



The Composing Process of Melancholic and Sanguine Junior High School Students in the Philippines

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Abstract

Composing is a process of discovering and exploring ideas and constructing a framework to best present them (Zamel, 1983). It is a private and solitary act, nondirective and personal (Hyland, 1983). Previous studies have focused on the description of learners' composing process, while a dearth of literature as regards the description of the writing process based on the learners' personality types has been observed. To inform and strategize the delivery and approach in teaching writing, it is interesting to explore the learners' composing process, their writing strategies, and the latter's relationship with their personality types. Employing the mixed methods design, the present study described the composing process of five sanguine and five melancholic junior high school students enrolled in a public school in the Philippines. The description was based on their observed writing strategies during their pre-writing, drafting, and revising and their answers to the survey questionnaire. To further validate their responses, a Focus Group Discussion was employed. The difference between the two personality types in the composing process was determined through ANOVA. Results revealed that the groups had different composing strategies. Sanguine wrote slower and used many drafts, unlike the melancholic writers, who were fast writers and consistent in their drafts. Also, sanguine utilized more pre-writing activities and showed recursion and modification in their final draft.

1. INTRODUCTION

As one macro skill in pedagogy, writing has seen a paradigm shift from product to approach as early as the late 70s. Enthused linguists (e.g., Perl, 1979; Flower & Hayes, 1981;

Zamel, 1983; Silva, 1986; Pemberton, 1983) and researchers have transformed the process, making it central in their academic writings and investigations. For one, Perl (1979) investigated the composing process of unskilled writers; Flower and Hayes (1981) extrapolated on the cognitive process theory of writing; Zamel (1983) looked into the composing process of advanced ESL students; Silva (1986) worked on the first and second language composing processes in her case study, and Pemberton (1993) crafted modelling theory and composing process models. Several studies exploring composing as a process have been continuously conducted across countries. Gustilo (2013) investigated Filipino engineering students' writing performance, resources, and idea generation processes in the Philippines. In 2016, Gustilo explored the differences between less and more proficient ESL College writing. Likewise, Torres and Flores (2017) studied the L1 composing process of Filipino ESL teachers. The more recent study of Torres and Medrano (2020) explored the differences in writing styles across language groups in the Philippines. Presumably, studies on composing focused more on the description of the processes undertaken by the different types of writers and did not dwell much on the writers' personality types.

Writing as an activity is private in nature. No matter how the external environment gives him clues on how and what to write, the writer still prefers to write what is on his mind and follows the processes he prefers. His composition output, or any task in general, reveals his personality type. The way he interprets the cues, the way he follows the principles, the way he activates his schema, and the way he designs his stages depend on his personality. Writing as an activity is influenced by the person's personality type; writing as an expression is affected by how a person thinks, behaves, and feels. Writing and personality are interrelated. Notably, few studies have dealt with the relationship of personality types and the composing process of the writers, such as the work of Jensen and DiTiberio in 1984, research on personality and individual writing processes. Many have focused on the relationship of personality to language acquisition and language skills. Taylor et al. (1969) worked on the role of personality variables in second language behaviour.

Cognizant of the gap in terms of richness, this study aimed to provide additional literature on the relationship between composing process and the personality types of the writers. Addressing this problem holistically can be undertaken by identifying the students' personality types at the very beginning. It is believed that writing is a very private and highly individualized activity. Hyland (1983) noted that writing is learned, and not taught. It is claimed to be nondirective and personal. When a writer composes, the teacher does not dictate what to

write, the teacher does not intervene with the pace, and the teacher does not impose what step should be done first. Once the teacher gives the prompter, it becomes the students' task to activate all the skills needed to accomplish the writing task. The process is then affected by the individual's emotion and behaviour in carrying it out and in responding to the prompter.

Knowing the personality type of the students and the way they feel and behave towards something will enable the teachers to adjust and modify their writing instruction strategies and help them devise instructional material satisfying the needs and styles of the students, consequently developing a positive attitude towards writing. Finally, knowing the personality types of the target learners will give precautions on how to strategize teaching more effectively.

