

## Implementing Process Writing Approach to Improve EFL Students' Writing Performance in Academic Writing

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### ABSTRACT

The research aims to improve students' essay writing skills by implementing the Process Writing Approach. Conducted as Classroom Action Research, the study involved 17 university students enrolled in a writing class. Data collection relied on writing tasks. Results indicate that with the development of appropriate procedural models, the Process Writing Approach effectively improved students' essay writing skills. Initially, before implementing the strategy, only 50 % of students achieved scores equal to or greater than C (56-70). Following Cycle I, this percentage increased to 70 %, though it fell short of the study's success criteria. Subsequently, in Cycle II, it rose to more than 80 %. This highlights the potential for improving essay writing skills, contingent upon adhering to the prescribed procedural models of the Process Writing Approach.

**Keywords:** *Process Writing Approach, Paired T-Test, Academic Writing*

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### INTRODUCTION

Writing is often regarded as the most challenging and intricate language skill to acquire in comparison to listening, speaking, and reading. Sadiku (2015) argue that generating meaning through writing demands more effort than recognizing meaning through listening and reading. Nunan (1999) even describes the task of producing "a coherent, fluent, extended piece of writing" in a second language as a substantial challenge. The complexity is further amplified by the fact that the rhetorical conventions in English texts—such as structure, style, and organization—frequently diverge from those in other languages, necessitating effort to understand and navigate these differences (Parkinson & Musgrave, 2014; Murphy, 2020).

Toba (2019) contends that students' struggles with writing are not solely attributed to their own shortcomings but can also be traced back to the monotonous and uninspiring techniques employed by instructors. This lack of variety and interest can lead to student boredom and diminished motivation for learning. Consequently, writing becomes an unpopular course for both students and instructors.

Gebhard (2006) identifies issues faced by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instructors in writing instruction, including challenges with less proficient writers using ineffective writing strategies. Additionally, the lack of attention to lecturers' feedback and corrections poses a hurdle. Addressing these concerns, Gebhard suggests

the need to build students' self-confidence to transform their negative attitude towards writing activities.

The researcher, facing similar challenges as an English lecturer for fifth semester students, notes a deficiency in the students' English writing skills, evident in mistakes related to content, organization, cohesion and coherence, and grammar. Preliminary assessments conducted in September 2023 revealed that the majority of students did not meet the minimum course requirements. Observations also revealed issues such as students not expressing ideas systematically, grammatical inaccuracies, lack of focus on English instruction, the poor application of cohesion and coherence, and a general lack of motivation.

Identified problems stem from various factors, including inadequate guidance in the writing process, the absence of writing models, insufficient conferences to discuss writing stages and errors, and disconnected material that fails to resonate with students' real-life contexts. Consequently, students exhibit low enthusiasm and struggle to construct cohesive essays.

To address these challenges, the researcher proposes the implementation of the Process Writing with tailored procedures. Process Writing, as endorsed by Oshima & Hogue (2006), is expected to positively impact student motivation, self-confidence, and interest in writing. The researcher draws inspiration from Nabhan (2019) study, which successfully applied Process Writing to enhance students' writing ability.

The research problem revolves around implementing Process Writing to improve students' skills in writing descriptive essays. This study aims to develop the implementation of Process Writing, focusing on content, organization, cohesion and coherence, and grammar as crucial components of writing. Specifically, the study aims to enhance the skills of fourth-semester students in writing descriptive essays, addressing the challenges identified in the 2023/2024 academic year.

The anticipated contributions of the study include increased motivation for students to undertake writing tasks using Process Writing and improved writing skills for English lecturers. The focus on descriptive essays aligns with the university's Academic Writing Course syllabus, aiming to bridge the gap between student difficulties and course expectations.

## **METHOD**

The respondents involved were 17 students of an Intensive Course Writing class in the fifth semester. They were selected as they experienced the writing process in a semester. The Process Writing with tailored procedures was implemented during the semester period (September 2023-January 2024) which included cycle 1 (September to November 2023) and cycle 2 (November 2023 to January 2024). The respondents had been writing three types of text: Narrative, Descriptive, and Compare and Contrast Paragraphs. While writing those paragraphs, they used process writing techniques covering outlining, drafting, revising, and finishing. Following their participation, the students' progress was meticulously monitored and assessed throughout the semester. Their engagement in the writing process spanned various tasks, including brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising, and finalizing their compositions. The Process Writing treatment itself adapted academic writing book written by Oshima & Hogue (2006). Further, the students received tailored feedback and guidance to enhance their writing proficiency across different genres. This comprehensive approach aimed to cultivate a holistic understanding of writing principles and foster continuous improvement in their composition skills.

