

The Strategies of Teaching Writing to Promote Creativity at University of Nusantara PGRI Kediri

Dwi Rahma Wati¹, Hovando Febryan Christoper², Narendra Sollahuddin³, Rayo
Septyansah⁴ El Radit Dzaniel⁵

Universitas Nusantara PGRI Kediri

rahmaadr16@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to analyze the instructional process and assessment of an Essay Writing course, specifically examining the integration of technical Writing and ideational Creativity indicators. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected from one lecturer and six students categorized into high, medium, and low achievement groups through semi-structured interviews, classroom observation, and document analysis of lesson plans and student essays. The study utilized data triangulation to ensure validity. Findings reveal a discrepancy between the formal lesson plan and classroom implementation, particularly where low-achieving students frequently neglected the pre-writing planning stage. The analysis demonstrates that technical Writing competencies, such as organization and grammar, serve as essential prerequisites for Creativity. Students who mastered technical foundations demonstrated higher originality and elaboration, whereas those who bypassed the planning phase failed to produce creative content due to cognitive overload on technical errors. The study concludes that effective essay writing instruction must strictly enforce pre-writing stages to bridge the gap between technical proficiency and creative ideation, ensuring that creativity is grounded in appropriate academic structure.

KEYWORDS: *Essay writing, creativity indicators, writing assessment, learning process, case study*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in academic essay writing is a core competency that must be mastered by students in higher education, serving as a critical medium for demonstrating critical thinking and scholarly communication. As posited by Flower and Hayes (1980), writing is not merely a linguistic act but a complex cognitive process that requires not only technical skills, such as grammar and organization, but also the ability to convey ideas creatively. However, in many institutional contexts, there is often a discrepancy between the ideal instructional planning stated in the Semester Lesson Plan and the actual teaching and assessment practices in the classroom. Assessment frequently focuses heavily on mechanical aspects, neglecting the potential for innovation and creativity of ideas, which Sternberg and Lubart (1996) identify as essential value-adds defined by their novelty and appropriateness. This gap suggests a need to re-evaluate how writing instruction balances technical rigor with creative expression.

Consequently, this research focuses on a deep exploration of the learning process and

assessment of the Essay Writing course taught by a single lecturer, referred to as lecturer, to understand how this balance is navigated in a real-world setting. The study emphasizes how the lecturer implements and assesses two key variables: Writing, defined as technical competence including grammar and structure typically evaluated through analytic scoring (Hyland, 2003), and Creativity, defined as ideational competence and originality (Torrance, 1974). By selecting a specific case study, this research aims to provide a "thick description" of the pedagogical strategies employed and the resulting student outcomes across different achievement levels.

To guide this investigation, the study poses two primary research questions regarding the instructional process. First, how does the lecturer plan and implement the Essay Writing learning process stages based on the formal lesson plan versus actual classroom practice? Second, how are Writing and Creativity indicators integrated, encouraged, and assessed in student essays, and how do the achievements of these two variables compare among Good, Medium, and Low student groups? These questions are designed to uncover the practical challenges and strategies involved in teaching writing as a multidimensional skill.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to provide a model for holistic assessment that effectively balances technical aspects with ideational aspects. (Dugan, 2021). By comprehensively describing and analyzing the curriculum implementation, teaching strategies, and assessment mechanisms of the subject, this research offers constructive feedback for the development of Essay Writing syllabi. Furthermore, analyzing the specific failures and successes of students at different levels provides empirical evidence on the relationship between technical proficiency and creative output, contributing to the broader theoretical understanding of writing instruction. (Singh, 2019)

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Fundamental Concepts of Essay Writing

Writing an academic essay is not merely arranging words but is a cognitive, social, and linguistic process (Flower & Hayes, 1980). Essays serve as a vessel for writers to articulate arguments, defend positions, and present analysis based on evidence.

Variable 1: Writing

Theoretical Foundation of Writing: The Sociocognitive Perspective

The Writing variable in this study is analyzed through the lens of the Sociocognitive Theory of Writing proposed by Flower and Hayes (1980). Unlike traditional linear models, this theory conceptualizes writing as a complex, recursive problem-solving process that is driven by three distinct but interacting cognitive phases: Planning, Translating (Drafting), and Reviewing.

