Implementing a Genre-Based Approach to Teaching Writing in Secondary Schools: An Empirical Study of Vocational School Students

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Abstract
This study utilized a classroom action research design to examine the efficacy of a genre-based approach in improving the writing skills of vocational school students. Thirty-four secondary school students in a Kutai Kartanegara East Kalimantan vocational school were instructed to use a genre-based approach for twelve weeks in this investigation. The strategy included teaching students exploratory and exploratory writing and providing feedback and opportunities for revision. Data collected through classroom observations, student work samples, and interviews supported the findings. The research discovered that genre-based instruction improved students' writing abilities. The student's abilities to write exploratory and procedural texts, employ appropriate language features and structures, and organize their thoughts were enhanced. In addition, the student's writing motivation and engagement increased. This study suggests a genre-based instructional strategy can improve students' writing abilities. Students can develop their writing skills systemically and systematically, preparing them for various writing duties and assessments. The study has significant implications for secondary school instructors and curriculum designers who wish to improve students' writing abilities. Additionally, it highlights the significance of classroom action research.

Keywords: genre-based approach; narrative text; descriptive text; classroom action research; secondary school students.

INTRODUCTION

The characteristics of vocational school students distinguish them from those of other educational contexts. These students typically have a solid propensity to acquire the skills and knowledge that effectively prepare them for specific vocations. According to Zimmermann et al. (2013), vocational education is preferred because it is believed to provide superior technical skills than general education and can facilitate the transition into the workforce. Vocational education offers certain subjects within a curriculum to produce competent employees prepared to enter the labour force.

Because it targets a particular profession, the workforce skills must match the work type to increase income. According to Tilak (2002), vocational education prepares specified resources for specific occupations, resulting in a more productive labour force. Consequently, it is anticipated that graduates of vocational secondary education will enjoy more tremendous advantages and competitiveness than graduates of public institutions.

Senior secondary education is essential for Indonesia's economic growth. To prepare a skilled labour force for absorption into the labour market, the government prioritizes SMK. The Vocational Revitalization program, which seeks to transform vocational education in 300 institutions, was launched in 2019. In 2021, the federal government launched the Center of Excellence Vocational School program. To increase employment, policymakers in developing nations have chosen to expand vocational education access. The expansion of SMKs by the government from 2019 has implications for the increasing number of SMK graduates entering the labour market (Astuti & Setyonaluri, 2022).

Vocational students must equip themselves with writing skills to compete in the labour market, especially in English (Lee & Schmidgall, 2020). The survey results indicate that professionals value writing skills in the global workplace. 200 English-speaking working professionals were surveyed by Schmidgall and Powers (2020a, 2020b). In every study, eighty percent or more respondents rated strong written English skills as "important" or "very important" for career success. In 2019, workplace jobs requiring English writing abilities were considered as the most vital, or at least tied for the second most important, of the sixteen tasks examined by Kim, who polled 148 Korean professionals working for multinational businesses. These responsibilities included composing emails, business reports, and contracts in English. 83% of the 71 employers surveyed by Moore et al. (2015) reported that English writing skills were either "important" (38%) or "fundamental" (45%) in workplace routines.

The ability to write in English is one of the most essential language skills students need for their future careers. However, language exams reveal that many vocational college students need more writing skills (Siyuan &Sriwisathiyakun, 2023). Most students at vocational colleges find English writing difficult, and they detest English writing and teaching. There are three issues with English writing instruction in vocational schools. First, traditional instructional methods make writing tedious. In a conventional classroom, teachers introduce writing skills at the outset, distribute one or two sample essays, and then have students compose their essays by applying writing skills and emulating them. This method of instruction cannot excite students about English composition. In addition, teachers cannot provide timely feedback on students' essays in traditional classes because there are typically more than 40 students, and it takes at least two days to correct them. Finally, in a conventional classroom, it is unfeasible for a teacher to provide individualized instruction to each student because there are too many. There are a few studies investigating the teaching of writing to vocational school students (Demir & Tavil, 2021; Siyuan & Sriwisathiyakun, 2023; Yang, 2022); therefore, using classroom action research, this study looked at how well a genre-based approach enhanced students' writing abilities in a vocational school.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Genre-Based Approach in Teaching Writing

Writing must be included in the vocational school curriculum as one of the skills taught to vocational students. There are a variety of text types that should be prepared for students. Students in a vocational school should study seven types of texts. They include descriptive, biography, recount, narrative, short monologue, application letter, and procedural text.

