

The Impact of a Writing Program on Improving Descriptive Essay Skills among CFY Students

Lana Hussain Ahmed Shahata

Al Khaleej Company for Training & Education, English Department, First Common Year, King Saud University, Riyadh, KSA
Email: Lana.shehata@gmail.com

How to cite this paper: Shahata, L. H. A. (2025). The Impact of a Writing Program on Improving Descriptive Essay Skills among CFY Students. *Open Journal of Modern Linguistics*, 15, 320-338.
<https://doi.org/10.4236/ojml.2025.152018>

Received: March 10, 2025

Accepted: April 14, 2025

Published: April 17, 2025

Copyright © 2025 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

This study seeks to examine the challenges and difficulties encountered by students in crafting descriptive essays, evaluate their attitudes toward writing, and investigate the extent to which instructors provide feedback on students' written work. The research is guided by three primary questions: 1) What are the recurrent issues in students' descriptive essays? 2) What are students' attitudes toward writing skills? 3) To what extent do instructors offer feedback on students' writing? It is hypothesized that students struggle with spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and essay organization. Moreover, it is postulated that students exhibit negative attitudes toward descriptive writing tasks and that feedback from instructors is either minimal or insufficient. The study employs a comprehensive analytical and descriptive methodology, utilizing a mixed-methods approach comprising pretest-posttest evaluations and a structured questionnaire. Participants were randomly selected from first-year science students enrolled in the College of Common First Year at King Saud University in Riyadh. A pretest was administered at the onset of the course to establish a baseline of students' writing proficiency, followed by targeted intervention and a subsequent posttest to assess progress. Additionally, a questionnaire was distributed to instructors to capture their perspectives on students' attitudes toward essay writing and to evaluate the nature of feedback provided. Data analysis and interpretation were conducted using advanced statistical software to ensure precision and reliability. The findings aim to illuminate the specific challenges students face in descriptive writing, uncover their attitudes toward the skill, and provide actionable insights into improving instructional practices and feedback mechanisms in academic writing pedagogy.

Keywords

Theories, Approaches, Craft, Composition, Cognitive, Social Constructionist, Free-Writing

1. Introduction

Language is a means of interaction between and among people Larsen (2003: 2). This explains to what extent learning language is important and should have more concentration and interest since people are social creatures. Among language skills, writing has an active role for the instruction of second-language learners because it is not only an effective tool for the development of academic language proficiency and a vital skill for academic success, but it also allows second language learners to enhance their perception of knowledge gaps (Warschauer, 2010). Writing concerns both the study and the practice to develop, so to develop your writing skills, you need to acquire both. For both native speakers and those who enroll in learning English, it is important to note that writing is a Process, not a “Product” Oshima and Hogue (1997: 2). Since writing is a process that means it develops through steps. Moreover, Ferguson and Mickerson (1992: 7) state that writing is a skill that is acquired through study. Writing is one of English skills that should be taught integrated, but it is regarded as the most difficult language skill to learn. This mostly shows how important writing is and should have remarkable and significant interest.

2. Statement of the Study Problem

University students in Sudan and Saudi Arabia, where the researcher is professionally engaged, face significant challenges in writing proficiency. These difficulties may stem from the inherently complex nature of writing as a process, misalignment between teaching methodologies and curricular materials, a mismatch between syllabi and students’ proficiency levels or needs, and students’ own lack of effort, often influenced by low motivation or negative attitudes toward writing.

Descriptive writing has been identified as one of the major areas of difficulty. Students struggle to compose even basic descriptive essays about a person, place, or object, which is the primary focus of this study. Their writing often lacks organization and coherence and is marked by frequent grammatical, structural, and punctuation errors. Notably, while students perform well in grammar-based assessments, their writing proficiency in exams and assignments remains considerably weak. This discrepancy drew the researcher’s attention and motivated the current study.

To enhance students’ writing skills, the researcher implemented an instructional intervention involving exposure to various descriptive writing samples. Despite the limited duration of the intervention, a noticeable improvement in students’ writing performance was observed. Encouraged by these preliminary results, the researcher aimed to further investigate the impact of targeted instructional strategies on descriptive writing proficiency.

This study is driven by the need for an effective and urgent pedagogical strategy to address students’ writing deficiencies. A well-structured intervention is required to mitigate these weaknesses and significantly improve students’ overall writing competence through a systematic, evidence-based approach.

3. The Objectives of the Study

- 1) To investigate the challenges and difficulties students encounter when writing descriptive essays.
- 2) To identify students' attitudes toward writing and their impact on writing proficiency.
- 3) To examine the extent to which teachers provide feedback on students' writing and its effectiveness in improving their skills.

4. The Questions of the Study

- 1) What writing challenges do students face in composing descriptive essays?
- 2) What are students' attitudes toward writing skills, and how do these attitudes impact their writing performance?
- 3) To what extent do teachers provide feedback on students' writing, and how effective is this feedback in improving their writing skills?