The Planning phase is the critical starting point where the writer generates ideas, organizes information, and sets goals. (Kaufer, D. 1986). According to the theory, effective planning is essential because it reduces the cognitive load during the subsequent stages; by establishing a roadmap, the writer can focus on language choices without losing the thread of the argument. The Translating phase then involves converting these abstract plans into written language, requiring the coordination of linguistic skills such as vocabulary and grammar. Finally, Reviewing involves evaluating and correcting the text to ensure it aligns with the intended goals. (Kelog, 2001) Crucially, this model posits that the quality of the written product relies heavily on the effectiveness of these cognitive processes. For students, particularly Slow Learners, failure often stems from the mismanagement of these stages. If the Planning phase is neglected, the cognitive burden during Translating becomes excessive, as the student must simultaneously generate ideas and manage complex grammatical structures. This theoretical framework provides the basis for analyzing why certain students in this study succeeded while others struggled to produce coherent and creative essays.

Writing Indicator (Based on Relevance Hyland, 2003, and Scoring)	Detailed Description and Theoretical
Content	Result of the Planning phase and <i>Generating Ideas</i> cognition. Includes depth of argument, relevance of ideas, comprehensive topic development, and adequacy of supporting evidence. Good essays show a thorough understanding of the subject.
Organization	Refers to Planning and Reviewing phases. Assesses logical structure (Introduction, Body, Conclusion flow), as well as cohesion (sentence links) and coherence (paragraph links) ensuring smooth transitions of ideas.
Vocabulary/Diction	Relates to accurate, diverse word choices appropriate for a formal academic tone. Reflects lexical depth and contributes to the clarity of Translating ideas.
Language Use/Grammar	The most critical technical aspect in Translating and Reviewing . Includes syntactic accuracy, morphology, tenses, and sentence structure. Grammatical errors can impede the understanding of <i>Content</i> . Technical elements such as spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.
Mechanics	Demonstrates writer precision during Reviewing/Editing and determines the formality of academic writing.
Variable 2: Creativity	

Theoretical Foundation of Creativity in Writing

Creativity is broadly defined by Sternberg and Lubart (1996) as the ability to produce work that is both Novel and Appropriate. In academic writing, creativity is not fiction but the ability to: (1) Present unique perspectives, (2) Use fresh analogies or metaphors, and (3) Develop innovative arguments that remain logical and evidence-based.

Indicators of Creativity (Based on TTCT and Adaptation)

To measure creativity in a writing context, this study adopts indicators from the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (TTCT) (Torrance, 1974), adapted for the writing domain:

Creativity Indicator (Based on Relevance on TTCT and Adaptation)	Detailed Description and Theoretical
Fluency	The speed and quantity of ideas generated, indicating <i>divergent thinking</i> . In essays, seen in the richness and flow of arguments produced.
Flexibility	The ability to shift perspectives, categories, or approaches when viewing a topic. Creative writers can analyze problems multidimensionally.
Originality	The most crucial element: uniqueness or novelty of ideas, solutions, or presentation styles rarely thought of by others. Creating new connections between existing concepts.
Elaboration	The ability to develop main ideas with rich detail, adding descriptions, examples, or nuances that make the writing vivid and persuasive.
Novelty and Appropriateness (Synthesis)	A synthesis indicator ensuring that <i>Original</i> ideas must also be <i>Appropriate</i> (logical, relevant, persuasive) within the academic essay genre.

3.0 RESEARCH METHOD

This section details the rigorous qualitative research design used to ensure valid and reliable data collection.

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a Qualitative approach with a single, intensive Case Study design. This design was chosen to allow deep investigation of a specific phenomenon (the *Essay Writing* learning process) within a real-world context (lecturer’s class), utilizing multiple sources of evidence to generate a rich, theoretical description.

Subjects and Research Location

Main Subject: Course Lecturer (Key Informant)

The core research subject is One Lecturer currently teaching *Essay Writing*, referred to as Lecturer.

