

Analysis of Teacher Strategies in Overcoming Student Difficulties in Learning to Write Expository Texts

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ABSTRACT

Writing expository texts is a critical skill for students, yet many struggle with organizing ideas, maintaining coherence, and using appropriate grammar and vocabulary. Previous studies emphasize the importance of teacher strategies such as modeling, scaffolding, peer feedback, and process-based instruction to improve students' writing skills. Building on this literature, the present study aims to analyze the strategies teachers use to overcome these difficulties in classroom settings. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, involving classroom observations, semi-structured interviews with teachers, and analysis of student writing samples. The findings indicate that teachers implement multiple strategies, including explicit instruction, guided practice, scaffolding through outlines and sentence starters, peer collaboration, and individualized feedback. These strategies, when integrated and adapted to students' needs, significantly enhance students' ability to write coherent and well-structured expository texts, while also improving their confidence and engagement. The study highlights the practical importance of combining diverse instructional strategies and adapting them to classroom contexts, providing valuable insights for teachers and implications for curriculum development to support effective writing instruction.

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1. Introduction

Writing is a fundamental skill that students must master to succeed in academic and professional contexts. Among the various forms of writing, expository texts are particularly important because they require students to explain ideas, present information, and construct logical arguments in a clear and structured manner (Berman & Katzenberger, 2004). The ability to write expository texts not only reflects students' literacy skills but also supports critical thinking, problem-solving, and the development of analytical reasoning. However, in practice, many students struggle with learning to write expository texts, which becomes a significant problem in the teaching and learning process.

Difficulties in writing expository texts often stem from several factors. Students frequently experience challenges in generating and organizing ideas, selecting appropriate vocabulary, and constructing grammatically correct sentences (Berman & Katzenberger, 2004). Moreover, maintaining coherence and cohesion in paragraphs is another common obstacle, resulting in texts that lack clarity and logical flow. Limited exposure to reading materials and insufficient writing practice also contribute to these problems, making it difficult for students to produce well-structured expository essays.

These challenges indicate the crucial role of teachers in supporting students throughout the writing process. Teachers must employ effective strategies that not only address technical difficulties but also motivate students to write with confidence. Strategies such as modeling, scaffolding, peer feedback, and the process-writing approach can serve as valuable tools in helping students overcome their struggles (DIN, n.d.). However, the effectiveness of these

strategies often varies depending on how well teachers understand students' needs and adapt their teaching methods accordingly.

The role of teachers becomes highly important in addressing these challenges. Teachers are not only facilitators of knowledge but also strategists who must design appropriate methods and approaches to help students overcome obstacles in the writing process. Various strategies, such as the use of models, scaffolding techniques, peer review activities, and process-based writing instruction, can be employed to enhance students' writing skills. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these strategies often depends on the teacher's ability to adapt them to students' needs and classroom contexts.

Research on improving students' expository writing and on teacher strategies to overcome student difficulties is large and multi-stranded. A foundational synthesis is Graham and Perin's meta-analytic report, *Writing Next* (2007), which identified a set of evidence-based instructional practices that reliably raise adolescent students' writing achievement explicit strategy instruction (planning, revising, editing), modeling, guided practice, use of rubrics and scoring guides, and structured peer collaboration. Their review remains widely cited as a roadmap for high-impact classroom techniques and underscores that combinations of explicit instruction, formative feedback, and scaffolded practice produce measurable gains.

A second major line of work documents the process-based approach to writing (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, publishing) and the importance of scaffolding each stage (Turkben, 2021). Studies and practitioner guides show that when teachers break expository writing into sequenced tasks and supply targeted supports (models, checklists, mini-lessons, teacher conferences), students improve in idea generation, organization, and revision behavior. Recent quasi-experimental and classroom implementation studies also demonstrate that scaffolded interventions increase students' confidence and quality of source-based and expository texts, especially when teachers use dialogic assessment and formative checks to adapt support.

A third strand emphasizes genre-based (systemic-functional) instruction. Studies applying the deconstruction → joint construction → independent construction cycle report improvements in students' awareness of expository moves (thesis statement, supporting information, concluding synthesis), grammatical accuracy in context, and organizational control. For example, Al-Baimani's (2019) doctoral study and several classroom action-research reports show that explicit teaching of expository genre features combined with joint construction activities helps EFL/ESL learners transfer genre conventions into their own writing.