1.1.Statement of the Problem

This study explored the composing process of melancholic and sanguine Junior High School students. Specifically, it aimed to answer the following:

- a. What is the composing process of melancholic and sanguine writers?
- b. What are the writing strategies of melancholic writers in prewriting, drafting, and revising?
- c. What are the writing strategies of sanguine writers in prewriting, drafting, and revising? and
- d. Is there a significant difference between the writing strategies of melancholic and sanguine writers?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.Personality and Personality Types

Personality comprises individuals' individuality, represents their constant patterns of feelings, thoughts, and behaviours, and influences their responses and actions (Cherry, 2022; Wright & Taylor, 1970). It is the basis of one's perception of someone and a predictor of their future behaviour in given situations (Zafar, 2012; Saklofske et al., 2012; Wright & Taylor, 1970).

Among the many existing typologies and terminologies, we adopt Galen's two of the four temperaments in classifying personality, the melancholic and sanguine. Melancholics are typecast as an analyzer, perceptive, enjoys instruction, consistent, practical, factual, detailed, inquisitive, persistent, sensitive, accurate, controlled, predictable, orderly, analytical, precise, and scheduled. In contrast, sanguines make new friends easily and love social contacts

(Greenbaum, 2005). They are sociable, outspoken, assertive, seek new experiences, friendly, compassionate, willing to help, optimistic, flexible, honest and accept corrections, and approachable (Chepkwony & Thinguri, 2017), and they are quickly aroused and may lose interest in one undertaking at once because they love variety in everything. They lack perseverance (Hock, n.d.).

2.2.COMPOSING AS PROCESS

The process theory of composition is a field of composition studies that focuses on writing as a process rather than a product. The process approach to writing teaching emphasizes the writer as an independent producer of texts (Hyland, 1983). Writing is a non-linear, exploratory, and generative process whereby writers discover and reformulate ideas as they attempt to approximate meaning (Zamel, 1983).

Writing as a process can be situated central to the idea that students determine the content. This is so because of its inherent characteristic that allows exploring the craft of writing from their interests, tone in language, style, voice, including diction, and that sense of freedom that supports how people respond to given topics and how they conceal if they please or deem it necessary. Classroom activities in schools often include peer work where students teach, review, brainstorm, and edit.

Process approach to writing emerged in the late 1970s due to dissatisfaction with writing as a product wherein it was believed that the latter could not fully develop the writing skills of the learners because of its focus on the textual features of language and its sentence-level structure approach. Writing instructors began giving students more group work and found that, with guidance, students could identify and recognize areas that needed improvement in other students' papers, and that criticism also helped students recognize their areas to strengthen.

It was assumed that the writing process generally operated in some variation of three to five "stages": (a) Prewriting: This step involves brainstorming, considering the purpose and goals for writing, using graphic organizers to connect ideas, and designing a coherent structure for a writing piece; (b) Drafting; (c) Revising; (d) Editing; and (e) publishing. Donald Murray (1972) limited these stages to pre-writing, drafting, and revising.

3. METHODOLOGY

The participants were 10 junior high school students enrolled in a specialized curriculum in Agriculture and Science and Technology from a State-University in Central

Luzon. The researchers employed a mixed-method research design. Specifically, questionnaires, observation, document analysis, and interviews were used. ANOVA was used to identify the difference between the composing processes and strategies employed by the respondents.

In undertaking the study, consultation was made with the university guidance counsellor to determine the personality types of the participants. With the test in place, the counsellor became instrumental in properly administering the test and interpreting the results. Permission was sought from the school principal to allow conduct of the test, observe their writing activity, and to do some follow-ups as deemed necessary.

The participants were oriented on the purpose of the study. Then they were asked to answer the Temperament Analysis Survey. Supplemental descriptions were taken from the literature review on the web for a more thorough and varied description of these types. After the scoring and interpreting results, 10 participants were identified - five sanguine and five melancholic.

