



Long Paper

Teaching Creative Writing in Vocational College: Basis for Proposed Writing Program

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Abstract

This study examined the effectiveness of a creative writing workshop model in improving the writing performance of students in higher vocational education. The participants were 45 second-year students (14 males and 31 females) majoring in Cultural Creativity and Planning at a vocational college in Yuncheng, Shanxi, China. A pretest–posttest non-equivalent control group quasi-experimental design was employed over a 14-week semester. The experimental group participated in a creative writing workshop model emphasizing peer feedback, collaborative discussion, and multiple revisions, while the control group received traditional lecture-based instruction. Quantitative analysis using the Mann-Whitney U test indicated that the overall difference between the experimental and control groups was not statistically significant ($U = 209, p = .317$). However, effect size analysis revealed differentiated outcomes across proficiency levels. Students in the “Pass” group showed substantial improvement under the workshop model ($d = 1.69$), whereas the “Excellent” and “Good” groups demonstrated limited short-term change. The findings suggest that workshop-based instruction may be particularly beneficial for students with weaker writing foundations in vocational education contexts. These findings suggest that workshop-based instruction may be particularly beneficial for students with weaker writing foundations in vocational education contexts. The results also raise questions about whether exam-oriented evaluation systems may overlook certain forms of creative



potential. Based on these findings, the study proposes a creative writing training model integrating self-media practice, focusing on three core dimensions: writing style development, reader resonance, and disciplinary integration. The study provides practical insights for improving creative writing pedagogy in higher vocational colleges.

Keywords – creative writing, workshop, writing style, reader resonance, disciplinary integration

INTRODUCTION

Fundamentally speaking, creative writing is an educational reform movement that directly addresses the stimulation of creativity among ordinary people. (Zhang, 2024) Originating in the United States, it sought to break from Europe's classical literary paradigm. Emerson's 1837 speech "The American Scholar" inspired this movement, and by 1937, the University of Iowa allowed students to earn degrees through creative works, marking the discipline's formal establishment. Since then, creative writing has spread globally to the UK, Australia, Europe, and later to Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

In China, creative writing began in 2009 and developed through universities like Fudan and Shanghai University. On January 23, 2024, the Ministry of Education officially recognized "Chinese Creative Writing" as a second-level discipline under "Chinese Language and Literature". This event is of great significance: The concept of "creative writing", which was imported from the West, has, after nearly 15 years of arduous efforts, taken a crucial step towards its localization in China. (Huang, 2024) Since Fudan's MFA program in 2010, over 120 universities have launched related courses or degrees. Among them, Shanghai University's program connects academia with the cultural industry, showing practical success. However, as traditional literary education emphasizes the interpretation of classics rather than creative production, students place more emphasis on the accumulation and study of classical literature rather than creative writing. To put it further, achieving results in creative writing is no easy task. Creative ability is built on students' accumulation and expression skills. Most teachers themselves are not creative writers and do not have effective operational methods, so it is difficult for them to lead students to achieve effective creative writing.

In this situation, vocational colleges have become a major area where writing skills are weak. The root cause lies in the deeply-rooted concept of exam-oriented education. Most students in vocational colleges are accustomed to writing by following templates, and their articles often present the false, exaggerated, and empty content commonly found in exam essays. They deny their own genuine writing and only believe in articles containing beautiful words and sentences, thus finding it difficult to make progress in creative writing. As Hansen (2021) highlighted, creative writing education should encourage students to challenge traditional frameworks and cultivate critical thinking as well as original expression.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Creative Writing in Contemporary Higher Education

Recent research suggests that creative writing in higher education is increasingly understood not merely as literary training but as a pedagogical approach that supports student voice, agency, and social engagement.

Myhill et al. (2023) found that when the writing environment shifts from rule-dominated instruction to a more dialogic and exploratory structure, students' writing motivation and expressive confidence significantly improve. Similarly, Ng et al. (2021) demonstrated that writing motivation and self-efficacy are strongly associated with writing performance, especially among students who previously relied on formulaic writing strategies.

Wang and Troia (2023) further confirmed that classroom climate and instructional orientation play a decisive role in shaping students' writing outcomes. Their findings suggest that interactive and supportive writing environments are particularly beneficial for learners with weaker foundations.

From a broader perspective, Howe and Wright (2023) argue that contemporary creative writing pedagogy has expanded toward multimodal and participatory forms, reflecting real communication practices. This evolution indicates that writing instruction increasingly values process, revision, and peer interaction rather than solely final products.

Together, these studies highlight a consistent shift in writing education — from standardized performance to creative engagement — which provides theoretical grounding for workshop-based models.

Workshop Pedagogy and Writing Development

The workshop model remains one of the most influential approaches in creative writing instruction. Deti et al. (2023) found that reflection-supported writing instruction significantly improves students' writing attitudes and achievement goals. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2023), in a systematic review of writing interventions, reported that process-oriented and feedback-rich instruction consistently produces moderate improvements in writing competence.