The genre approach was created in response to the process approach's limitations (Ahn, 2012). Martin (2009) devised genre-based approaches corresponding to Halliday's systemic-functional linguistics theory. Genre is viewed in systemic functional linguistics as a staged, goal-oriented social process predominantly accomplished through language. Culture influences genre to help students achieve social goals (Derewianka, 2003). The term "genre-based approach" refers to a method for teaching genres that include phases such as Building Knowledge of Field (BKoF), Modeling (MoT), Joint Construction (JCoT), and Independent Construction of the Text (ICoT).

Stage 1. Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF).

Martin (2009) stated that this stage targets to immerse students with background knowledge of a text, the social function of the chosen text, and the control of pertinent vocabulary and grammatical patterns. Students are exposed to the social context of an authentic example of the text type discussed in the class. Then, students are led to investigate the texts' characteristics and the chosen texts' social functions (Sundari et al. (2017). The following are teachers' implementation of BKoF:

Stage 1. Building Knowledge of the Field Knowledge (BKoF):

1) The teacher introduces students to the topic.

    a. The teacher presents a type of text.

    b. The teacher inquires about students' prior knowledge of the text.

2) With guidance from the teacher, students scrutinize the socio-cultural context, the text's purposes, and the expected outcomes (constructing cultural context).

    a. The teacher discusses the meeting's purpose with the students.

    b. The teacher discusses the sociocultural context of the text with the students.

3) The teacher shares the students' perspectives on the text.

4) The teacher utilizes situational context to expand students' vocabulary.

    a. The teacher questions the students about the context of a text.

    b. The teacher discusses topic-related vocabulary with the students.

5) The teacher provides a brief explanation of the generic structure and linguistic features of the text

    a. The teacher explains and provides a task of the grammar/structure of the sentence related to procedure texts.

    b. The teacher discusses the linguistic features related to the texts with the students.

    c. The teacher discusses relevant grammar usage examples.

    d. The teacher assigns the students a communicative drill.

    e. The teacher requests the students to demonstrate the sentence structure exercises and vocabulary they have previously learned.

Stage 2. Modeling of Text (MoT)

During this stage, the teacher commands the discussion and provides students with readings representative of the procedure texts they are studying. This stage focuses on providing a model text of procedure texts so that students can explore the linguistic features, generic structure and social functions of a text (Paltridge, 2001). In this stage, students will also investigate the model's structural pattern, cultural context, social function, and linguistic characteristics and compare it to other examples of the same text type. The steps are as follows:

1) The teacher orally presents a textual example
2) The teacher requests that students peruse the text carefully.
   a. The teacher reads a text aloud and displays a relevant image or media.
   b. The teacher discusses with students the text's structure.
3) The teacher analyzes the text's content by identifying the lexico-grammatical features to create the text).
   a. The teacher instructs the students to highlight the unfamiliar vocabularies from the text.
   b. The teacher pinpoints the text's grammar with the students.
4) The teacher discusses the generic structure of the text by providing a worksheet to be completed by students.
5) The teacher and students examine the social function of text
6) The teacher and students investigate the linguistic features of the model text.
7) The teacher asks students to compare the text to other similar texts.
   a. The teacher asks students to compare another text with the same genre.
   b. The teacher engages students in a discussion regarding the vocabulary and grammar used in texts.
   c. The teacher requests the students to summarize the text.

Stage 3. Joint Construction of Text (JCOT).

In this stage, the teacher and the students write a text collaboratively so that the students can see how the text is written (Kongpetch, 2006). The steps are as follows:
1) The teacher directs students to work in groups (providing students with the opportunity to work in groups).
   a. The teacher divides students into groups.
   b. The teacher assigns each group ahead.
2) The teacher facilitates discussion, queries, and text editing.
   a. The teacher instructs students to draft a text in groups.
   b. The teacher requests that students map related concepts or issues of a text that will be written.
3) The teacher assists students as needed. The teacher assigns peer assessment activities (discussion of student work).
   a. The teacher instructs students to identify the text's vocabulary.
   b. The students exercise the grammar that will be used in the text.
5) The teacher requests students to communicate the draft to the class.

6) The teacher requests that other groups provide feedback or respond to the presented text.