5. Literature Review

5.1. The Writing Skill

Zen (2005: 2) defines writing as one of the four skills, commonly accepted goals of learning a foreign language, but often a skill that "falls through". Archibald (2001: 153-160) mentions that writing is a skill that needs knowledge and proficiency in many areas. It is a multidimensional skill. It is a complex skill that results from the interaction of the writer's knowledge, experience, skills, and the cognitive demands of the task. Bello (1997: 1). states that writing is a continuous process of discovering how to find the most effective language for communicating one's feelings and thoughts. He maintains that writing is challenging, whether it is in a native language or in a second language. Orwig (1999: 2) gives a definition of writing as a skill saying that: It is a productive skill that is more complicated than it seems at first, and often seems to be the most difficult of the skills since it has several micro skills such as: using orthography correctly, spelling and punctuation conventions, using vocabulary in a correct way and using the appropriate style.

5.2. Writing Theories and Approaches

5.2.1. Cognitive Theory

Given its complexity, it is not surprising that there is currently no model or theory of writing that fully or adequately captures it. One conceptual approach to studying writing focuses mostly on the individual writer and concentrates on understanding the cognitive and the motivational processes involved in composing (Graham, 2006). This cognitive or cognitive/motivational approach is exemplified in an influential model of writing developed by Hayes (1996). In his model, he considers, at least in part, the interaction between the task environment for writing and the internal capabilities of the writer. The task environment includes both a social component (e.g., the audience, other texts read while writing, and collaborators) as well as a physical component (e.g., text read so far and the writing

medium, such as a word processor). Internal factors include four main elements. First, cognitive processes: text interpretation, reflection, and text production. These processes allow the writer to form an internal representation of the writing task that can be acted upon; devise a plan to reach one or more writing goals; draw conclusions about the audience and possible writing content; use cues from the writing plan or text produced so far to retrieve semantic information that is then turned into written sentences; and evaluate plans and text and modify them as needed. Second, motivation, which includes the goals, predispositions, beliefs, and attitudes that influence the writing process. Third, long-term memory—knowledge of the writing topic and audience as well as linguistic and genre knowledge, including task schemas that specify how to carry out writing tasks. Fourth, working memory, which serves as an interface between cognitive processes, motivation, and memory, providing a space for holding information and ideas for writing as well as carrying out cognitive activities that require the writer’s conscious attention.

5.2.2. Creative Writing Craft and Composition Theory

First-year students tend to think of most writers as creative writers. These institutionally constructed boundaries between creative writing and composition theory continue to be broken down in writing classrooms, but composition students are typically not exposed to authors’ discussions about craft. Tim Mayers (2005), in his book (Re)Writing Craft, argues that “craft criticism... can and should serve as a bridge between creative writing and composition studies” to “forge an academic disciplinary area in which writing is of primary concern” (p. xiv). Mayers’ argument hinges on the idea that creative writers and composition theorists need to share a department in most major universities because of their shared concerns. He recognizes that “because first-year composition courses are usually required of all students, whereas creative writing courses are not... students in creative writing courses... want to be in those courses,” and, therefore, that “creative writing students... are far more likely to think of themselves as writers and to enjoy writing” (pp. 114-115). As illustrated by Elbow and Belanoff’s (2003) text, composition instructors want their students to consider themselves writers and take their writing seriously. However, as Mayers points out, required course classroom environments differ from the atmosphere in a class the student elected to take. We agree with Mayers’ classroom distinction, and we also make it a goal in our classrooms to promote the idea that students should see themselves as writers. We see the marriage of composition theory and creative writing craft in the first-year writing classroom to help our students see themselves as writers.

5.2.3. Activity Theory

Nicole Hewes (2012) provides a method for describing and analyzing activity systems for writing and how they interact with macro-level activity systems involving academic discipline, culture, institution, society, and so forth. To illustrate activity theory in action an example is given below of how political, institutional, societal,

community, cultural, and historical factors might influence what happens in the class focusing on story writing. In this instance, the teacher's decision to concentrate on story writing was shaped by the district curriculum guide and the state's high stakes testing program (story writing was emphasized in both) as well as the teacher's and his/her students' interest in storytelling. The way in which story writing was introduced and taught was influenced by the teachers' beliefs about how to teach (which was previously influenced by his/her teacher preparation program, his/her own teachers as a child, and the culture of the school). In providing story writing instruction, the teacher used the same general routine approach that he/she had applied when teaching personal narratives and other types of writing. Students also continued to generate papers using the same general script they had been using since the start of the school year: selecting a topic, briefly planning what to say, making a draft, sharing it with a peer, revising and editing it, and sharing part or all of it with the class and at home. While this script for writing was followed by most students, some of them modified it by eliminating a step (e.g., planning) or adding ones (e.g., sharing plans with a peer). The last of these modifications had a ripple effect in the classroom, as almost all the students started sharing their plans with a peer. To provide students with concrete examples of stories, the teacher read traditional stories to the children (stories taken from his/her own dominant culture).

