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Teaching Writing to Young Learners: Vietnamese Primary School Teachers' Beliefs

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Abstract
This qualitative study examined the beliefs of Vietnamese primary teachers regarding writing instruction. The participants included 12 in-service teachers from five primary schools in a large city in Vietnam. The data consisted of in-depth semi-structured interviews. Qualitative analysis of the data showed several interesting insights into the teachers' beliefs about writing instruction for young learners and the challenges they faced in their classroom teaching. All the participating teachers believed that writing was very important for primary school learners, and teaching writing was one of the key tasks for primary school teachers. The teachers considered that students' lack of life experiences and creativeness was the most considerable challenge in teaching writing, but they faced several practical constraints in helping students overcome the difficulties. Notably, the teachers were supportive of methods to enhance the creativeness and emotions in students' writing, but they reported using model texts in teaching frequently. The socio-cultural contexts of teaching and learning were taken into account in the interpretation of the findings. This study is the first step to inform professional development programs and pedagogy to enhance the effectiveness of teaching writing skills to young learners at primary schools in Vietnam, and beyond.

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1. Introduction

Teachers' beliefs are an important aspect of educational research (Borg, 2003, 2015; Gaitas & Alves Martins, 2015; Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992). There have been a large body of research investigating teachers' beliefs and their influence on teachers' classroom practices and students' learning (Shakki, 2022). Accordingly, various definitions of teachers' beliefs have been coined. In the current study, teachers' beliefs are defined as the content of the statements made by the teachers about their thoughts, ideas, and knowledge, which are expressed as pedagogical "evaluations of what should be done, what should be the case, and what is preferable" (Ha & Murray, 2023, p. 142). Previous research has revealed that teachers' beliefs can exert an impact on their classroom practices (Pedersen et al., 2003; Poulson et al., 2001; Shin & Koh, 2007; Van Driel & Verloop, 2002; Woolley et al., 2004) and understanding teachers' beliefs can help understand their actual classroom practices (Borg, 2017; Ha & Nguyen, 2021; Ha, Nguyen, et al., 2021). As a consequence, there has been a strand of research examining teachers' beliefs about various related aspects of learning and teaching, such as beliefs about testing and assessment (Ha, Tran, et al., 2021; Momeni & Nushi, 2022), beliefs about teaching the English language to young learners (Reynolds et al., 2021), beliefs about curriculum reform (Alvarez Llerena & Ha, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2022; Pham et al., 2023; Tran et al., 2023), and beliefs about corrective feedback (Ha, Nguyen, et al., 2021; Wiboolyasarin, 2021). However, fewer studies have investigated the beliefs of primary school teachers (Ha & Murray, 2023). This is particularly the case with primary teachers' beliefs about writing instruction. While writing is considered one of the most important skills to master by primary school students, students in various instructional settings were reported to perform poorly in writing (Graham, 2019; Rietdijk et al., 2018). Furthermore, some research has shown that teachers find it challenging to deliver effective writing instruction to their primary school learners (Graham, 2019). Therefore, research is needed to understand teachers' knowledge, ideas, and thoughts about writing and writing instruction at the primary school level. According to some researchers (e.g., Cunningham & Fitzgerald, 1996; Fitzgerald, 1999; Gaitas & Alves Martins, 2015), teachers' classroom decisions in terms of teaching writing are significantly influenced by their beliefs concerning literacy and literacy instruction. To extend this line of inquiry, the current study was designed to obtain in-depth insights into teachers' beliefs about writing instruction at Vietnamese primary schools. It is hoped that this research can help inform

pedagogy and teacher professional development regarding teaching writing at primary schools.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Teachers' Beliefs

