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## Effectiveness of Process-Oriented Approach in the Development of English Writing Skills of Undergraduate Students

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**Abstract:** *Writing is an essential part of second language learning, and students face many problems while learning about writing. The objective of this study is to figure out the problems faced by the students while writing. This mixed-method study investigates the effect of the process-oriented approach in developing writing skills among eighty undergraduate students of the first semester at various universities across Pakistan. The data was collected online, and the researchers conducted pre-and post-test to check the language, vocabulary, coherence, and cohesion in students' writings. The participants wrote an essay containing 350-500 words taken as the sample to discuss the findings. The pre-test revealed that students faced too many writing difficulties, and the post-test showed improvement in writing. The results showed that students have positive attitudes towards using the process-oriented approach in improving their writing skills.*

**Key Words:** Process-oriented Approach, Language Learning, Writing Skills, Undergraduate Students, Essay Writing

### Introduction

Writing is a cognitive system and measures the student's attention, capacity for thinking, and ability to convey them in words ([Kellogg & Raulerson, 2007](#)). Students try their best to write good essays; however, they make many mistakes in their writing, especially grammar mistakes, lacking cohesion and coherence, and the use of complex sentences in writing. By following a product-oriented approach, teachers check the written works at the end of time and do not give proper guidelines during teaching writing skills. This approach creates problems for students in learning writing skills ([Abas & Aziz, 2016](#)).

A process-oriented approach to education relates to a kind of instruction that emphasizes writing to produce meaning and comprehension of ideas. In contrast to a product-oriented approach, this instructional method culminates with editing as the last stage in text production

rather than an early one. In a process-oriented approach, following the creation of the rough draught, it is refined into succeeding iterations with the help of student and instructor interaction. If the writer wishes to publish their findings, final editing and publishing can get better results ([Murray, 1972](#)).

The process-oriented approach emphasizes writing to make it meaningful step by step. The teachers are fully involved with the students during the writing process and give proper feedback to reduce the tendency of error. This approach involves four stages of writing. The first defined stage is pre-writing, the second is revising, the third is drafting, and the last is editing. These all stages contribute to the development of ideas and expansion of thoughts about the topic to produce effective results ([Seeds of Literacy, 2017](#); [Seow, 2002, p. 316](#)).

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In pre-writing, students deem the topic before writing. They try to comprehend the main idea behind a particular topic with the help of an authentic resource. Then in the drafting stage, they pen down their thoughts in their own words even if they are not perfect. At the third stage of writing, called revision, students revise their thoughts or ideas about the topic. In the editing stage, students review their writings. Students find and correct their mistakes. This final draft is considered the perfect copy that is the result of many revisions and reformation of ideas ([MIT, 2017](#)).

All the four stages of the process-oriented approach are linked with each other. Sometimes, writers come back from the revision stage to the pre-writing stage to add a new point of view or idea. Students can revise their work as much as they can to make their writing perfect; however, at the preliminary stages of writing, students should focus on their ideas, not on spelling and punctuations. The probe it at a later stage of writing instead of the initial stage. This process-oriented approach of writing is more effective for learning writing skills as it is more creative and encourages collaborative work ([Zakime, 2018](#)).

This current study has chosen eighty students of the first semester taught with the help of a product-oriented approach across different universities of Pakistan to see the effectiveness of the process-oriented approach in their writings. At first, a pre-test was conducted, and the mistakes were analysed. It was also noted at which level the students were lacking in writing, then after the implementation of the process-oriented approach, a post-test was conducted. In the end, results were analyzed with the help of a mixed-method comprising of combined quantitative and qualitative methods.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Good writing involves cohesion and coherence, good vocabulary, simple language, and proper grammar usage. However, students lack these qualities in their writing and face different problems while writing about any topics in their second language: English. Error in the students' writing continues until graduation because they learn writing through a product-oriented approach. Students of English face difficulty in writing because of a lack of creativity in teaching writing skills. Therefore, the researchers decided

to solve this issue through a beneficial method that is the process-oriented method.

### **Research Objectives**

The current study aims to accomplish the following objectives:

- i. To explore the attitude of students towards process-oriented writing
- ii. To find the effectiveness of process-oriented approach in the development of writing skills

### **Research Questions**

The current study intends to answer the following two questions:

- i. How do students perceive a process-oriented approach in their writings?
- ii. What is the impact of applying a process-oriented approach on students' writing skills?