Following the Classroom Action Research method, which consisted of two cycles, the steps to be taken in each cycle comprised Planning, Action Implementation, Observation, and Reflection (Burns, 2015). In the planning phase, the researcher outlined the objectives and methodologies for the upcoming cycle, ensuring alignment with the research goals. During action implementation, interventions were executed as per the established plan, aiming to bring about intended changes or improvements. Subsequently, observation involved closely monitoring the outcomes of the implemented actions, noting any emerging patterns or developments. Lastly, the reflection stage provided an opportunity for critical analysis and evaluation of the effectiveness of the interventions, informing adjustments for subsequent cycles or future research endeavors.

This study utilizes the quantitative method of Paired T-Test to count improvement of the students (if any). The paired sample t-test is part of the comparative hypothesis test or comparison test (Illowsky & Dean, 2013). The data used in the paired sample t-test generally consists of interval or ratio scale data (quantitative data). The paired sample t-test aims to determine whether there is a difference in the means of two paired or related samples (two groups), where the pairs are linked in some way, such as before-and-after measurements on the same subjects or matched pairs in a study (Misha et al, 2019; Manfei et al, 2017). It evaluates if the mean difference between paired observations is statistically significant, providing insight into whether a particular intervention, treatment, or condition has had a measurable effect.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Upon scrutinizing the compositions of students in Cycle I, detailed in Table 1, it's evident that their performance in crafting descriptive essays fell short of satisfaction. Merely 60.00% of students (8 individuals) attained a score equal to or greater than C (56-70), a marginal improvement from the Preliminary Study's 40.00% (7 students). Although there was an enhancement in Cycle I, it failed to meet the initial success benchmark, defined as  $\geq 75\%$  of students achieving scores at or above C (56-70) within the 0-100 range.

Table 1. Pretest and Post-Test of Writing Assessment

Students (by Acronym)	Pretest	Post-Test	
		Cycle 1	Cycle 2
YEG	75	80	85
FAR	65	70	85
S	63	70	83
JR	55	73	73
AAS	65	70	83
AS	65	70	83
ASM	63	70	78
RCO	62	70	83
RRY	60	70	83
DNH	63	70	80
DA	50	70	73
MS	56	70	80
JFRS	59	70	83
MRFA	60	70	83
AY	63	70	83

AQ	52	65	70
AP	60	70	83

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The subpar writing achievement stemmed from students' struggle to produce compelling descriptive essays. Many encountered difficulties articulating their thoughts throughout the writing process, spanning prewriting to publishing. Notably, their essays lacked depth and were riddled with errors, evident in the deficient incorporation of details. Assessments revealed persistent lapses in content, organization, and grammar, rendering two-third compositions unclear and challenging to decipher.

Student engagement, as per observations detailed in Table 3, was deemed satisfactory, with an average of 66.67% (10 students) actively participating in writing activities. However, this fell short of meeting the secondary success criterion, defined as an exemplary engagement level of 76%-100% (12-15 students). This shortfall could be attributed to prevalent issues during instructional sessions, where students grappled with initiating their first drafts due to inadequate topic familiarity. Moreover, many struggled to navigate through the various writing stages, often failing to distinguish between revising and editing tasks.

Several adjustments were introduced for the forthcoming action, focusing on refining the implementation procedures to identify suitable Process Writing Approach models applicable within the writing class. The ensuing paragraphs outline the model procedures implemented in the subsequent cycle. Several adjustments were made to the upcoming action, with a focus on refining the procedures for its implementation. The aim was to identify suitable model procedures of Process Writing Approach that could be effectively applied in the writing class. Below are the model procedures implemented in the next cycle.

In the subsequent step, the instructor furnished students with exemplars of rough drafts and guidelines for conducting individual drafting, revising, and editing tasks. This emphasis aimed to elicit a heightened level of engagement and accountability from the students, thereby providing them with clearer direction and fostering a sense of responsibility.

Following this, the instructor provided students with a vocabulary guide relevant to the lesson's topic as an initial language resource for each writing stage. This initiative was intended to address any issues students faced with vocabulary mastery and facilitate quicker essay composition. Subsequently, students were tasked with individually completing each stage of the writing process while collaborating within groups. This approach aimed to encourage active participation among students, ultimately leading to the production of individual essays, while also allowing the instructor to monitor and guide their progress effectively.

Lastly, the instructor afforded students additional opportunities for proofreading, peer editing, and sharing their writings in conferences. This was accomplished through vigilant monitoring of student activities and efficient time management, encouraging heightened engagement in these activities.

The following are the outcomes of the paired T-Test on the sample pretest and post-test Cycle 1.