5.2.4. Social Constructionist Theory

The main idea of this theory is that knowledge is constructed by group discourse. People construct their sense of self from communal ideas and attitudes. Language is the means for discovering and articulating a separate uniqueness. Language is the means for discovering selfhood by giving voice to all culturally based understandings which constitute people's experience. Thus "We" as the "subject" of our experience is a composite entity articulated in the language of our communal experiences. Four Lines of Research:

- 1) Discourse communities: group talk produces meaning.
- 2) Sociology of science: development of forms.
- 3) Ethnography: Concerned with context of the language situation.
- 4) Marxist: politics of production.

Knowledge is built through collaboration and agreement. Opposition must be included or there is a reversion to individualist construction which reverts to defining individuals as instruments of the language which defines them (cognitive process). Central question for deciding which camp to join: Do we control language, or does language control us? Social constructionists see the interaction of the individualizing power of the mind and the collective social authority of language as reciprocal and as the essential dynamic from which we make meaning. Connection with Poststructuralist theory: writer, reader, and text are socially constructed entities, constituted by vast interpretative frameworks. Language is a "web of meaning." There is no underlying truth. We exist as relationships between words. No connection between signifier (content) and signified (object). Dis-

course community denotes a group of individuals bound by common interests/conventions which will influence production of text within that group.

5.3. Teaching Writing

Harmer (2001: 79-84) explains four reasons for teaching writing to students of English as a foreign language. They are reinforcement, language development, learning style and writing as a skill.

1) Reinforcement: some students acquire languages in an oral /aural way; others benefit from seeing the language written down. “The visual demonstration of language construction is invaluable for both understanding and memory”. It is useful for students to write in the new language shortly after studying it.

2) Language development: the process of writing is different from the process of speaking; the former helps us to learn as we go along. “The mental activity of constructing proper written texts is part of the ongoing learning experiences.”

3) Learning style: some students are quick at acquiring language just by looking and listening. Others may take longer time spent in producing language in a slower way is invaluable. So, writing is appropriate for those learners.

4) Writing as a skill: the most essential reason for teaching writing is that it is a basic language skill like speaking, listening, and reading. Students need to know how to write letters, compositions, essays and reports and how to use writing conventions. Archibald (2004: 5) notes that “although proficiency in writing is somewhat related to overall language proficiency, improvements in general language proficiency do not necessarily affect a student’s proficiency in writing in their L2. However, writing instruction can be effective in raising proficiency in a few areas. Recent approaches to instruction have recognized that, while weak areas can and should be specifically addressed, writing must always be seen as culturally and socially situated.” Cumming (2002: 123-134) cautions writing teachers to be wary of exercises that attempt to break writing down into component skills as such exercises often eliminate portions of the task that are important to the personal and cultural significance of the writing. Learners’ needs are different at various stages in their learning and teachers must develop tasks to accommodate this.

5.3.1. Writing as a Process

The concept of process writing is centered on the idea that writing skills are developed through the act of writing itself. Contemporary writing instruction emphasizes the process of composition over the final product. The fundamental premise of process writing is that all learners are capable of writing, with a focus on generating high-quality content and mastering various writing genres.

Lynch (1996: 155) says that teaching writing has been shifted since the 1970s. It was concerned with the product, with the learner’s answer. The focus was on accuracy of mechanics of writing (spelling, grammar, vocabulary, and punctuation marks. Since the 1970s, there has been a great interest in the process of writing. This approach is more concerned with giving it the right way. Harmer (2007: 4-6) tells us something about the process of writing and the stages a writer goes

through to produce a piece of writing. He suggests four main elements: Planning, the writer must think about three issues (purpose, audience, and content structure.) Drafting is the first version of a piece of writing. Editing (reflecting and revision) and finally the final version. *Oshima and Hogue (1981: 4-15)* identify four stages of the writing process:(prewriting, planning, writing, and revising drafts and the final copy)

Choosing and narrowing a topic and brainstorming. Prewriting (**step 1**) Choosing and narrowing a topic When students are given a choice to write about a topic they like, they must narrow the topic to a particular aspect of that general topic. This means, the topic should not be too broad to write in one paragraph because it is impossible to cover a topic like “environment “in only one paragraph. Prewriting (**step 2**) Brainstorming means generating ideas that help students write more quickly on the topic they are interested in using three techniques: listing, free writing, and clustering. Teachers should help students learn how to use each of them and decide which is the most productive one. Stage 2: Planning Students are asked to organize the ideas they generated by brainstorming. **Stage 3:** Writing and revising drafts Students are asked to write a draft or more till they produce a final copy. This can be done by writing the first draft, revising content and organization, proofreading the second draft for grammar, spelling and punctuation marks. Stage. **Stage 4:** writing the final copy: after making the needed corrections, students can write the final copy. 2. Writing Stages Writing is not an easy task as it needs skills and high thinking abilities. It is a productive skill of important stages which should be focused on during teaching writing. *White and Arndt (1991: 5)* assert that writing serves as cyclical process. This means that when students are revising their writing, they might return to the prewriting phase to expand their ideas. They show the nature of the writing stages as in the following diagram. *Millrood (2001: 147)* describes three-phase framework of teaching to write: Prewriting (schemata-the previous knowledge a person already has-activation, motivation for writing, preparation for he writes, familiarization with the format of the text.).