Myhill et al. (2023) emphasize that workshop environments increase students' autonomy and intrinsic motivation, particularly when students are encouraged to share drafts and engage in peer dialogue. This aligns with Keller's (2025) argument that creative writing as a classroom method helps disrupt fixed writing habits and opens space for exploratory thinking.

Importantly, research also shows that writing workshops may produce differentiated effects. Students who have internalized rigid academic writing conventions sometimes

struggle to adapt to autonomy-based instruction (Ng et al., 2021), while students with weaker foundations often benefit from the reduction of evaluative pressure (Wang & Troia, 2023). These findings resonate directly with the differentiated outcomes observed in the present quasi-experimental study.

Creative Writing and Vocational Education Contexts

Although creative writing research has traditionally focused on comprehensive universities, recent studies have begun examining its relevance in applied and vocational contexts. Zeng et al. (2023) found that vocational students in art and design programs benefit from project-based and interdisciplinary learning structures that combine creativity with professional application. Their findings suggest that creative tasks integrated with career pathways enhance both competence and engagement.

In China, Huang and Li (2024) reviewed the localization of creative writing research, arguing that contemporary Chinese creative writing increasingly integrates cultural expression with applied communication. This perspective aligns with Zhang's (2024) discussion that creative writing in Chinese higher education must move beyond literary imitation toward authentic expression and social connection.

He and Tian (2024) further demonstrated that growth-oriented creative mindsets significantly enhance creative thinking performance. Their findings suggest that learning environments that encourage autonomy and experimentation may stimulate creative potential among students previously categorized as low-performing. Within vocational settings, where many students have experienced long-term exam-oriented writing instruction, formulaic patterns often dominate writing practices (Ng et al., 2021). Workshop-based environments that reduce rigid evaluation structures may therefore serve as a corrective pedagogical strategy.

However, empirical evidence in higher vocational colleges remains limited. Most studies rely on qualitative descriptions or theoretical advocacy, with relatively few quasi-experimental designs testing measurable writing outcomes. Wang (2023) proposed five oriented goals: "interest, experience, cooperation, revision, and output", emphasizing the complete path from interest awakening to achievement transformation. Zhang (2022) further pointed out that vocational college teachers need to possess four-dimensional qualities: writing ability, organizational ability, feedback ability, and cross-media integration ability, to be competent for real project-based teaching tasks.

Research Gap and Contribution

Existing literature consistently supports the motivational and expressive benefits of workshop-based instruction (Deti et al., 2023; Myhill et al., 2023; Zhang et al., 2023). It also suggests that instructional climate and student mindset significantly influence writing development (He & Tian, 2024; Wang & Troia, 2023). Yet two gaps remain: Limited empirical evidence in higher vocational college contexts. Insufficient examination of differentiated effects across proficiency levels.

The present study addresses these gaps by employing a pretest – post-test non-equivalent control group quasi-experimental design to examine not only overall performance changes but also level-specific differences among Excellent, Good, and Pass groups. By situating workshop pedagogy within vocational education and examining differential responsiveness, this study contributes nuanced empirical evidence to contemporary creative writing research.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a pretest – post-test non-equivalent control group quasi-experimental design to examine the effects of creative writing workshops on the writing performance of students in higher vocational colleges. Before the experiment, 45 students completed a unified pre-test consisting of poetry, short story, and argumentative essay writing tasks, scored independently by five teachers to balance the experimental and control groups. After a semester-long intervention—where the experimental group used the creative writing workshop model, and the control group followed traditional lecture-based teaching—a post-test with similar creative writing tasks was conducted. The results, evaluated anonymously by five teachers, were compared to determine the workshop model’s effectiveness in improving students’ writing ability.

Participants

The study targeted second-year students majoring in Cultural Creativity and Planning at a vocational college in Yuncheng, Shanxi. These students possessed foundational cultural literacy and writing skills, making them suitable for creative writing instruction. A total of 45 students from the 2022 cohort participated, aged 19 – 20, with similar academic backgrounds. Using cluster sampling, two intact classes were assigned to different conditions:

Experimental Group (23 students) received creative writing workshop instruction, focusing on collaboration, peer feedback, and multiple revisions. On the other hand, the Control Group (22 students) received traditional lecture-based instruction, emphasizing model essay analysis and individual writing.

Instrumentation

This study employed four main research instruments:

Pre-test: Conducted before the intervention to assess students’ baseline creative writing ability across different genres and ensure group equivalence.

Sample tasks : Please write a short story on the theme of the future city, depicting the scene of a future city and the life of people in this city.

Post-test: Administered after the teaching intervention to evaluate improvement and compare the performance between the experimental and control groups.