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	VAR00001	60.6471	17	5.66724	1.37451
	VAR00002	70.4706	17	2.85302	.69196

Figure 1. Paired Sample Statistics Cycle 1

This output provides a summary of descriptive statistical findings from the Pre-Test and Post-Test scores, the two samples under examination. The Pre-Test yielded an average learning outcome, or mean, of 60.64, while the Post-Test showed a mean learning outcome of 70.47. The research sample consisted of 17 students. The standard deviation for the Pre-Test was 5.6, and for the Post-Test, it was 2.8. Additionally, the standard error of the mean was 1.37 for the Pre-Test and 0.69 for the Post-Test.

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	VAR00001 & VAR00002	17	-.190	.466

Figure 2. Paired Sample Correlation Cycle 1

The provided output displays the findings of a correlation test examining the relationship between two datasets: the Pre-Test and Post-Test variables. The correlation coefficient (Correlation) is noted as 0.190, while the significance value (Sig.) is recorded as 0.466. Given that the Sig. value of 0.466 exceeds the probability threshold of 0.05, it is inferred that there is no statistically significant relationship between the Pre-Test and Post-Test variables.

		Paired Differences							
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	VAR00001 - VAR00002	-9.82353	4.36227	1.05801	-12.06640	-7.58066	-9.285	16	.000

Figure 3. Paired Sample T-Test Cycle 1

The third output is the most crucial as it provides the answer to the question posed in the example case above: whether there is an influence of using the Process Writing Approach strategy on enhancing students' writing abilities. However, before delving into the interpretation of the figures in the "Paired Samples Test" output table above, we need to understand the research hypothesis formulation and decision-making guidelines in the paired sample t-test. Here are the research hypothesis formulations:

1. H0 = There is no difference in the mean between the Pre-Test and Post-Test scores, indicating no influence of using the Process Writing Approach on improving writing abilities.
2. Ha = There is a difference in the mean between the Pre-Test and Post-Test scores, indicating an influence of using the Process Writing Approach on improving writing abilities.

Decision-making guidelines in the paired sample t-test are based on the significance value (Sig.) obtained from SPSS output. If the Sig. value (2-tailed) < 0.05,

then  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. Conversely, if the Sig. value (2-tailed)  $> 0.05$ , then  $H_0$  is accepted and  $H_a$  is rejected (Dean & Illowsky, 2013).

Based on the "Paired Samples Test" output table above, the Sig. value (2-tailed) is  $0.000 < 0.05$ , thus  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_a$  is accepted. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a difference in the mean between the Pre-Test and Post-Test scores, indicating an influence of using the Process Writing Approach in improving writing abilities. Additionally, the "Paired Samples Test" output table also provides information on the "Mean Paired Differences," which is  $-9.8$ . This value indicates the difference between the mean Pre-Test and mean Post-Test scores, or  $54.62 - 67.69 = -9.8$ , with the difference ranging from  $-12.06$  to  $-7.58$  (95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower and Upper).

In addition to comparing the significance value (Sig.) with a probability of 0.05, there is another an alternative method for conducting hypothesis testing in the paired sample t-test. This involves contrasting the computed t-value against the critical t-value. The decision-making criteria are outlined as follows:

1. Should the computed t-value  $>$  t-value,  $H_0$  is refuted while  $H_a$  is accepted.
2. Conversely, if the computed t-value  $<$  critical t-value,  $H_0$  is accepted whereas  $H_a$  is refuted.

As per the table of results from the "Paired Samples Test" provided above, it is evident that the computed t-value stands at a negative figure, specifically  $-9.28$ . This negative t-value arises due to the Pre-Test scores' mean being lower than that of the Post-Test scores. In this scenario, a negative t-value actually holds positive implications. Consequently, the absolute magnitude of the t-value is  $9.28$ .

The subsequent step involves determining the critical t-value, which hinges on the degrees of freedom (df) and the significance level ( $\alpha/2$ ). As gleaned from the aforementioned output, the df value is 16 and  $\alpha/2$  equates to 0.025. This figure serves as the basis for locating the critical t-value within the t-distribution table. Hence, the critical t-value is determined to be 2.120.

$\alpha$	0.1	0.05	0.025	0.01	0.005	0.001	0.0005
1	3.078	6.314	12.076	31.821	63.657	318.310	636.620
2	1.886	2.920	4.303	6.965	9.925	22.326	31.598
3	1.638	2.353	3.182	4.541	5.841	10.213	12.924
4	1.533	2.132	2.776	3.747	4.604	7.173	8.610
5	1.476	2.015	2.571	3.365	4.032	5.893	6.869
6	1.440	1.943	2.447	3.143	3.707	5.208	5.959
7	1.415	1.895	2.365	2.998	3.499	4.785	5.408
8	1.397	1.860	2.306	2.896	3.355	4.501	5.041
9	1.383	1.833	2.262	2.821	3.250	4.297	4.781
10	1.372	1.812	2.228	2.764	3.169	4.144	4.587
11	1.363	1.796	2.201	2.718	3.106	4.025	4.437
12	1.356	1.782	2.179	2.681	3.055	3.930	4.318
13	1.350	1.771	2.160	2.650	3.012	3.852	4.221
14	1.345	1.761	2.145	2.624	2.977	3.787	4.140
15	1.341	1.753	2.131	2.602	2.947	3.733	4.073
16	1.337	1.746	2.120	2.583	2.921	3.686	4.015
17	1.333	1.740	2.110	2.567	2.898	3.646	3.965
18	1.330	1.734	2.101	2.552	2.878	3.610	3.922
19	1.328	1.729	2.093	2.539	2.861	3.579	3.883
20	1.325	1.725	2.086	2.528	2.845	3.552	3.850