Research on teachers' pedagogical beliefs has focused on investigating what beliefs teachers hold (Borg, 2015), how teachers' beliefs impact their actual classroom practices (Borg, 2017; Ha, 2022), and the possible change in teachers' beliefs (Ha, 2022b). This research agenda has found that teachers' beliefs are dependent on their personal experiences (especially their prior experiences of learning as a student), their educational settings, and their socio-cultural factors (Alvarez Llerena & Ha, 2022; Borg, 2015; Ha & Murray, 2021; Hall, 2016; Reynolds et al., 2022). Because of these constraints, teachers' beliefs are not always reflected in their practices, but they are mutually informing and may subsequently influence students' learning processes and outcomes (Borg, 2015; Casas et al., 2020; Gaitas & Alves Martins, 2015; Ha, 2022a; Ha & Murray, 2023). In a review of research investigating the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their classroom practices, Basturkmen (2012) found that teachers' beliefs and practices regarding planned aspects of teaching such as lesson planning or curriculum implementation tend to be largely congruent, while teachers' beliefs and practices regarding unplanned aspects of teaching and learning such as teachers' oral feedback on learners' in-class spoken errors tend to be more incongruent. This finding has also been supported by recent research findings (Ha, 2021; Ha & Murray, 2023; Tran et al., 2023; Yuksel et al., 2021). Research has also shown that teachers hold different sets of beliefs which are sometimes contradictory to one another, and within these beliefs, the core beliefs (e.g., beliefs regarding language learning and teaching) tend to be more influential on teachers' classroom practices than peripheral beliefs (e.g., beliefs about how to give feedback) (Ha, 2021; Ha & Murray, 2023; Phipps & Borg, 2009). For example, in Ha and Murray's (2023) study on Vietnamese primary teachers' beliefs and practices concerning corrective feedback, they found that although some teachers believed that correcting learners' pronunciation errors was the most important to develop learners' intelligible pronunciation proficiency, they

corrected grammar errors frequently as well because of the influence of another belief (i.e., core beliefs) in that developing learners' language accuracy could help them achieve good exam results.

2.2. Teachers' Beliefs About Teaching Writing for Young Learners

Although teachers' beliefs have received extensive attention from various researchers (Birello & Pujolà, 2023; Borg, 2003, 2015; Derakhshan & Karimain Shirejini, 2020; Farrell & Kun, 2008; Kagan, 1992; Nguyen et al., 2023; Pajares, 1992), less research has been conducted with primary school teachers in general, and primary school teachers' beliefs about teaching writing in particular (de Abreu Malpique et al., 2022; Graham et al., 2021). However, the modest literature has shown some important findings. For instance, in a mixed-methods study with 255 primary school teachers in Portugal, Gaitas and Alves Martins (2015) found that teachers' beliefs about writing instruction could be divided into two main components: code-based beliefs and meaning-based beliefs. Specifically, the teachers holding code-based beliefs approved the importance of explicit explanations of grammar and vocabulary items, drilling using individual writing exercises, and the use of model texts. By contrast, teachers holding meaning-based beliefs supported the process writing genre, such as planning and revising activities, and autonomous writing activities. They highly appreciated the use of texts, descriptive reports, stories, everyday reports, and messages. However, other studies have shown that teachers can combine the two main seemingly contradictory approaches to form a balanced or eclectic approach (Pressley, 2003; Pressley & Allington, 2014).

In a qualitative study with eight primary school teachers in Spain, Casas et al. (2020) found that the teachers' beliefs regarding writing instruction revolve around the organization and management of writing tasks in the classroom. They also found that the teachers were supportive of individual sentence grammar rather than textual grammar. Casas et al. (2020) argue that such beliefs may be seen as epistemological and methodological constraints to integrated grammar and writing instruction. In an attempt to change teachers' beliefs, Hall's (2016) study investigated the development in beliefs of pre-service teachers concerning writing instruction through a course on learning to teach writing. She found that the comprehensive course could help pre-service primary school teachers shift their beliefs in the importance of teaching writing, enhance their self-efficacy beliefs

regarding teaching writing, and influence their selection of tools for teaching writing. Similar courses may influence in-service teachers' (with more teaching experience) beliefs about writing instruction, which may subsequently influence their teaching practices.

In conclusion, teachers' beliefs about writing instruction are important and have received considerable research in various contexts. However, teacher's beliefs about writing instruction in Vietnamese primary context has been underexplored. The current study was designed to address this gap. This study was the first step of the attempts to design and deliver effective professional development programs and activities for primary school teachers regarding writing instruction. Specifically, the current study was designed to examine in-depth the beliefs of in-service teachers at Vietnamese primary schools regarding writing instruction. The following two research questions were proposed to guide the study:

1. What are Vietnamese primary school teachers' beliefs concerning teaching writing to young learners?

2. What are Vietnamese primary school teachers' challenges in teaching writing?

3. Methodology

The main objective of this study was not to achieve results that can be generalized to the wider population. Instead, it was designed to obtain an in-depth understanding of the beliefs of a group of Vietnamese teachers regarding writing instruction for their primary school learners. As a result, a qualitative research design was adopted for this study because qualitative research can help researchers "get to the bottom of what is going on in all aspects of social behaviour" (Holliday, 2010, p. 99). Similarly, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) argues that with the help of qualitative research, it is possible for researchers to understand "(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meanings they attribute to their experiences" (p. 24).

