

# An Exploration to the Success Story of English School Paper Adviser in the Division of Davao Del Nort: A Case Study

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**Abstract:** This study was centered on exploring the experiences, challenges, coping strategies, insights, and recommendations of the English school paper advisers who handled the job and trained the student writers. Also, the study used a case study as a qualitative study approach in conducting this study. The participants were four (4) English school paper advisers and four (4) informants. Results of the study found that these English school paper advisers experienced difficulty in handling the job; they gained self-confidence, understanding that training the student writers goes beyond acquiring the job, and being determined and courageous. They overcome these by having time management, becoming skilled and knowledgeable in school papering, and keeping the passion of teaching and guiding the student writers burning inside them. The informants, too, shared that even though training and enhancement of knowledge were hard, it is not a reason to give up. Hence, the study recommended that everyone should keep pushing forward despite challenges; everything will not go as planned, we have to keep our faith and trust in the Lord. Additionally, the most important thing is that before you take a job, you need to be prepared and equip your mind with everything needed in order to pass.

**Keywords:** English School Paper Advisers, Student Writers, Case Study, Qualitative Inquiry, Philippines.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

A crisis has loomed in the field of journalism since the mid-1990s. Along with professional journalists, many journalism school faculty members have been left scratching their heads, trying to determine what skills are important to have students develop. In the study of Blesseddy (2019), the findings showed that several factors greatly affect the performance of the student journalists in journalistic competitions, particularly a lack of training, seminars, and colloquiums. On the other hand, as major responsibilities are assigned to school heads, only a few understand the existence and importance of campus journalism, as most of them consider it as an extension of their public relations office.

In Bangladesh, Ullah (2021) mentioned that the lack of professional education of coaches in journalism is one of the primary reasons for the rise of ill-trained writers. The insufficiency of knowledge on professional ethics and the insufficiency of formal journalism training among journalism coaches contributed to incompetent student writers. Training student writers is crucial to the job of a school paper adviser. School paper advisers should also engage in different

seminars and training to deepen their skills and knowledge in school papering. Training and seminars would help them to train their student writers well.

In Badas National High School in Mati City, campus journalists would still find it challenging to write a simple news article for the school paper publication during face-to-face classes. The lack of training and honing of skills contributed to the poor performance of the student writers. School paper advisers should engage the student writers in training, where the student writers can develop and enhance their skills in crafting articles. This difficulty is multiplied even in online publication during the New Normal, and in the assessment of the news writing articles of the students, there are common news writing errors that they commit (Morales, 2023).

The implementation of a no-homework policy in elementary schools is socially relevant because it directly affects the education and well-being of young students. Homework has long been a controversial topic, with many arguing that excessive homework can have negative impacts on students' mental health, family relationships, and overall

quality of life. Implementing a no-homework policy can help address these concerns and create a more balanced approach to education. Studying the perspectives of elementary teachers on the implementation of a no-homework policy is urgent because it allows us to understand the challenges and benefits associated with such a policy. Teachers play a crucial role in implementing and facilitating any changes in educational practices, and their perspectives can provide valuable insights into the feasibility and effectiveness of a no-homework policy. By studying their perspectives, we can identify potential barriers to implementation and develop strategies to overcome them, ultimately improving the educational experience for elementary students. Studying the experiences and challenges of a school paper adviser in handling student writers is socially relevant since the campus journalism program plays a significant role in the institution and the development of the students. Campus journalism is an underrated topic since no one talks about the importance of the program to the development of communication and writing skills of the students. Studying the perspectives and experiences of the school paper advisers is urgent since it will allow us to understand the importance of their roles as well as the benefits of honing the skills of the student writers. School paper advisers played a vital role in the development of the skills of the student writers, and by unveiling their perspectives, they will enable us to gain valuable insights. By studying the experiences of school paper advisers, we will be able to develop strategies to overcome the struggles and give emphasis to the development of the skills of the student writers.

