

Research Article:

A Combined Approach to Developing EFL University Students' Academic Essay Writing Skills: An Intervention Study

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ABSTRACT

Many researchers have acknowledged the tangible benefits of a combined approach to teaching second-language (L2) writing in multiple genres. However, little empirical evidence was available in the literature. Therefore, we initiated a quasi-experimental study to examine the impact of a combined approach on teaching essay writing. Eventually, an experimental group of 100 randomly selected university students received instruction in L2 writing through the combined approach. Measurements were taken to evaluate the progress of learners through essay-writing activities in different genres for a semester. All essays were evaluated against a rubric for criteria covering organisation, content, vocabulary, cohesion, structure, and mechanics. Results indicate immediate and significant improvements in students' performance from their first essay, with positive outcomes maintained through the final essays. However, some factors demonstrated a bigger change than others. The areas where the students' improvements were mostly identified included content, organisation and cohesion, vocabulary, and structure. In contrast, the development of using mechanics in their writing was relatively low. The study has pedagogical implications for the researchers and practitioners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) contexts. The way to apply a combined approach in writing classes and the method of researching the outcome of such a teaching strategy, as briefly presented in this study, could be exercised in EFL or ESL writing classes through adoption or adaptation processes. Introducing the approach in essay writing classes could be especially effective.

Keywords: Combined teaching instruction, EFL, ESL, tertiary-level students, academic essay writing

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INTRODUCTION

The proliferation of English Medium Instruction (EMI) in higher education institutions is a common phenomenon in the current trend of education in countries where English is not the first language to the majority of the population, yet English is in dire need in these polities to produce globally conducive graduates who will participate in the global market (Karim, 2023a, 2023b; Macaro et al., 2018; Rahman & Pandian, 2018; Rahman & Singh, 2020; 2022). The adoption of EMI mandates that alongside receiving instruction in the classroom in English, students are also obliged to write in the examinations, complete assignments, prepare lab reports, and meet any other academic requirements in English (Sarkar et al., 2021). These requirements necessitate the teaching and learning of English for Academic Purposes to keep pace with the EMI education system. Academic writing is of particular importance to accomplish examinations, assignments, lab reports, and any other written activities. Fundamentally, the skill of academic writing enables university students to publish their findings, e.g., data from a test run in the lab or data from a study and critical observation after reviewing scholarly articles or reporting the problems, e.g., the ones they often face in the higher education institutes, in the national dailies and journals. While reading tailors the trajectory to receiving knowledge, writing is the essence of expressing pupils' intelligence and wisdom (Ismail et al., 2018).

However, there are challenges that appear in the academic writing of university students because of the nature of academic writing, which is quite different from general writing in terms of its purpose, potential readers, text structure, and language style (Singh, 2019; Zhang, 2016). Precisely, the perceived difficulty in writing of university students in many countries such as China, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, and Vietnam has been reported in the relevant studies (e.g., Jeyaraj, 2020; Jung et al., 2015; Mckinley, 2013; Vuong, 2019; Xu & Li, 2018). As such, it is conspicuously realised that students' suffering in academic writing has become a global phenomenon (Wei et al., 2018). To minimise the challenges and optimise the mastery of academic writing, multiple methods and strategies have been adopted and adapted in various EFL (English as a Foreign Language) and ESL (English as a Second Language) contexts.

The theories and pedagogies developed in English-dominant countries have traditionally influenced the teaching of academic writing to EFL learners (You, 2004; Zhang, 2016; Huang & Zhang, 2020). However, adaptations should be made when applying these new approaches in EFL contexts to help students become independent writers and users of the language (Huang & Zhang, 2020). Nevertheless, building effective writing approaches to develop EFL learners' language (writing-to-learn) and, concurrently, writing abilities (learning-to-write) is challenging since these two distinct approaches have different focuses (Manchon, 2011). The learning-to-write approach aims to improve the learners' process and genre knowledge. In contrast, the writing-to-learn approach believes writing is a medium to expedite grammar and content learning

(Hyland, 2011). This article offers some discussion of the product, process, and genre approaches and proposes a synthesis that integrates these three major approaches: the combined approach and presents the effect of employing this approach on developing university students' essay writing skills through an intervention study. The onerous aspects of writing explained in various studies set the ground for the intervention.

Constrained by structured language tests, many teachers in EFL contexts follow traditional approaches to writing instruction in class, stressing accuracy in grammatical and surface features (Karim & Mohamed, 2019; Karim et al., 2019; You, 2004; Lefkowitz, 2009; Wingate, 2012; Yasuda, 2015; Zhang, 2016; Huang & Zhang, 2020). On the other hand, process approaches devote inadequate time to linguistic knowledge and have no systematic understanding of how language is patterned in a particular context (Graham & Harris, 1997; Badger & White, 2000; Hyland, 2003). Genre-based approaches arose as crucial responses to the concept that instruction in writing had come to be seen as a stagnant, isolated, and decontextualised activity to facilitate language learning rather than communication. Writers understand writing as a social activity (Hyland, 2007; Clark, 2011; Paltridge, 2013), and the writing process encompasses the audience, social context, and communicative purposes.

The product-process-genre approach encompasses a combined perspective, embedding the potentials of the three approaches rather than swinging to either a grammar-based and formulaic genre-oriented instruction or the conscience-discovering writing process. Such a combined approach enables learners to define the relationship between a specific genre's communicative intent and the types of language they encounter through the repetitive process of pre-writing, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing (Deng et al., 2014). Many professionals, particularly in the EFL context, find it extremely difficult to put the theory into practice (Racelis & Matsuda, 2013). In Bangladesh, for example, teachers exhibit limited success in translating theories into practices, albeit they underwent various training and professional development programmes (Karim & Mohamed, 2019; Karim et al., 2019; 2021). Since the quality of teaching and teachers in Bangladesh remains debatable, English language instruction is frequently imprecise (Hamid & Erling, 2016, Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Given the possible benefits of the combined approach, it is necessary to develop an adequately clarified combined instructional framework that can help EFL teachers at different stages (please see Figure 1) in the EFL classroom. Manifestly, the current literature provides few details on how such an integrated method could be implemented pedagogically in actual classroom practices (Racelis & Matsuda, 2013), and the impact of such a combined approach on students' academic writing performance remains under-researched. To bridge this gap in the literature, this study proposes a combined approach based on the theoretical foundation of systematic functional linguistics (SFL) and the related genre-oriented approach (Rose & Martin, 2012), and even the writing-method model (Flower & Hayes, 1981; Hayes, 2012). In this study, the researchers investigated the

effects of such a combined approach on the academic essay writing of EFL learners in the classroom. The research question that guided the present study is as follows:

How does the combined approach affect teaching academic essay writing to university students?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Aiming to improve the pedagogy in English as a second language or in foreign language classrooms, many scholars have advocated for combining product-process-genre approaches. For example, Nordin and Mohammad (2017) have recommended introducing a process-genre approach in ESL or EFL writing classrooms to ensure the effectiveness and strength of process writing pedagogy (pre-writing, drafting, feedback, and revising), which cannot be substituted by a genre or product approach alone. They have clarified that these two approaches could be seen as complementing rather than opposing each other. Scholars have conducted studies undertaking this view. While some studies have intended to examine the effect of the combined approach in teaching writing, others have been found to investigate its role in reducing anxiety in the writing classroom. In addition, researchers have also kept studying the role of such an approach in enhancing prospective English language teachers' writing skills within the scope of their research.