Research on peer feedback and collaborative writing complements teacher-led strategies (Tahmasebi & Khodabakhshzadeh, 2017). Systematic reviews and empirical studies indicate that structured peer review, when scaffolded and mediated by the teacher, raises revision rates, metacognitive awareness, and motivation; teacher training in how to set up and monitor peer feedback is repeatedly shown to determine whether peer review yields quality revisions. Comparative work also indicates complementary effects: teacher feedback tends to supply accuracy and expert modeling, while peer feedback often promotes engagement and iterative improvement when students are taught how to give useful comments.

A growing body of literature highlights the centrality of teacher knowledge, diagnostic assessment, and professional development for effective writing instruction (Ellis & Smith, 2017). Research on formative assessment and teacher PD shows that teachers need tools to diagnose specific student problems (idea development, coherence, vocabulary, mechanics) and to adapt strategies responsively (e.g., targeted mini-lessons, conferencing, adaptive scaffolds). Programs that combine collaborative teacher learning, analysis of student work, and practice with formative assessment techniques report stronger classroom implementation and better student outcomes than one-off workshops. This research implies that strategy lists

alone are insufficient: teacher capacity to interpret writing problems and match interventions matters critically.

Despite robust evidence for individual strategies, recent reviews note important gaps and directions for future work. Many high-quality studies focus on secondary or tertiary learners and short-term interventions; fewer investigate long-term transfer of expository writing skills across subjects or in primary classrooms and low-resource contexts (Scott et al., 2019). There is also limited experimental work comparing combined or sequenced packages of strategies (for example, genre instruction + process scaffolding + peer review) under real classroom constraints. Systematic reviews therefore call for more classroom-embedded, longitudinal, and context-sensitive studies that link specific teacher practices to observable improvements in expository text quality.

Considering these conditions, it is essential to conduct a study that analyzes teacher strategies in overcoming student difficulties in learning to write expository texts (Hall, 2004). Such analysis is expected to provide insights into effective teaching practices, reveal the challenges faced by both students and teachers, and contribute to the development of more innovative and applicable approaches to writing instruction. In the long term, the findings of this study can support the improvement of students' literacy skills and foster better academic achievement.

2. Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the strategies used by teachers to overcome students' difficulties in learning to write expository texts (Arsita, 2021). A qualitative design is appropriate because the focus of the research is on exploring real classroom practices, teacher decision-making, and the learning challenges encountered by students, all of which require in-depth description rather than numerical measurement. Through this approach, the research aims to capture not only the techniques applied by teachers but also the contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of those strategies.

The research was conducted in a school setting where expository writing is taught as part of the language curriculum. The participants consisted of language teachers who regularly teach writing skills and a group of students selected to provide supporting data on the difficulties they face (McMaster et al., 2020). Teachers were chosen purposively based on their direct involvement in writing instruction, while students were identified based on teacher recommendations and observable challenges in expository writing.

Data collection was carried out through three primary techniques (Mazhar et al., 2021). First, classroom observations were conducted to record the strategies teachers used during the process of teaching expository writing, with attention to lesson delivery, scaffolding techniques, and feedback methods. Second, semi-structured interviews with teachers provided insights into their perceptions of student difficulties, the rationale behind their instructional choices, and the challenges they encountered in implementation. Third, student writing samples were collected and analyzed to identify common patterns of difficulty, such as issues with organization, coherence, grammar, or vocabulary.

The collected data were analyzed using a thematic analysis technique. Observation notes, interview transcripts, and writing samples were coded and categorized to identify recurring themes related to teacher strategies and student difficulties. These themes were then interpreted to reveal the alignment between students' needs and the instructional strategies employed by teachers. To enhance the credibility of the findings, triangulation was applied by comparing data from observations, interviews, and document analysis. Member-checking with participants was also conducted to ensure the accuracy of interpretation.