In finding the literature review of this study, the researcher found two studies that can be related to this study. The study of Basilan and Padilla (2022) titled “*Assessment of Teaching English Language Skills: Input to Digitized Activities for Campus Journalism Advisers*” which focuses on the utilization of English language of the school paper adviser in teaching the student writers that will enable them to have a better performance in the campus journalism field and the study of Untalan and Redublo (2019) titled “*Performance of Secondary School Publications in Calapan City: Basis for Campus Journalism Development Plan*” which focuses on the school publication and in providing information to the public and the local community. The study on the exploration of the success story of English school paper advisers differs from other studies because it solely focuses on the experiences of the school paper advisers. The purpose is to understand their experiences and to focus on unveiling the problems that they usually encountered as a school paper adviser. This study should be conducted as soon as possible because it is relevant and timely to be studied. Lastly, this study might provide some relevant concepts that will be useful to the field of language and the schools in the division of Davao del Norte.

#### ➤ *Research Objectives*

This study aimed to investigate the success story of School Paper Advisers.

Additionally, the following questions are addressed in this study:

- What are the experiences and challenges that paper advisers had encountered?
- How did the paper advisers overcome such challenges in handling the student journalist and the program?
- What are the insights of the paper advisers in handling the program as well as the student journalists?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### ➤ *Literature Review*

#### • *Student Publication and Student Writers*

It was stated that Campus Journalism plays an essential role in a school community. Some of these important roles that campus press play includes delivering the school image to the community, providing its clientele both students and faculty the significant information to process school issues not otherwise available, this can be beneficial also to silence rumors that often arise due to the absence of information, and providing a check on and fiscalizing the student government, the school administration, and even the students, an essential for any democratic institution. Additionally, the student publication also helps maintain order on the campus by reporting irregularities of school rules, analyzing these school rules and regulations, and providing actual student reactions, and its editorials or opinion write-ups are instrumental in amplifying the voice through reasoned and factual discussion (Avelino, 2022).

#### • *Difficulties in Writing*

A study explored the students' difficulties in linguistics. It was found that the students encountered challenges in identifying appropriate research gaps and elaborating on relevant previous studies. It is believed that the research gap is essential in bridging between the theoretical constructs and the issues to be found. Thus, it was difficult for students to link and synthesize the previous theoretical concepts with the new ones (Kheryadi, 2018).

#### • *Techniques and Strategies in Writing*

A study showed that the application of free writing techniques significantly developed the students' skills in writing. However, these studies were mostly conducted by using pre-experimental research, in which each study was only implemented in one specific group with no other groups being used as a comparison. Therefore, to generalize the findings of these studies, which argued that freewriting affects the improvement of students' writing skills, it would be much more beneficial if there were a control group of students at the same level who participated in the same program activities but never did the freewriting. Then, it will be possible to compare the two groups and see whether or not their writing skills have improved (Tarmizi et al., 2018).

#### • *Importance of Writing*

Writing skill is a thinking tool for the other three language skills and language components, such as vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. It was further claimed that English writing skills play an important role for EFL learners to develop several skills in their English

learning, such as analyzing, arguing, and critical thinking. This idea is in line with the research findings, which claim that writing is a fundamental skill in language learning. The learners must employ their knowledge of the language, such as grammar, diction, punctuation, spelling, and many more. These enable learners to have a well-structured way of the presentation of thoughts in written communication. (Khazrouni, 2019; Tusyanah et al., 2019).

#### ➤ *Theoretical Framework*

This study was anchored on Flower and Hayes' Cognitive Process Theory of writing since this study is connected to writing. According to the study of Flower and Hayes (1981), Cognitive Process Theory of Writing, the process of writing is described as "a set of distinctive thinking processes which writers orchestrate or organize during the act of composing". The theory emphasizes the role of goal setting, generating and evaluating ideas, and the process of reviewing, evaluating, and revising the written text. Likewise, writing is perceived as a challenging and motivating activity in the learning process.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### ➤ *Research Design*

The study employed a qualitative phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of elementary teachers within their specific contexts. This method emphasizes understanding participants' perspectives in real-life settings by recognizing that truth is multiple and subjective. In-depth interviews served as the primary data collection tool, enabling the researcher to uncover social norms, values, and deeper meanings associated with the participants' experiences. By grounding the study in its natural context and using multiple data sources, the research aimed to provide a comprehensive and authentic understanding of the phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Teherani et al., 2015).