Huang and Zhang (2020) have studied the ability of the process-genre approach to improve Chinese university students' argumentative writing in English as a Foreign language. The quasi-experimental study has informed the intervention group's good performance in the immediate posttest and better performance in the delayed posttest. The content and organisation were the areas of improvement observed. Lara (2017) has conducted a study to learn how the process-genre approach assisted fourth-grade EFL learners in writing well-structured narrative paragraphs. It has been learned that due to this approach being employed, Colombian students have become capable of writing well-structured paragraphs by developing one idea and explaining it with supporting ideas. The participants' writings have shown no deviation from the given topic. In a similar study, Belmekki and Sekkal (2018) have investigated the effect of the process-genre approach on ESP students' achievement in writing request letters. The study has uncovered that Algerian university students have improved writing in four areas: organisation, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. In a distinct study, Arslan (2013) has examined the effect of the integrated approach (combining product, process and genre approaches) on growing the writing efficiency of prospective English language teachers. The study has revealed that Turkish prospective teachers' writing competency has improved in terms of incorporating general components such as organization, content, vocabulary, grammar and mechanics in their writing. In addition, the participants possessed a good command of pre-writing, while writing and post-writing

stages by activating brainstorming, narrowing a topic, developing an outline of writing, writing the first draft, receiving feedback, revising the first draft to prepare the final draft and editing. Furthermore, Ajmal and Irfan (2020) have carried out a study to learn the effect of the process-genre approach on ESL intermediate/pre-university students' writing anxiety in Pakistan. Applying the second language writing anxiety inventory containing a 22-item multidimensional questionnaire and conducting interviews, the study has found that the writing anxiety of the experimental group and control group has been reduced. It has also shown that in the employment of the process-genre approach, the integration of two approaches based on six stages was conducive to reducing Pakistani students' writing anxiety. A similar finding has been presented by Ajmal et al. (2023). In the integration of process and genre approaches, the role of teachers and peers has been found to be effective, with materialising positive comments, feedback, and criticisms that they yield to reduce stress, increase self-confidence, and ensure self-improvement. In an earlier study, Ghufon (2016) has uncovered that the process-genre approach is more effective than the product approach. In Ghufon's study, the participants of the experimental class were subjected to treatment following the process-genre approach, while their counterparts who belonged to the control group were taught following the product approach. The writing scores of those undergone teaching driven by the process-genre approach were higher than those taught following the product approach.

The individual contribution of product and process approaches has also been subjected to research. El Ouidani and Madaoui (2024) have investigated the effect of employing these two approaches to teaching writing on the writing skill development of 86 Moroccan EFL students. While the experimental group have been taught following the process approach, the instructions for the control group have adhered to the product approach. The experiment group has been guided to follow several stages, including brainstorming, collaborative problem-solving, free writing, multiple drafting, structured peer feedback, and teacher-student conferences. By contrast, the control group has been taught through model analysis, writing exercises, and structured feedback sessions with teachers. The statistical analysis of the post-treatment assessment has indicated the process approach's higher effectiveness than the product approach in Moroccan high-school students' improvement in expository essay writing. In a study with 60 Filipino university students, Ramos et al. (2019) intended to learn the effect of product and process approaches on students' composition writing. They have noted that the control group was taught following the product approach whereby the lectures on grammar lessons concentrated on basic errors, possession, abbreviation and numbers, parallelism, misplaced modifiers and words, tense, voice, punctuation, subject-verb agreement, vocabulary and preposition were conducted by the teacher in addition to the presentation of model compositions to pattern their work. Differently, the experimental group received teaching that followed the process approach and, accordingly, familiarised the participants with the pre-writing, writing, and post-writing stages. Eventually, they learned to find a topic, find about the topic, and think

about it in such a way that ideas are generally shaped, refined and organised. They also embraced the purpose of writing, considering the audience and readers. As part of post-writing activities, they were acquainted with peer evaluation to be accomplished following a proofreading checklist and teacher evaluation, leading them to craft the final draft after editing and revising multiple drafts. The compositions written by both groups improved as a result of process and product approaches, as evident in the pre-test and post-test assessments. However, Ramos et al. (2019) have illuminated that while the product approach was found to be conducive to improving the mechanics of compositions, the process approach outperformed it in championing students in content and organisation. The authors have concluded that both approaches of teaching can be used to cater to enhanced expertise in writing compositions. The remark of Ramos et al. (2019) was echoed in the study of Pasand (2013). Pasand (2013) has examined if using a model text in the process-product approach and asking the students to continue it was useful to Iranian intermediate-level students. A training programme was conducted espousing the process approach, and a two-session writing class was arranged followed by the training. The first session engaged students in writing following a process approach. In this segment, students wrote on the chosen topic after completing pair works (i.e., having a discussion and sharing ideas). A feedback session was also accomplished. In the second session, a model text prepared based on the topics they wrote about in the first phase was distributed among the students to read. They were enlightened about the text organisation, lexical items, grammatical points, and so on through class discussion. After that, students started writing again on the chosen topics. The comparison of writings produced in two phases has indicated an improvement in Iranian EFL learners' writing, with former writings identified as less structured and organised than the latter ones.

The researchers have also highlighted the negative aspects of these process, product and genre approaches. Examining some Iranian students' writing samples produced through receiving teaching that followed the product approach, Al Bloushi and Al Shuraiaan (2024) have noted that "students lose their creativity" and wrote using repetitive words and unrealistic expressions (p. 17). They have also pointed out that the process approach also has some cons: "Students are less focused on grammar [...] make many grammatical mistakes" (p. 18). The genre approach has also been subjected to criticism with the assertion that this inductive approach is unsuitable for all kinds of writing (Horowitz, 1986). Students are left to discuss acceptable forms on their own while writing on their "growing experience of repetition" and on "suggestions in the margins of their drafts" because teachers do not explicitly advise students on the structure of the various target texts (Hyland, 2003b, p. 19). Observing such demerits may have triggered the researchers and practitioners to integrate the process-product and process-genre approaches to scale up the pupils' writing skills in different ESL/EFL contexts. We also argue that the synthesisation of the three approaches may play an essential role in increasing students' academic writing ability (Arslan, 2013). The initiative to introduce a diverse approach in ESL writing classrooms may ensure that

the utility and strength of the product approach (familiarisation, controlled writing, guided writing and free writing), process writing pedagogy (prewriting, drafting, input, and revising), and the genre approach. Instead of contrasting one another, these three methods should be used as complements to one another. The synthesization of all approaches in an interplay of multidimensional factors may mark to sustain highlighting their strengths for increasing students' learning efforts to achieve a better and more synthetic approach to the teaching of writing, as argued by some researchers (Pintrich, 2004; Schwinger et al., 2009; Wolters, 2003). The process-genre approach and process-product approaches have been employed in diverse ESL and EFL settings, e.g., China, Colombia, Algeria, Pakistan, Iran, Morocco, and the Philippines, and a combined version of the product, process and genre approaches has been exercised in Turkey. The effect of employing integrated approaches on ESL and ESL students' academic writing has been informed through research, although the South Asian Region remains underrepresented in the relevant literature. Moreover, the teaching and learning of English in the East is historically informed by the prescription of the West, in particular, the English-dominant contexts (Zhang, 2016), which demands how the EFL/ESL contexts adapt the prescribed approaches to enhance students' writing skills. Hence, the present study first theorised the combined approach to teaching academic essay writing skills along with its application in an EFL context (Ali, 2014). Finally, the study intended to identify the effect of the combined approach on teaching academic essay writing to university students in Bangladesh.

Combined Instructional Framework

Since the sequence of classroom instruction is crucial for L2 writing pedagogy (Byrnes & Manchon, 2014) and combined pedagogy is demanding for EFL writing teachers, the researchers have proposed a teaching framework of combined pedagogy to keep the arrangement of classroom activities simpler for teachers and students. Our proposition is based on the teaching and learning cycle of Huang and Zhang (2020), and the newly developed model encompasses the planning, drafting, revising, and editing processes in the joint construction and independent construction phases.

Our readjustment aims to encourage clear writing-process explanation with genre knowledge and grammatically correct writing during the joint construction phase, as well as to enhance students' understanding of the writing process so that they can complete the independent writing task.

