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# Students vs Lecturers: How Should Writing be Taught and Learned?

# Mahasiswa vs Dosen: Bagaimana Seharusnya Writing Diajarkan dan Dipelajari?

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#### Abstract

There have been a number of studies investigating the hindrances that students face and their preferences in writing activities. Yet, there raises questions whether all the students' preferences should be implemented and whether lecturers should comply with all the preferences in order to create an ideal model of teaching and learning writing. Using R & D method, this present study aimed to develop Reading-Based Model of Teaching Academic Writing. This article reports the result of the first stage of the study- the needs analysis. The data were collected through questionnaires distributed to 127 university students and in-depth interview with four writing lecturers. The students' voice of their preferences in writing activities with the lecturers' views on an ideal writing class based on their experiences and knowledge of teaching writing were examined and compared. The results revealed that there were agreements and discrepancy between students' and lecturers' perception about stages in writing process, students' ability to develop ideas, the implementation of writing strategies, and the practice of corrective feedback. This study was expected to shed a light on how writing should be better taught and learnt.

**Keyword:** Students' perception, lecturers' perception, writing needs

#### Abstrak

Sejumlah penelitian yang mengkaji tantangan yang dihadapi mahasiswa dalam menulis dan preferensi mereka telah banyak dilakukan. Namun, muncul pertanyaan apakah semua preferensi mahasiswa harus diterapkan dan apakah dosen harus mengikuti semua preferensi dalam menciptakan model pengajaran dan pembelajaran menulis yang ideal. Dengan menggunakan metode R & D, penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan Model Pengajaran Menulis Akademik Berbasis Membaca. Artikel ini melaporkan hasil studi tahap pertama - analisis kebutuhan. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui penyebaran kuesioner kepada 127 mahasiswa dan wawancara mendalam dengan empat dosen mata kuliah kepenulisan. Preferensi mahasiswa dalam kegiatan menulis dengan pandangan dosen

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tentang kelas menulis yang ideal berdasarkan pengalaman dan pengetahuan mereka tentang mengajar menulis dianalisis dan dibandingkan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat persemaan dan perbedaan antara persepsi mahasiswa dan dosen tentang tahapan dalam proses menulis, kemampuan mahasiswa mengembangkan ide, penerapan strategi menulis, dan praktik memberikan umpan balik. Studi ini diharapkan dapat memberikan gambaran bagaimana menulis harus diajarkan dan dipelajari dengan lebih baik.

Katakunci: Persepsi mahasiswa, persepsi dosen, kebutuhan menuli.

#### Introduction

The most implemented writing approach in Indonesia is Genre-Based Approach (GBA). In Indonesia, the impelementation of GBA has started steadily since 2006. Concerning its history, Genre- Based Approach is not recent nor the first. It has been around for decades. Before GBA, approaches in teaching writing have experienced significant change over the last few decades (Pham & Bui, 2021; Lin, 2006). From the mid1940s to the mid-1960s, grammar accuracy of students' written works was the main focus which was based on a behaviorist view in which repetition could lead to mastery. Then, in the mid-1960s, the purpose of writing had begun to shift the focus in writing from sentence-level accuracy to a discourse level. Since the 1970s, the process approach began to be noticed and known. According to Lin (2006), Instead of focusing mainly on grammar accuracy in writing, teachers also acknowledge the process undergone from thought, planning (pre-writing) to the final product (drafting, editing, revising, etc). Then, Halliday in 1990s, based on theory of Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL), developed a genre which emphasizes the social purpose of language which, the scholars believed, is more relevant to real world communication (Pham & Bui, 2021). Since then, Genre Based Approach is increasinglyused worldwide as an approachfor teaching a language.

Genre Based Approach is applicable and preferable in teaching writing classes, particularly in Indonesia. It has been proven effective in teaching various genres for various purposes such as teaching an exposition (Rozimela, 2005), a recount text (Mastura, Arsyad, and Koto, 2020), summary writing (Chen and Su, 2012), and a narrative (Hermansson et al, 2019).

GBA in teaching writing has undoubtedly offered and provided profound advantages to both students and teachers. In spite of that, many students still face some struggles with regard to some issues in writing such as choosing the proper word, constructing a grammatically correct sentence, generating and developing ideas (Rozimela, et al, 2021). These seem to be resulted from limited exposure of written works and insufficient inputof target language. In response to the writing problems, various strategies, methods and approaches have been studied to deal with writing complexity. However, there has not been a specific model of teaching which may help teachers and students to cope with these problems. To develop a model a necessary step is finding out students' needs.