Sample tasks : Please create a copy of an advertisement about jewellery with the theme "Lost Treasure".

Evaluation Criteria: Developed to guide teacher assessments from five key dimensions — creativity, structure, linguistic, style, and reader resonance — ensuring consistency and reliability in evaluation (See Table 6, Appendix 1.) .

Grading rules: Designed with 11 detailed dimensions—originality, depth and breadth, logic, continuity, accuracy, richness, fluency, appeal, personality, attraction, and influence—each with defined scoring range and weight. This scale provided an objective and comprehensive framework for evaluating students’ creative writing performance (See Appendix 2).

Validation of instruments: To ensure the validity and reliability of the assessment instrument, the tool was reviewed and validated by five professors specializing in creative writing and writing pedagogy from Shanxi Yuncheng Preschool Teachers College. The experts examined the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the writing tasks and evaluation criteria. Based on their suggestions, minor revisions were made to improve the clarity of instructions and the alignment between the assessment indicators and the objectives of creative writing instruction.

The instrument was designed to measure students’ creative writing ability through a set of creative writing tasks reflecting different forms of creative expression. The test content included poetry writing, short narrative writing, material-based essay writing, and creative advertising copy, which simulate practical writing contexts commonly encountered in the creative industry.

Students’ writing performance was assessed using a rubric-based evaluation framework. The evaluation dimensions included creativity of ideas, content development, organization and coherence, language accuracy and fluency, emotional expression, personal style, and reader impact. Content validity was established through expert review. The internal consistency of the instrument ranged between $\alpha = 0.75$ and 0.88 , indicating acceptable reliability for educational assessment.

Data Gathering Procedure

This study investigated the effect of a creative writing workshop model on the writing proficiency of vocational college students majoring in Cultural Creativity and Planning over one semester. First, students completed three creative writing tasks, which were scored by five teachers to establish baseline writing levels. Based on the pre-test results, students were grouped into Excellent, Good, and Pass levels and evenly assigned to experimental and control classes to ensure balanced writing proficiency (The basis and methods for

student grouping) . The experimental class adopted the creative writing workshop approach, including collaboration, peer feedback, and revision, while the control class received traditional lecture-based instruction. At the end of the semester, both classes completed three new writing tasks, all of which were anonymized for fair evaluation. Finally, five teachers scored all works using the same rubric, and the average scores were compared to assess the impact of the teaching model on students' writing performance.

Data Analysis

The research team utilized SPSS statistical software to analyze the post-test data from both classes. Mann-Whitney U tests were used to identify significant differences in writing performance between the two classes across the three proficiency levels. In addition, qualitative content analysis of student writing was performed to evaluate thematic richness, expressive clarity, and structural sophistication. These findings were synthesized to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the creative writing workshop model, offering practical recommendations for enhancing writing instruction in vocational education contexts.

Inter-rater reliability measures

This study adopted a multi-rater evaluation method. The specific approach was as follows: In the pre-test, each student's three works were independently scored by five writing teachers. Eventually, each student received 15 scores, and the average was taken. In the post-test, each student's three creations were also given 15 scores by these five teachers, and the average was taken.

To assess the consistency among raters, inter-rater reliability was calculated using the two-way mixed effects intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC), treating the teachers as fixed effects and the works as random effects, focusing on absolute agreement. This approach quantifies the degree of agreement among teachers and ensures the reliability and validity of the scoring process.

Ethical Considerations

This study strictly adhered to ethical research principles to ensure the rights, dignity, and safety of all participants. All procedures were reviewed and approved by the TUA Institutional Ethics Review Committee (TUA-IERC) under the approval code: 2024-2nd-CASE-Sun-v1, before the start of the pilot phase.

Anonymity and Confidentiality were strictly observed. All students' personal identities were anonymized using codes throughout the data recording and analysis process. Final writing scores, pre-test, and post-test results were recorded without any identifying information. Only the principal researchers and authorized scoring teachers had access to the raw data, and all were required to sign a confidentiality agreement before participating in the evaluation.

Throughout the experiment, students' academic performance was neither affected nor influenced by their participation in the study. The creative writing tasks were integrated into regular coursework, and students did not perceive them as high-stakes assessments. They were reassured that the pre-test and post-test scores would not impact their academic grades or evaluations. This reduced potential psychological stress helped ensure honest participation.

In summary, this study employed a Quasi-Experimental design with rigorous pre- and post-testing, carefully balanced group assignment, multi-dimensional evaluation scales, and multi-rater scoring, combined with both quantitative statistical analysis and qualitative content analysis. This approach ensured objectivity, consistency, and reliability of the data, while effectively capturing the impact of the creative writing workshop. The methodology provides a robust and scientifically valid framework for investigating the enhancement of writing skills among vocational college students.