Before the study started, ethical issues were reviewed and approved by the Ethics Review Board of the first author's university and written consent from the

participants was obtained. The procedures of data collection and analysis followed ethical guidelines outlined in the ethics application.

3.1. Contexts and Participants

The study was conducted at primary schools at a large Vietnamese city. In Vietnam, primary education consists of the first five grades of formal education (Grades 1-5), with the students primarily being 6-11 years of age. Subjects taught at primary schools include Vietnamese, Maths, Sciences, History and Geography, Arts, Music, and Physical Education. Of these subjects, Vietnamese and Maths are the two most important subjects which are allocated to the majority of teaching hours. Specifically, for Grade 4 and Grade 5, Vietnamese is taught for seven thirty-minute lessons per week. Within the Vietnamese subject, writing is one of the two most important components (with reading). The teaching follows the guidelines of the national curriculum and syllabus. Specifically, teachers are given a set of textbooks and teachers' books which outline the teaching and learning activities and materials. The teachers are encouraged to design their lesson plans to suit their students' writing habits, competence, and culture. However, in reality, due to the time constraints and heavy workloads, many teachers choose to follow activities provided in the textbooks.

Table 1
A Summary of the Participating Teachers' Background

Name (Pseudonym)	Gender	Age	Teaching experience	Grade currently taught	Qualifications
Mrs Chan	Female	37	13	4	Master
Mrs Chinh	Female	43	22	5	Associate Degree
Mr Dan	Male	59	38	5	Bachelor
Mrs Dung	Female	31	9	4	Bachelor
Miss Han	Female	26	3	4	Bachelor
Mrs Hang	Female	50	29	4	Associate Degree
Mrs Hoa	Female	42	20	4	Bachelor
Mrs Hoan	Female	34	5	5	Bachelor
Miss Nga	Female	26	3	5	Bachelor
Mrs Tra	Female	43	20	5	Bachelor
Miss Tu	Female	25	3	4	Bachelor
Mr Van	Male	31	10	5	Master
Mean		37.3	14.6		

A purposive and convenience sampling technique was employed for the selection of the participants of the current study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The

participants included 12 teachers from five primary schools in a large city in Vietnam. There were ten female and two male teachers, reflecting the gender distribution of the Vietnamese teaching resources. The teachers had between 3 and 38 years of teaching at primary schools (including teaching writing) (mean = 14.6). As illustrated in Table 1, each of the 12 teachers held a degree in primary education provided by a university in Vietnam. Of the 12 teachers, eight teachers held Bachelor's Degrees, two teachers held Associate Degrees, and the remaining two teachers held Master's Degrees. At the time of data collection, half of teachers were teaching Grade 4, and the other half of the teachers were teaching Grade 5. The teachers participated in regular professional learning and teacher professional development activities which were organized either by their schools, or the Department of Education and Training at the district and provincial levels.

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

The current study employed qualitative data which were collected using in-depth interviews. The interviews were semi-structured in nature and were guided by a set of ten broad questions (see Appendix). The questions were developed carefully based on the recent literature regarding teachers' beliefs about writing instruction (e.g., Casas et al., 2020; Gaitas & Alves Martins, 2015). The teachers were interviewed individually. Due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted online via Zoom meetings. Because both the researchers and the participating teachers shared the first language, the interviews were conducted in Vietnamese. The duration of each interview was in between 40 and 50 minutes. All the interviews were audio-recorded (with the participants' consent) for subsequent data transcription and analysis.

Thematic analysis approach was employed for the analysis of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Firstly, the interview recordings were listened repeatedly for an overall understanding of the data. Next, all the recordings were transcribed verbatim. After that, the researchers read the transcripts many times for a thorough understanding of the data. Then, the transcripts were coded with the help of a qualitative data analysis software (NVivo, version 12). Accordingly, sentences and phrases with similar meanings were grouped together and were given names (codes). After that, the codes were revised, refined, and regrouped to

form broader themes. The coding was firstly conducted with one interview by each of the author independently. Then, all the authors discussed and compared the coding. The discrepancy was resolved by negotiation. After that, the first author coded all the remaining interviews, and the second author coded 30% of the interviews for cross-checking. The agreement rate was approximately 91%. Finally, the themes emerging from the data analysis were reported and discussed below. The quotes were translated into English by the authors, and they were cross-checked by two colleagues who were English-Vietnamese bilingual. In order to ensure confidentiality for the participants, pseudonyms were used when reporting teachers' quotes.