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Students' needs, characteristics and their preferences must be taken into account in designing a teaching model in writing class.

Numerous need analysis studies to find out students' needs and preferences in writing class have been conducted in EFL Writing context as prior investigation to design or select a teaching model (Fatimah,2018; Halaludin, Ahmad,& Anshari,2020; Rozimela et al, 2021; Sabarun 2019). They investigated the students' needs, problems and preferences in academic writing class. In General, they shared quite similar findings with different emphases. Halaludin, Ahmad, & Anshari (2020) investigated students' and lecturers' needs in teaching academic writing. Lecturers and students agreed that a teaching model should have a comprehensive learning approach, larger scope of writing assessment, and publication of written work. Fatimah (2018) put emphasis ongetting feedback from lecturers and peers, and the demand of more resources from books and journal as developing ideas was the biggest challenge for students.

Similar to Fatimah's finding (2018), the study by Rozimela et al. (2021) unveiled that the students demanded more sources to read related to topic being written and acknowledged the importance of reading in writing class. Furthermore, in terms of writing strategy, half of students preferred collaborative to independent writing, and concerning feedback, most of students were likely to receive direct written corrective feedback from lecturer. Another needs analysis study was conducted by Sabarun (2019) which aimed to know students' perefences in terms of learning style, learning sources, feedback. Findings showed that the students preferred to do independent learning in class, get sources from the internet, and receive feedback from the lecturer.

Based on the result of the above-mentioned studies, there were three highlighted points that the studies share in common; getting feedback, learning strategies and the demand of sources to develop ideas. Firstly, in Fatimah' study, students were likely enthusiastic to receive feedback from both lecturers and peers; however, in the other two studies, lecturers' feedback were likely to be the choice of students. There was discrepancy between these findings. Furthermore, there was also discrepancy in terms of collaborative and independent learning.

Lastly, in terms of reading sources, the aforementioned studies were in one voice in which they acknowledged profound role of doing more reading in writing class. Theoritically speaking, the idea of reading in writing class has been researched and the results are remarkable. Empirical and anectodal evidence from a number of studies supports the idea that writing is inextricably intertwined with reading. Findings of experimental research show that reading before writing provides a significant effect on students' writing performance (Lee & Hsu, 2009; Kirin, 2010; Mermelstein, 2015; Pysarchyk&Yamshynska, 2015; Nam & Song, 2020). Besides, correlational studies also emphasize strong relationship between reading and writing implying that the more the students

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read, the better the writing will be (Sakurai, 2017; Atayeva, Setyo, Kassymova, &Kosbay, 2019).

Reflecting on the result of previous studies conducted in writing EFL Context in Indonesia, need analysis done to understand what the students need and preference offers great advantage for the successful learning process. However, the students' preferences are likely influenced by some factors such as their characteristic, learning style, and etc which make the preferences vary. Thus, this study examines students' activities in pre, whilst and post teaching thoroughly which are based on their preferences. The result of this need analysis surely can be used as a base to select or design a teaching model; however, at the same time, lecturers' perception and knowledge on this particular field are needed. Not all the students' preferences suit the goal of teaching and learning. Therefore, this study aims to analyze and dig deeper on students' and lecturers' perception into how writing should be taught. The students were asked about their preferences in choosing activities during learning; meanwhile, the lecturers were asked to enuciate the whole writing process in teaching one type of text based on their knowledge and experience.

# Methods

This study is aimed to develop a model of teaching writing. Research and Development is a process used to develop and validate educational product (Borg and Gall, 1998). This study falls into the first category; that is developing a model. ADDIE model is used to develop the model. The first three steps (Analyze, Design, and Develop) have been conducted. 'Analyze' was intended to find out the students' writing needs of academic writing. The participants were 127 university students who were taking Essay Writing subject and four writing lecturers. As mentioned previously, this article focuses on the result of needs analysis.

The data were collected through likert-scale questionnaire distributed to the students to find out their preferences in each step of teaching and interview with the lecturers to figure out lecturers' perception on ideal concept of teaching writing. The questionnaire consisted of two parts, the students' perception on their needs of language and genre knowledge and skill and their preferences of learning writing. The students were required to decide their choice of each item in a range of 1-4. In addition, the interview questions were addressed to the lecturers to obtain information about their perception about the students' needs writing. The instruments were validated by two writing lecturers beforehand. The questionnaire was distributed online. Interview with the lecturers were conducted offline. The data were analyzed descriptively and qualitatively. The students' answers were codified, classified, and put into percentage. Then, the lecturers' answers were read closely, grouped, and described as they were. The two sets of data were associated and interpreted in order to obtain comprehensive information about the students' needs of academic writing.

