
**ENHANCING SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' INFORMATIONAL TEXT
WRITING COMPETENCY: PERSPECTIVES, METHODS, AND EDUCATIONAL
PRACTICES**

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<https://doi.org/10.54922/IJEHSS.2025.0936>

ABSTRACT

Developing students' competency in writing informational texts is essential for academic success and real-world communication. This study explores pedagogical approaches such as competency-based learning and process-based writing instruction while analyzing the role of digital tools in enhancing writing proficiency. By identifying key challenges-including curriculum inconsistencies, limited teacher training, and student engagement issues-this paper provides strategic interventions for improving instructional effectiveness. Through structured writing workshops, digital learning platforms, and interdisciplinary writing assignments, students can develop critical writing skills. The findings contribute to the ongoing discourse on effective writing pedagogy, highlighting the need for curriculum development and teacher professional training to bridge existing gaps in instructional practices.

Keywords: Informational text composition, competency-based learning, secondary education, writing instruction, pedagogical strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing informational texts is an essential skill for secondary students, fostering their ability to communicate clearly, critically analyze information, and engage with academic discourse. As competency-based education (CBE) gains prominence, writing instruction must evolve to emphasize real-world application and cognitive development. This paper explores current teaching practices in informational writing, highlighting key challenges such as curriculum inconsistencies, limited teacher training, and low student engagement. Furthermore, it proposes evidence-based pedagogical strategies, including structured writing workshops, digital learning tools, and interdisciplinary writing tasks, to enhance students' writing competency and prepare them for academic and professional success.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. What makes informational texts distinctive?

Informational texts are non-fictional writings that aim to convey factual information systematically and accurately. These texts can include reports, news articles, research summaries, and instructional guides. Unlike narrative or literary texts, informational texts prioritize clarity, structure, and coherence to facilitate knowledge dissemination. Informational texts are non-fiction writings primarily aimed at conveying factual and scientific information clearly, accurately, and systematically. These texts include reports, research articles, manuals, and news articles. A distinguishing feature of informational texts is their objectivity and coherence in presenting information. Unlike narrative texts, which focus on storytelling, informational texts emphasize the

transmission of knowledge, theories, research data, or events in a structured and comprehensible manner (Bazerman, 2018).

To achieve effective information transmission, informational texts must have a clear structure, typically including an introduction, main content, and conclusion. Paragraphs should be logically organized to help readers follow and understand the content easily. Moreover, precise and unambiguous language is essential to maintain credibility and accuracy (Hyland, 2007).

These texts often incorporate elements such as data, charts, and references to enhance clarity and persuasiveness. Therefore, teaching and developing informational writing skills is vital for students' academic and professional growth.

2.2. Competency-based education and writing instruction

Competency-Based Education (CBE) evaluates students based on their ability to apply skills and knowledge in real-world situations rather than solely relying on rote memorization. In writing instruction, CBE requires students to develop their writing skills through practical exercises, iterative practice, and continuous feedback (Graham & Perin, 2007).

CBE-based writing instruction encourages students to engage in an ongoing writing process, including drafting, revising, and finalizing their work. This process helps students improve their writing comprehensively, from planning and organizing ideas to producing precise and logical texts. Feedback from teachers and peers is crucial, allowing students to recognize strengths and areas for improvement (Applebee & Langer, 2013).

Implementing CBE in writing instruction better prepares students for real-life situations where writing skills are not only academic but also essential in professional and social communication. The ability to write clearly and accurately can significantly impact communication effectiveness in various contexts.

2.3. The role of process-based writing

Process-based writing instruction emphasizes multiple stages, such as outlining, drafting, revising, and finalizing, as integral parts of writing. This approach not only improves students' writing skills but also enhances their critical thinking and logical organization abilities. Studies have shown that process-based writing instruction significantly enhances the quality of students' informational texts, particularly in secondary education settings.

One key benefit of process-based writing is that it helps students develop organizational skills and coherence in constructing texts. By going through multiple drafting stages, students can review and refine their work, improving structure and correcting grammatical or syntactical errors. This iterative writing process fosters self-evaluation and self-correction skills (Flower & Hayes, 1981).

Additionally, process-based writing instruction fosters critical thinking. The drafting, revising, and feedback stages encourage students not only to write but also to evaluate their ideas carefully. Teacher and peer feedback helps students identify weaknesses in their writing and refine their work accordingly, enhancing their overall writing ability (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987).

This method is particularly crucial for informational writing, which demands a clear structure from introduction to conclusion, supporting details, and logical argumentation. Implementing process-based writing helps students analyze information, organize ideas effectively, and present arguments coherently (Hyland, 2007).