### **Significance of the Study**

The current study can inspire teachers to use a creative and unique teaching method to provide students with an engaging and exciting learning environment. This approach would also help the students to improve their writing performance. A great supplement to the existing research is the latest writing analysis by showing the effectiveness of a process-oriented approach in teaching composition and improving academic success in English. This research would help the teachers and learners of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/ EFL) to produce practical writings.

### **Literature Review**

In this section of the article, a concise background of different studies ([Fatima, Ahmed, & Shafi, 2021](#)) about the significance of writing skills, ESL/ EFL, and the importance of a process-oriented approach was listed. The researchers also went through the previous works done on improving writing skills by different approaches or methods, which were going to be included in the related literature of this section. This section is important in finding the research gap and the development of a research argument ([Hussain, Arif, & Saleem, 2021](#)).

In Pakistan, Urdu is a national language, and English is taken as the second language and

official language ([Akram & Mahmood, 2007](#)). [Ghani \(2003\)](#) said that English acts as a foundation for higher education and white-collar work in Pakistan. It is the language of higher education and a status symbol in Pakistan. As English is a second language of Pakistani students, so many students face problems in writing English. In the past, various researchers have presented numerous techniques for improving writing.

Written discourse is important in communication skills ([Ahmed, Shafi, & Masood, 2021](#)). The 'simple view of writing' and the 'not-so-simple view of writing' are two ideas of writing growth that are used in the teaching of writing skills. The former is divided into two basic components: conception and lexicon. It is further expanded by offering the latter perspective of writing that deals with the process-oriented way of writing. This method is assisted with directions and brainstorming ([Hanna, Hodges, & Rudolf, 1966](#); [Juel, 1988](#)).

[Williams \(2003\)](#) suggested that learners cannot begin drafting until they have completed pre-writing, or learners cannot begin editing until they have completed drafting, and so on. Instructors were hesitant to abandon such step-by-step methods. [Hillocks \(1995\)](#) presented an environmental mode of instruction to enhance writing skills. This instructional technique teaches students to address subject and rhetoric challenges. This approach leads learners to standards of achievement that are higher than students would ever attain by themselves.

The writing was considered as a target-oriented, recurrent, cognitively challenging, and challenge-oriented process till the 1980s. The research on writing methods was largely cognitive in nature during this time ([Manchón et al., 2007](#)). The sociological part of writing has been concentrated on contextualized, mental, and interpersonal behaviour during the 1990 era ([Kent, 1999](#)). This led to the post-process shift in writing, including philosophy, analysis, and education. This shift was very important in developing new models of writing.

Following the trend of a post-positive shift in L1 writing, L2 researchers attempted to elucidate this activity using words like writing behaviours and approaches, in which authors participate in writing while generating, expressing, and refining their thoughts in a non-native language. In line

with the evolution of L1 writings, studies into L2 writing styles were steadily shifted from a cognitive to a socio-cognitive perspective ([Manchón et al., 2007](#)). The writing of students got better following socio-cognitive perspective ([Spence, 2014](#)).

[Ahn \(2012\)](#) taught students two separate genres – reporting and essay writing. The evaluation took place before and after a lecture by comparing written excerpts of students. The results showed that early-stage students benefited from the teacher's constructive scaffolding processes by making them mindful of how the text is arranged for various communicative purposes. Furthermore, [Senel \(2018\)](#) believed that the level of trust of the students improves, and the process approach promoted a constructive writing mindset.

[Yavuz \(2012\)](#), revealed the effect of blogs on writing skills and students' attitudes towards Turkish as a second language. The researcher used a mixed-method approach, and data was collected from 24 B students studied in the city centre of Istanbul. In qualitative, an assessment scale of writing was used and in the quantitative group, interviews and personal information were used in the data collection process. Researchers proved that blogs are showing a positive attitude in developing their writing skills.

Discourses are formed with time ([Hassan, Shafi, & Masood, 2021](#)). Literacy development includes the use of verbal words, artwork, games, and verbal engagement. These are crucial and not only lead to the formation of writing but also continue to do so in fundamental ways all through the process. All through literary language learning, students innovate, engage, respond, and develop writing skills ([Masood, Shafi, & Darwesh, 2020](#)). Once actions permanence become tangible, and writing becomes regulated and intentional ([Dyson, 1992](#)).

[Edelsky \(1982\)](#) discovered that multilingual authors make linguistic choices based on aptitude, temperament, and expressionistic need when investigating language learning. These authors' writing growth is aided by that access to a variety of metaphorical instruments. The need for the arts encourages people to break through social, cultural, and linguistic boundaries. Instructors may help students focus on their methods and develop an emotion for writing ([Edelsky, 1986](#))

which is important for learning the writing skill (Shafi, 2019).