- While-writing (thesis development, writing from notes, proceeding from a given beginning phrase and following a plan)—post-writing (reflection on spelling and grammar errors, sharing the writing with other students-redrafting, peer editing). *Chien (2007: 25-31)* in his study differentiates between two kinds of strategies in the writing process. Cognitive and metacognitive strategies. The first involves strategies for using knowledge to solve problems, the second concerns monitoring, controlling, and understanding one’s strategies. Sometimes they overlap with each other. He adds, writing consists of three main cognitive processes/strategies: planning, translating, and reviewing. Planning is divided into three sub-strategies: generating ideas, organizing and goal setting. Translating is done when writers put their ideas into visible language. Finally, reading and editing are the sub-strategies of reviewing. *Lindsay and Knight (2006: 94-95)* divide writing into three stages:

- Pre-writing stage—the teacher sets the task, learners [prepare for what they will write. The writing stage—the learners do the task, for example, writing a report, a story, a letter—post-writing—feedback and follow-up work. 2.5 Purposes of Teaching Writing Teachers of English often choose writing tasks from textbooks to help students improve their writing ability. The writing tasks that teachers select from textbooks and assign to students can help them become confident writers and independent thinkers. The four purposes for teaching writing:

1) Writing for language practice. Writing can be taught for practicing language forms to develop accuracy and correctness. It is basically for reinforcement, training, and imitation of language forms. In language-based writing tasks, students would be given writing exercises that would reinforce language structures that have been taught through the manipulation of grammatical patterns. For example, students would be given a paragraph and asked to perform substitutions, transformations, expansions, or completion exercises.

2) Writing for rhetorical practice in writing tasks that teach rhetorical forms, teachers would provide the content and use model essays as stimuli for writing. Students will imitate the rhetorical and syntactic forms by following the chosen model passage. Examples of such tasks are writing guided compositions in which the content and organization are given by the teacher, reading a passage, and writing a composition with parallel organization, reading an essay and analyzing its organizational pattern and writing a similar essay on a related topic.

3) Writing for communication Teaching began to shift its emphasis on accuracy and patterns to the ability to understand and convey information content. Completing a communicative writing task would require greater awareness of the writer's purpose, audience, and the context of writing. Here, writing has a social function. Such communicative writing tasks stimulate real life situations where a writer will write to convey some information to a reader.

4) Writing as a discovery and cognitive process. Writing tasks in the classrooms have begun to shift their focus to the process of writing which has been influenced by the humanistic and cognitive approaches. The process approach has two main schools of thought: the expressive and the cognitive. The expressive school of thought stresses the importance of self-development. Writing is viewed as an expressive mode through which student writers use writing to explore or discover meaning by themselves and develop their own voice.

5.3.2. Teaching Writing Approaches

1) The Controlled-to-Free Method

In the 1950s and 1960s, when the Audio-lingual approach prevailed, writing was taught only to reinforce speech. It was believed that the mastery of grammatical rules could lead to that of the foreign language, especially in its spoken form. This belief encouraged the teaching of grammar in the time allocated to writing. It was in such circumstances that the method known as controlled-to-free emerged. It consists essentially in providing the students with pieces of writing

such as sentences or paragraphs and asking them to make some grammatical or lexical changes such as using the present tense instead of the past, or the plural instead of the singular etc. to change phrases into clauses or vice versa. This type of exercise makes the learners write frequently and gives them the opportunity to produce their own writing without mistakes because their productions are strictly controlled. Only after having improved this first type of highly controlled writing can the students move to free compositions in which they express their own ideas. Between extremes, there are exercises where the students are provided with all or some of the language they need. The shift from controlled-to-free writing takes place gradually as the teacher's guidance decreases gradually from the first exercise to the last.