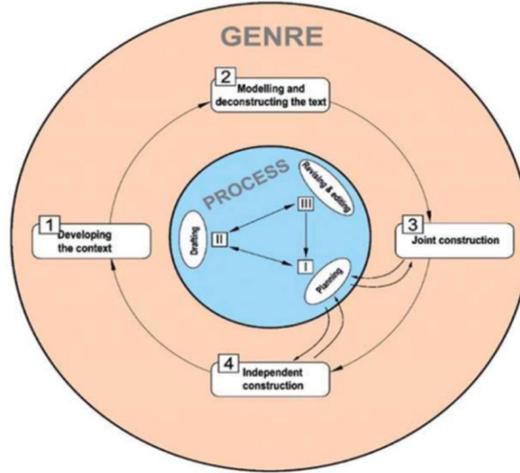


Figure 1. Process-genre writing instructional framework (Rose & Martin, 2012)

Here, we experimented with the combined approach as a pedagogical technique that consisted of three levels: the genre level, the product level, and the process level. Starting with the development of context, the teacher elicits the learners' views on and knowledge of the communicative purposes, audience, and context in which the specific genre is prevalently deployed. Following the development of the appropriate genre knowledge for the students, the instructor moves on to modelling and deconstruction; this involves a teacher-led study of the target genre (Feez, 1998). With the inclusion of the model texts, the instructor introduces the meta-language, "a language used to talk about language" (Humphrey & Macnaught, 2011, p. 100), of the particular genre (i.e., thesis statement, body, conclusion), illustrates the characteristics of the language, and corroborates the structure and rhetorical conventions of that form. Learners are instructed to collaborate and participate in group discussions to explore the quintessential aspects of the genre and appreciate how language is organised and configured in the model text to attain communicative or social goals.

The combined instructional structure outlines the framework and stages that teachers integrate into instructional strategies, but it does not follow the fixed sequence of the writing process. Writers are instructed in different, real writing situations to adapt to the strategies and writing processes. With the genre knowledge accumulated during the preceding stages, the students' preparation is no longer "generating ideas in a vacuum" (Racelis & Matsuda, 2013, p. 389); instead, their focus is on creating concepts in response to the relevant context with an understanding of the "real and simulated audience" (Hyland, 2011, p. 32). Learners are, therefore, afforded time to prepare their writing, and volunteers are incentivised to exchange their planning notes in class. Once

the planning is complete, the teacher instructs to draft the essay in collaboration with the learners. While drafting the essay, the instructor provides guidance on linguistic tools (e.g., subject-specific vocabulary, genre-specific sentence structures such as nominalisation) and rhetorical patterns or frameworks (e.g., thesis-body paragraphs-conclusion) to be used when writing the essay. The strategy of writing is repetitive, and learners and teachers go through the process many times before the essay fulfils the requirements of the genre. Learners are told to write on a similar topic on their own during the independent construction stage, and they are recommended to rewrite their essays before the second draft is provided to their peers for future refinement. Students are told to submit their written products to the teacher after revising and rewriting their essays, and the teacher responds appropriately to their final, updated drafts regarding both the linguistic and rhetorical aspects of the structure. Following the latest queries from high-quality research to ascertain the efficacy of the most impressive hybrid combined approach, an intervention study was conceived.

The Context and the Status of Writing

The immersion of EMI in private universities presupposes the provision to accomplish all academic activities in English (Sarkar et al., 2021). Eventually, academic writing activities, including accomplishing assignments, preparing lab reports, writing reports and theses, writing in examinations, and so on, require students' competence in writing skills. However, academic writing seems to be challenging for undergraduates. Rahman and Hasan (2019) have profiled the academic writing difficulties of Bangladeshi students and note that lack of academic writing courses, lack of teachers' interest, teachers' low proficiency, weak foundation of the students rooted in primary, secondary, and higher secondary level, and method of teaching are causing difficulties. As such, they add, the ability to paraphrase, maintain coherence and cohesion, employ grammatically correct structures, and use diverse vocabularies is evidently absent in students' writing (Rahman & Hasan, 2019). Afrin (2016) has revealed that the lack of vocabulary accompanied by low motivation causes a serious problem in students' writing. In addition, grammatical weakness, as a significant feature of the students' writing in this polity, has been reported in Afrin (2016). A lack of knowledge and understanding about the writing process is also prevalent in Bangladesh, as Afrin adds. Furthermore, Ara (2021) has revealed that tertiary-level students have limited capacity to produce coherent pieces of writing. Ara has confirmed that the students suffer from a lack of writing competence and that their writing skills are seriously flawed. Learners' anxiety in writing has been highlighted by Shurovi et al. (2022). Besides, the quality of teachers has also been questioned by Akter (2022), who claims that the paucity of experienced and skilled teachers is seen in Bangladesh.

These backdrops motivated the researchers to undertake the intervention study to comprehend the benefits of the Combined Approach at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. Like other Asian countries, the incremental demand for academic writing at the tertiary

level gravitates to more studies to be conducted to offer more insights for bringing ease in students' knowledge building concerning this productive skill (Bai & Wang, 2021; Yu et al., 2019).

METHODS

Research Design

The study adopted mixed-method quasi-experimental research that included interventions based on the combined approach to learning academic writing essays. Mixed-method quasi-experiment is a type of research design that combines qualitative and quantitative methods to answer complex questions that cannot be addressed by one approach alone. Quasi-experiments are similar to experiments, but they do not involve random assignment of participants to groups or conditions. Instead, they use existing groups or natural variations to compare the outcomes (Edmonds et al., 2014).

Research Procedure

The focal university adopted a trimester system of education. The duration of the trimester was 16 weeks (four months) when the study was conducted. The course teacher initially taught the academic essay writing techniques in the traditional ways for four weeks. Then, the interventions were carried out for the rest of the 11 weeks. After the interventions (Implementation of Intervention is discussed later), we assessed how the combined approach facilitated the improvement in students' writing quality over time in succeeding essays. The study's primary data source was students' portfolios.

Research Site and Participants

The study was conducted at a leading private university in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The university offers BBA, BSS in Economics, BA in English, LLB (Hons), CSE, and B. Pharm. The university emphasises the importance of equipping students with the necessary reading and writing skills so that they can complete academic and professional writing successfully and can eventually perform competently in a variety of professions.

The students of two sections of a writing course (ENG 102: Composition and Communication Skills) participated in the study. The aim of the course is to enable the students to write sound academic essays with a good introduction, body, and conclusion through the process of incorporating and synthesising ideas. While writing non-fiction prose and essays is concerned, the students are trained on how to analyse arguments and how to employ academic writing strategies. Moreover, critical reading and thinking are emphasised in this course. The duration of the trimester was 16 weeks (four months)

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The researchers approached the university orally for administrative approval in order to accomplish the study. In Bangladesh, it is customary that the respective Chair of the Department or the Dean of the Faculty are usually approached to obtain permission for data collection from the university (Numanee et al., 2020). Upon gaining approval, one of the researchers contacted the two instructors of the ENG 102 course teaching two sections of the course. One of the researchers shared the study objectives with the teachers and the students, briefed them about the nature of their involvement in the study, and informed them of the duration they were expected to spend on the study. The researchers also pursued the participants' consent. As suggested by Creswell and Poth (2017), the participants were briefed on how the result would be transmitted, what their rights were, their choice of exclusion from the study, how this study would help them, the assurance of camouflaging their identity, and the anonymity of this study. These steps were taken to ensure that the investigation was conducted in an ethical and respectful manner. Finally, 100 (58 female and 42 male) students of the two sections participated in the study. However, after the data had been cleaned, 97 ($N = 97$) test scores were used for data analysis. According to the background survey, it was found that none of them had living and educational experience overseas, nor had they systemically received EFL writing instruction before participating in the study.

The present study used a pre-test (diagnostic test) to make convenience sampling (Creswell, 2014). Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where units are chosen for people based on their accessibility to the researchers (Nikoloipoulou, 2022). Before the intervention, in the pre-test, a timed, impromptu, argumentative writing test was conducted to obtain baseline data from the group.