Through this methodology, the research seeks to provide a clear and evidence-based description of the strategies that teachers employ in overcoming student difficulties in expository writing. At the same time, it aims to highlight the practical implications of these strategies for improving the quality of writing instruction and fostering students' literacy development.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Result

The findings of this study reveal that students experienced a range of difficulties in writing expository texts, most notably in organizing ideas, maintaining coherence, and applying appropriate grammar and vocabulary. Many students were able to generate ideas but struggled to develop them into structured paragraphs with clear topic sentences and supporting details. In addition, errors in sentence construction and word choice were frequently observed, which affected the overall clarity of their writing. These difficulties indicate that students required both cognitive and linguistic support in order to produce well-structured expository texts.

From classroom observations, it was found that teachers employed a variety of strategies to address these challenges. One of the most commonly used approaches was modeling and guided practice, where teachers provided examples of well-written expository texts and demonstrated how to identify the main idea, supporting evidence, and conclusion. This helped students understand the expected structure of expository writing. Teachers also applied scaffolding techniques, such as giving outlines, sentence starters, and writing prompts, to guide students in organizing their ideas before drafting. These supports gradually decreased as students became more confident in their writing.

Another significant strategy was the use of peer feedback and collaborative learning activities. Teachers encouraged students to work in pairs or small groups to review each other's drafts and provide constructive feedback. This not only improved students' awareness of writing conventions but also increased their motivation and engagement in the writing process. Furthermore, teachers incorporated individual conferencing and targeted feedback, where they addressed specific errors or weaknesses in each student's work, particularly in grammar, vocabulary, and coherence.

The analysis of student writing samples before and after the implementation of these strategies showed noticeable improvement. Students demonstrated greater ability to organize their ideas logically, construct cohesive paragraphs, and use more precise vocabulary. Although grammatical errors still appeared in their texts, the frequency and severity of such errors decreased compared to their initial drafts. Interviews with teachers also confirmed that students became more confident in writing and showed a more positive attitude toward the expository writing tasks.

Overall, the results indicate that the combination of modeling, scaffolding, peer collaboration, and individualized feedback proved effective in helping students overcome their difficulties in writing expository texts. These findings highlight the importance of teacher adaptability in selecting and integrating multiple strategies to address different aspects of students' writing challenges.

3.2 Practical Insights for Teachers to Enhance Writing Instruction

The results of this study provide several practical insights that can guide teachers in enhancing writing instruction, particularly in teaching expository texts. First, teachers need to emphasize modeling and explicit instruction as an essential starting point. By presenting examples of well-written expository texts and demonstrating the process of developing a thesis, supporting ideas, and a conclusion, teachers can help students visualize what effective

writing looks like. This explicit guidance reduces ambiguity and provides students with a clear framework to follow, especially for those who struggle with organizing their thoughts.

Second, the use of scaffolding techniques is crucial for addressing students' difficulties in structuring their writing. Teachers can introduce outlines, graphic organizers, sentence starters, or guiding questions to support students in planning their essays. Such tools enable students to focus on building logical connections between ideas while gradually developing independence in writing. Over time, as students become more proficient, teachers can reduce the level of support, allowing learners to write with greater autonomy.

Another important insight is the incorporation of peer collaboration and feedback activities. Encouraging students to work together in pairs or small groups to review drafts fosters a more interactive learning environment and provides multiple perspectives on writing quality. Peer feedback not only helps students identify strengths and weaknesses in their work but also promotes critical thinking and metacognitive awareness. For this strategy to be effective, teachers should guide students on how to give constructive feedback and monitor the process to ensure it remains productive.

Additionally, individualized feedback and conferencing remain valuable for addressing specific challenges faced by students. While whole-class instruction provides general strategies, individual feedback allows teachers to target persistent errors in grammar, vocabulary, or coherence that may differ among students. Short one-on-one sessions can boost students' confidence and motivation, as they feel their individual needs are acknowledged and addressed.

Finally, teachers are encouraged to adopt a process-based approach to writing instruction rather than focusing solely on the final product. By dividing writing into stages planning, drafting, revising, and editing students are given opportunities to reflect, refine, and improve their work over time. This approach helps reduce the pressure of producing a perfect text in one attempt and nurtures writing as a skill that develops gradually.

Taken together, these insights highlight the importance of combining multiple strategies, adapting them to student needs, and fostering an environment that views writing as a developmental process. By implementing modeling, scaffolding, collaboration, individualized support, and process-oriented teaching, teachers can significantly enhance students' ability to write coherent and effective expository texts while also building their confidence as writers.