#### ➤ *Participants of the Study*

In this case study, the target participants are school paper advisers from the different high schools in the division of Davao del Norte, specifically, in the schools of Asuncion National High School, Sagayan National High School, New Corella National High School, and Kapalong National High School. Four participants are carefully selected for this research endeavor. All four (4) participants would undergo an in-depth interview wherein each of them would be interviewed individually by the researcher face-to-face.

In this study, I have four participants who are all scheduled for in-depth interviews. The four individuals are chosen based on specific interests. I conducted individual in-depth interviews (IDI) with four (4) participants. Additionally, other critical components of the recruitment process include the identification and recruitment of participants, and the methods to advertise the study and the evaluation of the recruitment plan (Gallin et al., 2018).

In selecting the respondents for this study, the purposive sampling method was used in determining the respondents to

ensure the acquisition of authentic experiences relevant to the study. Hermeneutical phenomenology is the 'lived experiences' of research participants (phenomenology) and the interpretation (text) of the life they have lived and experienced (hermeneutics). In that case, the study will be rich and descriptively deep in analyzing process (Manen, 1990).

#### ➤ *Instrumentation and Data Gathering Process*

First, I acquired authorization from the various schools to help me find and recruit people for my study. Before agreeing to engage in my research study, the researcher was assured that all participants are well informed about the study. Second, participants are discovered and recruited using the purposive sampling strategy to ensure that they are appropriate and capable of supplying relevant and useful information that was used in the subsequent chapters. To ensure the integrity of the recruitment process, I processed consent and agreement documents prior to the interview sessions. They can read the terms and conditions before signing and participating, and this includes statements that their participation is a voluntary act that contributes to the research's success.

During the interview sessions, I, the researcher, was in charge of collecting data. I recorded the data using devices such as mobile phones to ensure precise transcription before translating it into official English. The participants were also decided on the time, venue, and date of the interview. Additionally, I refrained from interfering with them while they are discussing their experiences throughout the interview, unless they require clarification on a question or are having difficulty comprehending it, in which case I was alter it to make it easier for them to understand.

Following the interview sessions, the final phase was transcribed, with emerging themes identified using thematic analysis tools. The extracted themes were sent to the data analyst whose knowledge corresponds to the concept of language study for approval and verification.

#### ➤ *Data Analysis*

The data gathered in my research was presented and examined in my study in accordance with the research objectives or goals. To draw the study's conclusions, a thorough examination of the content of the participants' responses is required. To answer the study's research questions, data was analyzed for common trends.

In addition, the researcher methodically organized and stored the study's data using technological techniques. Both the audio and video recorders captured the conversation. Qualitative analysis involves breaking down the information into manageable portions, organizing it, looking for patterns, synthesizing it, and talking about what's important to know. To offer a more comprehensive overview of the study, the investigator conducted a qualitative content analysis. Content analysis is the study of making inferences about other states or characteristics of the source from a text by using a methodical and repeatable methodology. It involves systematically identifying patterns, themes, or biases within

the text to interpret meaning and understand the underlying context (Krippendorff, 2018). After the research analysis, all of the material that was examined came from the informants, who were considered a reliable and credible source of information for the study.

The collected and acquired data in this study were examined using thematic analysis. The goal of the data collection phase was to look for any trends that would point to the ideas the participants represent. Subsequently, the information was classified into meaningful groups that encapsulated the letter's manuscript. A versatile method for qualitative analysis, theme analysis allows the researcher to generate fresh ideas and conclusions from the data.