The mean pre-test scores of the participants were used in multiple analyses to evaluate the homogeneity of the participants. Initially, Shapiro-Wilk test was employed to determine the normality of the data set. The Shapiro-Wilk test results indicated that Section 1 scores were normally distributed ($P = 0.362$), whereas Section 2 scores did not follow normal distribution ($P = 0.009$) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Shapiro-Wilk test of normality

	Class	Statistic	df	Sig.
Score	Class 1	0.974	48	0.362
	Class 2	0.935	49	0.009

In this scenario, a Mann-Whitney U-Test (non-parametric) was carried out to investigate the difference between the two sections. The test revealed no statistically significant difference between Section 1 (Median = 5.75, $n = 48$) and Section 2 (Median = 6.00, $n = 49$), $U = 1151.50$, $P = 0.860$.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of two sections

Class	N	Mean	Median	SD
Class 1	48	5.76	5.75	1.13
Class 2	49	5.68	6.00	1.62

Table 3. Mean ranks and sum of ranks

	Class	N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
Score	Class 1	48	48.49	2327.50
	Class 2	49	49.50	2425.50
	Total	97		

The effect size was calculated using the following formula:

$$r = \frac{|z|}{\sqrt{n}}$$

where, r = effect size, z = standardised test statistic, and n = total sample size. The calculated effect size was 0.02, reflecting a small effect size and reaffirming the homogeneity between the Sections [1].

Implementation of Interventions

The combined approach premised on the paradigm suggested by Huang and Zhang (2020) was used in this study. The following steps were taken as the teaching and learning process proceeded. In the first stage, the teacher assisted the students in understanding the context by presenting and analysing the model essays. Prior to this step, students were given reading assignments in pairs on a particular topic, such as the introduction part of the assignments. Moreover, the teacher helped students learn rhetorical patterns based on knowledge of the writing context, intent, and audience rather than just recommending what could be expressed in each paragraph. For example, the introduction paragraph contains a *hook*, which is a sentence that attracts students' interest in the subject. The instructor encouraged the students to consider why this hook was important to an essay instead of asking them to write without further clarification at the beginning. Besides, during the class, the teacher focused on the model text and

initiated the students to discuss the micro and macro structures of the assignments. Then, the teacher instructed the class to focus on the key factors of each paragraph of the essay. Each sentence was marked and categorised according to its function and communicative purposes. Ideas, linguistic characteristics, and genre structures were explicitly addressed in this stage. Based on the previous steps, students reached the initial stage of writing, and they were advised to write the first draft independently. Both peer review and teacher evaluation were conducted. Finally, students revised the draft, edited it, and made their final writings.

In brief, according to the combined approach, writing should be developed as a process wherein each stage is substantial and fulfills the intended purpose; it should also deal with the benefaction of readers, whose responses are a crucial part of writing.

Combined Approach in the Classroom

All the steps of the combined process teaching model require adequate time, and the teacher should implement them patiently. To help teachers teach writing productively and successfully at the tertiary level, the combined approach (see Figure 2) is proposed here. Task 1 is put in order with a complete description of the steps for a more elucidative understanding of the combined approach. For more clarification, the researchers argued that the combined approach is better than any other single approach (e.g., the product approach); the evidence supporting this claim is presented in the results section of the present article.

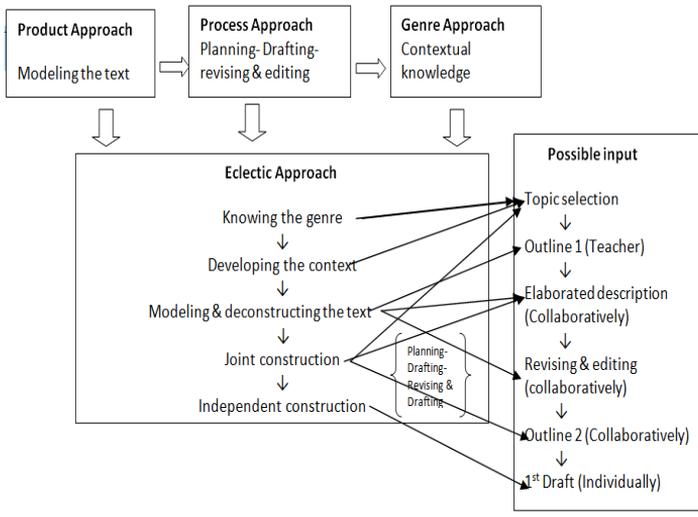


Figure 2. Application of the combined approach

The present study used the combined approach that incorporated different techniques used by the three major approaches (product, process and genre approaches) and the ingenuity on which they rely.

Intervention Programme

The instruction for the intervention group in the present study followed the steps of the combined instructional framework (see Figure 2). The researcher designed the writing teaching techniques with the university teacher who was involved in carrying out the intervention. Before the intervention, the researcher organised three training sessions for the instructor to enhance the teacher’s understanding of the combined framework and classroom practices. As commonly practised, combined instruction focuses on increasing the recount essays (i.e., an essay giving an account of an event or experience), process writing, explanation, meaning, and argumentative genre knowledge of students through the reinterpretation of model texts with communicative aims, writing context, and readers in mind during the process of writing. Here, as an example, argumentative genre awareness, its aim, material development, and implementation are discussed in detail. The organisation of the argumentative essay was based on Lee et al.’s (2009) explanation; that is, an argumentative essay has an introduction, body paragraph/s, and conclusion (see Figure 3). An introduction starts with an “attention grabber” that draws the attention of readers and a specific thesis statement that tells the readers the purpose of the writing. A clearly defined subclaim for progressing, creating, or describing the thesis statement should be given in each of the body paragraphs, and each subclaim should be supported by examples and proof. In addition, the writer should respond to opposing viewpoints by demonstrating their flaws while also considering and refuting their strengths. Lastly, writers summarise their key points and restate their stand. Writing techniques were specifically taught to students while they were going through the writing processes during the joint construction phase. Feedback was provided by peers and teachers in multiple drafts.

Table 4. Instructions for writing an argumentative essay

Instructional focus	Intervention group
Instruction	Eclectic approach (product-process-genre approach)
Genre	Argumentative writing
Content	The tourism industry of Bangladesh
Input source	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Model texts and other sources (e.g., online sources)• Course teacher• Peer students

Instructional focus	Intervention group
Input emphasis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Genre expectation • Content knowledge • Linguistic resources • Written strategies
Practice	Learning through actual use in the writing of multiple drafts
Model text	As a resource of the content, organisation, and linguistic knowledge input and knowledge
Writing process	Recursive and collaborative work
Writing strategy	Explicit instruction of planning, drafting, revising, and editing the joint construction stage
Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-evaluation • Peer feedback • Teacher feedback (focus on content, organisation, and linguistic features)

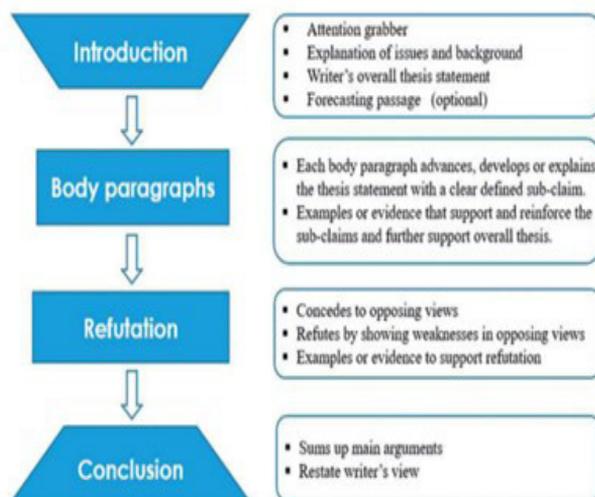


Figure 3. Organisation of an argumentative essay (based on Lee et al., 2009, p. 155)

Data Collection

During the 11 weeks of learning, students were provided with general knowledge about essay writing, such as the nature of an essay introduction and five basic types of academic essays, through the combined approach. To address the research question, portfolios were analysed with regard to the effectiveness of the combined approach.

A brief overview of the portfolios is presented in the statistical and textual analysis of the portfolios section in this article. An analysis of the 600 samples taken from the portfolios of the 100 students in the ENG 102 course demonstrated the recount essay, process writing, description, definition, and argumentative essays. The framework for the analysis was based on a discussion of the elements of the writing process, genre knowledge, communicative purposes, writer-reader roles, context, content, and organisation, as well as the use of language. The information illustrating these elements of the writing process was taken from different parts of the portfolios, specifically the context analysis sheets and students' outlines and texts.