When engaged in process-oriented educational programmes, Betancourt and Phinney (1987) illustrate that competent multilingual authors adopt a similar composing process as unilingual authors. For the second language student pursuing literacy acquisition, researchers agree with whole linguistic instructional methods (Hudelson, 1984, 1989; Hamayan, 1989). This is due to the vital necessity for communication learners to acquire language in context, with meaning that is significant and relevant to them.

According to Valdés (1988, 1992), to investigate literacy development in a children’s L2, academics may examine everything users understand regarding literacy development in a children’s first language (L1) and look for parallels. Johnson (1989) makes the connection between study in L2 literary development and study in L2 oral learning by suggesting that investigation inside one area might influence the information in another (p. 44). Edelsky (1982) and Valdés (1992) raise reservations about such a conclusion.

### Research Methodology

It is imperative to follow a theoretical framework for a study (Masood & Shafi, 2020; Ullah, Arif, & Qaisar, 2020) because it guides researchers to follow a specific pattern and look at the data from specific perspectives (Fatima, Rahim, & Musaddiq, 2021). The researchers analysed data under a process-oriented approach by Seow. A process-oriented approach is a learning process supported by research and views about the student educational process and the combination of self-directed and access to information management. Seow (2002) stated that there are “four main stages (of a writing process): planning, drafting, revising and editing” (p. 316).

The data was collected in qualitative form. The researchers collected data for the current study from eighty first-semester university students across different institutions of Pakistan from the discipline of Applied Linguistics, English Language, English Linguistics and English Literature. They were studying the subject of English for Academic Purposes. The data was collected in written form. The researchers conducted pre-tests and post-tests of students. The researchers gave them the topic “My Favourite Personality” to write about 350-500 words essay and allowed them 45 minutes to write.

The researchers collected data online by arranging zoom meetings with the students. They were told that their identity remained secret. So, there was no specific ethical issue faced by the researchers. The researchers investigated the impact of the process-oriented approach on students writing by following the mixed-method approach. First, the researchers collected data through pre-test and post-test. The data was collected in written form. Second, the data was analysed, and results were presented in quantitative form. Lastly, the data was analysed based on language, vocabulary, coherence and cohesion in their writings. The data was analysed under the process-oriented approach qualitatively.

### Results

In this section, the results are shown in quantitative data. The qualitative data is compiled in the form of a table which shows three columns: writing varieties, students’ strength and writing status & percentage. The first column shows the approach followed by students while writing. The second column shows the number of students following an approach. The last column of the table informs about the percentage of the students following the approach and their comparative grades in five parameters: excellent, good, average, fair, and poor.

**Table 1.** Choice of writing approach and their results

Writing Varieties	Students’ Strength	Writing Status & Percentage
Generating ideas – Drafting – Submit (G-D-S)	Nineteen students followed this step	Fair 24%
Drafting – Submit (D-S)	Twenty students followed it	Poor 25%
Generating ideas- Drafting – Revision/Editing –Submit (G-D-R-S)	Thirty-one students followed it	Excellent 39%

Writing Varieties	Students' Strength	Writing Status & Percentage
Drafting- Revision – Submit (D-R-S)	Six students followed it	Good 8%
Outlining- Drafting – Submit(O-D-S)	Four students followed it	Average 5%

## Discussion

This part of the research descriptively explains the qualitative results. Researchers found five different findings of writing after applying the process-oriented approach. 1) Generating ideas – Drafting – Submit (G-D-S), 2) Drafting – Submit (D-S), 3) Generating ideas- Drafting – Revision/Editing –Submit (G-D-R-F), 4) Drafting-Revision –Submit (D-R-S), and the last is 5) Drafting – Submit (D-S). The findings for all these five writing approaches are explained in the following section.

Most students followed the third step, Generating ideas- Drafting –Revision/Editing – Submit (G-D-R-S). First, after assigning a topic, they generated ideas about what they should write about that topic. They started writing those thoughts or ideas in written form. After completing the writing, they reviewed it again and found some mistakes and corrected them. Then, they did the final step to submit. They followed all steps of the process approach and showed excellent writing. They used good vocabulary and language in their writings and showed coherence and cohesion.

Nine students followed the first step: 1) Generating ideas – Drafting – Submit (G-D-S). The first step students followed was generating ideas. After assigning topics, they generated ideas in their cognition and thought about what they would write and how. After generating ideas, they wrote them on paper like it was in their mind. After completing these steps, they submitted their work. They skipped the revision or editing process, so their writing showed no excellent impression. The researchers observed many mistakes in their writing. If they revised it once time then maybe they can make it easy. They used good vocabulary but did not follow coherence and cohesion in their writings, and the language was complex.