4. Results

4.1. Teachers' Beliefs About Teaching Writing

All the participating teachers were supportive of the importance of writing for primary school students. They believed that writing was an important means of communication which was new to young learners. They considered that communication in written form could help learners express their thoughts and ideas, which they might not be able to do in spoken language. The process of writing and learning writing could enable learners to develop their thinking skills and reflect on their living experiences. Some teachers also expressed their thought that writing might enhance learners' confidence in communication. Mr Van, for example, said,

Teaching writing is very important for primary school students who had learned speaking and listening at home but had little or no prior writing experience. Primary school students are more familiar with concrete concepts, so writing can help them learn to think in a more abstract manner. Teaching writing can also develop students' connections with their life experiences and improve their confidence in communication.

The teachers also considered the importance of writing and teaching writing in relation to other subjects. For instance, Mrs Chan believed that writing was essential for students' learning and development because it was not only important for the Vietnamese subject, but it was also used as a key means of communication in other subject matters and in real-life activities. She considered that writing could help students communicate more coherently and effectively,

develop their thinking skills, and influence other communication skills such as listening and speaking.

All the teachers reported that they were aware of the difference between teaching writing and teaching reading, listening and speaking. They considered that teaching writing was more difficult because students had to learn the written language (e.g., vocabulary and grammar) and learn how to express their thoughts and life experiences via this new language form. This is particularly the case with teaching young learners (e.g., six-year-old students). The students started learning speaking informally (at home) at a very young age (i.e., since the age of one or two). The teachers also distinguished the difference and difficulties in teaching writing in terms of the nature of communication. For example, Mrs Han said,

Writing is a productive skill, while reading and listening are receptive skills. Writing requires knowledge and skills of spelling and handwriting. These two aspects of writing are really challenging for young learners because they tend to mix the spoken language style into their writing.

Interestingly, while the teachers believed that writing could enhance students' thinking skills and reflect their living experiences in a lively manner, most of the teachers thought that using good writing samples (for students to imitate) helped students learn writing. For example,

In order for the students to effectively learn how to write, I give them model writing texts so that they can analyze and understand the structure, such as the introduction in a direct or indirect way so that the students can follow the model writing texts. They can also learn the words and how to use the words from the samples. (Mrs Chinh)

Analyzing and copying model texts is very effective. Teachers should help students analyze the model texts and point out the good points in the text (which words and sentences are good, why they are considered good ones). Analyzing the model texts carefully and practicing writing following the model texts, again and again, students will be able to write well.

All the teachers claimed to understand the differences in teaching writing at the primary school level from secondary school levels. They said that primary school teachers should be aware of the uniqueness in the objectives, requirements and content knowledge regarding teaching writing for young learners. The teachers also compared the newly implemented curriculum with the previous one. Most teachers were supportive of the new

curriculum because of some improvements. Mrs Dung, for example, said,

For Grades 1 and 2, the curriculum states clearly the number of sentences students are required to write (e.g., Grade 1 students should write from one to three sentences, while Grade 2 students should be able to write from four to five sentences. The former curriculum did not explicitly describe the requirements of writing sentences, but writing paragraphs were taught for Grade 2, which made it difficult for both teachers and students.

4.2. Challenges in Teaching Writing

The teachers pointed out that some challenges in teaching writing at the primary school level which were related to the students. They stated that many of their primary school students lacked living experiences, linguistic resources, and emotions. They ascribed the students' lack of living experiences to the fact that they did not have opportunities to explore the world, which led to a lack of the skill of observation and storage of information. The students' poor linguistic resources led to the use of a limited range of words and sentence types, leading to the lack of creativity in writing. This also made students confused between written language and spoken language. The students' lack of living experiences and linguistic resources were considered to bring about a lack of interest in writing and learning writing. Some teachers said that students might find the common topics unfamiliar to them and were not interested in writing about such topics. Mrs Ha, for example, said:

Students' decoding skill (i.e., reading comprehension) is not good, so they cannot write well as these two skills are closely related. Students prefer to answer the questions posed by the teachers (rather than initiating new ideas). Some students want to avoid writing because they may feel ashamed of their poor writing.