DATA ANALYSIS

Pre- and Post-tests

Five writing instruction sessions were carried out to understand learners' gradual development, and argumentative essays (pre-test and post-test) were conducted to compare their improvements. Note that the last or 5th essay was on the argumentative essay with the same topic (see Table 5). To investigate the follow-up effects, the researcher observed the students' performance throughout the 11-week semester in five types of essays. To guarantee the comparability and feasibility of the five topics, two experienced English writing teachers who worked with students at the university as the participants were consulted on the combined technique. Researchers considered diversity in life experiences while selecting the topics. Initially, 11 topics on various foci, such as food, weather, communication, travels and tours, technology, etc., were listed. At last, upon agreement by all, the following five topics were finalised.

Table 5. Types and topics of essays given to the students in pre to post-tests

Pre-test	Application of the combined approach to different genres				Post-test
Argumentative essay	Recount essay	Descriptive essay	Process essay	Definition essay	Argumentative essay
Topic: How could tourism in Bangladesh be dangerous for the country	Topic: Favourite tour	Topic: Public transport in Dhaka	Topic: Writing a good book	Topic: Facebook addiction	Topic: How could tourism in Bangladesh be dangerous for the country?

Scoring

After 11 weeks of involvement in the writing class, the argumentative essays (pre-test and post-test) of the students were evaluated and graded by two different writing teachers (both of them hold PhD in English language teaching with eight years of teaching experience at the university level) from two different universities. These evaluators (who only rated the scripts of the argumentative essays) were given a rubric to use. The essays were graded on six assessment criteria: Organisation, content, cohesion, vocabulary, structure, and mechanics. The key approach for grading essays in this study was based on Paulus (1999), who looked into the difference between the first and second drafts of students' essays in terms of developing their writing skills of tertiary level students' composition writing. The rubric for assessing the essays used a scale from 1 (the lowest score) to 10 (the highest score) for the six criteria (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009). A blind evaluation system was introduced so as not to reveal any identifiable details. Students' essays in the six tests were kept in their portfolios. The names of the students and their ID numbers were omitted, and the essays were shuffled and renumbered in a standardised manner known only to the researchers to prevent discrimination against various tests and students. A training session helped ensure uniformity in the marking criteria. The two evaluators were given ten sample argumentative essays to see whether they would reach a consensus on the final score. If the component scores provided by the two evaluators were different, they would have to check the parameters and clarify why they gave the scores that they did until they reached an agreement. The final score was the aggregated average value of the ratings given by the two evaluators. After evaluating 50 essays, the two evaluators reached a mutual understanding regarding the marking of the rubric, and then they continued to evaluate the rest of the essays independently. After the students completed the 11-week writing classes, 200 argumentative essays on the same topic (pre-test and post-test) student essays were rated and marked by the two raters. The raters were given a version of Paulus's (1999) rubric to use in these scripts. The rating of the written texts was based on six assessment criteria: organising, development, cohesion, vocabulary, structure, and mechanics. Since each of the six criteria included 10 levels, the students' essays were marked out of 10. Inter-rater reliability between the two raters was assessed using the Intraclass Correlation Coefficient (ICC). ICC scores indicated first-rate reliability between the raters in both the pre-test (ICC = 0.941) and post-test (ICC = 0.931) (see Table 6).

Table 6. Inter-rater reliability between two raters

		Intraclass correlation coefficient						
		Intraclass correlation	95% confidence interval		F-test with true value 0			
Pre-test	Single measures	0.889	0.825	0.929	18.873	96	96	.000
	Average measures	0.941	0.904	0.963	18.873	96	96	.000
Post-test	Single measures	0.870	0.667	0.937	20.302	96	96	.000
	Average measures	0.931	0.800	0.967	20.302	96	96	.000

Writing samples were selected to best represent a student’s abilities, progress, or most successful texts in a particular context (Hyland, 2003b). Students were also encouraged to reflect upon their tasks and the textual experiences, their processes, and their strategies. As the students were required to write reflections on the written texts assembled over time, they were able to observe changes in their work and compare different genres and written products.

Analysis of the Portfolios

During the 11 weeks of learning, students were given general knowledge about five basic academic types of essays through the combined approach. A wide variety of techniques were used to collect written texts. In order to investigate the research question, portfolios were analyzed to understand the effectiveness of the combined approach. It was hoped that the information gained from the portfolios would explain the students’ gain due to the combined approach awareness. A brief overview of portfolios is presented below. An analysis of the participants’ portfolios (altogether 600 essays from pre-test and post-tests) taken from 100 students from ENG 102 demonstrated the recount, process writing, description, definition, and argumentative essays.

The essays were analysed based on six criteria. There were 100 copies of each essay, and errors were counted based on each criterion, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7. Criteria-based analysis of portfolios

Criteria-based analysis of five kinds of essays									
S/ No	Criteria		Pre-test (argumentative essay)	Recount essay	Description essay	Definition essay	Process essay	Post-test (argumentative essay)	Mean score
1	Organisation	Errors in the topics sentence	30	26	23	16	15	11	3.6
		Errors in the thesis statement	22	19	13	10	8	7	2.6
2	Content	Lacking logical supporting details	39	43	39	22	12	6	2.6
		Cannot develop a conclusion	71	68	49	35	27	16	2.7
3	Vocabulary	Lack of vocabulary.	72	70	64	49	40	32	3.0
		Lexical error.	66	64	55	50	43	37	3.1
4	Cohesion	Lacking unity and coherence.	74	71	50	30	25	21	2.7
		Limited variety of sentences.	89	83	61	38	22	10	2.1
5	Structure	Problem with organising paragraphs.	35	33	21	11	10	8	2.5
		Cannot follow the text construction.	28	30	21	14	11	6	2.7
6	Mechanics	Grammatical errors.	85	83	69	53	48	43	2.7
		Misspelling, inappropriate punctuation, and capitalisation.	60	55	42	32	27	25	2.9

In the pre-test (diagnostic test), the students could not write the topic sentence effectively, and they had errors in the topic sentence. However, after applying the combined teaching technique, even from the first essay to the fifth essay, we saw improvement in the students' writing. The students managed to write the topic sentence and the organisation of the texts. For example, one student (S1) wrote in the pre-test, "Public transportation in Dhaka city is a problem for which there hasn't

been a solution.” Here, the student could not write the topic sentence correctly. In their (e.g., S1) fifth essay, however, the researchers identified more well-formed topic sentences with appropriate tense and nominalisation, such as “Travelling by public transport is now very helpful and interesting.” Gradually, students made remarkable changes in writing logical and supportive details, and they were able to narrow down the topic in their essays. At the beginning of the study, the students faced difficulties in choosing appropriate words in their writing, which also indicates that they were not able to use simple, basic vocabulary that they already knew. Hence, their vocabulary is not very rich; for example, S3 wrote, “more better”, “very very beautiful”. Most of the students used the same vocabulary in their essays repeatedly. Students had lexical errors, perhaps resulting from a lack of exposure to the target language, code-switching, and interference from L1. Step by step, students also made improvements in word choice for essay writing, organising paragraphs and following instructions. Moreover, their errors in grammar also became less. These results reveal that the application of the combined approach works effectively to improve learners’ writing in collaborative writing classrooms.