2) The Free-Writing Approach

The Free-writing Approach is essentially based on the belief that when we write freely and frequently, we improve our ability in that language skill. Free writing means that the students write without teacher's interference and are encouraged to emphasize content and fluency first. Once the ideas are expressed on paper, the teacher intervenes to provide some assistance to improve grammatical accuracy. For Peyton and Staton (1996), "Learners write for a period in class on a topic of interest to them. This writing can take many forms, including quick writings, which are time-limited, done individually, and not always shared; and dialogue journals, written to a teacher, a classmate or another partner who then responds. On the other hand, such writings "may be kept in a notebook. From these pieces, themes may emerge that can act as a facilitator for more extensive writing that is discussed, revised, edited, and published." (p. 16-32) Free writing is of two types: when it is focused, it answers a question, or a topic proposed by the student himself. The teacher's interference is very limited because he gives his instructions at the beginning of the exercise and allows the students to write freely.

3) The Power Writing Approach

The origin of this approach draws back to 1989 when J. E. Sparks (1989) of the University of Southern California published his book entitled "Power Writing". He studied many non-fiction writers from Aristotle to contemporary authors and concluded that all these authors presented a main idea and supported it with appropriate details. From this observation, J.E. Sparks developed the concept of "Power Writing", a method of writing which assigns numerical values to main ideas, major and minor details. One of the components of Power Writing as presented originally is a method of simple paragraph construction called the "Power graph". This method not only includes a formula for writing paragraphs but also aids students in the identification of main ideas and supporting details. Traditional Power Writing, according to Sparks, is based on a numerical approach to the structure of writing. It erases and replaces complex and ambiguous abstract terminology with a numbered structure that students can easily keep in mind. This numerical structure can be used in all types of development: expository, argumentative, narrative, and descriptive; and for all forms of writing such as paragraph and composition.

5.4. Previous Studies

1) **Gouty and Lid (2002)** in their thesis “improving the students’ writing ability the use of the teachers’ intervention” in Illinois Chicago, described a program to improve student writing ability. The targeted sample of the study consists of first and third grade students in a middle-class community in the Midwest. Materials that develop writing activities are developed. A writing unit is also constructed. The tools of the study are surveys, teacher and student writing performance and self-editing checklists. The results indicated an increase in the students’ use of grammar and vocabulary. Student improvement also increased in self-editing skills and attitude toward writing. Portfolio assessment is highly recommended as an alternative to traditional assessments. Some writing activities used in this study are adopted during the stages of explaining the writing process in the program at hand.

2) **Kowalewski (2002)** in their study “improving the students’ writing in the elementary classroom, in Saint Xavier, described a program for instructing students in the writing process to improve their writing skills. The population of the study consisted of fourth and fifth grade students in a middle-class community in northern Illinois. The total population of the school was 566 students. The sample of the study consisted of 76 students distributed into three sites. Site (A) 24 students, site (B) 26 students, site (C) 26 students. The collected data showed lack of use of progress writing skills because there was a lack of skills related to organization and revision in the writing process. And a lack of teacher modeling, reflection and the time given for student writing. The study suggested some solution strategies for the problem such as: increasing the time allowed for writing, more teachers modeling demonstrations of writing techniques like (organization, ideas, word choice, sentence fluency, voice, and conventions). The results of the study showed a marked improvement in students’ writing. The students showed greater ability to communicate more effectively through their writing at the end of the program.

6. Methodology

This study employed an analytical and descriptive research design, utilizing two data collection tools: a pretest and posttest to measure students’ writing performance and a questionnaire to gather instructors’ perspectives. Participants were randomly selected from first-year science students at the College of Common First Year, King Saud University, Riyadh. A pretest was administered at the beginning of the semester, followed by an instructional intervention. After seven weeks, a posttest was conducted to assess the effectiveness of the intervention. Additionally, an instructor questionnaire was administered to gain insights into students’ attitudes toward essay writing from the instructors’ perspective. Data were analyzed using a statistical software package to ensure objective interpretation.

7. Participant Selection

A simple random sampling technique was used to select participants from first-year science students at the College of Common First Year, King Saud University,

Riyadh. Randomization was conducted using computer-generated selection to eliminate bias. While no stratification was applied, an effort was made to ensure diversity in the sample. Instructors were chosen based on specific criteria, including a minimum of three years of teaching experience and active involvement in teaching writing-related courses.

8. Data Collection and Intervention

At the beginning of the semester, a pretest was administered to assess students' initial writing proficiency. The instructional program lasted seven weeks and included structured writing workshops, individualized feedback sessions, and guided writing exercises. The program focused on spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and the organization of descriptive writing. After the intervention, a posttest was conducted to evaluate improvements in students' writing performance. Additionally, an instructor questionnaire was designed to explore instructors' perceptions of students' writing attitudes and performance. The data collected from both the tests and the questionnaire were analyzed using statistical software to identify patterns and measure the impact of the intervention.

8.1. Testing the Study Hypotheses

The first hypothesis of this study states:

“Students’ descriptive essays exhibit issues related to spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and organization.”