Eight students did their writing with the second step: 2) Drafting – Submit (D-S). They wrote the topic and submitted it, they did not follow any other step of writing, and they showed

poor writing. The language and use of vocabulary were not good, and their writing did not follow coherence and cohesion and showed poor writing skills. This approach is without the brainstorming and editing stages; this process is an example of the product-oriented approach. This approach was least encouraged as it produced minimal results. The students who followed this approach were poor because of no second thought on the written material.

Thirty-one students followed the third step: 3) Generating ideas- Drafting –Revision/Editing – Submit (G-D-R-S). Students started with brainstorming. They generated ideas and then wrote their initial draft based on the outline, which was the by-product of brainstorming. The brainstorming stage unified the ideas and produced coherence in students' writing. The draft was modified for mistakes and errors. Revision of this draft produced effective results in the writing of the students. In the final stage, the writing was submitted for analysis. Researchers followed that these students completed their writing more efficiently than the students of other groups. In the light of this evidence, researchers recommend this process-oriented approach to students for improving their writing skills.

Ten Students did their writing with the fourth step: 4) Drafting- Revision – submit (D-R-S). Students started their writing with drafting step, started writing on paper without thinking. They revised it again and submitted it. They showed good writing but were not excellent. The language and vocabulary were good, but there were no coherence and cohesion in their writings. Researchers observed that if they followed the remaining one step, they could have shown more excellent work. When one generates ideas about any topic and make a mind map, it is easy to write because one already have a setting in one's cognition system.

The researchers found that two students did their writing with the 5th step: 5) Outlining-Drafting – Submit (O-D-S). First, students made outline writing to make their writing easy, then they started writing and did the final step to

submit it. The researchers found their writing average not good or excellent. Students made mistakes. Their writings showed average results, not excellent. This approach is not highly encouraged. However, this produced some average results. Students who followed it had some experience of writing. These students missed a significant part of the editing, which affected their writings.

A process-oriented strategy aims to educate pupils on cognitive thinking methods. It is an understanding of the learning approach wherein children are educated to create, alter, and utilize existing expertise in a given area through suitable cognitive thinking exercises. The process-oriented approach is a type of instruction that focuses on the students' intellectual capital and use procedures. The focus is on the instructor and other educational elements progressively relinquishing control of students' development of cognitive systems.

The primary regulatory concept holds that conducting individualized education procedures and exercising maximal command throughout processes is impossible but unacceptable. A process-oriented analysis is founded on the link between self-regulation and access to information management. As a consequence of this relationship, learning and teaching approaches could become more suitable or contradictory. Therefore, the process-oriented approach of writing is beneficial for the students while composing a piece of writing or developing their writing skills.

## **Conclusion**

The pre-test result showed that students made mistakes in their writings and showed negative attitudes towards writing. They made mistakes because they were using the product-oriented approach. The topic that the researchers assigned to students belonged to the common interests of life, and it was never out of common understanding. The topic length was almost 300 to 350 words, and 45 minutes were given for writing.

The researchers found various flaws in the writings of students. Students used the wrong sentence structure and committed spelling mistakes at many places; however, utilizing a process-oriented approach, they produced effective results and corrected their mistakes.

Many students did not use cohesion and coherence in writing, which is an important part of writing. Students also used complex structure sentences. When the researchers guided them about writing steps of process-oriented approach and said to re-write the same topic with the following writing steps. Most students showed positive attitudes and constructed new ideas in their writings. The result showed that a process-oriented approach is beneficial for students to improve writing skills.

## **Suggestions**

The research should be implemented practically for better results. This study can be utilized to improve the writing skills of undergraduate students at different universities across Pakistan ([Masood et al., 2020, 2021](#); [Siddiq et al., 2021](#)). However, further research is still needed at the primary and secondary levels to check the effectiveness of using the process-oriented approach in developing students' writing skills. [Roohi, Masood and Mushtaq \(2021\)](#) believed that the new studies in educational science could benefit from top to bottom, so this approach should be taught to students.

Further research is also needed at higher and primary levels to enhance their translation and reading skills using process-oriented approaches. Moreover, further research can elaborate on the relationship between the process-oriented approach and CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning). The new researchers can research it and fill the research niche at these levels. Furthermore, the upcoming researches can be done on primary to university levels using TBLT (Task-Based Language Teaching) for other subjects of science, humanities, and mathematics.

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