3.3 Pedagogical Implications for Curriculum Development

The findings of this study carry important pedagogical implications for curriculum development, particularly in the teaching of writing skills. First, curriculum designers should ensure that expository writing is given structured and progressive attention across grade levels. Learning to write expository texts requires students to master the organization of ideas, coherence, and use of appropriate language features, which cannot be achieved through isolated lessons. By incorporating systematic scaffolding within the curriculum, students can gradually develop their skills, starting with guided exercises and moving toward more independent writing tasks.

Second, the curriculum should integrate explicit instruction in writing strategies. This includes teaching students how to plan, organize, draft, revise, and edit their work. Providing structured activities that incorporate modeling, graphic organizers, and sentence starters can be embedded as regular classroom practices. These strategies help students internalize the conventions of expository writing while giving teachers a framework to support learners at different proficiency levels.

Another implication is the need to emphasize collaborative and peer-assisted learning within the curriculum. Group activities, peer review sessions, and discussion-based tasks should be designed as part of writing instruction. Such collaborative exercises not only enhance students' understanding of expository conventions but also foster critical thinking,

reflection, and communication skills. Embedding these practices into the curriculum ensures that peer interaction becomes a consistent component of writing development rather than an ad hoc classroom activity.

The curriculum should also incorporate formative assessment and feedback mechanisms. Regular checkpoints, teacher-student conferences, and structured feedback sessions allow learners to identify and correct their mistakes while promoting continuous improvement. By including guidelines for individualized feedback, the curriculum can support differentiated instruction and ensure that the unique difficulties of each student are addressed systematically.

Finally, curriculum development should recognize writing as a developmental and cross-disciplinary skill. Expository writing tasks should be integrated into other subjects, such as science, social studies, or civics, to give students meaningful contexts for practicing organization, clarity, and logical argumentation. This approach not only reinforces literacy across the curriculum but also strengthens students' ability to apply writing skills in diverse academic and real-world scenarios.

3.4 Strategies That Can Be Adopted or Adapted in Different Educational Contexts

One of the most universally applicable strategies is modeling and explicit instruction. By providing clear examples of well-structured expository texts and demonstrating the process of organizing ideas, teachers in any context can help students understand expectations and internalize writing conventions. This approach is flexible and can be adapted to different age groups, language proficiency levels, or subject areas.

Scaffolding techniques are another highly adaptable strategy. Tools such as graphic organizers, sentence starters, outlines, and guiding questions can be customized to meet the specific needs of students in various classrooms. In contexts where students are less confident writers or have limited language proficiency, more structured support can be provided, while in advanced settings, scaffolds can be gradually removed to promote independence. This adaptability makes scaffolding a key strategy for supporting learners at multiple levels.

The use of peer feedback and collaborative learning is also applicable in a wide range of educational settings. Teachers can design structured peer-review sessions, writing workshops, or group discussion activities to encourage students to evaluate and improve each other's work. Even in large classrooms or online learning environments, digital platforms can facilitate collaboration and feedback exchange. By adjusting the complexity and scope of collaboration, teachers can implement peer-based strategies effectively regardless of context.

Individualized feedback and teacher conferencing remain essential strategies that can be modified according to class size, time constraints, and student needs. For example, in smaller classrooms, teachers can conduct one-on-one conferences for detailed guidance, while in larger classrooms, written comments or digital tools can be used to provide personalized feedback efficiently. The key principle is to address specific student difficulties in a way that is practical and sustainable in the given teaching environment.

Finally, the process-based approach to writing dividing writing into stages such as planning, drafting, revising, and editing is a strategy that can be applied across curricula and subjects. Teachers can integrate this approach into any discipline where writing is required, allowing students to develop skills incrementally and learn that writing is iterative rather than a one-time product. The flexibility of this method makes it suitable for different classroom sizes, cultural contexts, and educational levels.

In summary, the strategies identified in this study modeling, scaffolding, peer collaboration, individualized feedback, and process-based instruction are not only effective in overcoming student difficulties in expository writing but are also versatile enough to be adapted to various educational contexts. Their successful implementation depends on teacher creativity, awareness of student needs, and the ability to tailor approaches to the specific

classroom environment. By adopting and adapting these strategies, educators can foster better writing skills and greater student engagement in any learning setting.