Thematic analysis was also a helpful method of inquiry for exploring individuals' ideas, opinions, knowledge, experiences, or beliefs within a set of qualitative data, such as interview transcripts, survey responses, or social media content. It allows researchers to identify, analyze, and interpret patterns or themes that emerge from the data. Once themes are identified, their application can vary depending on the research objectives and the chosen analytical approach. Thematic analysis is widely used by scholars as a flexible and accessible tool to make sense of complex qualitative data and gain deeper insight into participants' perspectives (Braun & Clarke, 2006)

Additionally, I completed the processes for getting to know the data, making draft codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and identifying themes, and putting together the report. Beginning with transcription, the analytical process was initiated. Using analysis, break it up into it is individual pieces. The researcher attempted to understand the data they had collected during this process.

I eventually listened to the participant recordings of their interviews and documented my observations to help with the coding process later on. I went over the data multiple times to get a feel for the responses and quickly identify which ones were more common. These repeated answers helped me develop a few themes, which I subsequently

whittled down to a select handful. I eliminated extraneous information using data reduction techniques so that readers might use it as smart study material. Sorting and arranging an important amount of qualitative data allowed me to integrate and categorize it quickly. In order to allow readers to form their own opinions, the data was shown using matrices, charts, and graphs.

#### ➤ *Research Ethics*

To ensure ethical standards in the study, the researcher adhered to key principles including respect for persons, beneficence, justice, informed consent, and confidentiality (Mack et al., 2005). Participants were treated with dignity and given full information about the study, allowing them to make informed and voluntary decisions (Munhall, 2012). Written consent was obtained, and participants were free to ask questions and withdraw at any time (Creswell, 2012). The principle of beneficence was upheld by minimizing risks, ensuring anonymity, and using safety measures during face-to-face interactions (Bricki & Green, 2007). Confidentiality was strictly maintained in accordance with the Privacy Act of 2012, with all personal identifiers concealed, and data securely stored and properly disposed of (Maree & Van der Westhuizen, 2007). The principle of justice was observed by treating all participants fairly, using purposive sampling without discrimination, and acknowledging their contributions with tokens of appreciation (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). These ethical measures ensured that the research was conducted responsibly, respectfully, and with full regard for participants' rights and well-being.

## IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### ➤ *Lived Experiences of School Paper Advisers in Handling the Student-Writers*

The major themes and core ideas for research question number 1 are presented in Table 1. From the answers of the participants, three major themes had emerged: having a hard time handling the student-writers; recognizing the need for school-based training for students and teachers; struggling financially to support training; and balancing academic responsibilities and training student-writers.

Table 1 The Experiences of English School Paper Advisers

| Emerging Themes   | Supporting Statements   |
|---|---|
| <b>Having a Hard Time Handling the Student-Writers</b>                          | <p>“The management of these writers is quite tough, specifically, when we go to an event because it is a big crowd.” (IDI-R1)</p> <p>“The attitude of the students, the attitude in the sense that they have been identified, it's so difficult for them to fulfill given the instruction.” (IDI-R2)</p>  |
| <b>Acknowledging the Need for Teachers' and Students' School-Based Training</b> | <p>“As a school paper adviser, you should be equipped with the training plus advanced reading in dealing with the different genres in writing.” (IDI-R1)</p> <p>“We only have the school-based training and often restrict the program's growth because we do not have the school-based training, the general school-based training, but we are just doing the teacher and the writer training.” (IDI-R3)</p>                                       |
| <b>Struggling Financially to Support Training</b>                               | <p>“We have also struggled about the financial aspect, specifically we have limited funds and also a bit lack of support from any local and local communities.” (IDI-R1)</p> <p>“When we attended the DSPC and you know what our budget is, I had to use my own money just for us to survive.” (IDI-R2)</p> <p>Limitations I encountered are the limited resources that we have, such as funding for materials or access to training.” (IDI-R3)</p> |



|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Managing Academic Obligations and Nurturing Student Writers</b> | <p>“One is our time to coach with the student knowing that we have other loads and we have class advisories.” (IDI-R2)</p> <p>“Meeting with the writers for practice is usually a challenge because many of them are also busy with their academic obligations.” (IDI-R4)</p> <p>“Balancing between my being a school paper adviser and other teaching duties can limit the time I have for in-depth mentoring, editing, and overseeing the production of the school paper.” (IDI-R4)</p> |
|--|---|