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# Findings Students' Perceptions

As mentioned above, the students' and lecturers' perceptions of how writing should be taught and learnt were regarded as students' needs of academic writing. The result shows that there were similarities and differences in their perceptions. The findings are outlined in 3 stages of writing: pre-writing, whilst-writing and post-writing as follows.

Stages	Activity	Percentage (%)
Pre-writing	Building students' prior knowledge	100
	Providing text model	98.5
	Additional reading related to topic	100
	given	
	Explicit teaching of text structure	97.1
Whist-writing	Collaborative Writing	58.4
	Independent Writing	51.6
Post-writing	Feedback from Lecturer	70.8
	Feedback from peer	29.2
	Direct written feedback	95.6
	Indirect written feedback	4.4

In the pre-writing stage, some activities that the students needed were congruent with what the lecturers did. One of the activities in pre-writing stage is building initial knowledge on topic. All the students (100%) agreed that building background knowledge on the topic of writing is undeniably helpful to gather ideas to be written in the text. Thus, this activity must be included in pre-writing stage. Then, other than building initial knowledge, in this stage of writing, the students demanded additional reading material on the topic to be written. They stated that additional reading material can help them gather and develop ideas. They said that the more they read, the better their writing will be. Actually, in the class the students had been asked to read before they started to write; however, the reading activity was not guided. Therefore, additional reading material needs to be provided by lecturers and the reading activity needs to be guided.

Furthermore, 98.5% students agreed that one important thing that should be done by the lecturers in the beginning of teaching writing is to provide model(s) of the certain text genre. They stated that they needed lecturers' guidance to understand the structure of the text. Then, 97.1% students preferred explicit explanation to figuring out by themselves.

For whilst-writing stage, the students had different preferences on the writing process: some liked doing collaborative writing and the others enjoyed doing independent writing. Collaborative writing is certainly a helpful activity in which students can combine two or more minds to explore ideas. Based on the

data from the questionnaires, 83.2% of the students agreed on the effectiveness of collaborative writing. However, this result was not supported by the result when it came to their preferences for collaborative writing or independent writing: 58.4% of the students preferred to do collaborative writing as the practice before doing independent writing, and 41.6% of the students preferred to directly do independent writing.

In the last stage of writing, the students were given feedback for the betterment of their writing. All the students agreed on the benefits of feedback to improve their writing. In the questionnaires distributed, the students were guided to describe their preferences on feedback given by lecturers and peers and on types of the feedback. It was found that 70.8% of the students preferred to receive feedback and comments from lecturers instead of peers. In terms of the types of feedback given, the students' preference laid mostly on direct written corrective feedback (95.6%) whereby both lecturers and peers marked all mistakes in the students' writing and corrected them simultaneously.

# Lecturers' perceptions

Interviews were conducted with four lecturers (D1, D2, D3, and D4) who were teaching writing in that semester. The interviews aimed to gather information about both students' needs in learning writing and lecturers' points of view of how writing should be taught. There were 5 main questions in the interviews which were developed as the interviews went by. From the interviews, it was found that each lecturer used a different approach in teaching writing. Despite this difference, there were some similarities: first, the students were given one or two sample texts in the same genre and discussed the content and structure; second, the students practiced writing both in groups and individually; and third, the students were given the opportunity to improve their writing based on the inputs given by their colleagues and lecturers.

In the beginning of the interviews, the four lecturers were asked about what students needed to do to be able to write well. They all argued that students should practice more, not depending only upon lecturers' instructions. The students were expected to write not merely to fulfill their assignments. Besides, they will be able to learn to write and improve their writing if they read more published reading material. Excerpt 1 below is an excerpt from an interview with a lecturer showing (his/her) expectations of what students should do in learning writing.

# Excerpt 1

Beside studying the strategies in writing and practicing what they have learned, they are also expected to actively improve their writing ability through reading, and discussing with peers. Furthermore, they are also expected to do more practice outside the class. (D3)

In the follow-up question, they were asked to elaborate briefly about the students' writing ability and what problem most students encountered. Related to students' ability, overall it was alright meaning that they were able to write short paragraph. However, when it came to essay, they encountered considerable problems in developing and organizing ideas, and language used as it is shown in the following excerpt.