Justification for Subject Selection (Purposive Sampling): *Purposive sampling* is used as the focus is on deep exploration of an expert individual’s practice.

Lecturer was selected because: (1) She is the official lecturer for the *Essay Writing* course, (2) She possesses relevant teaching experience, and (3) She is known for teaching strategies worthy of in-depth exploration. This specific selection allows the researcher to obtain *thick description* data regarding her planning, implementation, and assessment.

Supporting Informants: Essay Writing Students (Comparative Data)

For data validation and comparison (Source Triangulation), the study involves six students from Lecturer's class. Grouping is based on academic performance:

Good Students (2 persons): Students with the best essay results. Function as the Ideal Model of learning outcomes.

Medium Students (2 persons): Students with average essay results. Function as the General Representation of process effectiveness.

Low Students (2 persons): Students with the lowest essay results. Function as a Critical Evaluation of learning process barriers.

3.2 Data Collection Techniques (Method Triangulation)

The study utilizes Triangulation of Methods and Sources to enhance credibility, combining: Interviews, Observations, and Document Analysis.

1. Interviews

Interviews are conducted in a Semi-Structured (Free Model) format. Questions begin with broad *open-ended* inquiries, followed by specific *probing* questions to dig deeper into variables and indicators.

Subject	Interview Goal	Opening Question Instrument (Free Model)
Lecturer	Explore planning, teaching strategies, and assessment mechanisms for <i>Writing & Creativity</i> .	"Could you please tell the whole story of how you plan and execute the learning process for this Essay Writing course, from the very beginning to the final assessment?"
Students (6 Persons)	Explore experiences, perceptions of the learning process, and understanding of assessment indicators.	"Tell me about your experience taking this Essay Writing class, including the parts you found most challenging and the parts you felt most encouraged your creativity."

Example Probing Questions (If answers lack detail):

"You mentioned the importance of *planning*. Do students always start with the *planning* stage? If not, what are the consequences?"

"How do you ensure *Originality* (Creativity) does not compromise *Appropriateness* (Writing) in their essays?"

"Are there any additional process stages you perform outside of what is listed in the RPS to help struggling students?"

2. Observation

Non-participant observation is conducted in lecturer's class to observe actual teaching practices and the students' essay writing process.

Observation Sought Focus	Goal	Key Evidence
Lecturer Teaching	Record strategies, emphasis on <i>Writing</i> vs. <i>Creativity</i> , and feedback delivery.	<i>Evidence</i> of learning stages actually performed by the Lecturer in class.
Student Process	Observe stages performed by students: Is it truly started with Planning? If not, what stages are done and why.	Recording the workflow patterns of <i>Good</i> , <i>Medium</i> , and <i>Low</i> students during in-class writing sessions.

3. Documents (Document Analysis)

Document analysis compares formal planning, implementation, and final results.

Semester Lesson Plan (RPS): Analyzing formally planned learning stages and assessment weighting. Student Essays (6 Documents): Analyzing scores and Lecturer feedback on essays from the 6 informants to see actual assessment patterns regarding *Writing* and *Creativity*.

Research Schema (Table of Research)

The following table summarizes the data collection scheme.

Research Subject	Qty	Role/Description	Main Data Link Method	Data Produced	Theoretical
Lecturer	1	Main Subject, planner, executor.	Interview, Observation, RPS	Teaching strategy, RPS implementation, Indicator assessment.	Sociocognitive Theory (Process)
Good Students	2	Supporting Informant (Success Model).	Interview, Essay Analysis	Perception of success, Evidence of essay results.	Hyland's Analytic Scoring (Achievement)
Medium Students	2	Supporting Informant (General Rep).	Interview, Essay Analysis	Perception of common challenges, Process consistency.	TTCT & Sternberg (Achievement Level)
Low Students	2	Supporting Informant (Critical Eval).	Interview, Essay Analysis	Process barriers/failures, Weak points in indicators.	Discrepancy Theory (Process-Outcome Gap)

This section presents findings from the triangulation of sources (Lecturer, Students, Documents) and methods, discussing them in depth.