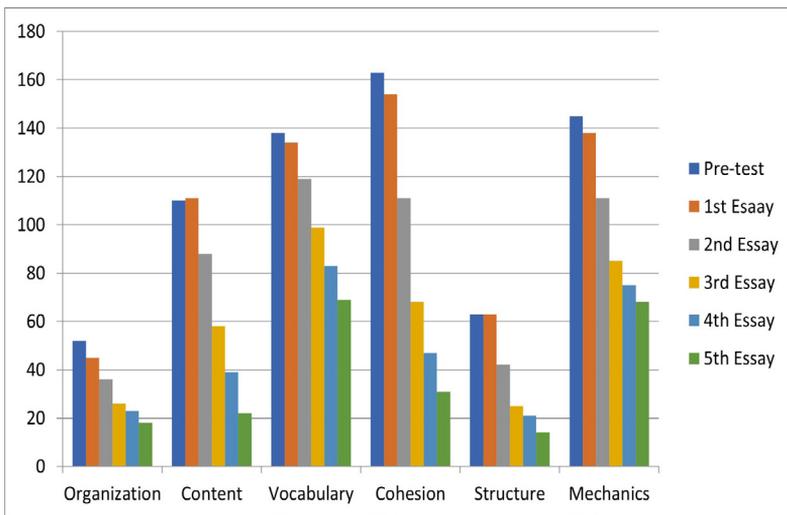


Figure 4. Students’ progress across time for overall score

At the beginning of the study, an argumentative essay was administered as a pre-test to all students who participated in this study. They comprised at least 250 words on the topic. The raters also rated on test length, organisation, clarity and relevance, and grammar. Test analysis showed that students could not exhibit the clarity and relevance of the ideas in their essays. They also faced problems in organisation and coherence. Such as, one student wrote, “Tourism can contribute to environmental pollution when a tourist travel to one place to another. They carry some stuffs like are not environment

friendly". Here, the student failed to include the necessary background information, and it was an abrupt opening. He also wrote complex sentences with grammatical errors. Most of the students struggled to organise their ideas and use essay mechanics. They were inefficient in retrieving the right words to express their ideas. They also showed limited success in organising their thoughts within the allotted time.

Post-tests were conducted on different genres of essays, such as recount, description, definition, process, and argumentative essays. They followed the combined approach-driven teaching techniques in their writings, and the data revealed that they became writers through the gradual development of their essays. Their text analysis conveyed the improvement in their ability to answer a question, organise their writing coherently, or write with appropriate range and levels of accuracy of lexis and grammatical structure.

Recount

In the recount genre, students expressed their feelings about their favorite tours. They recounted the place they went to visit. In the students' writings, it was observed that they shared their memories and experiences in their recount writing. Here, one included his/her comments and experience, opinion, or interpretation of the recounted experience or events. In their essays, they used first and third person most frequently and past tense in relating the events. They also used past tense for analysing and expressing their opinion.

Excerpt 1: Last summer, my friends and I were tired because of our tiresome daily routine. We decided to go to Saint Martin. For it is a very beautiful place in Bangladesh.

Excerpt 2: Last Eid vacation my parents wanted to relax and spend family time. So, we went to Rangamati. As we all know that it is one of the beautiful places in Bangladesh. We left home in the evening to reach there early.

Excerpts 1 and 2 are the exemplars taken from the students' scripts to demonstrate the content presented in a sequence of events. In the writing of the students, most of the students presented the details they provided in their drafts, and the structure of the essay was as follows: description, orientation, sequence of events, and reorientation.

At first, they wrote the titles, and the following sections are the social function and generic function. In the social function, they informed or entertained the readers. In the generic structure, in the orientation segment, students described the setting scene and included the necessary background information such as who, when, where, and why. Next, in the event section, they retold the events in chronological order, in the past tense.

The students used the following language features in their writings: simple prepositional phrases and adverbs of time and places to sequence the events, e.g., yesterday, my friends and I went to the beach, after a while, etc. Students also used simple and compound sentences with clauses of equal status, resembling story-like language. Such as: "Yesterday, my family and I went to the beach and made sandcastles." Furthermore, they used unequal or dependent clauses, usually of time or place, e.g., "After we made sandcastles, we went for a swim."

Description

Descriptions are like reports concentrated on describing someone or something (Langan, 2011). Here, the students wanted to clarify the subject by including information relating to public transport in Dhaka. They discussed the context details of the benefits and drawbacks of Dhaka's public transit. They clarified their independent opinion with information.

In the thesis statement, they provided a single idea that was prominent throughout their essays. It did not only set out the purpose of the essay but regulated the way that the information was conveyed in the essay writing.

Excerpt 3: Using public transport in Dhaka is the best way for the common people to reach their respective places very fastly.

In the body paragraphs, students stated their feelings associated with the topic they wrote about. They provided full sensory details that helped to support the thesis. The students' writings also showed that topics were set out in each separate paragraph, and a topic sentence started that paragraph. They could relate to the introductory paragraph and their thesis.

Excerpt 4: In Dhaka, there are many taxi services such as Uber, Ola, and Pathao, but they are very expensive. Many people like to use Uber as it is safe, reliable, and affordable rides at the push of a button while opening up flexible for driver-partners. I think it is more expensive than others. The cost starts from tk. 300. So, it is too expensive for people.

According to the text of this student, her essay aimed to clarify the taxi's negative aspects, as she claimed in the statement of a thesis that a taxi has many downsides. Excerpt 4 defined the cost of taxi travel. The first sentence was a topic sentence. In her opinion, she claimed that taxis had high fares. Next was the supporting detail where she clarified that it is beyond the capacity of the common people.

In conclusion, they reconfirmed the main concept they had explored earlier in the essay. They also gave their final thought; these were mainly suggestions related to the key points mentioned in the texts.

Excerpt 5: Dhaka is maintained well the public transport, still, there are some issues which can be solved out by taking regular inspection safety measure by authority and autorickshaw, buses, bike, and the train could be the best option for moving around the city.

Excerpt 5 was the conclusion of a student's composition. She demonstrated in the thesis statement that people in Dhaka prefer public transportation because it "saves money, reduces congestion, and is also securing than using private vehicles." The first two sentences from the sample reconfirmed the principal concept. After that, she provided her final thoughts, recommending that readers use public transportation while traveling in Dhaka. Many learners, however, have difficulties writing a successful thesis argument. A thesis argument, as they had discovered, is one sentence reflecting the thoughts of the writers on the subject. Still, some represented their main idea in many sentences instead of a single sentence. Some students' thesis statements did not imply the clear ideas of the writers. Finally, in the conclusion, students made a summary of the entire essay. This conclusion also reaffirmed their thesis. They wrote a good conclusion because it was their final thought to be read by their audiences because they knew that their readers would remain on their minds the longest after they had read the remainder of their essays. As part of analysing the texts of the students, they concentrated on the usage of the present tense, past tense, and topic-related vocabulary. They employed the present simple tense when expressing their thoughts and proving the supporting details on the issue. Regarding appropriate vocabulary, an investigation of the students' texts showed that vocabulary relevant to public transport was used in the essay, e.g., 'taxi,' 'passenger,' 'ticket,' 'auto rickshaw,' 'bus,' etc.

Process Writing

The students generally realise that process writing is a genre about describing the process and procedure of making or creating something. It follows sequence or order when describing a process. For this writing, they wrote the processes of writing a good book. Students explained to the readers how to write a book by following a series of steps.

From the students' writings, it could be made that different elements of the essay, such as the thesis statement, the steps of writing a good book (selecting the type of the book, getting an idea about the story, making the readers remember the book, selecting a name and cover for the book), and the conclusion were followed. Most of the students provided the writing procedures and the steps of writing a book. A few

students explained the writing processes and their suggestions for writing a book. This can be illustrated in Excerpts 6, 7, 8, and 9.

Excerpt 6: Writing a book is not as easy as it is sound. It is very hard to write a book. This is why you need to follow some steps.

Excerpt 7: To write a book first, you should select the type of book and you have to think about it. Choosing the type or genre of the book is very important. There are many types of books like-children books, novels, short stories, poetry, etc. At first, you have to select the genre of the book.

Excerpt 8: You have to think about the story you are going to write about. You have to be conscious of the start and the end of your story. You have to think and gather ideas to write a good story or it will not be a good one.

Excerpt 9: Then you have to find out how to make your readers satisfied and remembering the book. When a book makes a reader laugh, the reader enjoys it. But when a book makes a reader both laugh and cry the reader likes and remembers it. People laugh when they are given perspective they had never expected of. They laugh when they can see the absurdity but others cannot. You have to contrast the story that way to take a place in the reader's heart.