# Excerpt 2

Most students experience difficulty in developing ideas. The topic was not well- elaborated as the students merely wrote the general information. For example, for the topic "junk food" they were supposed to elaborate the topic comprehensively; however, the fact showed that after they wrote two supporting sentences and they stopped. (D2)

Concerning the main question of how the writing is taught, the answers were outlined into three stages; pre-writing, whilst-writing and post-writing. In pre-writing, the first and foremost step are introducing the topic and exploring what the students already know about the topic. The importance of building initial knowledge has been acknowledged in the field of English language teaching (ELT). Because of its importance, the first step carried out by the lecturers in teaching writing using the Genre-Based Approach was Building Knowledge of the Field (BKOF) (see Excerpt 3). To get students familiar with a topic is a way to assist them in exploring ideas. There were some methods commonly implemented by the lecturers in this stage, and asking questions was the common one.

# Excerpt 3

There are 5 text genres taught in essay writing course and the first step in teaching any genre is building students' background knowledge. (D1)

In pre-writing stage, reading activity before writing is the topic mostly discussed among lecturers. The lecturers are aware that reading is the cornerstone of writing which determine the quality of the written text (excerpt 4). However, the practice of integrating reading and writing has not been done well. The common practice was that the students were encouraged to read additional information; however, it was not programmed in teaching stages. However, the lecturers wished to integrate reading not as an option but as main part of instructional writing practice.

# Excerpt 4

Reading is very important for a writer. There is a quote that says "a good writer must be a good reader. A good reader is not necessarily a good writer". It means that to be a successful writer, one must read a lot.

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Besides, reading gives not only ideas but also real models of how language is used to express ideas. (D1)

Beside building students' initial knowledge and reading additional information, the next step of teaching in pre-writing stage is providing the model(s) of particular genre. All the participants have implemented this step in teaching every genre. They believed that providing and examining the model(s) helped the students aware of generic structures of the certain genres and made the students aware of the importance of coherence and cohesion in writing.

After discussing the model(s), the students began to write the draft of writing. Firstly, the students started with collaborative writing by which they either wrote in group or in pairs. After completing the collaborative work, the students did independent practice. After all steps were done, the students' works were assessed and given feedback for the betterment of their text.

All the lecturers have agreed that feedback from lecturers both spoken and writtenis very useful for improving students' writing skills. Therefore, the lecturers provided both spoken and written feedback generally and individually. The feedback was provided regarding all aspects: content, idea organization, language, and mechanics. Feedback from the lecturers was given both on the learning process and on the writing products. All the lecturers said that they usually gave feedback verbally when some students presented their writing individually and when the students wrote in groups, so they could immediately make improvements. Meanwhile, written feedback was given in the form of comments, notes or marks on their writing. For this, each lecturer had his/her own way; two lecturers provided comments at the end of the students' writing as a guide for them to improve their writing, the two others provided notes on the parts that needed to be revised, and the others marked the parts that needed to be revised. The lecturers have agreed that students should be encouraged to learn to find their mistakes and then learn to correct them. The lecturers' perceptions of feedback for students in learning writing are depicted in Excerpt 5 and Excerpt 6.

# Excerpt 5

Feedback from lecturers is very important. In my opinion, feedback should be used by students as a place to learn, not just to find out what they need to improve. So feedback should not make students dependent, but what makes them think and be independent. Peer feedback is also useful as long as there are guidelines they can use. (D1)

# Excerpt 6

I allocate time to provide feedback to students after students have finished writing drafts. Corrections are done together, and I first give the opportunity to student colleagues (colleagues) to provide feedback or provide corrections. (D4)

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# DISCUSSION

This study aims to reveal the students' needs of academic writing. The findings show some agreements and discrepancies between students' and lecturers' perceptions about the activities carried out in the stages of writing process. While the agreement is useful for creating and developing an ideal model of teaching academic writing, the discrepancy is important to be discussed in order to find solution to overcome the hindrances experienced by both the students and lecturers in teaching and learning writing.

One of foremost findings in this study is that both lecturers and students are in one voice to acknowledge the role of reading in writing class. The acknowledgement is due to the great benefits that reading offers with regard to the richness of ideas and other writing aspects. This finding is in line with results of several studies investigating the relationship between the amount of reading and the improvement of their writing's performance (Sakurai, 2017; Atayeva, Setyo, Kassymova, &Kosbay, 2019; Lee & Hsu, 2009; Kirin, 2010; Mermelstein, 2015; Pysarchyk & Yamshynska, 2015; Nam & Song, 2020). These studies show that massive amount of reading contributed to students' writing performance.