Findings on the *Essay Writing* Learning

Process 1. Formal Planning (RPS) by lecturer

Detailed Narrative: Findings indicate that the RPS designed by lecturer has formally adopted a process approach to teaching writing. The RPS explicitly lists systematic stages, starting with Pre-writing (topic selection and *planning*), followed by Drafting, Revising, and Editing. *Planning* is listed

in the RPS as a crucial stage in early meetings, with learning outcomes requiring students to construct a solid framework (organization).

2. Classroom Implementation: The Gap between Plan and Practice

Detailed Narrative: Classroom observation verifies that the Lecturer consistently emphasizes the importance of *planning*. However, triangulation between Lecturer Interviews, Student Observations, and RPS Analysis reveals a gap.

Lecturer's Process: lecturer explains in interviews that *planning* (specifically brainstorming for *Fluency & Flexibility*) is the foundation, aligning with the Planning phase in Sociocognitive theory. Student Process (Observation): Observations reveal that the majority of students (specifically *Medium* and *Low*) tend to skip the Planning stage. When asked to draft, they immediately construct sentences without a detailed outline. This is *evidence* that they jump straight to the Translating phase without adequate planning, potentially hindering *Content* and *Organization*.

Lecturer's Additional Stage: Recognizing this tendency, lecturer admitted to adding a spontaneous stage outside the RPS: a "Quick Outline Check" session at the start of class. This is an informal intervention aimed at forcing *Low* students to show *evidence* of planning, mitigating weaknesses in *Organization*.

Integration and Assessment of Writing and Creativity

Indicators 1. Lecturer's Emphasis on Writing and Creativity

Detailed Narrative: Based on interviews, lecturer asserts she assesses essays with a balanced weight between technical ability and idea quality.

Writing Focus: The Lecturer tends to emphasize Content and Organization as bridges to *Creativity*. She argues that *Original* ideas (*Creativity*) cannot be effectively conveyed if *Grammar* and *Organization* (*Writing*) are weak. This aligns with Sternberg & Lubart' s theory that creativity must be *Appropriate*.

Creativity Focus: The Lecturer encourages Originality by assigning controversial or open-ended topics and rewarding essays that demonstrate rich Elaboration and unique perspectives.

2. Comparison of Student Achievement (Table and Analysis)

Analysis was conducted on essays from *Good*, *Medium*, and *Low* students to identify achievement patterns in *Writing* and *Creativity*.

Table 1: Comparison of Essay Assessment Results (lecturer) and Key Indicator Analysis

	Student Total (Initials)	Group (Initials) Score (Scale 100)	Key Strengths (Highest Indicators)	Key Weaknesses (Lowest Indicators)	Process Conclusion (Triangulation)
MA	Good	92	Originality, Content, Organization	Mechanics (Minor)	Planning process performed deeply and effectively.
FI	Good	88	Fluency, Flexibility, Content	Grammar (Complex structures)	Capable of <i>Creativity</i> balancing with <i>Writing</i> strong
AD	Medium	76	Organization, Fluency (Average) (Basic)	Grammar, Vocabulary	Planning process adequate, but technical weaknesses limit score.
RI	Medium	71	Content (Standard)	Originality, Elaboration (General ideas)	Difficulty transferring ideas into unique <i>Content</i> .
SA	Low	60	Mechanics	Grammar,	Ignored Planning process,

Student	Group	Key	Key Weaknesses	Process
	Total (Initials) Score (Scale 100)	Strengths (Highest Indicators)	(Lowest Indicators)	Conclusion (Triangulation)
		(Average)	Organization, Fluency	jumped to <i>Drafting</i> .
	AR	Low	55 - Content and Grammar	Content, Flexibility, Failed to grasp failed in basic <i>Writing</i> implementation.

4.0 RESULT

This section presents the findings from the triangulation of sources, comprising the Lecturer, Students, and Documents. Regarding the essay writing learning process, findings indicate that the formal lesson plan (RPS) designed by the Lecturer adopts a process approach, explicitly listing systematic stages: Pre-writing (planning), Drafting, Revising, and Editing. However, classroom observations and interviews revealed a gap between this formal plan and implementation. The majority of students, specifically those in the Medium and Low groups, tended to skip the Planning stage and immediately jump to the Translating (Drafting) phase. Recognizing this tendency, the Lecturer implemented a spontaneous, non-RPS stage called the "Quick Outline Check" to enforce evidence of planning, specifically mitigating weaknesses in Organization.