When it comes to the challenges from the teachers' part, they mentioned a number of difficulties they faced in teaching writing. Firstly, the teachers said that it was difficult to improve students' life experiences. They considered the building and maintaining a plan to enhance students' life experiences were challenging because such a plan was time-consuming and costly. Such plans also required teachers to have experience and required a smooth collaboration between teachers, schools, and students' parents. For example, Mrs Hang said, "Teachers should create opportunities for students to expose to the real

world to gain more experience, but teachers faced lots of challenges".

The teachers considered that time constraint was one of the biggest challenges in teaching writing. Learning writing needed a large amount of time for practice, but it was difficult to allocate sufficient time for students to learn and practice writing. Some teachers said that they could improve students' writing time by integrating writing into other subject matters (e.g., reading, listening), but teachers needed to be very skilled to do so. Mrs Hoa said,

Each writing task requires a different kind of personal creativity, which requires more time for both teachers and students. Teachers, therefore, need to spend more time preparing materials for the writing lessons so that they can raise students' memory, imagination, and emotion in writing.

The teachers also mentioned the constraints related to equipment and school support. They ascribed this to the incompatible investment in teaching aids and equipment the lack of cooperation between teachers, schools, and students' parents.

The teachers also considered that assessment in writing was a big challenge. They said that it was not easy to develop assessment criteria to assess the creativity in students' writing. Most teachers stated that they had tried their best in their assessment methods. They tried to develop clear assessment criteria before giving students writing tasks. They also supported the method of students' self-assessment. For example, Mrs Chan said,

I usually use oral feedback using a scale. I use criteria such as organization, the structure of the paragraph or the whole writing piece, spelling, word choice, expressions, and creativity. I also ask students to self-assess.

In a similar vein, Mr Dan considered that he focused on the authenticity in writing, the creativeness in word choice, expressions, and sentence use.

However, some teachers were aware that they were influenced by the traditional attitudes towards assessment, such as a focus on structures of writing or grammar and vocabulary rather than the creativity and emotion conveyed in writing. They were also aware that the method of teaching based on model texts and practice constrained students' creativity.

5. Discussion

The present study investigated the beliefs of Vietnamese primary teachers regarding writing instruction. Analysis of the interview data showed several interesting insights into the teachers' beliefs about the importance of writing and teaching writing for young learners, the difference in teaching writing and teaching other skills, and the effective methods of teaching writing and assessing students' performance. All the participating teachers believed that teaching writing was important to young learners and that teaching writing was different from teaching other subject matters. The teachers' teaching experience may account for these beliefs as most of the participating teachers had been teaching at primary schools (including teaching writing) for many years.

The most notable finding is the teachers' beliefs concerning effective methods of teaching writing. Although the teachers were aware of different methods of teaching writing, such as process-based teaching, they seem to support the method of using model texts. This belief was also found in the study of Gaitas and Alves Martins (2015) in Portugal and that of Casas et al. (2020) with Spanish teachers. The participating teachers in the present study considered that exploiting the model texts and getting students to do repeated practice following the model texts in terms of writing organization, word choice, sentence structure could be very effective. Interestingly, the teachers acknowledged the limitations of this method in that it might hinder students' creativity in writing, but they still used it frequently in their teaching. This belief may originate from the influence of Vietnamese exam culture on teachers' classroom practices (Ha & Murray, 2023; Ha, Tran, et al., 2021; Tran et al., 2023). In Vietnam, there has been a long tradition that teaching and learning are heavily exam-oriented, and teachers and students tend to practice and prepare for exams instead of focusing on improving students' competency and skills (Ha, Tran, et al., 2021; Le et al., 2022). This finding can also be explained by the tension between teachers' different sets of beliefs. As explained by Ha and Murray (2023), teachers' core beliefs may have a stronger impact on their classroom practices than their peripheral beliefs. In this case, teachers' beliefs concerning the teaching outcome in terms of students' responses to the pre-determined assessment criteria might be more powerful than their beliefs about the long-term teaching outcome (e.g., enhancing students' creativity and emotions in writing).

The second notable finding concerns the teachers' reported challenges in

teaching and learning writing. The teachers stated that the biggest challenge to teaching writing in their primary school contexts came from the students' lack of life experiences, limited linguistic resources, and poor learning motivation. It should be noted that all the participating schools were located in the largest city of Vietnam. However, according to the teachers, most students lacked life experiences. This may be due to the Vietnamese contemporary education context in big cities where many parents wanted their children to spend most of their time studying. Students did not only study at school, but they also spent hours of their out of school time learning various subjects in private learning centres (e.g., English language centres), at their teachers' home, or at their home with their personal tutors. Therefore, the students might not have enough time to explore the world around them. This might have led to the limited living experiences, which could influence the emotions and creativeness in their writing.

