occasionally use internet-based materials as supplemental learning aids. The following table summarizes the findings of interviews with the director of the Indonesian Language Department and the writing lecturer.

**Table 6.** The views of the Head of Study Program and Lecturers on Available Learning Resources

The Head of Study Program	Writing Lecturer
<i>"Sometimes we use internet-based resources as additional learning materials."</i>	<i>"Materials are still very limited. Recently I focused on one book as a primary source. Sometimes I also download sample texts from the internet because students often have difficulty understanding the examples given in the book."</i>

The findings of the interviews contradicted the conclusions of the questionnaire, which claimed that students were expected to get varied things from multiple sources. Based on these findings, writing professors must develop a learning strategy and pick relevant materials to help them fill this gap.

### 3.4. Considering Students' Ability and Desire in Writing

This is meant to measure students' writing ability as well as their enthusiasm in learning creative Writing, as mentioned in the questionnaire data below.

Table 7. Students' Abilities and Desire

No.	Students' Abilities and Desire	Percentage	Classification
<i>Students' Abilities</i>			
1	Basic level	74.2%	High
2	Intermediate level	55.6%	Medium
3	Advanced level	43.5%	Low
<i>Learning Interest</i>			
4	Learning focuses on grammar.	82.4%	High
5	Learning focuses on the creative writing process.	85.5%	High

Table 7 presents information regarding the writing talents and interests of pupils. In terms of writing skills, the questionnaire findings suggest that pupils are mostly at the elementary and intermediate levels. To back this viewpoint, interviews with writing professors found that the majority of the students still lacked fundamental writing abilities. This is due to their inability to construct strong paragraphs, making it difficult for them to write creatively (Gawain, 2016). Therefore, Creative Writing lecturers must consider involving students' desires and abilities during the course.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The findings of the needs analysis stage may be divided into three major themes: issues, needs, and solutions from the lecturer's perspective, the student's perspective, and the material's perspective. The description of students' and lecturers' requirements and issues in studying creative Writing drives researchers to find the necessary instructional products. Some of the key components of the teaching model included the learning methods. An examination of the lecturers' concerns revealed that lecturers preferred to employ the lecture teaching style and spend a lot of time in class teaching theory, leaving little time for writing practice in class. Second, an examination of the students' difficulties revealed that they required more suitable writing methods to help them write better, tactics that supported group problem solving, and more time in class for creative writing practice. Students prefer to study creative Writing with a variety of learning materials and media, and they are given more time to write. The new teaching approach is anticipated to give insightful comprehension and more time in class for writing practice in order to assist lecturers in conducting instruction more effectively and quickly. Moreover, lecturer's manual is significant because it succinctly outlines the subject of Creative writing classes in a way that makes lecturers' jobs simpler. This article will serve as a guide for lecturers who want to adopt a model that was built and developed based on requirements analysis. This article also discusses the created model in an appropriate manner. It was conceived and produced in response to the needs identified in the needs analysis and is significant for students since it contains lesson content and exercises that will assist students in better understanding and mastering creative writing abilities. The current study is limited in data interpretation. Therefore, following researchers are encouraged to conduct studies in the area of creative Writing.



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