RESULTS

This section primarily compares the post-test writing scores of students who received creative writing workshop instruction with those who received traditional creative writing instruction. In addition, based on the writing ability levels (excellent, good, and pass) of students in different groups of the two classes, the researchers further compared the post-test scores of students in the same group of the two classes. Through these comparisons, the study aimed to determine the actual effectiveness of the creative writing workshop approach in enhancing students' writing skills and its applicability among different learner groups.

Table1. Posttest scores of the Creative Writing workshop participants

Student Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Individual Score	97	90	83	85	80	82	90	94	85	83	86	84	91	82	95	90	88	84	89	89	90	90	85
Mean Score	87.48																						
Interpretation	Each student creates three works, which are scored by five teachers. Each student has a total of 15 points, and then the average score is calculated. The average score of the Creative Writing Workshop is 87.48.																						

Table 2. Posttest scores of traditional writing mode participants.

Student Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Individual Score	87	91	85	88	93	91	87	87	84	87	87	83	88	86	86	86	85	83	85	70	81	78
Mean Score	85.46																					
Interpretation	Each student creates three works, which are scored by five teachers. Each student has a total of 15 points, and then the average score is calculated. The average score of the Creative Writing Workshop is 85.46.																					

Non-parametric Test Results

To examine the overall difference between the two classes (Table 1 and Table 2), a Mann-Whitney U test was conducted on the post-test scores. The results showed that the experimental group (Median = 88.00) did not significantly outperform the control group (Median = 86.00, $U = 209$, $z = -1.00$, $p = .317$). This indicates that, from a non-parametric

perspective, there is no statistically significant difference in overall writing performance between the creative writing workshop and traditional instruction.

Table 3. The comparison of the post-test scores between the creative writing class and the traditional writing class.

Paired grp	CWW		TWW		Cohen's d	Effect size
	M ₁	87.77	M ₂	85.46	0.4942	Small
Posttest	SD ₁	4.40	SD ₂	4.76		

Note: $d=0.2$ =Small; $d=0.5$ =Medium; $d=0.8$ =Large

Table 3 presents the effect size comparison of post-test writing scores between the creative writing workshop class and the traditional writing class. The results show that the mean score of the creative writing workshop group was 87.77 (SD = 4.40), which was slightly higher than the mean score of the traditional writing group, 85.46 (SD = 4.76). The calculated Cohen's *d* value was 0.49, which represents a small-to-moderate effect size. This finding suggests that although the overall difference between the two instructional approaches was not large, the creative writing workshop still demonstrated a modest positive impact on students' writing performance.

In line with many previous studies, traditional or exam-oriented writing teaching often leads to stylized writing patterns, thereby restricting students' creative expression, especially the creative expression ability of students who were evaluated as excellent or good, even in the open and free environment of the Creative Writing workshop, they still create stereotyped writing thinking their writing expressions, tend to be more organized and elegant in language, but they have been hesitant in creative expression. Therefore, their scores are not much different from those of traditional creative writing classes. Gilbert (2021) pointed out that students are often compelled to follow a 'set of rules for writing', meaning that writing classes tend to confine students within established rules, which may restrict their creative expression. Ng et al. (2021) also pointed out that over time, student cohorts develop set ways in which they engage in writing tasks. (Ng et al., 2021) It is indicated that institutionalized teaching will form a fixed writing habit over a long period of time. This result also presents a new feasible direction for the researchers' next step of study.

To further explore how students with different writing abilities responded to the instructional approaches, effect sizes were calculated for three proficiency groups: Excellent, Good, and Pass. The results are presented in Table 4.

For the Excellent group, the calculated effect size was $d = -1.76$, representing a large effect size favoring the traditional writing instruction. This result indicates that, within the short-term intervention period of this study, students with already strong writing abilities would tend to achieve slightly higher scores under the traditional instructional approach. One possible explanation is that these students may have already internalized structured

writing conventions commonly emphasized in exam-oriented instruction, which align more closely with traditional evaluation criteria.

Table 4. The comparison of the post-test scores between the groups in the creative writing class and the traditional creative writing class

Paired Grp		CWW		TWW	Cohen's d	Effect size
Excellent (Over 89)	M ₁	80.43	M ₂	89.22	-1.7592	Large
	SD ₁	6.31	SD ₂	3.18		
Good (85-89)	M ₁	87.57	M ₂	86.22	0.4344	Small
	SD ₁	4.12	SD ₂	1.53		
Pass (Below 85)	M ₁	88.89	M ₂	80.43	1.6932	Large
	SD ₁	3.18	SD ₂	6.31		

Note: $d=0.2$ =Small; $d=0.5$ =Medium; $d=0.8$ =Large

For the Good group, the calculated effect size was $d = 0.43$, indicating a small effect size favoring the creative writing workshop. This suggests that the workshop-based approach may provide some benefit to students with intermediate writing proficiency. However, the magnitude of improvement remains relatively limited, possibly because these students require a longer period of exposure to workshop-based writing practices to fully develop their creative writing abilities.

