



LEARNERS' EXPERIENCES IN WRITING REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE (RRL): BASES FOR ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research aimed to determine the experiences of learners in writing the Review of Related Literature (RRL) in the District of Janiuay I, Schools Division of Iloilo, during the School Year 2024-2025, as a basis for an enhancement program. Emergent themes were drawn regarding learners' experiences in writing the RRL, the challenges they encountered, and their coping mechanisms for struggles faced during the process. In writing the Review of Related Literature, learners experienced a better understanding of the topic and the development of research and writing skills, alongside limited prior knowledge and initial confusion. In terms of the challenges encountered, they were hindered by citation and referencing difficulties, a fear of plagiarism, and difficulty in finding credible and reliable sources. Learners managed these struggles by reading sample RRLs and model papers, seeking guidance from teachers and knowledgeable others, and using credible online sources and research databases. An enhancement program was proposed as a result of the study.

Keywords: *Writing, RRL, Experiences, Enhancement Program*

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INTRODUCTION

Writing a Review of Related Literature (RRL) was a core requirement in Senior High School research, as it established the foundation of a study by examining existing knowledge, identifying gaps, and positioning new investigations within current academic conversation. A strong literature review developed students' abilities in critical reading, synthesis, and scholarly writing.

Senior High School (SHS) was the final stage of basic education before college or employment. In many education systems, such as the K-12 program in the Philippines, Senior High School covered Grades 11-12 and was designed to prepare learners for higher education, entrepreneurship, or the workforce.

In the Philippines' Senior High School (SHS), academic writing and research were taught through core subjects like Reading and Writing, specialized research courses (Practical Research 1 & 2, Inquiries, Investigations & Immersion) for skill development, and track-specific subject that required formal papers, all culminating in the major Research/ Work Immersion project, focusing on research skills, formal structure, and critical analysis.

To build essential academic and research skills they used in senior high school, college, and even in professional work, senior high school students need to be knowledgeable in writing a Review of Related Literature (RRL).

According to Amarga and Quirap (2024), Senior High School learners encountered obstacles in content development, coherence, and organization, which hindered their ability to produce well-structured research papers. Additionally, Graham and Perin (2022)

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emphasized that many students struggled with writing mechanics, including grammar, punctuation, and sentence construction.

As a Senior High School educator specializing in Practical Research, the researcher observed that many students encountered persistent difficulties in constructing a well-developed Review of Related Literature (RRL). Recognizing these challenges, this study was driven by a commitment to understanding the specific academic writing hurdles faced by students at Janiuay National Comprehensive High School.

The ability to craft a structured and coherent literature review was a fundamental competency that fostered critical thinking and advanced research skills. However, students frequently struggled with synthesizing diverse sources, organizing complex ideas, and maintaining the necessary academic rigor. By exploring the lived experiences of these learners, this research sought to uncover the systemic and individual obstacles they faced, the coping strategies they employed, and the pedagogical support they required. Ultimately, the insights gained served as a foundation for developing targeted interventions designed to empower students as confident, competent academic writers, effectively preparing them for the demands of higher education.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research method, research design, participants of the study, sampling design, research instrument, validity of research instrument, data gathering

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procedure and data analysis used in this study. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of Senior High School Students in writing the Review of Related Literature.

Research Method

This study utilized a qualitative method using a phenomenological approach to explore the experiences of senior high school students in academic writing, specifically in crafting the review of related literature.

Qualitative method was a research approach that focused on collecting and analyzing non-numerical data—such as words, images, and observations—to gain a deep understanding of human experiences and social contexts. They emphasized the importance of context, meaning, and the subjective interpretations of participants. Such methods typically involved tools like in-depth interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and content or thematic analysis, all of which allowed researchers to explore complex phenomena in a flexible manner (Brown & Nguyen, 2022).

Research Design

The aim of this phenomenological study was to explore the experiences of senior high school students in Writing the Review of Related Literature. Embree (2020) suggested that phenomenology can be used to explore how individuals understand everyday activities and phenomena in their daily lives. He also discussed how this philosophical tradition can bridge the gap between theoretical and empirical studies in contemporary social science research.

The interviewer allowed the participants to sit together and answered questions about the experiences on their journey in writing the Review of Related Literature. The aim was to

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get their experiences, challenges and coping mechanisms through their responses to the questions.