The selected participants were then asked to write on a specific topic - 'My Inspiration' which the writers decided, and then the observation rolled out. To facilitate observation, the participants were grouped based on their personality types. The observation was done only in three one-hour sessions. The consistency of their observed patterns of behaviour and strategy in the composing process was assessed through a self-made questionnaire describing the behaviour and strategies they employ in pre-writing, drafting, and revising.

Some behaviours were included in the questionnaire to describe how they would activate themselves first before or for them to generate their ideas for the initial writing process. The respondents were also interviewed to expound on the reasons for doing such strategies and behaviour. The composition analysis in terms of organization, style, and length ensued. This determines and notes any difference in organization, style, and length between and among the collected and final revised drafts. Comparing and analyzing these drafts allow the description of the process they used.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. On the Composing Process

During the pre-writing in the composing process, the two groups were observed from the time they received the instruction until they revised their papers. When the researcher told them that they would write for a certain purpose, the melancholic types raised many questions like the type of writing material, the number of words, and the topic. They insisted that the topic should be given to them. This behaviour was consistent with the typical characteristic of melancholics

who asked for details and structured instructions before doing any assigned tasks. The melancholics started to compose right after everything was cleared. They used scratch papers; one even used the Filipino language first in her draft. At the end of Day 1, these writers were almost done in their work. This is consistent with the typical characteristics cited in Myers-Briggs' *melancholics* that they get things done at once after they receive the essentials of the task.

Meanwhile, the *sanguines* are the opposites. They did not start their composition at once. Instead, they kept talking to their seatmates and doing other things like tapping the pen and rocking the chair. Out of five, only one sanguine could finish the first draft. The majority were able to write only two to three lines. This behaviour was justified by their types, who were prone to procrastinate tasks and work under pressure.

On Day 2, the melancholics were almost done. Only two were noticed to stop writing to read the paper. On the other hand, only one sanguine was finished. Two had just started their draft. This group used lesser drafts.

On Day 3, the melancholics spent only a few minutes revising their works in the revision stage. The sanguine types were relaxed still though they showed seriousness in reading their papers and consumed all the time given to them.

The final draft of melancholic and sanguine writers showed differences too. The melancholics' final drafts were consistent with their first draft. The way they started their composition and developed and presented their ideas was consistent. No changes or revisions at all. As Myers-Briggs characterized them, they stick to their plans. What they did was to free their drafts from erasure. They submitted a longer draft. Most of them chose family, and only one included a loved one on his paper. The *sanguines*, on the other hand, exhibited variations in the presentation of their ideas and even in word choice. Their works showed that their first draft was different to their final draft. Their drafts were shorter but more organized.

Table 1. Difference between the prewriting strategies of melancholic and sanguine writers

	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between:	11.556	1	11.556	10.478	0.012
Within:	8.823	8	1.103		
Total:	20.379	9			

Result for ANOVA: $F(1,8) = 10.487, p = .012$

There is a significant difference between the melancholic and sanguine students regarding their pre-writing strategies, as revealed by the information in Table 1.

Presented in Table 2 are the prewriting strategies of melancholic and sanguine writers. The melancholic types activated themselves by silent activities like looking around the environment and talking to themselves silently—no melancholic engaged in rocking the chair and tapping the pen. Only two of these types utilized different strategies, but the majority did not use activities in the prewriting stage. This was typical in their characteristics- more given to thought. They pondered silently on what to write. Only two checked the behaviour “ask my classmate about his/her opinion about the topic”. This revealed their independence. Further, these writers exhibited fewer physical activities as justified by their working on reflecting on their thoughts, memories, and feelings.