8.2. Comparison of Pretest and Posttest Results

Differences Between Pretest and Posttest Scores

Test	Mean	St. Deviation	T-Value	P-Value
Pre	22.94	10.42	-12.378	0.0000
Post	35.40	8.62		

The T-test results show a p -value of 0.000, which is lower than the significance level of 0.05. This indicates a statistically significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores, favoring the posttest. These findings suggest:

- 1) The remedial writing program played a significant role in addressing the writing deficiencies identified in the pretest.
- 2) The intervention had a positive impact on students' overall writing performance.
- 3) There is a strong correlation between the remedial writing program and improvements in descriptive writing skills.

8.3. Verification of the Study Hypotheses

Second Hypothesis:

“Students have negative attitudes toward descriptive writing.”

Statement 1: Your Students Enjoy Writing

Table 1. Frequency distribution for Statement 1.

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	3	4.5
Agree	21	31.3
Not Sure	9	13.4
Disagree	24	35.8
Strongly disagree	10	14.9
Total	67	100.0

Interpretation of Table 1

The results indicate that only 3 participants (4.5%) strongly agreed that students enjoy writing, while 21 participants (31.3%) agreed. In contrast, 9 participants (13.4%) were uncertain, whereas 24 participants (35.8%) disagreed, and 10 participants (14.9%) strongly disagreed. These findings suggest that a considerable portion of the respondents perceive that students do not enjoy writing.

Statement 2: Your Students Think Writing Sessions Are Boring**Table 2.** Frequency distribution for Statement 2.

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	14	20.4
Agree	38	56.7
Not sure	3	4.5
Disagree	10	14.9
Strongly disagree	2	3.0
Total	67	100.0

Interpretation of Table 2

The results indicate that a majority of respondents (56.7%) agreed, and 20.4% strongly agreed that students find writing sessions boring. Meanwhile, 4.5% of participants were uncertain, while 14.9% disagreed and only 3.0% strongly disagreed. These findings suggest that a significant proportion of students perceive writing sessions as unengaging, supporting the hypothesis that students have negative attitudes toward descriptive writing. Statement No. (3): Your students think writing is useful.

Statement 3: Your Students Think Writing Is Useful**Table 3.** Frequency distribution for Statement 3.

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	10	14.9
Agree	34	50.9
Not sure	14	20.9
Disagree	7	10.4
Strongly disagree	2	3.0
Total	67	100.0

Interpretation of Table 3

The results indicate that 50.9% of participants agreed and 14.9% strongly agreed that students find writing useful. However, 20.9% were uncertain, while 10.4% disagreed and only 3.0% strongly disagreed. These findings suggest that most students recognize the value of writing, though a notable percentage remain unsure or hold a negative perception.

Statement 4: Your Students Enjoy Sharing with Friends a Draft of What They Have Written

Table 4. Frequency distribution for Statement 4.

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	11	16.4
Agree	20	29.9
Not sure	16	23.9
Disagree	18	26.9
Strongly disagree	2	3.0
Total	67	100.0

Interpretation of Table 4

The data shows that 16.9% of participants strongly agreed and 29.9% agreed that students enjoy sharing their drafts with friends. However, 23.9% were uncertain, while 26.9% disagreed and 3.0% strongly disagreed. These findings indicate a mixed perception, with a slightly higher tendency toward positive attitudes regarding peer sharing in writing.

Statement 5: Your Students Submit Assignments on Time and Inquire About Feedback

Table 5. Frequency distribution for Statement 5.

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	9	13.4
Agree	37	55.2
Not sure	5	7.5
Disagree	13	19.4
Strongly disagree	2	4.5
Total	67	100.0

Interpretation of Table 5

The data reveals that 68.6% of participants (strongly agree + agree) believe students submit assignments on time and inquire about feedback. However, 7.5% remain uncertain, while 23.9% (disagree + strongly disagree) suggest that a significant portion of students struggle with timely submissions or do not actively seek feedback. These findings indicate that most students demonstrate responsibility in assignment completion and feedback engagement, though some inconsisten-

cies remain.

Third hypothesis: Teachers either do not give feedback or don't give enough feedback about their students' writing.

Statement No. (1): You give noncritical feedback—telling your students what you think about their writing.

Table 6 shows the frequency distribution for the study's respondents about question no. (1).

Table 6. The frequency distribution for statement no. (1).

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	23	34.3
Agree	32	47.8
Not sure	6	9.0
Disagree	5	7.5
Strongly disagree	1	1.5
Total	67	100.0

Table 6 illustrate the frequency distribution of respondents' opinions regarding Statement (1): "You give noncritical feedback—telling your students what you think about their writing."

The results indicate that 23 participants (34.3%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 32 participants (47.8%) agreed. Additionally, 6 participants (9.0%) were uncertain, 5 participants (7.5%) disagreed, and only 1 participant (1.5%) strongly disagreed.

Statement No. (2): You give your students 'criterion-based feedback'—telling them how their draft matches up against the most common criteria of good writing.

Table 7 shows the frequency distribution for the study's respondents about question no. (2).