In contrast, the Pass group demonstrated the most substantial improvement. The calculated effect size reached $d = 1.69$, which represents a large effect size favoring the creative writing workshop. This finding indicates that students with weaker writing foundations benefited significantly from the workshop-based instructional model. The collaborative, interactive, and less restrictive environment of the creative writing workshop may help reduce writing anxiety and encourage students to express their ideas more freely. As a result, students with lower initial writing proficiency were able to show greater improvement in their writing performance.

Keller (2025) emphasizes that creative writing, as a method for exploring writing beyond academic boundaries, can reveal how students' fixed writing habits and thinking patterns may hinder their adaptation to instructional approaches that prioritize autonomy and creativity. Wang (2023) also highlighted that student writing motivation, teachers' personal and professional characteristics, and classroom environment significantly influence students' writing skills. For students with weaker writing abilities, these factors are particularly impactful, and teachers can enhance students' writing skills by providing diverse instructional support and fostering motivation. Moreover, Myhill et al. (2023) demonstrated that changing the writing environment to a creative, non-traditional context can further stimulate students' interest and creativity, particularly benefiting students with weaker writing foundations. When the classroom was

transformed into more autonomous and collaborative practices, students' motivation and creative expression significantly increased (Myhill et al., 2023).

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study suggest that the creative writing workshop should not be simply viewed as a substitute for traditional writing instruction but rather understood as a complementary pedagogical framework. This perspective is supported by recent developments in writing education research. Empirical evidence indicates that writing instruction integrating self-reflection and creative engagement significantly enhances students' writing achievement and motivation, especially among those with weaker foundations (Deti et al., 2023). Traditionally, conventional writing instruction has played a fundamental role in cultivating students' awareness of textual structure and clarity of expression. Mastery of organizational patterns, cohesive devices, and linguistic conventions constitutes an important prerequisite for effective written communication, particularly in academic writing and professional communication contexts. However, when writing instruction overemphasizes formal correctness and standardized structures, students may gradually rely on fixed patterns, potentially limiting their willingness to explore new ideas and develop personal writing styles to some extent. A systematic review further demonstrates that interventions emphasizing autonomy and collaborative participation effectively improve writing performance and learner confidence (Zhang et al., 2023). It is in this sense that the workshop model enables students to gradually recognize that writing is not merely a practice of following rules, but also a creative activity of expressing ideas and constructing meaning. Moreover, research confirms that when the writing environment shifts from rule-dominated evaluation to one that encourages expression and creativity, students' motivation and self-efficacy increase substantially (Myhill et al., 2023). These theoretical and empirical findings provide a coherent explanation for the moderate effect observed in the present study.

Writing competence is reflected not only in the mastery of established linguistic conventions but also in the ability to flexibly employ linguistic resources according to different contexts and communicative purposes. Incorporating creative practices into an instructional framework that continues to value structure and convention helps alleviate the long-standing tension between "normativity" and "creativity" in writing instruction. Furthermore, this complementary framework holds particular practical significance in the context of vocational education. Students in applied learning environments often need to develop writing competencies that are both accurate and standardized, yet adaptable to diverse situations. In actual professional communication, written expression not only needs to follow certain professional conventions but also frequently requires creative expression, narrative capability, and audience attention. Therefore, a pedagogical model that combines traditional writing instruction with creative writing workshops can better respond to the complex and diverse literacy demands of contemporary professional environments.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The results indicate that although the creative writing workshop did not produce a statistically significant difference in overall post-test scores, it demonstrated meaningful improvement among students in the “Pass” group, suggesting practical instructional value. The findings imply that students with different initial proficiency levels respond differently to an open and workshop-based writing environment. Students who were previously classified as “Excellent” or “Good” may have already developed relatively stable writing patterns and, therefore, showed limited short-term change. In contrast, students with weaker foundations appeared to benefit more from a supportive, interactive, and less restrictive writing context.

These results do not suggest that traditional writing instruction lacks value. Rather, they indicate that incorporating more flexible and practice-oriented approaches into vocational writing courses may better support diverse learner needs. On this basis, the study proposes further integrating creative writing with self-media practice and professional coursework, using reader feedback, style exploration, and disciplinary integration to gradually refine the workshop model.

This research provides preliminary empirical evidence for creative writing instruction in higher vocational colleges. Future studies may strengthen the conclusions by expanding the sample size, extending the intervention period, and conducting cross-institutional validation to more comprehensively examine the long-term effectiveness and applicability of the model.