Stage 4. Independent Construction of Text (ICoT**)**
This stage allows students to exercise their writing skills and practice their comprehension of the selected genre. The teacher assigns autonomous essay writing to students (Kongpetch, 2006). In this stage, the teacher poses the following questions.
1) The teacher guides students as they create different texts.
   a. The teacher assigns a topic for students to compose a text individually.
   b. The teacher instructs students on creating the text.
2) Teacher checks the students' writing products.
3) The teacher requests that students perform their texts before the class.

The Importance of Writing Ability for Vocational Students
The English proficiency of vocational school students can vary depending on their prior exposure to the language, their desire to learn English, and the institution-provided resources. In certain vocational institutions, English may not be the primary language of instruction, which can hinder the English language development of students. Consequently, their levels of English proficiency in reading, writing, speaking, and listening can vary considerably.

Moreover, the English proficiency of students in vocational schools is frequently correlated with their respective study areas. For instance, automotive technology students may be required to comprehend English-written technical manuals and communicate effectively in an English-speaking environment. In contrast, students in healthcare-related programs may be expected to comprehend medical terminology and interact with English-speaking patients.

The English proficiency of students can have a substantial effect on their future employment opportunities. English proficiency has become an asset in numerous industries in a globalized world. Therefore, providing vocational school students with excellent English language skills is essential to their success in the professional world and ability to adapt to the demands of a global workforce (Yang & Zhen, 2023). Given the distinct characteristics and career-focused nature of vocational school students, it is crucial to design English language instruction that aligns with their professional objectives (Mahbub, 2018). It involves incorporating job-specific and practical language usage into instructional materials and methods. Real-world examples and authentic materials pertinent to students' professional fields can boost their motivation and engagement with English instruction.

Writing skill is of utmost importance for vocational school pupils (Konstantinidou et al., 2023). Strong writing skills enable vocational students to plainly and coherently communicate their ideas, thoughts, and knowledge. Written communication is essential in many professional disciplines for conveying technical information, documenting procedures, and collaborating with colleagues or clients. Professional success necessitates communicating effectively in writing through reports, correspondence, project proposals, or other documents.

In addition, strong writing abilities endow vocational students with the ability to think critically and solve problems. Writing enables students to express their analysis,

synthesis, and evaluation of information, fostering higher-order thinking skills. Students are encouraged to organize their thoughts, consider multiple perspectives, and present logical arguments throughout the writing process. These skills are invaluable in vocational fields where complex problem-solving and decision-making are prevalent because they enable students to analyze situations, propose solutions, and defend their decisions convincingly.

In addition to facilitating self-expression and self-reflection, writing proficiency facilitates both in vocational students. Students can develop a distinctive voice by expressing their creativity, ideas, and experiences through writing. Through reflective writing, students can evaluate their learning experiences, identify areas for improvement, and set personal objectives. This practice of self-reflection promotes personal growth and self-awareness, which are highly valued in professional settings (Siregar et al., 2022).

Moreover, excellent writing abilities can positively impact vocational students' career prospects and advancement opportunities. (Coffelt et al., 2019) Employers value employees who can communicate effectively in writing because it demonstrates professionalism, attention to detail, and the ability to communicate complex ideas. A well-written resume, cover letter, or job application can significantly improve a vocational student's chances of gaining employment or advancing in his or her chosen field. Moreover, as they advance in their professions, students with superior writing skills can assume leadership roles, contribute to industry publications, and engage in professional networking through written communication.

Possessing practical writing skills allows students to communicate effectively, think critically, convey themselves with confidence, and improve their career prospects. By emphasizing the development of writing skills alongside technical expertise, vocational institutions can equip students with the essential tools for success in their chosen professions, allowing them to flourish in the workplace and make substantial contributions to their respective fields. In conclusion, students at vocational schools possess distinctive characteristics and English skills that are highly pertinent to their career goals. Their language development can be effectively supported by recognizing their career-oriented nature and tailoring their English language instruction to their employment disciplines. By addressing their specific language needs and conveying relevant language skills, vocational institutions can equip students with the English proficiency required for success in their chosen fields.