Regarding the integration and assessment of writing and creativity, the Lecturer asserts that she assesses essays with a balanced weight, emphasizing Content and Organization as essential bridges to Creativity. She encourages Originality by assigning controversial or open-ended topics and rewarding essays that demonstrate rich Elaboration and unique perspectives. Furthermore, she argues that Original ideas (Creativity) cannot be effectively conveyed if Grammar and Organization (Writing) are weak. This link is evident in the comparison of student achievement, where analysis revealed clear patterns based on performance groups. Low Students (SA & AR) who ignored the Planning stage had the lowest scores in Organization and Content. In contrast, Good Students (MA & FI) achieved high scores in Originality and Elaboration (Creativity) primarily because they had mastered the technical foundations of Organization and Grammar (Writing).

5.0 DISCUSSION

This section interprets the findings by comparing them with previous studies and offering theoretical explanations. First, findings show a strong negative impact regarding the link between planning and organization; Low Students (SA & AR) who ignored the Planning stage (Pre-writing) had the lowest scores in Organization and Content. Our interpretation confirms that failure in the Planning phase directly impacts the Translating (Drafting) phase, hindering the logical structure and flow of ideas in the final product. This finding is consistent with classical writing process models proposed by Flower and Hayes (1980), which emphasize that effective planning is essential for the quality of the written product. The empirical evidence confirms that neglecting pre-writing negatively impacts both Content and Organization.

Secondly, the in-depth analysis of the Good Students group shows they achieved high scores in Originality and Elaboration (Creativity) only because they had mastered the technical foundations of Organization and Grammar (Writing). This strongly validates the theoretical premise from Sternberg and Lubart (1996) that creativity must be both Novel and Appropriate. The study suggests that the freedom to exercise unique ideas (Originality) can only be realized effectively

when the writer is not overburdened by basic technical errors. Conversely, Low Students expended too many cognitive resources addressing Grammar and Organization issues, inhibiting their Fluency and Originality.

Finally, regarding pedagogical intervention and limitations, the observation revealed a consistent gap between the formal lesson plan (RPS) and the student process, where Medium and Low groups skipped Planning. Lecturer spontaneous intervention, the "Quick Outline Check," acts as a necessary pedagogical scaffold to enforce the Planning stage required by Sociocognitive theory. This action implies that for many students, particularly those struggling, the process approach needs to be mandated and assessed at each step. However, despite the rich description provided, this study is constrained by its single case design involving one lecturer and six students, meaning the findings regarding cognitive resource allocation may not be fully generalizable to all essay writing contexts.

6.0 CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Essay Writing learning process taught by the Lecturer attempts to integrate Writing and Creativity indicators. However, the effectiveness of this process heavily depends on student adherence to the Planning (Pre-writing) stage. Successful students (Good Students) are those who manage to use Writing competence (especially Organization) as a foundation for creative expression (Originality and Elaboration). Failure in the Low Students group is primarily caused by neglecting the Planning phase and fundamental weaknesses in Grammar and Organization indicators. These findings reinforce that in academic writing, technical competence is a prerequisite for effective and creative expression of ideas.

The primary implication of these findings is that instructional design for academic writing should adopt a mandatory process assessment model. Educators should not only assess the final product but must assign significant weight or make the completion of the Planning stage (e.g., submitting a detailed outline or draft) a prerequisite for passing the assignment. The holistic assessment model must balance analytic scoring of technical components with explicit criteria for novelty and appropriateness to guide students in achieving balanced success. Based on these barriers and limitations, it is recommended that the Essay Writing syllabus be revised to include mandatory, graded checks of pre-writing stages to reinforce the process approach. Furthermore, future quantitative research is recommended to experimentally test the effect of strict intervention on improving Organization and Creativity scores across larger and more diverse student populations.

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