Figure 1. Teaching strategies based on the student level

Recommendations

Based on the research results, creative writing workshops have had differentiated impacts on students of different levels, especially on those with a weaker foundation. Therefore, it is necessary to optimize the course structure on the existing basis, integrating creative writing workshops, practice on self-media writing platforms, and professional

skills training. By breaking away from template-based writing, strengthening reader awareness, and integrating professional content such as design and planning, a more systematic, practical, and career-development-oriented creative writing teaching model should be constructed. From a theoretical perspective, this approach is consistent with constructivist and social interactionist principles that emphasize learning through authentic tasks and collaborative engagement. Accordingly, a curriculum improvement framework is proposed (Table 5).

The first core dimension is the exploration of writing style.

At the level of exploring writing styles, teaching should first, through the guidance of teachers and internal discussions in workshops, guide students to gradually eliminate the templated or fixed frameworks in writing, thereby cultivating genuine thinking and expression in creative writing. Meanwhile, through five progressive creative writing training sessions, students gradually explore and establish a writing style with their own characteristics. During this process, discussions on the language art of the works will also be held within the workshop. Students will correct and modify each other, thereby continuously enhancing the expressiveness of the language and the appeal of the works.

As Ge (2020) pointed out, the true teaching goal of creative writing does not merely lie in training writing skills, but in releasing students' creativity. The key lies in achieving the unity of "life truth" and "artistic truth". Through this kind of training and communication, students can not only have a clearer understanding of their own writing style but also be fully prepared for future careers in creative planning.

In specific workshop practices, students can bring snacks, freely form groups, and even chat while writing. This atmosphere breaks the "sense of discipline" in writing, helping them enter a state of psychological relaxation and thereby stimulating their inner desire to express themselves. Research also shows that this kind of environment can significantly improve the quality of the works of the "qualified group" students: they gradually shift from the originally formulaic and empty sentences to sincere, emotional, and vivid expressions.

Myers (2020) holds that if the embellishment of language and the structure of paragraphs are emphasized too early, it may instead cause students to fall into the anxiety of "how to please the teacher", while neglecting the core motivation of expression in writing. This study also found that many students resist writing precisely because the long-term exam-oriented essays have required them to use "flowery language" and "standardized structure". As a result, they dare not write about their real experiences and can only imitate model essays or even fabricate stories.

Therefore, at the beginning of the workshop, the teacher particularly emphasized: "First, write down what you want to write in your heart, and then gradually refine the sentences." This strategy helps students relieve their psychological burden, especially for those in the "qualified group"; it is simply a complete liberation. They no longer get bogged down in spelling or grammar mistakes, but dare to write creatively around real life, making

their works more natural and genuine. Through repeated training and revision, they gradually form a stable writing style of their own.

Table 5. Curriculum Improvement Plan

Key Result Areas	Objectives	Strategy	Success Indicators for creative writing class
Style Exploration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Break free from fixed thinking patterns and writing frameworks, and develop a creative writing habit of genuine expression. 2. Find a clear personal creative writing style. 3. Enhance the expressive ability of language art. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Daily field research and writing, classroom presentations and workshop discussions, through teacher guidance, eliminate writing templates or frameworks, and cultivate genuine thinking in creative writing art. 2. Through reading and imitating the works of well-known writers, find a writing style with personal characteristics. 3. Discussions on the language art of works within the workshop, mutual correction and modification, to enhance language expressiveness. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The unity of life, truth, and artistic truth. 2. Write a summary of your personal creative style. 3. After the work is completed, the number of revisions drops below 30%.
Reader positioning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cultivate students' awareness of the reader circle in the process of creative writing. 2. Be capable of adjusting the form of creative writing based on the positioning and reading needs of readers. 3. Build resonance points between the text and the readers. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Starting from within the creative workshop, explore the readership of personal works. 2. Through self-media creative writing, check the reading volume on the platform and conduct reader demand analysis. 3. Discuss the feedback from readers on self-media and analyze the relationship between reading volume and resonance points. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the reader circle report. 2. Complete the reader needs analysis report. 3. Complete the statistics of personal creativity and the resonance points with readers.
Creative integration practice	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build a multi-faceted cognition that integrates professional courses with creative writing. 2. Build a model system that integrates professional courses with creative writing. 3. Practice the integration path of professional courses and creative writing, and make technical adjustments based on reader feedback. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Through the creation of online soft articles, planning proposals, literary copywriting, etc., guide students to build a multi-dimensional creative writing cognition that integrates videos, images, and text. 2. Integrate professional knowledge such as modeling, color, fine arts, and design software, and through creative workshops, build a new model system for creative writing. 3. Creative works are placed on online platforms to collect readers' reading volume and feedback, and technical adjustments are made based on the feedback. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cross-course creative portfolio 2. Creative Writing Workshop Model System. 3. Reading volume analysis and reader feedback report.

The second core dimension is the readership positioning of the work.

The dimension of reader positioning emphasizes a shift from "self-expression" to "reader consciousness". Students need to analyze the dual feedback from the data within the workshop and on self-media platforms to clarify the reader circle and its needs, and then adjust the writing form. This process is characterized by quantitative reports (such as reader feedback analysis and resonance point statistics), aiming to cultivate a positive "writing-audience" writing perspective and ensure that the text truly resonates.