Furthermore, reading at initial stage of writing is able to equip the learners for what they are going to write as Nation (2019) names this as "meaning-focused input". This input deals with writing' hidrances such as writer' block – the circumstances in which the learners do not have any idea what they should write and how to begin writing. Thus, Grabe (2003) argues that guideline about how they perform reading in writing class is required.

Another agreement that both students and lecturers is the importance of building students' intial knowledge and providing model of a particular genre. These steps are the first and second steps of Genre Based Approach model. According to Freedman (in Devitt, 2004), students' genre awareness needs to be built up, one of many ways, by providing textual input with implicit instruction. Implicit instruction means that the lecturers may use various techniques or activities to let the students find out the textual elements of the text; not specifically mentioning every element.

Despite these agreements, there is a discrepancy between students' and lecturers' perception which needs insightful discussion to find the red-line on how the writing should be taught and learnt. The first issue is students' preferences on doing collaborative writing and independent writing. This finding shows that lecturers instructed the students to write collaboratively prior to independent writing as they are aware of the benefits derived from collaborative writing. Besides, the strengths of collaborative writing have also been shown in findings of some studies conducted by Dobao (2013), Addinna et al (2020) and Ho (2021). Dobao et al (2013) claim that collaborative writing is highly effective and recommended in teaching writing skill. Furthermore, Addinna et al. (2020) point out that beside its effectiveness, doing collaborative writing can be a learning community for students in which they can build motivation and creativity in writing. Not so different from Addinna, Ho (2021) highlightes the

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benefits of collaborative writing in students' collaborative written text and independent written text viewed from their writing fluency.

Though the research has confirmed the effectiveness of collaborative writing, not all students are aware of these benefits. The finding reveals that almost half of students preferred doing independent writing right after they were given the model to working collaboratively with peers. It may be caused by factors such as students' learning styles and their experience in collaborative writing. A study conducted by Addinna et al. (2020) unveiled that students with Field Independent learning style benefited and achieved better than students with Field Dependent learning style.

As for experience, some students might not be given sufficient scaffolding, guideline and elaboration on how they work effectively with peers. Implicit or unclear instruction might leave the students with confusion resulted in their reluctance doing collaborative writing. As for this fact, the lecturers' role in scaffolding is highly required. Besides, the lecturers are demanded to be creative in designing strategies in which the learning strategies for each genre must vary - avoiding monotonous way of teaching.

The last issue needs to be highlighted is feedback. The students in this study preferred direct corrective feedback from lecturers. They would be very delightful if the lecturers marked all the erros. Despite this finding, peer feedback is also beneficial. A study conducted by Harutyunyan & Poveda (2018) revealed that doing peer revision for one course in academic writing benefited students in some ways; improving the quality of writing, critical thinking, and collaborative work skill. However, in practice, peer feedback is not properly implemented (Saptenno&Soiusa; 2021). It is caused by insufficient training given by lecturers. To get benefits from peer feedback, it needs guidance from lecturer and a lot of practice to give construsive feedback. Furthermore, lecturers' feedback undoubtedly provides great assistance. However, based on the lecturers' perception, the feedback can be direct, but not marking all the errors as it is not building students' self-correction. Lecturers may highlight some errors and ask the students to find the rest. One point should be noted that the comments from both from peers and lecturers should not be too general but constructive and should build the students' sense of self correction.

# Conclusion

This study looks the students' needs of academic writing through the students' perception based on their preferences with lecturers' perception on how teaching writing should be conducted. Based on the findings, there are some highlighted points that can be consideration for lecturers in creating an ideal writing class. First, the need of reading is writing class is inevitable due to great assistance that reading can provide. Guided reading can help the students to explore ideas in writing. Then, building students' awareness of genre is needed; yet, it is suggested to do explicitly or implicitly by providing some clues or hints. The choice should depend on the students' language level. The next E-ISSN 2548-9097

issue is writing strategies. Students' preferences vary due to their learning style; thus, the lecturers are required to be creative in creating fun but not monotous learning activities. Last issue discussed is feedback. Feedback both from peers and lecturers undoubtedly contributes for betterment of text. In regard to peers' feedback, the lectures must equip the students with some knowledge and information how the giving feedback is conducted. Besides, the lecturers should provide clear and not too general comments on students' writing. Hopefully, this elaboration gives insight to lecturers teaching writing skill in EFL/ ESL Context. For future research, these findings can be a base to design a model to teach writing skills.

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