Table 2. Prewriting strategies of melancholic and sanguine writers

BEHAVIOR	PERSONALITY TYPE	
	Melancholic (No. of Students)	Sanguine (No. of Students)
scratch my head with a pen/pencil	1	4
ask my classmate/seatmate about his/her opinion about the topic	2	5
ask my teacher what to do	3	4
play with the pen/pencil by spinning it	1	4
play with the pen/pencil by tapping it	0	3
look around the environment	4	5
look at the ceiling	1	4
write notes of what to write	2	2
write list of what to write	2	4
write outline of what to write	1	3
rock the chair	0	4
look at blank pages of my paper	2	4
keep silent and have a mental outline of my ideas	1	4
talk to myself as I outline my ideas	4	4

The sanguine employed different pre-writing strategies like self-talking, outlining, listing, and mental outlining. Almost all of them used the behavior except in the writing notes of what to write. “Look around the environment and ask my classmate/seatmate about his/her

opinion about the topic behaviors” were utilized by all the sanguines to activate their writing schema. Based on the characteristics of this type of personality according to Jung, they love to talk and physically engage themselves in the environment. Sanguines love movements. These characteristics were evident in the behavior and strategies they used in the pre-writing process.

The data in Table 2 support the observation that melancholics had finished their draft earlier because they started it at once and did not engage themselves in many pre writing behavior and strategies unlike the sanguines.

Table 3 shows that few of both personality types used Filipino first on their draft, which was also observed in the process: one melancholic who was the most silent among the group and the sanguine who was the least skilled writer in her group. Both would ask help from the teacher for unfamiliar words and considered audience responses. Also, both wanted a nice presentation of ideas.

The melancholic writers utilized lesser activities in the drafting stage. When they started to write, they engaged themselves in writing and prevented interruptions, including stopping to check their work from time to time, consistent with their observed behaviour. The zero results in the behaviour “wish that the composition will be done at home” was also consistent in their observed behaviour during the writing process because they intended to finish the task at once when they started to write. The items “dislike interruptions” and “dislike classmates who talk to me” justified their being independent and silent workers.

The sanguines were more afraid to commit grammatical errors. They consistently paused to check their ideas. This strategy was evident in their final draft which showed the re-organization of ideas. This revealed further that when they were not satisfied with the flow of their ideas or choice of words, they would rearrange them. Their submitted drafts proved this behaviour. The majority of the sanguines postponed actions and were not afraid of deadlines. They also exhibited difficulty in finishing the task not because they were not less skilled writers but because they often stopped to check their works. “Ask my classmates from time to time about their paper” supported the observation that they were still doing other activities besides their assigned task. The inconsistency observed have they checked the item “dislike to be disturbed by a classmate” because they accommodated questions showing no irritation during the observation. However, this inconsistency was justified by their nature of being people-friendly. However, they also avoided distractions like noisy environments to finish the task. According to Myers-Briggs, sanguines need to concentrate for them to realize the assignment.

Table 3. The drafting strategies of melancholic and sanguine writers

BEHAVIOR	PERSONALITY TYPE	
	Melancholic (No. of Students)	Sanguine (No. of Students)
use scratch paper	3	5
stop after a paragraph to review my composition	1	3
ask my teacher for unfamiliar word/translation	3	4
ask my classmates for the English translation	4	4
write my ideas in Filipino first	2	3
write my whole composition in Filipino first	1	2
encircle the word to be translated	0	1
put a blank for the unfamiliar, difficult word	1	2
use the Filipino word for the unfamiliar, difficult word	2	3
dislike classmates who talk to me	1	4
dislike interruption	0	3
dislike noisy environment	4	5
pause for a while and ask my classmates how their papers are going	1	3
read my work silently from time to time	1	3
talk to myself and ask questions about my work	2	4
read my work to myself from time to time	0	2
ask myself if my ideas are good	3	3
ask myself if my teacher/reader will understand what I write	2	2
afraid to commit grammar errors	0	3
feel happy when I write beautifully	3	4
wish that my composition will be done at home	0	3
pause and check for grammar first	1	4
pause and check for the flow of my ideas first	2	3

The result of ANOVA shows that when it comes to drafting strategies, students in both melancholic and sanguine groups differ from one another (Table 4).