➤ *Coping Mechanisms of the School Paper Advisers on the Challenges Encountered in Handling the Student-Writers*

The major themes and core ideas for Research Question Number 2 are presented in Table 2. Based on the participants' responses, five key themes emerged: creating a collaborative environment for student-writers; facilitating solutions to student-writers' concerns; conducting school-based training for student-writers; managing the dual roles of teacher and coach; and funding program through resource mobilization.

These themes highlight how the implementation of a no-homework policy influences teachers' instructional strategies and professional development. Participants emphasized the value of interactive and experiential learning in place of traditional homework. They also noted the importance of open communication with students and parents, and the continuous enhancement of their teaching knowledge and skills to adapt to the new approach.

Table 2 The Coping Mechanism of English School Paper Advisers

| Emerging Themes   | Supporting Statements  |
|---|--|
| <b>Fostering a Collaborative Space for Student Writers</b>  | <p>“As an adviser, that's the first thing I'll do is to always remind them and to guide them because writers, they're not only focusing on writing, on what's on the school paper because this is only extracurricular.” (IDI-R2)</p> <p>“Encourage a collaborative environment for all my campus journalists, which helps me address challenges effectively while keeping the students still motivated in writing articles.” (IDI-R3)</p>               |
| <b>Facilitating Solutions to Student-Writers' Concerns</b>  | <p>“I manage it with patience and constant pushing through.” (IDI-R1)</p> <p>“Dealing with students' inconsistent commitment in challenging situations like finishing the task that supposedly they should submit on the deadline.” (IDI-R3)</p>   |
| <b>Conducting School-Based Training for Student-Writers</b> | <p>“Before some of the contests that we attend, we need to conduct practice; they will be out of the class, and they will be staying here. They will write then after writing, we will check the outputs.” (IDI-R2)</p> <p>“I conduct workshops, also offer constructive feedback and assign diverse writing roles to enhance each of the students' skills.” (IDI-R3)</p>  |
| <b>Managing the Dual Roles of Teacher and Coach</b>         | <p>“It is time-consuming, it is a painstaking kind of job, but I managed that through time management.” (IDI-R1)</p> <p>“I consider it as part of my responsibility and I said that it would come, it is already there, I have to do that, and I have to face the problem.” (IDI-R2)</p>   |
| <b>Funding Program through Resource Mobilization</b>        | <p>“We try to solicit some funds from my colleagues, from the parents, from anybody here to suffice the budget, the bigger budget we have had since we're growing.” (IDI-R1)</p> <p>“When we attended the DSPC and you know what our budget is, I had to use my own money just for us to survive.” (IDI-R2)</p> <p>“Limitations I encountered are the limited resources that we have, such as funding for materials or access to training.” (IDI-R3)</p> |

➤ *Insights of the School Paper Advisers in Handling Student-Writers:*

The major themes and core ideas for research question 3 are presented in Table 3. From the answers of the participants, four major themes emerged: become skilled and knowledgeable in school papers; continue honing one's skills; be patient in training student-writers; and be passionate as coach and adviser.