In traditional writing teaching, the teacher is often the sole reader of the work. Students habitually write around "what the teacher likes", resulting in a high reliance on external evaluation for the creative direction. In the workshop mode, the reading and feedback of writing are no longer the exclusive domain of teachers but occur among students or on self-media platforms. The students in the workshop are both creators and readers as well as mentors. The readership on self-media platforms is infinitely open and dynamically changing. This "equal reader relationship" has altered the internal dynamic mechanism of writing. Especially for high-scoring students, when they realize that their works need to reach the "true readership" rather than the "scoring mechanism", they are more willing to make breakthroughs in theme depth, structural arrangement, and language style, pursuing personalized expression rather than being confined to writing techniques. This coincides with the research conclusion of He & Tian (2024), which states that growth-oriented creative thinking can significantly enhance students' performance in writing tasks by stimulating their intrinsic creative motivation.

The third core dimension is the integration of creative writing and vocational skills.

Technology integration focuses on the consolidation of interdisciplinary capabilities, combining professional courses such as design and fine arts with creative writing. Students develop diverse creative perceptions through practical forms such as case studies, model construction, and online distribution, and continuously optimize their works based on feedback from real readers. Its achievements (such as cross-course portfolios and creative writing model systems) reflect a closed loop from theory to practice, highlighting the educational philosophy of "learning by doing". The benefits of intensive skills training and integrated creative practice can be benchmarked with industry-university collaboration models, which combine professional theory with practical industry experience. Learning in the context of real creative projects helps students acquire both domain-specific skills and broader competencies, including problem-solving, project planning, and collaborative communication (Zeng, 2023).

This program is based on constructivism and social learning theories. Through a step-by-step training of style shaping, reader connection, and technology application, it not only enhances students' creative writing literacy but also strengthens their career-oriented planning and adaptability.

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study present practical implications for educators, curriculum developers, and policymakers in vocational education.

Ministry of Education. This study aligns with the Ministry of Education's directives on the establishment of professional programs in higher vocational colleges, especially the need for a scientific, standardized, and comprehensive talent training program for the Cultural Creativity and Planning major. By investigating the implementation and effects of the creative writing workshop model, the study offers empirical evidence to support curriculum improvement and aligns vocational education with national cultural innovation strategies. It also offers some suggestive thoughts on educational reform for the Ministry of Education. What is the current situation of exam-oriented education? How much does exam-oriented education restrict creative ability? What is the realistic possibility of improving exam-oriented education?

Vocational Schools. The study offers practical guidance for vocational institutions in their curriculum reform and talent development strategies. Specifically, it provides a model for how creative writing courses can enhance student motivation and language expression. These findings are valuable for expanding diverse training approaches and enhancing the quality and appeal of vocational schools.

Teachers. For writing instructors, this research offers innovative teaching methods that emphasize collaborative writing, student engagement, and creative expression. It highlights the importance of the teacher's role in guiding workshop-based learning and contributes to professional development and pedagogical advancement in writing instruction.

Vocational College Students. The creative writing experience enabled students to improve their written expression, logical thinking, and creative skills. The techniques and collaborative practices explored in the study benefit their academic performance and provide a foundation for future career development and overall competencies.

Aspiring Writers. This study offers practical and actionable strategies in creative writing that are particularly beneficial to aspiring writers or literature enthusiasts. It aims to stimulate interest and build confidence in writing creatively.

Future Researchers. The study serves as a foundational reference for future academic research on creative writing instruction in vocational education. Its experimental design, data analysis, and instructional strategies can be adapted and expanded by other scholars, supporting continuous development in this area.

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DECLARATION

Conflict of Interest

There are no conflicts of interest between the authors regarding the content of the paper.

Informed Consent

An informed consent form was obtained from all participants involved in the study.

Ethics Approval

The researchers secured Ethical clearance from Trinity University of Asia's Ethics Clearance Committee with protocol Number 2024-1st-CASE-Gao-v1.

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Author's Biography

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Appendix 1

Evaluation criteria for the creative writing level of students in higher Vocational Colleges

The following is the evaluation standard table of the creative writing level of students in higher vocational colleges, combining reliability and validity. It aims to provide a clear and systematic framework for evaluating the creative writing ability of vocational college students.