Overall, process-based writing instruction is a powerful method that not only improves writing skills but also nurtures critical thinking and self-assessment abilities. When properly applied, this approach enables students to produce high-quality informational texts with real-world applications.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques to explore the effectiveness of instructional strategies in enhancing students' informational writing competency. Surveys and interviews were conducted with teachers and students from various secondary schools, providing insights into their experiences and perceptions of current teaching practices. These data were analyzed to identify key challenges, such as curriculum inconsistencies, insufficient teacher training, and low student engagement.

Additionally, classroom observations were conducted to assess real-time instructional practices. These observations helped evaluate whether teaching methods aligned with competency-based and process-based writing frameworks. The analysis also included a review of students' written work to assess their ability to apply writing strategies, structure arguments, and convey information clearly.

This mixed-methods approach provided a comprehensive understanding of the state of informational writing instruction, informing practical recommendations for improving teaching practices, such as structured writing workshops, enhanced teacher training, and digital tool integration.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Current challenges in teaching informational writing

Survey data revealed that over 70% of participating teachers expressed confusion when teaching informational texts due to the absence of detailed instructional materials. One teacher noted: "The textbooks offer little guidance on how to teach students to analyze visuals or interpret data representations in informational writing." This lack of concrete resources contributes to inconsistent teaching approaches and limits students' understanding of text structures.

Interviews with teachers showed that many had not received formal training in teaching informational or multimodal texts. One respondent stated: "We learned how to teach literary texts in college, but informational writing — especially with visuals — is completely new territory." This gap highlights the need for targeted professional development aligned with curriculum reforms.

Several major challenges hinder the improvement of students' informational writing skills in secondary education. One key issue is the lack of a structured writing curriculum. Many schools do not have standardized guidelines for teaching informational writing, leading to inconsistencies in instructional approaches among teachers. This lack of systematic learning opportunities affects students' writing quality (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Another significant challenge is insufficient teacher training. While writing instruction is an essential part of language education, many teachers lack proper training in effective writing pedagogy, particularly in teaching informational writing. As a result, they may struggle to apply appropriate methods to develop students' writing skills (Applebee & Langer, 2013).

Moreover, student motivation remains a major issue. Informational writing is often perceived as difficult and dry, leading to low engagement. The lack of interest and active

participation affects students' learning outcomes. Thus, dynamic teaching methods that connect writing with real-world applications are needed to enhance student motivation (Bazerman, 2018).

4.2. Enhancing writing competency through effective strategies

Classroom observations during writing workshops demonstrated increased student engagement. In one session, students used graphic organizers to plan a report on environmental issues. When asked about their experience, a student shared: "I didn't know how to structure my writing before, but this method helped me organize ideas step-by-step." The use of scaffolding tools proved beneficial for learners with limited writing experience.

Students also responded positively to the integration of visual aids and online tools such as collaborative Google Docs. One group collaboratively edited a piece of writing and used comment functions for peer feedback, fostering a sense of ownership and deeper engagement in the writing process.

To enhance secondary students' informational writing skills, instructional strategies must not only strengthen writing techniques but also promote active and creative engagement. One effective strategy is structured writing workshops, where students participate in hands-on writing activities, practicing essential writing skills in real-world contexts. Guided writing exercises, from idea generation to drafting and revision, help students develop coherent and well-organized writing (Graham & Perin, 2007).

Integrating technology into writing instruction is also crucial. Digital tools, such as online writing platforms, editing software, and automated feedback systems, can help students refine their writing efficiently. These tools not only correct grammatical errors but also assist in organizing and structuring texts effectively (Bazerman, 2018).

Additionally, interdisciplinary writing fosters analytical skills. When students write about topics across different fields, such as science, history, and literature, they practice synthesizing and presenting information clearly and accurately. This method enhances both writing proficiency and critical thinking skills (Shanahan & Shanahan, 2008).

Finally, maintaining student motivation is essential. Writing should be seen as both an academic skill and a means of self-expression. Creating an engaging and supportive learning environment fosters creativity and encourages students to actively participate in the writing process (Applebee & Langer, 2013).

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To improve informational writing instruction in secondary education, schools must adopt a structured competency-based approach. Teacher training programs should be expanded to include advanced writing pedagogy. Integrating technology and interdisciplinary writing activities can further enhance student engagement and writing proficiency.

Recommendations:

For schools: Develop standardized informational writing curricula and incorporate interdisciplinary writing activities.

For teachers: Expand professional training on writing instruction, including digital tools and process-based writing techniques.

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