Table 7. The frequency distribution for statement no. (2).

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	27	40.3
Agree	32	47.8
Not sure	5	9.0
Disagree	2	3.0
Strongly disagree	1	1.5
Total	67	100.0

The results show that 27 participants (40.3%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 32 participants (47.8%) agreed. Additionally, 5 participants (7.5%) were uncertain, 2 participants (3.0%) disagreed, and only 1 participant (1.5%)

strongly disagreed.

Statement No. (3): You give your students a detailed feedback on their writing regarding sentence structure.

Table 8 shows the frequency distribution for the study's respondents about question no. (3).

Table 8. The frequency distribution for statement no. (3).

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	29	43.3
Agree	30	44.8
Not sure	3	4.5
Disagree	4	6.0
Strongly disagree	1	1.5
Total	67	100.0

The results indicate that 29 participants (43.3%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 36 participants (53.7%) agreed. Additionally, 3 participants (4.5%) were uncertain, 4 participants (6.0%) disagreed, and only 1 participant (1.5%) strongly disagreed.

Statement No. (4): You give your students detailed feedback on their writing regarding paragraph organization.

Table 9 shows the frequency distribution for the study's respondents about question no. (4).

Table 9. The frequency distribution for statement no. (4).

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	22	32.8
Agree	36	47.8
Not sure	3	10.4
Disagree	4	11.9
Strongly disagree	2	3.0
Total	67	100.0

The results indicate that 22 participants (32.8%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 36 participants (53.7%) agreed. Additionally, 3 participants (4.5%) were uncertain, 4 participants (6.0%) disagreed, and 2 participants (3.0%) strongly disagreed.

Statement No. (5): You give your students feedback about the reasons for their mistakes.

Table 10 shows the frequency distribution for the study's respondents about question no. (5).

Table 10. The frequency distribution for statement no. (5).

Answer	Number	Percent
Strongly agree	18	26.9
Agree	32	47.8
Not sure	7	10.4
Disagree	8	11.9
Strongly disagree	2	3.0
Total	67	100.0

The results indicate that 18 participants (26.9%) strongly agreed with the statement, while 32 participants (47.8%) agreed. Additionally, 7 participants (10.4%) were uncertain, 8 participants (11.9%) disagreed, and 2 participants (3.0%) strongly disagreed.

9. Findings of the Study

1) While responses to certain questions related to the second hypothesis indicate agreement on the usefulness of writing and students' engagement in sharing ideas about writing, the overall results reveal a predominantly negative attitude toward writing. This conclusion is strongly supported by the quality of students' written work in both the pretest and posttest. The consistently weak writing performance suggests that students' perceptions and attitudes toward writing significantly impact their proficiency.

2) The study further examined students' ability to write descriptive essays. Although initial questionnaire responses suggested that students possessed strong descriptive writing skills, this claim was contradicted by their pretest and posttest scores. The results indicate that students exhibited weak writing abilities before the implementation of the remedial program. The discrepancy between the questionnaire responses and test results suggests that the survey may not have accurately reflected students' actual skill levels. Possible explanations for this inconsistency include instructor bias, misinterpretation of questionnaire items, or a lack of diligence among some respondents. Therefore, the questionnaire findings regarding students' writing abilities do not align with the test results.

3) Furthermore, although the study indicates that teachers provide feedback on students' writing, the actual quality of students' work contradicts this claim. If effective feedback were consistently provided, an improvement in students' writing performance would be expected, which was not observed. It is possible that teachers' responses were influenced by their awareness that providing feedback is a fundamental teaching responsibility, thereby affecting the accuracy of their self-reported answers.

4) The study demonstrates a significant improvement in students' descriptive essay writing, as evidenced by their posttest scores, which were consistently higher than their pretest scores. The correlation between the pretest and posttest results suggests that the intervention successfully met its objectives.

5) The pretest and posttest assessments evaluated multiple aspects of writing, including spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and organization. The findings highlight notable progress in all these areas. The remedial instructional program played a crucial role in addressing the weaknesses identified in students' pretest performance. Additionally, the strong correlation between pretest and posttest results further validates the effectiveness of the intervention.

10. Recommendations

1) Given students' predominantly negative attitude toward writing, it is essential to implement strategies that enhance their motivation. This can be achieved through engaging writing sessions, targeted support, and instructional approaches that foster a more positive perception of writing. Progressive writing sessions and structured interventions should be prioritized, particularly for first-year students, to ensure meaningful development in their writing skills.

2) Providing feedback is a fundamental responsibility of teachers; therefore, instructors should focus on offering more comprehensive and constructive feedback. Additionally, they should actively follow up on students' progress to ensure that feedback leads to tangible improvements in their writing.

3) Instructors should facilitate the entire writing process within the classroom by closely monitoring students' progress, providing guidance, and assigning relevant tasks. Regularly assessing and reviewing students' assignments will help reinforce writing skills and encourage consistent improvement.