The Roles of Genre-Based Approach in Writing Practices

The genre-based approach influences and improves writing practices in diverse contexts. By focusing on specific writing genres and their conventions, this strategy provides a structured framework that guides students through understanding, analyzing, and producing diverse types of texts. The genre-based approach aids in the development of genre awareness among students. The genre-based approach helps students comprehensively understand various writing genres, including their purpose, structure, linguistic traits, and audience expectations. Students develop genre awareness by studying and analyzing various genres, enabling them to recognize and employ the appropriate conventions and techniques for various writing tasks (Pham & Bui, 2021). This understanding enhances their capacity to adapt their writing to specific contexts and effectively communicate their ideas.

Pham and Bui (2021) explained that promoting contextual appropriateness requires understanding the context in which different writing genres are produced and received. The genre-based approach highlights the necessity of considering context, audience, and purpose when writing texts. Students are encouraged to analyze the contextual features of various genres, such as formal reports, persuasive essays, and technical manuals, to foster the development of appropriate, relevant, and effective writing in particular contexts.

The genre-based approach encourages students to critically consider various genres' purposes, structures, and linguistic characteristics (Ismail & Hellaludin, 2022). Through analysis and reflection, students develop metacognitive skills that enable them to evaluate their writing and make informed decisions regarding genre conventions and choices. The genre-based approach offers students a distinct framework and explicit instruction on the organization and structure of various genres, thereby enhancing their writing fluency and effectiveness. This instruction expedites the writing process to help students become more proficient and practical writers. By understanding the common patterns and expectations of genres, students can focus on generating ideas and communicating their thoughts coherently rather than struggling with the organization and format of their writing.

This method bridges the gap between writing assignments in the classroom and those in the real world. Immersing students in authentic writing experiences, such as writing business reports, technical documents, and persuasive arguments, prepares them for their academic, professional, and personal writing demands. The emphasis on genre conventions and contextual adequacy equips students with the skills necessary to successfully navigate and succeed in various writing situations outside the classroom. Essential to writing practices, the genre-based approach cultivates genre awareness, promotes contextual appropriateness, develops critical thinking and metacognition, improves writing fluency and efficiency, and prepares students for real-world writing tasks. By incorporating this strategy into writing instruction, instructors can enable students to become proficient and adaptable writers capable of communicating their ideas in various contexts and genres.

METHOD

This section describes the research method. This section comprises several subsections that describe the research method in terms of the research design, subjects/participants/data sources, and research implementation.

Research Design

This study used a mixed-methods research design to examine implementing a genre-based approach to teaching writing in secondary schools. This design permitted the accumulation and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data, allowing for a comprehensive understanding of the intervention's effects. The study employed a classroom action research methodology, which entailed implementing the genre-based approach over eight meetings and evaluating its impact on students' writing proficiency and attitudes toward writing. According to Burns (2010), the primary goal of CAR is to identify a troublesome situation or issue that the participants, who may be teachers, students, managers, officials, or even parents, think deserves a more thorough and systematic study. Teachers conduct classroom action research through self-reflection to enhance their performance and improve students' learning outcomes (Mettetal, 2002).

Subjects/Participants/Data Sources

The investigation focused on vocational school students in a rural area of Kutai Kartanegara Regency, SMKN 1 Sangasanga. A representative sample of students enrolled in a vocational program was selected using purposive sampling. The sample comprised 34 students between the ages of 15 and 17. Pre-assessment measures were used to determine the writing proficiency levels of students and ensure a diverse range of proficiency levels within the sample. Additional data sources included students' written texts, classroom observations, and self-reports of writing attitudes.

Research Implementation

Multiple data collection procedures were conducted in at least two cycles during the classroom action research, consistent with Mettetal's (2002) assertion that class action research is conducted in at least two successive cycles. According to Mettetal (2002), classroom action research consists of planning, action implementation, observation, and reflection. This problem-solving design is based on a model known as a self-reflection spiral system, which begins with planning, action, observation, reflection, and re-planning. This research utilizes student learning outcomes tests as its method of data acquisition. The data obtained from cycle tests and observations were descriptively and qualitatively analyzed. Quantitative data, such as pre-and post-test scores, were analyzed using descriptive statistics to examine changes in students' writing proficiency levels.

FINDINGS

Preliminary Research Result

Six students were interviewed to determine the results of the preliminary study. It was discovered that writing is regarded as highly challenging, particularly in terms of selecting the appropriate words (vocabulary) and determining word formation (structure or grammar).