Participants of the Study

The participants of the study were twenty (20) Grade 11 Senior High School students from ten (10) different academic strands offered in Janiuay National Comprehensive High School. Senior High School students were selected as participants in this study because they were directly engaged in research-based learning, particularly through subjects such as Practical Research 1 and Practical Research 2, which required them to develop essential academic skills including writing a Review of Related Literature (RRL). At this educational level, learners were expected to demonstrate the ability to search for credible sources, summarize and synthesize studies, and organize literature coherently—skills that were central to effective research writing.

Furthermore, Senior High School students represented a population that was experiencing the transition from basic to more advanced academic writing, making them ideal participants for understanding the challenges and coping strategies associated with RRL writing. A purposive sampling was used in choosing the participants of the study.

Sampling Design

Purposive sampling (also known as judgment, selective or subjective sampling) was used in selecting the participants of the study.

Creswell (2020) emphasized that purposive sampling was commonly used in qualitative research because it helped to identify specific cases that can provide detailed information on

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the research topic. Creswell highlighted that while purposive sampling does not aim for statistical generalization, it can provide in-depth insights, particularly when the research focused on case studies, ethnographies, or phenomenological research.

The participants of the study that were chosen to participate have notable and meaningful experiences in Academic Writing specifically in writing the Review of Related Literature. The selection of the participants was possible after several visits to the sites. The visit assisted in choosing the sample that corresponds well with the purpose of the study.

Research Instrument

In gathering information on the experiences of Senior High School students in Academic Writing, specifically in crafting the Review of Related Literature, the researcher used the semi-structure interview in gathering the data. Semi-structured interviews were particularly useful in studies where the researcher seeks to understand complex human behavior and the subjective meanings that participants attached to their experiences (Patton, 2020).

The interview consisted of questions that focused on teaching experiences of Senior High School students in writing the Review of Related Literature. The questionnaire was validated by three experts. Audio recorder was used to captured all the proceedings during the interview.

Validity of the Research Instrument

Content validation refers to the process of systematically evaluating whether the items, questions, or tasks in a research instrument adequately represent the content domain of the

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study (Polit & Beck, 2021).

In this study, content validation was conducted to ensure that all items in the In-depth Interview Guide were relevant and aligned with the objectives of assessing Senior High School students' experiences, challenges, and coping strategies in writing the RRL.

Experts in the field—such as research instructors, curriculum specialists, or experienced teachers—reviewed the instrument to evaluate the clarity, relevance, comprehensiveness, and appropriateness of each item.

Data Gathering Procedure

The researcher sought the concurrence of the Dean of the Graduate School to conduct interviews to the target participants of the study. Since the study involved minor students, ethical considerations and proper protocols were strictly followed. Before data collection, permission was sought from the school principal and the students' parents or guardians.

Informed consent forms were distributed to ensure that participants and their guardians fully understand the study's purpose, procedures, and potential risk. Upon approval, the researcher conducted personally the study observing the health safety protocols and precautions.

Prior to the conduct of the interview, the researcher required the participants to sign the informed consent form and oriented them that the whole process was recorded.

Data Analyses

The information was gathered from the twenty (20) participants with their detailed responses about their experiences, challenges they have encountered, and their coping

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mechanism in writing Review of Related Literature. The In-depth interview guide were given to the participants at a time. The semi-structured interviews were analyzed using the steps in thematic analysis.

In terms of data interpretation, this study utilized thematic analysis as its primary qualitative analytical method. Often applied to textual data such as interview transcripts, this approach involves a rigorous examination of the data to uncover recurring themes, concepts, and patterns of meaning. According to Braun and Clarke (2020), thematic analysis serves as a robust qualitative tool for identifying and reporting these patterns across a dataset. This method allows researchers to organize complex information into detailed descriptions while providing a framework for interpreting the nuances of the specific research topic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The purpose of the study was to ascertain the experiences of learners in writing the Review of Related Literature, the challenges they have encountered while writing the Review of Related Literature, and their coping strategies they use to overcome struggles in writing the Review of Related Literature as bases for an enhancement program.

The participants in the study were twenty (20) Grade 11 learners in Janiway National Comprehensive High School, Schoolyear 2024-2025, and were enrolled in Practical Research subjects or any research related subjects offered in each semester.

