



LEARNING TO SELF-REGULATE CREATIVE WRITING IN SCHOOLS: EFFECTS OF GOALS AND MOTIVATION ON WRITING SELF-REGULATION AND PERFORMANCE



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INTRODUCTION

Creative writing is a very complex and cognitively demanding activity requiring the use of the cognitive writing strategies and simultaneous activation of metacognitive, motivational, affective and behavioural processes, and the control of the immediate environment or the contextual variables. That is the reason why writing implies self-regulation of all the above-mentioned activities and environment by the individual who creates the text.

METHODOLOGY

Learning to self-regulate creative writing is an important competence that students need to acquire according to the school curriculum. Therefore, the aim of this study was to examine in the ecologically valid school task (writing an essay) the direct and indirect effects of writing goals and values on the success of the writing activity and to verify if those effects were mediated through the use of self-regulation strategies. The procedure of writing the essay exam was identical to the one used in the state final exams. High school students (N=231; 127 girls; mean age=18,35; SD=0,667) participated in this study.

The research went through several phases (before writing the essay exam, writing the essay, immediately after writing the essay and after getting the feedback on the written essay) during the regular classes. The research methods mainly consisted of the self-report questionnaires and the essay exam evaluated by two independent evaluators. The procedure of writing the essay exam was identical to the one used in the state final exams.

Selection of variables for mediational analysis: Dataset was obtained from a larger study that investigated motivational and cognitive determinants of self-regulated learning in writing assignments. Variables were selected based on criteria for mediation analysis proposed by Baron and Kenny (1986).

Writing outcome: score for the essay test assignment was calculated as average score obtained from two independent evaluators using the state exams methodology for scoring essay tests in Croatian high school final exams (M=29,41, SD=4,266). Interrater reliability calculated as Intraclass Correlation Coefficient was high (ICC=0,96).

Mediator: planning and self-directed writing strategy was selected from a larger list of learning strategies as mediator because it had the highest correlation with outcome variable

Motivational predictors: two goal orientations (learning goal orientation and performance goal orientation) and two cognitive appraisals (value of writing and self-efficacy in writing self-regulation) were selected from a larger set of motivational variables because they had relatively high correlations with the mediator and outcome variables.

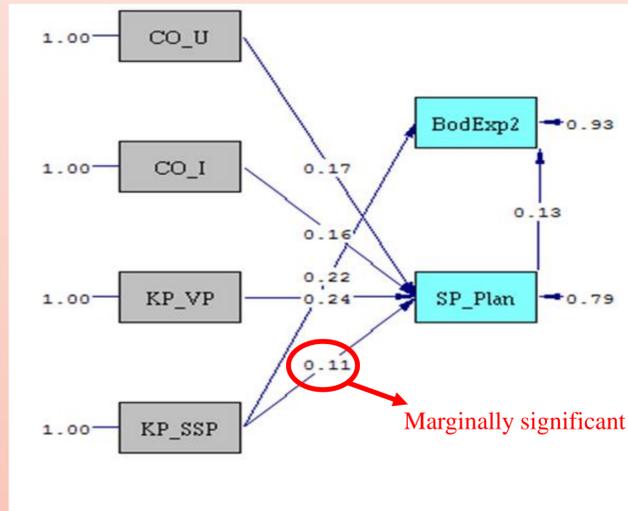
RESULTS

Using the mediation analyses, we have tested direct and indirect effects of writing goals, values and self-efficacy on writing achievement (a standardised scoring procedure performed by two independent evaluators).

Table 1. Mediator and motivational predictors	alpha	M	SD
Mediator: Planning and self-directed writing strategy (N=11)	0,86	3,27	0,71
Predictor 1: Learning goal orientation (N=5)	0,78	19,68	2,874
Predictor 2: Performance goal orientation (N=5)	0,80	18,10	3,874
Predictor 3: Value of writing (N=6)	0,78	22,17	4,277
Predictor 4: Self-efficacy in writing self-regulation (N=7)	0,80	25,99	3,458

Note: N=number of items; Scale Min.=1, Max.=5; For Planning and self-directed writing scale result is calculated as an average score on scale items.

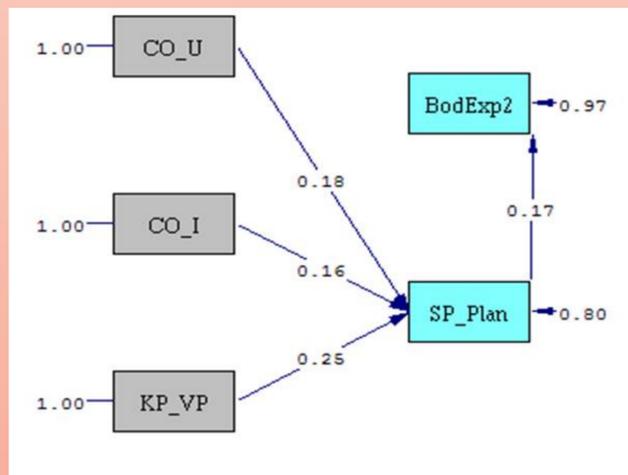
Model 1: Mediated and direct effects of writing motivation on writing performance



Partially mediated model has a good fit indicators:
 $\chi^2=5.73$; $df=3$; $\chi^2/df=1.91$;
 $p<0.126$; $RMSEA=0.069$.

Effect of KP_SSP on SP_Plan is **marginally significant** resulting with non-significant mediation effect

Model 2: Only mediated effects of writing motivation on writing performance



Fully mediated model has acceptable fit indicators:
 $\chi^2=7.80$; $df=3$; $\chi^2/df=2.06$;
 $p=0.031$; $RMSEA=0.091$.

Mediation effect sizes are very small and only value of writing has statistically significant mediation effect of 0.04 (Sobel test: $z=1.97$; $p=0.05$) on writing outcome.

Variable labels:

CO_U – learning goal orientation

CO_I – performance goal orientation

KP_VP – value of writing

KP_SSP – self-efficacy in writing self-regulation

BodExp2 – score on writing essay test

SP_Plan – planning and self-directed writing strategy

CONCLUSIONS

We have found that the learning goal orientation, the performance goal orientation and the value of writing have indirect positive effects on writing achievement through increased use of planning and self-directed writing strategy. On the other hand self-efficacy in writing self-regulation had only a direct positive effect on the writing achievement, bringing into question is it cause or an effect of previous achievements. These results indicate the relative importance of self-regulation processes in the highly complex task of creative writing.

THE MOST IMPORTANT CONCLUSION!

Creative writing is more about INSPIRATION and less about SELF-REGULATION, and it can't be (significantly) reduced to numbers!

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