Table 3 The Insights of English School Paper Advisers

| Emerging Themes   | Supporting Statements  |
|---|--|
| <b>Become Skilled and Knowledgeable in School Paper</b> | <p>“So as a school paper adviser, you need to be equipped with a basic skill in school papering as well as in coaching the different genres in writing.” (IDI-R1)</p> <p>“I have to advise them that believe in themselves, especially if you go to SPA, you are teaching communication, and when you're going to handle a school paper, the teacher must know communication skills.” (IDI-R2)</p> |

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Continue Honing One's Skill</b>            | <p>“The best advice is to continue learning, continue honing skills, and continue honing different skills in writing. Because in that aspect, they can develop more, and they can boost their confidence in accepting any advice.” (IDI-R1)</p> <p>“Attend workshops, online courses or conferences specifically geared toward school journalism and advising. By doing this, you constantly improve yourself.” (IDI-R4)</p> |
| <b>Be Patient in Training Student-Writers</b> | <p>“To the school paper adviser is patient, then give more time to the students in giving training, coaching. More time in coaching, then check the work of the students.” (IDI-R2)</p> <p>“They should be patient and also stay passionate and foster a positive environment for the students to thrive.” (IDI-R3)</p>  |
| <b>Be Passionate as a Coach and Adviser</b>   | <p>“Have the passion in writing, have the passion in expressing our ideas, telling the truth. Because in school papers is we have this about media, so tell the truth, write what is true.” (IDI-R2)</p> <p>“They should believe in their impact as a teacher, as a molder of learning, and also in their skills as a teacher. I believe that their guidance shapes the students' skills and confidence.” (IDI-R3)</p>       |

This study used a phenomenological qualitative approach to explore the lived experiences of 4 school paper advisers who handle student-writers. In-depth interviews revealed a range of positive and negative experiences, highlighting key challenges and coping strategies. Four major themes emerged regarding school paper adviser's experiences: (1) Having a hard time handling the student-writers – struggle with basic grammar; (2) acknowledging the need for school-based training for students and teachers – regular school-based training is essential for academic growth and improvement; (3) struggling financially to support training – financial strain can hinder professional growth and skill development; (4) balancing academic responsibilities and training student-writers– with the right strategies, both responsibilities can be fulfilled successfully.

Teachers also described coping mechanisms to address the challenges: creating a collaborative environment for student-writers; facilitating solutions to student-writers' concerns; conducting school-based training for student-writers; managing the dual roles of teacher and coach; and funding program through resource mobilization. These strategies helped maintain student engagement and teacher effectiveness despite the shift in practice.

In terms of insights, four key themes surfaced: (1) become skilled and knowledgeable in school papers – this skill set prepares them for future academic and media-related opportunities; (2) continue honing one's skills – by refining skills over time, individuals become more competent and confident in their abilities; (3) be patient in training student-writers – this approach helps build trust, reduces anxiety, and cultivates resilience, students become more willing to experiment, learn from mistakes, and persist in refining their work; and (4) be passionate as coach and adviser – a passionate coach creates a supportive and encouraging learning environment. The study highlights the need for competent school paper advisers that are fit to guide and mold the student-writers to produce and write school paper articles that are authentic, truthful and globally competitive.

## V. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the participants have discussed their experiences, struggles, coping strategies, and insights. Even if you have skills and patience, it does not mean it is easy to handle the job of being a school paper adviser. Various challenges in the Campus Journalism Program are too tough to handle. The results also highlighted the importance of being patient in teaching and coaching, because having only skills and knowledge can't make you become successful.

Furthermore, as I conducted interviews and listened to the responses of the participants, I found myself deeply moved. Their stories ignited a fire within me, serving as a source of inspiration and motivation to persevere in the face of challenges and pursue the success I aspire to achieve. Their resilience and determination resonated with me, reinforcing the belief that with dedication and hard work, overcoming obstacles is possible. Their words encouraged me to maintain a positive mindset and to continue striving towards my goals, even when faced with adversity.

Finally, the study's findings also suggested that school paper advisers who desire to excel in handling the student writers and the Campus Journalism Program need to prepare before accepting the job. Moreover, engaging themselves in seminars and workshops that are related to Campus Journalism will help them to enhance their skills and knowledge and establish confidence in handling the job. Support from the local communities and school administrators should be there throughout the process to keep them motivated and have strong faith in God in reaching their goal and overcoming challenges.

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