The study used an in-depth interview guide under the qualitative research method.

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The researcher-made interview guide was used to gather the data. The instrument was subjected to validity test and was found by the validators valid and appropriate to use.

The following are the findings of the study:

With regard to the experiences of learners in writing the Review of Related Literature, the themes identified were: (1) better understanding of the research topic, (2) development of research and writing skills, and (3) limited prior knowledge and initial confusion.

For the challenges encountered by learners while writing the Review of Related Literature, the themes identified were: (1) citation and referencing difficulties, (2) difficulty in finding credible and reliable sources, and (3) fear of plagiarism.

In terms of coping strategies or how learners managed the challenges they encountered while writing the Review of Related Literature, the themes identified were: (1) reading sample RRLs and model papers, (2) seeking guidance from teachers and knowledgeable others, and (3) using credible online sources and research databases.

To fully equip the learners with the knowledge and skills required to write a Review of Related Literature (RRL) effectively, an enhancement program was proposed which may address these identified gaps and strengthen their academic writing competence.

Insights

Based on the findings of the study, the following insights were gathered:

The findings reveal that writing the Review of Related Literature (RRL) serves as a meaningful learning process for learners, as it contributes to a better understanding of their research topics and promotes the development of research and academic writing skills.

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Despite initial struggles, the experience allows learners to deepen their conceptual grasp of their subject and become more familiar with scholarly writing conventions.

However, the presence of limited prior knowledge and initial confusion indicates that many learners begin the RRL writing process without sufficient foundational preparation, suggesting a gap in early research instruction and readiness. This implies that structured pre-RRL training and scaffolded support are necessary to help learners' transition more smoothly into literature writing tasks.

The challenges identified—particularly difficulties in citation and referencing, locating credible and reliable sources, and fear of plagiarism—highlight that technical and ethical aspects of academic writing remain major barriers for learners.

These challenges suggest that learners are not only struggling with writing mechanics but also with research literacy skills, such as source evaluation and proper attribution. The fear of plagiarism further indicates uncertainty and lack of confidence in paraphrasing and synthesizing information.

These insights point to the need for explicit instruction in citation styles, source validation, paraphrasing techniques, and plagiarism awareness as part of research writing programs.

Moreover, the coping strategies reported by learners demonstrate active and adaptive learning behaviors. Reading sample RRLs and model papers shows that learners benefit from exposure to concrete examples, while seeking guidance from teachers and knowledgeable others underscores the critical role of mentorship and instructional support in the research

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writing process. The use of credible online sources and research databases also indicates growing awareness of quality information sources when proper direction is provided.

These insights suggest that enhancement programs should incorporate model analysis, guided mentoring, and database navigation training as core components. Strengthening these support mechanisms can transform learner difficulties into opportunities for skill development and independent research competence.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve learners' experiences and performance in writing the Review of Related Literature (RRL):

It is recommended that schools implement a structured Research Writing Enhancement Program that begins before learners formally write their Review of Related Literature (RRL), particularly since learners showed limited prior knowledge and initial confusion.

Research teachers are encouraged to provide explicit and repeated instruction on citation, referencing, paraphrasing, and plagiarism avoidance, as these were identified as major challenges. Workshops and mini-lessons on APA (or the required style) formatting, hands-on citation exercises, and the use of reference management tools should be integrated into research subjects in Senior High School. Furthermore, practice activities with feedback should be conducted regularly to strengthen technical accuracy.

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Librarian-led sessions or research database orientations may be conducted to familiarize students with academic databases, journals, and credible repositories. Providing a curated list of approved databases and sample sources may further guide learners in navigating academic resources.

Since learners benefited from reading model RRLs and sample papers, it is recommended that teachers develop a repository of annotated model RRLs showing good structure, synthesis, citation use, and writing style.

Mentoring and consultation mechanisms should also be formalized. Regular research clinics, scheduled teacher consultations, and peer review sessions may support learners who seek guidance from knowledgeable others. Additionally, research advisers should monitor progress through checkpoints and draft submissions to provide timely feedback.

Finally, for sustainability, the school research committee or academic head should monitor program implementation through progress tracking sheets, writing rubrics, plagiarism check reports, and periodic evaluation of student outputs. Continuous review and improvement of the program based on learner performance data and feedback are strongly recommended to ensure long-term effectiveness.

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