Excerpt 10: Last, of all, you have to choose a good name and cover for the book. As people like to make decisions by only seeing its appearance which is why you need to create a name and cover so beautiful and attractive that anyone will agree to buy it.

Most of the students preferred writing a rough outline, presenting only the heading (introduction, steps of writing a book, conclusion) and providing detailed information. In their context analysis, almost all students reported in the present simple tense in their writings, linking words showing the sequence of writing a book, giving details of the technique of writing a book and using imperative sentence structures and pronouns to address the readers. It is clear from the procedures above that words like 'first,' 'then,' 'after this,' 'next,' and 'last of all' have been used to show the sequence; they are called 'time linkers.' Regarding appropriate vocabulary, an investigation of the students' texts showed that vocabulary relevant to the topic was used in the essays, e.g., 'follow some,' 'easy steps,' 'selected,' 'style,' 'children's books,' 'novels,' 'short story,' 'poetry,' 'ideas,' 'readers,' 'name,' and 'cover.'

Definition Writing

In definition writing, students defined a term and its purpose was to explain the key term of a concept to the readers. Here, students wrote a report on Facebook addiction. All the students started with a general comment on the addiction before proceeding to the body. Towards the end, most of them gave a solution to this addiction. This can be illustrated in Excerpt 11 to 13.

Excerpt 11: The addiction of [sic] Facebook is increasing a lot nowadays. Day by day it is getting worse. The communication is becoming more and more virtual because of Facebook. People are using Facebook and getting involved in virtual life more than in real life. This is affecting them and their relationships. Even they are not aware of it.

Excerpt 12: The creator of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg is kind enough to allow us to use it free of cost. He has launched a website named internet.org which allows us to use free Facebook. Nowadays everyone has a smart phone. But we don't need any smart phone to use free Facebook. We can use it from any kind of phone. Mobile operators are also giving free internet data for people.

Excerpt 13: Because of Facebook people are not socializing at all. They just sit in homes and call and text other people instead of meeting them in the real life. They are wasting their time as well as their money.

Excerpt 13 gave an overall picture of Facebook addiction, how the use of Facebook was increasing and why it was not good. Excerpts 11 and 12 were about how it was free and it was not making people social. Here, the student also stated that it was wasting time and money.

They wrote by using complete sentences, and it was more likely for the students to use complete sentences when describing a thesis statement, topic sentences for body paragraphs, or a conclusion. Examining the students' texts, it was found that formal language, present tense, and appropriate vocabulary were used. Present simple tense was used in explaining the factual information; for example, one student wrote: "They just sit in their homes and call and text other people instead of meeting them in real life." In writing a report, the students were able to use appropriate vocabulary; for example, 'communication,' 'involve,' 'virtual life,' 'real life,' 'affecting,' 'website,' 'internet,' 'socializing,' 'call,' 'text,' 'meet,' and 'wasting time.'

Argumentative Essay

In an argumentative essay, the students could present arguments about both sides of the tourism of Bangladesh. In the beginning, they refuted arguments and gave weight to the actual position. In the conclusion, they rephrased the thesis statement, major points, call to attention, or concluding remarks.

Here, students accomplished this by writing a clear, persuasive thesis statement in the introductory paragraph. In the body paragraph, they used evidence and explanation to support the thesis statement. Next, they wrote a paragraph addressing opposing positions because they felt tourism in Bangladesh could be dangerous for the country.

Excerpt 14: Due to the tourism industry Bangladesh is getting foreign currency and it is becoming rich. By this her economic status increases by providing direct employment to the local tourist places e.g. restaurants, guest houses, transportation sectors are benefitted by tourism.

Excerpt 15: However, due to tourism, Bangladesh is also suffering such as tourists through their unwanted staff here and there. These cause pollution the environment and bitches get dirty. Crimes made by foreigners are very common in Bangladesh.

Excerpt 16: For solving these problems Bangladesh Porjoton Corporation and Police can help. Bangladesh govt. should take some initiatives to tackle these problems by making campaign which leading to people their environment and for making less the number of crimes.

From the Excerpts 14, 15, and 16, we got the following outline of an argumentative essay:

1. Introductory paragraph: containing a hook and thesis statement
2. Body paragraph: containing arguments and a rebut to the opposing side
3. Conclusion: summarizing the main points and leaving a lasting mark on the readers' minds.

In this way, the students wrote a powerful argumentative essay. Here, they used the present simple tense, and the language was formal. Some students used complex sentences, conjunctions, and related vocabularies to the topic, such as, 'tourist business', 'eco-tourism', 'tourist attractions'.

FINDINGS

The present study intended to identify the effect of the combined approach on improving students' academic essay-writing skills. The results from the portfolio analysis (Table 7) of the students indicated that the students involved in the combined approach improved in all six aspects of their writing, including organisation, development, cohesion, structure, vocabulary, and mechanics. To elaborate, in the Pre-test related to organisation, 30% of errors were found in the topic sentence, and 22% of errors were found in the thesis statement, while in the post-test, 11% of errors remained in the topic sentence, and 7% of the errors were identified in the thesis statement. Similarly, in the Pre-test related to content, 39% of errors were linked to the lack of logical supporting details, and 71% of errors were seen in the conclusion, while in the post-test, 6% of errors were linked to the lack of logical supporting details, and 16% of the errors were identified in the conclusion. A notable reduction in errors related to vocabulary, cohesion, and structure was also observed when pre-test and post-test were analysed. Yet, concerning mechanics, less improvement was observed. While 85% of grammatical errors and 60% of errors related to misspelling, inappropriate punctuation, and capitalisation were identified in the Pre-test, 43% of grammatical errors and 25% of errors related to misspelling, inappropriate punctuation, and capitalisation were noted in the Post-test. It can be concluded that engaging in the combined approach resulted in a substantial improvement to the organisation, development, cohesion, structure, and vocabulary of students' essays but relatively less improvement in mechanics.

In addition, the comparative study between the pre-test and post-test of argumentative essays showed an improvement in students' writing, as indicated by the mean scores (see Table 8).

Table 8. Argumentative essay scores in pre-test and post-test by Rater-1 and Rater-2

		<i>N</i>	Mean	SD	Std. error mean
First rater	Pre-test	97	5.608	1.474	0.150
	Post-test	97	7.415	1.142	0.116
Second rater	Pre-test	97	5.832	1.391	0.141
	Post-test	97	7.724	0.984	0.100

Independent sample *t*-tests (Table 9) were conducted to compare the pre-test and post-test mean scores of argumentative essays written by university students ($n = 97$) and examined by two raters. In the case of the first rater, the mean score of the post-test ($M = 7.415$, $SD = 1.142$) was higher than the pre-test ($M = 5.608$, $SD = 1.474$). This difference was significant ($t(181) = -9.544$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, the second rater's assessment revealed a rise in the post-test mean score ($M = 7.724$, $SD = 0.984$) compared to the pre-test mean score ($M = 5.832$, $SD = 1.391$) with a statistically significant difference ($t(173) = -10.936$, $p < 0.001$).