Another notable finding was related to the constraints in teaching writing from the teachers' part. The biggest constraint was time resources. Most of the teachers stated that they needed to make plans to improve students' life experiences and creativity, but their limited time resources did not allow them to fully achieve their goals. This may be due to the teachers' heavy workload. As a matter of fact, teachers were reported to be busy in many contexts. This is particularly the case for Vietnamese primary teachers who had to spend a considerable amount of time delivering extra classes after school time for the purpose of income (Nguyen, 2017). The teachers also reported a lack of cooperation between teachers, school administration, and students' parents (Le et al., 2021; Nguyen & Ha, 2021). They believed that the support from the students' parents (in response to time, care, and finance) was essential to conduct extra-curricular activities or experiential learning activities outside the school contexts.

6. Conclusion

Despite the current study has several important contributions discussed above, it has several limitations that need to be pointed out. Firstly, the study employed a qualitative approach which limited the number of participants. This may influence the generalization of the results to other educational contexts. Future studies could employ a mixed-method approach to improve the generalization of the findings and gain in-depth insights into the teachers' beliefs at the same time. Secondly,

the present study did not include classroom observation data. Future research could observe teachers' actual classroom teaching because teachers' beliefs and practices are mutually informing (Ha & Murray 2023; Ha 2021), and exploring teachers' classroom practices may reveal interesting insights into the beliefs that may not be elicited via interviews (e.g., the implied beliefs).

The current study employed a qualitative research design to examine the beliefs of Vietnamese primary school teachers concerning writing instruction. The findings revealed some interesting beliefs and challenges that the teachers faced in teaching writing for primary school learners. All the participating teachers believed that writing was important and that teaching writing was key in primary education. Interestingly, the teachers believed that enhancing the creativeness and emotions in students' writing was important, but they reported using model texts in teaching frequently. This might be influenced by the tensions and trade-offs among different sets of their beliefs. This might also be influenced by the Vietnamese exam-oriented teaching contexts where students learn for exams and teachers try to respond to students' needs. Moreover, the study showed that the teachers were supportive of methods of improving students' life experiences, but they reported a number of challenges that hindered their effort in providing students with experiential learning opportunities. The tensions between their beliefs and challenges made the teachers opt for teaching practices that might be useful for their learners in the short term only.

The current study's findings have several implications for teacher training and writing pedagogy at primary schools in Vietnam and probably in other similar contexts. As reported by the teachers, there was a need to improve students' life experiences and creativeness in writing. At the same time, the teachers reported being constrained by time, financial and material resources. It may be difficult to resolve these issues if we only look at the superficial level. Instead, designing and conducting effective teacher professional development courses could help to improve the situations. Firstly, it seems that there is a need for training teachers to effectively integrate writing instruction into the teaching of other subjects. In this way, the teachers can increase the students' exposure to writing without having to go over the limit in terms of students' learning load. Secondly, teachers' professional development programs are needed to help teachers design and implement effective experiential learning activities for students to enhance creativeness and emotions in their writing.

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Appendix

Guiding Interview Questions

1. Can you tell us about the role of writing and writing instruction at primary school education (e.g., writing sentences, paragraphs, and writing a full piece)? Why?

2. What are the differences (if any) in teaching writing at primary school level compared with that in other levels of education (in terms of objectives, content, methods, and assessment, etc.)? Why/why not?

3. Compared with the former curriculum (2006 Curriculum), is there any positive innovation in the current curriculum (2018 Curriculum) in terms of writing instruction at primary schools? What are they (if any)? Why or why not?

4. How much time do you spend on teaching writing? Is it sufficient to develop students' writing performance in response to the requirements of the current curriculum? Why/ why not?

5. How do you identify teaching objectives, plan your lessons in the short term and long-term periods, organize teaching activities, etc.?

6. What methods, techniques do you often use in your writing instruction? What are the benefits and drawbacks of each method/technique? Why?

7. What are the difficulties and challenges in teaching writing for young learners at primary schools?

8. What strategies have you applied to overcome the challenges to enhance the effectiveness of teaching writing? What are the consequences? Why?

9. How do you assess your students' writing? Are you happy with your current assessment methods and tools? Why or why not?

10. Do you have any suggestions for the teaching of writing in response to the curriculum reform? What and why?

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