Table 4. Difference between the drafting strategies of melancholic and sanguine writers

	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between:	7.569	1	7.569	5.656	0.045
Within:		10.706	8	1.338	
Total:	18.275	9			

ANOVA RESULT: $F(1,8) = 5.656, p = .045$

The two groups did not show any statistical difference with regard to their revising stage. Both considered grammar as an area to be checked and decided to check the organization of ideas when needed. These items were seen as inconsistent on the part of the melancholics. These were not evident in their observed behavior and in the collected final drafts. However, this inconsistency might not be in question because they might have considered their works already organized and pleasant that no revision or modification was needed. The sanguines exhibited consistency. Their answer in the questionnaire was true to the observed behavior and in the collected final draft. There were changes in the organization and choice of words.

Table 5 below shows that both groups of writers considered the audience. Both of the two groups consumed only a little time in this stage as what Murray (1972) cited that revising would only take the remaining 14% of the composing time.

Table 5. The revision strategies of melancholic and sanguine writers

BEHAVIOR	PERSONALITY TYPE	
	Melancholic (No. of Students)	Sanguine (No. of Students)
look for the grammar error first	2	4
look for the organization of my ideas first	1	3
reorganize my idea if I am not satisfied with it	3	4
stick to my ideas	1	1
rearrange my paragraphs if I saw something wrong	3	3
check the organization of the flow of my ideas	3	2

check my paper before I pass it	1	2
feel happy that I have written a good paper	2	3
feel happy that my teacher/reader will be happy with my work	3	4

Data on Table 6 below comparing the revising strategies of the melancholic and sanguine show no significant difference, that is, they used almost the same strategies in the final process.

Table 6. The revision strategies of melancholic and sanguine writers

	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between:	1.521	1	1.521	1.546	0.249
Within:		7.870	8	0.984	
Total:	9.391	9			

ANOVA Result: $F(1,8) = 1.546, p = 0.249$

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study revealed that melancholics and sanguines showed variations in the composing process. Their composing process was affected by their personality types. Melancholic writers were generally characterized as thinkers and focused individuals and were noted to be fast and consistent writers. Sanguine types are noted to be sociable and physically active. These dominant traits made them engage in different activities to activate their schema.

Melancholics used a few strategies in prewriting and did not show any revision in their final draft. They just freed their paper from erasures. They were consistent on their drafts. No revision strategies were employed to improve the organization and style of their output. They were noted as fast and focused writers. This is true of their personality; once details are cleared, they work continuously without interruptions and want to finish the work at once.

Sanguines used more activities in every stage of the composing process typical of their type: talking, doing movements, and exploring things to activate themselves. They used outlining, listing, mental outlining, and self-talking in the prewriting strategies.

Melancholic writers showed linearity of the composing process, supporting Murray's (1972) model that the composing process is linear. They started from pre-writing and ended in revising. As Myers-Briggs says, melancholic works in a planned manner and sticks to that plan.

Sanguine writers showed recursion in the process. Majority stopped to look for the flow of the ideas then returned to pre-writing by asking the peers or talking to self then returned to composing again. Recursivity was typical to sanguine as Myers-Briggs cited that this type works in flexible ways. Sanguines act first, think later and stay open to new information that is returning to the previous stage when they realized something went wrong on their task.

5.1.Recommendations

With the foregoing findings and conclusion, the following are offered as recommendations:

1. For effective writing instruction, writing teachers must consider learners' personality types. In doing so, the writers could write more effectively when writing in their preferred styles.
2. The teacher must allow flexibility in the writing class. Let the sanguine personality types activate their schema by doing physical activities as long as they will not create disturbance.
3. Democratic environment must also be observed to allow the writers to compose on their own pace, style, and topic that would make them discover the wonder of writing and the depth of their thoughts.
4. Seating assignments must be arranged according to personality types too. Sanguine must be seated next after his co-type so they could talk exchanging ideas and not to disturb the melancholic types.
5. Further research on this line of study must be undertaken with longer time of observation and larger data to validate and improve the conclusions made in this study.

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