Table 1. The Result of the writing pre-test

	Content	**Organization**	**Vocabulary**	**Structure**	**Mechanic**	**Total Score**
Max. Score	30	20	20	25	5	100
Average Score	17	16	15	13	3.9	65.9

Regarding the average grade is 65.9, the performance in these five categories could have been higher or feebler. The average score in the 'Content' and 'Organization' is 15 from the maximum score of 30 and 20, respectively, followed by the average score in 'Vocabulary' is 13 from the top score of 20, continued by the average score in the 'Structure' is 12 from the total score of 25. Then, the average score of 'Mechanic' is 4 from the maximum score of 5.

The Students' Writing Results

This study was conducted in two cycles. Genre-based stages were completed in each cycle. The following graph shows the result of students' writing in the preliminary study, Cycle 1 and Cycle 2.

Graph 1. The Students' Writing Result
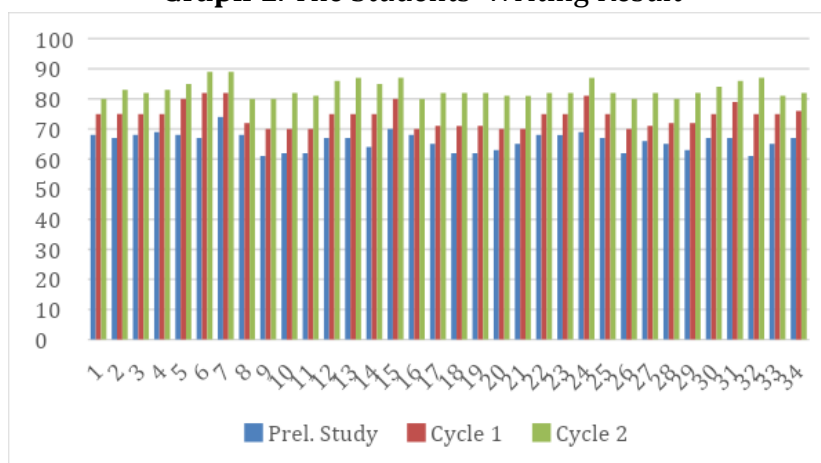
Throughout the preliminary study, Cycle 1, and Cycle 2, the graph depicting the development of students' writing abilities demonstrates a discernible upward trend. Prior to the implementation of the genre-based approach, the average score in the pilot study was 64,9, indicating the students' baseline level of writing competence. As the intervention began, the average score increased significantly, with Cycle 1 exhibiting an average of 74.2. This increase suggests that the genre-based approach positively impacts students' writing skills and demonstrates their progress in mastering genre-specific conventions and techniques. In Cycle 2, the upward trend continued, with an average score of 83.05.

The Students' Responses to Genre-based Approach in Writing Activities

Based on the questionnaire distributed to students, most responded positively to implementing a genre-based approach to writing activities, primarily procedure texts.

Table 2. The Students' Responses of GBA in Writing Activities

	N=34	Percentage
Encouragement to practice writing.	30	88%
Assisting in texts' constructing	30	88%
Developing and expanding new vocabulary before writing	32	94%
Pattern guidance for writing mechanics.	32	94%
Stimulating collaborative activities	31	91%
Highlighting on target sentence structure	33	97%

According to their feedback, it was entertaining, informative, and engaging. According to their response, the most recent two meetings were engaging and pleasurable because the teacher provided straightforward explanations and encouraged student participation in the learning process.

DISCUSSION

Based on this study's findings, it was determined that a genre-based approach effectively enhanced students' writing abilities. However, its initial implementation led to confusion among students. The confusion resulted from the fact that they were not accustomed to being instructed using such a learning step in their regular classroom activities. The conventional procedure was utilized, where the teacher assigned students to write a text after explaining its generic structure.

A genre-based approach can aid students in writing or constructing text content by guiding them to recognize and employ various genres' text structures and language patterns (Tuan, 2011). This strategy emphasizes teaching students how to use language patterns to compose coherent, purposeful prose. According to Pham & Bui (2021), students engage in activities such as reading and writing contextualized texts, listening to and discussing native input (documentaries, et cetera), and analyzing and producing texts of various genres. This model of teaching and learning writing enables students to identify specific areas of difficulty and equips them with the tools necessary to overcome them. Using this method, students can simultaneously enhance their knowledge of grammar, subject matter, and content, as well as their pedagogical comprehension of learning English and a few other conventions of academic writing style. It allows students to develop their abilities step-by-step by analyzing and re-creating outstanding models of texts introduced throughout the writing activities. (Uday, 2022).