Table 6. Evaluation Criteria

Evaluative dimension	Evaluation index	Specific description	Score	Weight
Creativity and theme	Original creativity	The novelty and originality of the	0-10	22%
	Depth and breadth	The depth and breadth of the topic	0-10	
Structure and organization	logicality	The rationality and logical order of the article structure	0-10	20%
	consistency	Connections and transitions between paragraphs and	0-7	
linguistic performance	accuracy	Correct grammar and spelling	0-8	18%
	richness	Diversity and richness of word choices	0-7	
	fluency	The flexibility of sentence patterns and the natural flow of	0-7	
Emotion and style	infectivity	The authenticity of emotional expression and the touch to	0-14	20%
	individuality	The author's personal style and consistency	0-10	
Reader resonance	attraction	The interest and appeal of the work to	0-12	20%
	influence	The influence of a work on the mind or emotions of the	0-8	

Evaluation description:

Score range: Each evaluation indicator is marked with a score range, which can be adjusted according to the actual situation.

Weight: The total score of each dimension is the sum of the scores of all indicators under it. Different weights are assigned to each dimension according to its importance.

Scoring rules: To ensure reliability, specific scoring rules and examples should be provided for each evaluation indicator, so that raters have unified standards for scoring.

Teacher training: Before formal marking, teachers are trained to ensure that they have a common understanding of the marking criteria and can maintain consistency in actual marking.

Appendix 2

Grading Rules

Originality (10%)

Score details:

- 0-3 marks: lack of novelty, common theme, lack of unique perspective.
- 4-6 marks: There is some innovation, but traces of conventional thinking can still be seen.
- 7-8 marks: with obvious originality, novel theme, unique mark of view.
- 9-10 marks: Highly innovative, the theme has never been seen before, and deeply reflects the unique thinking of the individual.

Depth and breadth (10%)

Score details:

- 0-3 marks: The theme discussion is shallow, and the scope is narrow.
- 4-6 marks: the theme has a certain depth, but there is still room for expansion.
- 7-8 marks: The theme is deeply discussed, involving multiple levels.
- 9-10 marks: The topic is both deep and broad, showing comprehensive thinking and deep insights.

Logical (10%)

Score details:

- 0-3 marks: The structure is confused, and the logic is not clear.
- 4-6 marks: basically orderly, but there are logical faults.
- 7-8 marks: clear logic and reasonable structure.
- 9-10 marks: strict logic, exquisite structure, clear hierarchy.

Continuity (7%)

Score details:

- 0-1 marks: Lack of transition between paragraphs, overall incoherence.
- 2-3 marks: Some paragraphs are coherent, but there is still room for improvement.
- 4-5 marks: paragraphs transition naturally, and the overall coherence is good.
- 6-7 marks: Smooth transition between paragraphs, excellent overall reading experience.

Accuracy (8%)

Score details:

- 0-1 marks: Grammar errors are frequent, spelling errors are frequent.
- 2-3 marks: There are some grammatical or spelling mistakes, but they do not affect understanding.
- 4-6 marks: basically no grammar and spelling errors, accurate expression.
- 7-8 marks: accurate language, showing a high level of language control.

Richness (7%)

Score details:

- 0-1 marks: poor vocabulary, repeated use of the same words.
- 2-3 marks: Vocabulary choice is general, slightly monotonous.
- 4-5 marks: rich vocabulary, able to properly use a variety of words.
- 6-7 marks: Very rich vocabulary, clever use of advanced vocabulary and expressions.

Fluency (7%)

Score details:

- 0-1 marks: Single sentence pattern, read stiffly.
- 2-3 marks: The sentence pattern has a certain change, but the fluency is average.
- 4-5 marks: diverse sentence patterns, fluent language.
- 6-7 marks: Flexible sentence pattern, beautiful and smooth language.

Appeal (14%)

Score details:

- 0-3 marks: emotional expression is flat, a lack of appeal.
- 4-7 marks: Emotional expression is reflected, but not deep enough.
- 8-11 marks: emotional authenticity, with a certain degree of appeal.
- 12-14 marks: Strong emotion, deeply moved readers.

Personality (10%)

Score details:

- 0-3 marks: lack of personal characteristics, obvious imitation traces.
- 4-6 marks: Have a certain personal style, but not distinct enough.
- 7-8 marks: personal style is obvious and recognizable.
- 9-10 marks: Very personal style, the work is full of personality and color.

Attraction (12%)

Score details:

- 0-3 marks: The content is boring and difficult to attract readers.
- 4-6 marks: The content has some appeal, but not enough to keep the reader interested for a long time.
- 7-9 marks: The content is engaging and arouses readers' curiosity.
- 10-12 marks: The content is highly engaging and engages the reader.

Influence (8%)

Score details:

- 0-1 marks: Little impact on the reader's thoughts or emotions.
- 2-3 marks: It has a certain impact on readers, but the effect is not lasting.
- 4-6 marks: can cause readers to think deeply and have a certain impact.
- 7-8 marks: deeply affect the reader's thoughts or emotions, leaving a lasting impression.

Through these grading rules, the teacher team can evaluate students' creative writing works more objectively and consistently, and students can also understand their strengths and weaknesses according to these rules, so as to improve their writing skills.