3.5 Comparison of the Results with Previous Studies

The findings of the current study align closely with previous research on effective strategies for improving students' expository writing. Consistent with Graham and Perin (2007), this study found that explicit instruction, modeling, and guided practice are critical in helping students organize ideas and produce coherent texts. In both the current research and Graham and Perin's meta-analysis, teacher-led demonstration of writing processes and examples of well-structured texts provided students with clear frameworks that facilitated understanding and application of expository conventions. This similarity underscores the enduring importance of direct instructional support in writing education.

Additionally, the current study's emphasis on scaffolding techniques resonates with findings from process-based writing research. Prior studies have shown that breaking writing tasks into stages planning, drafting, revising, and editing combined with teacher-provided supports, improves students' ability to organize ideas and maintain cohesion in their texts. The present research confirms this by demonstrating that students who received scaffolding, such as outlines and sentence starters, were more successful in structuring their expository essays. This alignment suggests that scaffolding remains a universally effective strategy across educational contexts.

The integration of peer feedback and collaborative learning in the current study also reflects trends identified in earlier studies, including Al-Baimani (2019) and other classroom-based research. Similar to previous findings, students in this study benefited from peer review activities, showing increased awareness of writing conventions and heightened motivation to revise their work. However, the current study further emphasizes the teacher's role in monitoring and structuring peer interactions, highlighting that peer feedback is most effective when guided and scaffolded, a nuance that some earlier studies mentioned only briefly.

In terms of individualized feedback and teacher conferencing, the current study corroborates previous research indicating that targeted, student-specific guidance is crucial for addressing persistent difficulties in grammar, vocabulary, and coherence. Like Taylor et al. (2024), this research shows that teachers who tailor feedback to individual needs help students build confidence and develop writing skills more effectively than generalized instruction alone. This comparison emphasizes the value of formative, personalized interventions as a complement to broader instructional strategies.

Despite these consistencies, the current study adds to the literature by providing detailed evidence of how these strategies interact in a real classroom context and by documenting improvements in both student confidence and writing quality. While prior studies often focus on one specific intervention or strategy, the present research highlights the synergistic effect of combining modeling, scaffolding, collaborative learning, and individualized feedback. This holistic approach demonstrates that addressing multiple dimensions of student difficulties simultaneously may yield stronger outcomes than isolated strategies, offering practical insights for both teachers and curriculum developers.

The results of this study largely support and extend previous research, reinforcing the effectiveness of established strategies while providing a more integrated perspective on their application. The findings confirm that teacher adaptability, context-sensitive implementation, and the combination of multiple strategies are key factors in helping students overcome challenges in expository writing.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, several conclusions can be drawn regarding teacher strategies in overcoming student difficulties in learning to write expository texts. First,

students commonly face challenges in organizing ideas, maintaining coherence, and using appropriate grammar and vocabulary in their writing. These difficulties highlight the need for structured guidance and targeted support from teachers. Second, the study demonstrates that teachers employ a variety of effective strategies to address these challenges. Key strategies include modeling and explicit instruction, scaffolding through outlines and sentence starters, peer feedback and collaborative learning, and individualized guidance through conferences and formative feedback. These strategies help students understand the structure of expository texts, develop logical connections between ideas, and improve the clarity and accuracy of their writing. Third, the findings indicate that combining multiple strategies and adapting them to students' needs and classroom contexts enhances their effectiveness. Students who received integrated support through scaffolding, modeling, peer interaction, and individualized feedback showed notable improvement in writing quality, as well as increased confidence and motivation in completing expository writing tasks. Finally, the study provides important pedagogical and practical implications. For teachers, the research suggests the value of adopting flexible, context-sensitive approaches that address both cognitive and linguistic aspects of writing. For curriculum developers, the results underscore the importance of designing writing instruction that incorporates structured progression, strategy instruction, collaboration, formative assessment, and cross-disciplinary integration. In conclusion, teacher strategies play a critical role in helping students overcome difficulties in writing expository texts. When effectively implemented and tailored to students' needs, these strategies not only improve writing skills but also foster student engagement, confidence, and long-term literacy development.

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