Table 9. *t*-test results of pre-test and post-test (Rater-1 and Rater-2)

Independence sample test		Levene's test for equality of variances		<i>t</i> -test for equality of means						
		F	Sig.	<i>t</i>	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean diff.	Std. error diff.	95% confidence interval of the diff.	
									Lower	Upper
First rater	Equal variances assumed	6.074	0.015	-9.544	192	.000	-1.807	0.189	-2.180	-1.433
	Equal variances not assumed			-9.544	180.688	.000	-1.807	0.189	-2.180	-1.433
Second rater	Equal variances assumed	9.050	0.003	-10.936	192	.000	-1.892	0.173	-2.233	-1.551
	Equal variances not assumed			-10.936	172.839	.000	-1.892	0.173	-2.233	-1.550

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to learn the effect of the combined approach on the development of the academic essay-writing skills of learners. The participants were taught EFL writing through the combined approach; previously, the same group of students had been taught for 4 weeks through a conventional product-dominated approach. The improvement in students' writing was subjected to the calculation of an overall score and test analysis in six writing subcategories (e.g., organisation, content, vocabulary, cohesion, structure, and mechanics). The findings (e.g., Table 3 and Figure 4) showed that the students received higher scores and gradually became writers in their essays after receiving the combined writing instruction in all six analytical measures. The effectiveness of the process-genre approach to support writing pedagogy is evident in the literature (Nordin & Mohammad, 2017). Huang and Zhang (2020) showed that the content and organisation of Chinese university students' argumentative writing improved due to being taught under the process-genre approach. Before that, Lara's (2017) study advocated that this approach assisted fourth-grade EFL learners in writing well-structured narrative paragraphs. Similarly, Belmekki and Sekkal (2018) revealed that the process-genre approach was effective in improving Algerian university students'

writing of request letters. Ghufroon (2016) also acknowledged that this approach was conducive to rendering improved writing. Besides, Pasand (2013) uncovered that the process-product approach enabled Iranian EFL learners to produce improved writing. While these studies echoed the comprehensive benefits of employing the process-genre approach, Arslan (2013) presented the effectiveness of the integrated approach (i.e., combining product, process, and genre approaches) in improving Turkish prospective teachers' writing competency. The findings of the present study resonated with the studies that avoided espousing either process, product, or genre approaches due to their individual cons (Al Bloushi & Al Shuraiaan, 2024; Horowitz, 1986; Hyland, 20023b) and applied process-genre, process-product, and integrated approaches to improve learners' writing proficiency.

The present study showed that the improvements made by the students in the content scores may be attributed to the presence of many phases in the process. Students who were familiar with the genre approach were better able to grasp the communicative intent, prospective audience and context, allowing them to write more effectively. The modeling and reinterpretation exercises (e.g., Figure 2) helped students learn how professional academic writers use relevant knowledge to support their thesis statements and arguments, which are valuable tools for good writing (Zhang et al., 2016). This study suggests that for students to learn effectively through combined instruction, the teacher must clearly illustrate which contents are required to achieve the communicative goal. In the classroom, one popular technique is to interpret model essays. One of the major changes in terms of content from the intervention, according to the evaluation of the student's written texts, is the advancement of the thesis. In the pre-test, most students developed many distinct ideas in the body paragraph to justify their ideas; after the intervention, they implemented different types of information, such as facts and personal experiences, to explain their opinions, and thus, they succeeded in the communicative intent. In combined instruction, the proactive participation of the students in generating ideas may strengthen their content knowledge. Students may expand their conceptual knowledge by sharing information with and learning new ideas from their peers while participating in activities such as brainstorming and group discussions.

The students' progress in the organisation of their written texts indicates that they benefited from supervised text analysis and clear guidance on rhetorical structures by the teachers. Consequently, they became capable of producing well-organised essays by the end of the semester. Before constructing the text jointly, the instructor directed students to prepare their essays using techniques such as making notes and mind maps to organise their thoughts, through which the students' metacognition was also strengthened and their thoughts contextualised by that metacognition. Planning helped learners comprehend conceptual knowledge and interconnected aspects in the academic genre, especially planning with contextual categorisation, as observed by many other researchers, and thus encouraged improvements in genre knowledge and academic

writing (Negretti & McGrath, 2018; Wette, 2017). It seems that enhancements to genre awareness helped students identify the conceptual, interpersonal, and textual meanings in some of the communicative situations and also helped them make more appropriate lexico-grammatical choices for a specific genre.

It is also intriguing to see the learners' improvements in language use. In the present study, the product aspect within the implementation of the combined instructional system seemed to have encouraged the learners' lexical development. The genre aspect within the proposed combined instructional framework appeared to have facilitated learners' syntactic development. In the pre-test, many students used attributive clauses (i.e., a clause serves as an attribute to a noun in the main clause, inverted sentences, and template sentences) such as S4 wrote, "with the development of technology...". In the post-test, however, the researcher identified more well-formed simple sentences with appropriate tense and nominalization, such as "The popularity and refreshment of the tourism have led a steady decreases[sic] the stress and depression of people in recent years".

This finding aligns with Wingate's (2012) claim that the quality of an academic essay is largely decided by the development of the ideas. Typically, students' attention is concentrated on the correctness of grammar and vocabulary in the conventional form-based, product-oriented approach, and model texts are provided to students without the rhetorical framework being properly structured to offer a more successful argument. The teacher implementing the combined approach spent a significant portion of class time discussing features of the text and the rhetorical structures of the various essay forms. Eventually, the students gained a higher level of awareness about the textual structures through the scaffolded exercises and the subsequent repetitive writing practices. Explicit guidance in genre and interaction of students with the writing process, the social context, communicative purposes, and the audience may have encouraged them to create genre-specific texts with more suitable content and organisation. It is plausible that the quality of the content and organization increased accordingly as the students were introduced to more content and gave more attention to the writing structure. The combined approach, as Memari Hanjani and Li (2014) point out, focuses equally on the local and global dimensions of literature and topics at the surface level, such as language and mechanics. This result gives us confidence in guidance's role in learning languages. Students were motivated to use the language features in their joint and independent text creation after obtaining constructive input from the instructor and through model texts. (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993). The exemplified forms were internalised through students' actual use and meaningful interactions with their peers and teachers in multiple drafting (Devitt, 2015; Deng et al., 2014). Finally, the students also made progress with the mechanics of writing, which concerns the mastery of writing conventions such as spelling, punctuation, and capitalisation. Mechanics do not depend heavily on context or writing processes; they are more of a matter of mastering the conventions. In the intervention group, mechanics were not specifically

taught in the writing course; instead, peers and the instructor offered appropriate feedback on these topics. They benefited from the combined approach as well.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study implemented an adapted combined model (Huang & Zhang, 2020) to suit EFL writing instruction in a Bangladeshi university setting, focusing on the emerging framework of the learning/teaching cycle and process-writing pedagogies and also sought to evaluate the effects of this combined approach on the writing of EFL learners through an intervention study. Results indicate that the five writing instruction sessions substantially enhanced the writing of EFL learners with regard to six components: organization, content, development, cohesion, vocabulary, and mechanics. The present study contributes to the L2 writing literature by adding a feasible and effective teaching framework (the combined approach) for enhancing students' writing abilities. There are also important methodological ramifications for teachers working with students of English as an alternative or foreign language in other settings. First, when executing the combined instruction, writing teachers should follow the steps properly by scaffolding students' writing skills and knowledge and giving consistent attention to genre knowledge and the writing process by using a guided model text. The results indicate that specific guidance when using the genre approach helped students gain knowledge of genres, while the recursive process promoted knowledge and skills enhancement. In contrast, directing students to comprehensible language feedback and exercise practice did not help them implement what they had achieved in conducting actual writing tasks. Second, the use of model texts should be investigated in a relevant context with an emphasis on topic-specific content knowledge, rhetorical structures, and lexicogrammatical possibilities rather than merely emphasising linguistic features. The improvements in the students' content and organisation demonstrate that the combined approach is more beneficial than conventional approaches focused on EFL learners' awareness of content and rhetorical structure. Therefore, the researcher recommends that teachers attempt to develop students' content and rhetorical knowledge in a concrete context. Third, writing should be considered a collaborative rather than an individual activity. In implementing the combined framework in the current study, collaborative work was performed throughout the process. The integrated process provided multiple feedback opportunities from teachers and peers and helped students become more successful writers rather than inactive students. Consequently, teachers in other circumstances may find it beneficial and important to use the combined approach in their teaching of writing.

Due to the nature of the analysis, we have to point out that the results of the experiment deserve to be viewed with caution. It should be recognised that the students were mainly taught essay writing, and the analysis was done accordingly. Accordingly, no assumptions should be made regarding the effectiveness of combined teaching on

other forms of writing practice in classroom settings. Future studies should look at how students' genre experience and writing techniques can be applied to new contexts and styles of writing. It would be equally exciting if further experiments investigated how external variables (e.g., students' and teachers' attitudes towards the combined approach) affect the outcomes of the combined approach. Students' and teachers' interviews should be carried out to find out which parts of the combined approach play the most critical roles in improving students' writing skills.

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