Students are taught the linguistic features and generic structures of the texts in which they would be required to draft a text (Hyland, 2007) using a Genre-based approach to English writing. The social-communicative functions, linguistic features, and structural features of genres are all discussed in the classroom (Hyland, 2003). This kind of teaching has been shown to improve the academic English writing skills of ESL/EFL students (Lu et al., 2021; Nagao, 2018), as well as the students' understanding of textual structures and genres.

In this study, students developed their vocabulary. A genre-based approach can help students develop their vocabulary before independent writing by allowing them to read and analyze different texts. This method allows for greater exposure to different vocabulary and linguistic structures. According to Pham & Bui (2021), the genre-based writing approach necessitates a writer's command of vocabulary specific to the genre in which they are writing. In addition, some genre analysis strategies are presented to exemplify how students can be taught to modify and combine their word selections according to their writing genre. The macro-based approach of genre-based pedagogy enables instructors to utilize students' skills as a resource to expand their linguistic and content knowledge, validating and expanding what students bring to the classroom. Students can acquire genre-specific vocabulary and linguistic structures by analyzing and producing texts in various genres. It can help them develop their writing skills and become proficient in various genres.

In addition, by providing a systematic guide for writing meaningful passages, a genre-based approach can aid students in emphasizing the target sentence structure. The genre-based approach entails modeling and exposing students to examples of the genre they are expected to write (Dirgeyasa, 2016). It can assist students in identifying the target sentence structure and understanding how it is used in the writing discipline they are

employing. In addition, the genre-based approach emphasizes developing writing skills by instruction in genre-specific linguistic characteristics and rhetorical patterns. It can help students become familiar with the sentence structure of each genre and effectively employ it in their writing. The genre-based method also requires analyzing and synthesizing texts from various genres to identify differences in move-step structure. It can assist students in comprehending the structure of each genre and emphasizing the intended sentence structure.

CONCLUSION

According to the findings of this study, a genre-based approach conducted in two cycles significantly improved students' ability to write a procedure text. Most students mastered the essential elements of the required recount genre and exhibited favourable attitudes toward this cycle and the procedure text. The genre-based approach will effectively train students to write in various text genres and enhance their writing skills. Genre-based approach as an instructional technique for teaching and learning writing is like one side of a coin, while genre as the written result is like the other. In teaching to write, the Genre-based approach is one of the teaching methods that provide explicit commands or procedures for students and teachers to follow. The genre-based approach displays the unique features of writing in terms of structure, visual appearance, the goal of communication, and language use. For students who lack motivation and writing competencies, a genre-based approach drove them to be actively involved in making a writing product. It takes students from their first draft into more complex and ultimately autonomous forms of writing. It also encourages and supports students' ability to learn on their own.

However, the genre approach has been criticized for limiting learners' content-related creativity and disregarding natural learning processes. GBAs may inhibit the generation of creative ideas by students because they strictly adhere to the genre's structures. Related to the disregarding of the genre-based approach, as it limits the students' independence in creating their texts creatively, the teachers can highlight the teaching of linguistic features (grammar, vocabulary, and lexicon properties), generic structure, and social function of texts so that students can write their ideas in English texts while excessively emphasizing genres and conventions.

Recently, genre-based approaches are becoming increasingly popular for learning writing in vocational schools due to the Indonesia Minister of Education's mandate that teachers must become more familiar with this practical teaching method. Teachers should introduce many well-written text samples that exhibit the characteristics of the specific text categories to implement in their classrooms effectively. As identified at the outset of this study, one of the obstacles EFL students confronted in developing their writing skills was a lack of knowledge of appropriate sentence structure or grammar in terms of language features and generic structure of a procedure text; as a result, they were unable to convert their ideas into comprehensible text. Samples of "expert" and "selective" procedure texts helped students comprehend the genre's purposes, language characteristics, and organizational structure, enabling them to compose their texts effectively.

Additionally, teachers should employ the adaptability of a genre-based strategy. In other words, teachers should implement the genre-based stages with moderate rigidity.

The function of scribes can be disregarded for more capable students who fully perceive the modeling phase and desire to practice writing further. Instead, they should revise and correct their texts to match the text model. For students who have not yet acquired the generic structure, language features and social function of the model text, it is considered necessary for the teacher to serve as a scribe during the phase of collaborative negotiation.

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