Figure 4. t table

Therefore, as the calculated t-value of 9.28 exceeds the critical t-value of 2.120, in line with the decision-making criteria outlined above, it can be concluded that H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted. Hence, it can be inferred that there exists a disparity in the mean scores between the Pre-Test and Post-Test results, suggesting an impact of the Process Writing Approach learning strategy on improving students' writing skills in academic writing.

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	VAR00001	70.4706	17	2.85302	.69196
	VAR00002	79.3529	17	5.64514	1.36915

Figure 5. Paired t-sample Cycle 2

In this output, we are presented with a summary of descriptive statistical results from both samples under study, namely the Pre-Test and Post-Test scores. The mean score for the Pre-Test is found to be 70.47, while for the Post-Test, the mean score is 79.35. The total number of respondents or students used as the research sample is 17. The standard deviation for the Pre-Test is 2.85, and for the Post-Test, it is 5.64. Lastly, the Standard Error Mean for the Pre-Test is 0.69, and for the Post-Test, it is 1.36.

		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	VAR00001 & VAR00002	17	.249	.335

Figure 6. Paired Sample Correlation Cycle 2

The output above shows the results of correlation testing or the relationship between the two datasets, namely the Pre-Test and Post-Test variables. Based on the output above, the correlation coefficient (Correlation) is found to be 0.249 with a significance value (Sig.) of 0.335. Since the Sig. value of 0.335 > the probability of 0.05, it can be said that there is no relationship between the Pre-Test variable and the Post-Test variable.

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	VAR00001 - VAR00002	-8.88235	5.65555	1.37167	-11.79017	-5.97454	-6.476	16	.000

Figure 7. Paired Sample T-Test Cycle 2

Based on the "Paired Samples Test" table above, the significance value (2-tailed) is found to be 0.000 < 0.05, thus rejecting the null hypothesis (H0) and accepting the alternative hypothesis (Ha). Consequently, it can be concluded that there is a difference in the mean scores between the Pre-Test and Post-Test, indicating an impact of using the Process Writing Approach on students' writing performance. The "Paired Samples

Test" table also contains information about the "Mean Paired Differences," which is -8.88. This value represents the difference between the mean scores of the Pre-Test and Post-Test, calculated as  $70.47 - 79.35 = -8.8$ , with the difference ranging from -11.7 to -5.97 (95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower and Upper).

To ensure effective implementation of Process Writing Approach, English teachers and lecturers are advised to adopt the recommended procedures tailored to their students' characteristics and needs. These procedures should be integrated into writing courses as alternative strategies to enhance writing skills effectively. Additionally, students are encouraged to independently apply Process Writing Approach techniques beyond the classroom, fostering continuous improvement in their writing abilities across different essay genres. Furthermore, future research should explore the applicability of Process Writing Approach in teaching various essay types, such as narration, expository, process, and comparison and contrast, to ascertain its effectiveness as a writing instruction approach.

In conclusion, the study underscores the efficacy of implementing Process Writing Approach with structured procedures to enhance students' descriptive essay writing skills. The success observed in Cycle II highlights the importance of sustained application and adaptation of Process Writing Approach techniques to individual learning contexts. This approach not only benefits students' academic writing but also empowers them to independently apply effective writing strategies beyond formal classroom settings. Moreover, future research should continue to explore the potential of Process Writing Approach in teaching diverse essay genres, contributing to the advancement of writing instruction methodologies.

## **CONCLUSION**

The successful implementation of Process Writing Approach significantly improved students' proficiency in writing descriptive essays, as demonstrated by increased scores and greater engagement in writing activities. prior to the strategy's implementation, only half of the students attained scores meeting or exceeding the C level (56-70). After completing Cycle I, this proportion rose to 65 %, yet it did not meet the study's predetermined success benchmarks (table 1). The improvement was particularly notable in Cycle II of the study which shows the increase of 80 % (table 1), indicating that sustained application of Process Writing Approach is essential for success. The enhanced writing skills were achieved through a structured approach involving various stages, including setting objectives, brainstorming, clustering, drafting, revising, editing, and peer collaboration. These steps were facilitated by providing models, guidelines, and vocabulary support to aid students in the writing process.

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