4) Since questionnaire items play a crucial role in addressing the research questions, it is important to ensure that respondents fully understand them. Therefore, monitoring the questionnaire administration process and providing clear explanations of the items to participants is essential for obtaining accurate and reliable responses.

5) Students within the same academic level may exhibit varying degrees of writing proficiency. This variability should be carefully considered when designing pretest and posttest assessments to ensure that the evaluations accurately reflect students' abilities and progress.

11. Suggestions for Further Studies

1) Students, curriculum, and teaching approaches are fundamental components of the learning process and should receive greater attention in research. Therefore, future studies should explore these aspects in depth to identify effective strategies for improving writing instruction and student outcomes.

2) Since this study focused on descriptive essay writing and students' attitudes toward writing, further research should investigate other types of writing, such as argumentative, expository, and narrative essays. Additionally, future studies should examine other factors influencing writing proficiency beyond students' attitudes, such as cognitive strategies, teacher feedback effectiveness, and the role of digital tools in writing development.

3) Given the generally weak writing performance observed among students, there is an urgent need for research on effective methods to enhance and develop their writing skills. Further studies in this area would be valuable and could yield promising results in improving writing proficiency at various educational levels.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

References

- Archibald, A. (2001). Targeting L2 Language Proficiency: Instructions and Areas of Change in Students' Writing over Time. *International Journal for English Studies*, 1, 153-160.
- Archibald, A. (2004). *Writing in a Second Language*. The Higher Education Academy Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies.
- Bello, T. (1997). Writing Topics for Adult ESL Students. In *The 31st Annual Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Convention 1* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED402860). <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED402860>
- Chien, S.-C. (2007). *The Role of Writing Strategy Use in Relation to Chinese EFL Students' Achievement in English Writing: A Cognitive Approach* (pp. 25-31). CamLing, Cambridge Institute of Language Research, University of Cambridge.
- Cumming, A. (2002). Assessing L2 Writing: Alternative Constructs and Ethical Dilemmas. *Assessing Writing*, 8, 73-83. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1075-2935\(02\)00047-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1075-2935(02)00047-8)
- Elbow, P., & Belanoff, P. (2003). *Being a Writer*. McGraw Hill.
- Ferguson, G., & Mickerson, L. (1992). *Academic Writing Strategies*. Oxford University Press.
- Gouty, M., & Lid, T. (2002). *Improving Students' Writing Ability through Teacher Intervention*. Saint Xavier University.
- Graham, S. (2006). Writing. In P. Alexander, & P. Winne (Eds.), *Handbook of Educational Psychology* (pp. 457-478). Erlbaum.
- Harmer, J. (2001). *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (3rd ed.). Longman.
- Harmer, J. (2007). *The Practice of English Language Teaching* (4th ed.). Pearson Education Limited.
- Hayes, J. R. (1996). A New Framework for Understanding Cognition and Its Effect on Writing. In M. Levy, & S. Ransdell (Eds.), *The Science of Writing: Theories, Methods, Individual Differences, and Applications* (pp. 1-27). Erlbaum.
- Hewes, N. (2012). *The Language of Dr. Seuss and Children's Literacy*. Students' Scholars Paper, Digital Colby.
- Kowalewski, E. (2002). *Improving Students' Writing in the Elementary Classroom*. Saint Xavier University, The REIC Database.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2003). *Teaching Language: From Grammar to Grammarian*. Heinle.
- Lindsay, C., & Knight, P. (2006). *Learning and Teaching English: A Course for Teachers*. Oxford University Press.
- Lynch, T. (1996). *Communication in the Language Classroom*. Oxford University Press.
- Mayers, T. (2005). *(Re)writing Craft: Composition, Creative Writing, and the Future of English Studies*. University of Pittsburgh Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt9qh4v2>
- Millrood, R. P. (2001). *Modular Course in ELT Methodology*. Publishing House of Tambov

State University.

Orwig, C. (1999). *Aspects of Communicative Competence. Extract from the LinguaLinks Library, Version 3.5*. Published in CD-ROM by SIL International.

Oshima, A., & Hogue, A. (1981). *Introduction to Academic Writing*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.

Oshima, A., & Hogue, A. (1997). *Introduction to Academic Writing* (2nd ed.). Longman.

Peyton, J. K., & Staton, J. (1996). *Dialogue Journals in the Multilingual Classroom: Building Language Fluency and Learning*. Ablex Publishing.

Warschauer, M. (2010). New Tools for Teaching Writing. *Language Learning & Technology*, 14, 3-8. <https://doi.org/10.64152/10125/44196>

White, R., & Arndt, V. (1991). *Process Writing*. Longman.

Zen, D. (2005). The Process Approach to ESL/EFL Writing. *The Journal of Asia TEFL*, 2, 1-205.