

Addressing Student Writing Challenges: A Review of Difficulties and Effective Strategies

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ABSTRACT: *This narrative literature review examines students' writing challenges and practical strategies to address them. The study synthesizes research on cognitive, linguistic, and affective factors contributing to writing problems, including working memory capacity, vocabulary knowledge, syntactic complexity, writing anxiety, and self-efficacy. The review identifies several promising strategies to support writing development: strategy instruction, collaborative writing, technology-enhanced writing instruction, targeted vocabulary instruction, and individualized feedback. Findings suggest that a multifaceted approach addressing various aspects of writing difficulties is most effective. The study highlights the need for further research on the long-term effectiveness of interventions, the potential of emerging technologies in writing instruction, and culturally responsive approaches to meet diverse student needs.*

Keywords: *affective factors, cognitive factors, linguistic factors, student writing, writing difficulties, writing interventions*

INTRODUCTION

Strong writing skills comprise the foundation for scholars' and professionals' advancement. However, recent studies paint a concerning picture: It is identified that a considerable number of students face challenges in writing skills required in school (Roxas, 2020; Santangelo & Olinghouse, 2009). These findings illustrate the importance of establishing prevention approaches that may help students overcome difficulties in improving their writing skills. Writing involves skills in planning, organizing, drafting, and revising the existing material (Graham & Perin, 2007). Despite being the central skill in most academic disciplines, or at least the one that remains most relevant in learning outcomes across all curriculum areas and learning levels, writing is a significant difficulty for many students. The processes students experience while writing are complex and diverse, which imply cognitive-linguistic and affective aspects.

Cognitive factors include specific writing abilities, including working memory, vocabulary, general intelligence, and reading ability (Bourke & Adams, 2010). For example, students have difficulty putting what they want to say in order because of low working memory. Therefore, the organization of ideas and the flow of the discourse suffer. Linguistic factors can be linked to one's language skills and ability to share information, concepts, ideas, and knowledge, for instance, lexical density, syntactic density, grammar, and language connectivity (Crossley & Kim, 2022). For example, individuals who use English as a foreign language would have difficulty conveying intricate concepts because of restricted vice or unfamiliarity with idioms and phrases. Affective factors affecting a student's writing include writing anxiety, lack of interest,

negative perceptions, and low self-esteem, which negatively affect writing performance (Deb, 2018). A student, for instance, who has high writing anxiety is likely to delay their writing assignments, hence producing substandard work, resulting in negative writing experiences.

Due to the effect of writing difficulties on the poor performance and future employability of students, several studies have been conducted to analyze the different dimensions of students' writing difficulties by offering important information and recommendations on these problems and their probable solutions (Alfaki, 2015; ELbashir, 2023; Setyowati et al., 2020). These studies have identified specific issues students experience in writing, such as difficulties in organizing ideas, expressing complex thoughts, and maintaining coherence throughout their work. Thus, this literature review offers a synthesis of research from the past two decades regarding students' writing difficulties and solutions to this need.

In this review, an analysis is carried out to assess the challenges that students face in writing so it can reflect on students of all ages and what their difficulties are with writing. To address the issues mentioned above, this review will seek to answer the following research questions: 1) What are the main cognitive difficulties students encounter in writing? 2) What are the main linguistic difficulties students encounter in writing? 3) What are the main affective difficulties students encounter? 4) What strategies work to reduce these writing difficulties?

The following sections of this review will describe the cognitive, linguistic, and affective factors concerning writing problems in more detail. The review shall examine various practices and interventions that are handy for learners when writing coherently.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research used a narrative literature review. According to Ebidor & Ikhide (2024), a narrative literature review is a comprehensive synthesis of existing research on a specific topic, often used in humanities and social sciences, to identify key findings and inform further study. The review consists of three main stages: Topic Selection, Literature Search, Evaluation, and Synthesis. This approach proved very useful as it enabled the critical literature analysis and formulated a comprehensive overview of the field's research state.

Topic Selection

The selection of the research topic was guided by the growing concern over students' writing difficulties and the need for effective interventions. The focus on addressing the challenges of student writing: a review of problems and practical strategies was chosen to encompass a broad range of issues affecting student writing while

exploring successful strategies for improvement. This topic was refined through preliminary reading of recent publications.

Literature Search

An efficient search plan was created for the databases to find relevant studies. The following electronic databases were used: Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, JSTOR, and Web of Science. The search was conducted using a combination of keywords and phrases, including "student writing challenges," "writing difficulties," "writing interventions," "academic writing support," "cognitive difficulties in writing," "linguistic difficulties in writing," and "affective difficulties in writing." To ensure the inclusion of high-quality research, the search was limited to peer-reviewed journal articles and scholarly books published between 2000 and 2024. Studies focused on writing difficulties or strategies for learners of any grade level, with a particular emphasis on cognitive, linguistic, or affective aspects of writing, were included. English language publications were prioritized. To maintain the review's focus, non-academic sources, inaccessible full-text studies, and research unrelated to student writing difficulties or interventions were excluded.

Evaluation and Synthesis

The selected literature was critically evaluated for quality and relevance for this study. After identifying the studies, each was assessed by its quality according to methodological quality, sample size, and relevance to the objectives of the current research. An extraction form was designed to obtain important information from all the studies identified. The synthesis process that was followed involved carrying out a thematic analysis. Possibilities were looked for, aiming at extracting patterns and similarities between the studies included in the paper; the type of writing difficulties students experienced and the outcomes of the strategies used were examined.

Based on the narrative literature review analysis, the following sections present the study's findings grouped under the outlined themes. These themes guide how to tackle the different and complex student writing difficulties.

RESULTS

The literature review on students' writing problems and effective interventions yielded a wealth of information from the selected studies. The analysis of the extracted data revealed several key themes and patterns related to the challenges students face in writing and the strategies that effectively address these difficulties.

1. Cognitive Difficulties in Writing

1.1. Low Working Memory Capacity

The working memory capacity is directly linked to students' writing performance because it determines how well these students can handle multiple cognitive demands involved in writing. Students with low working memory capacity tend to have difficulty in managing the numerous tasks involved in writing, including idea generation, planning and organizing the content, and sustaining the focus on the writing goals and objectives while at the same time paying attention to the correct use of grammar and other technicalities of writing (Kellog, 1996). This limitation can cause cognitive overload and, therefore, fragmentation in the writing process, as well as many interruptions in writing and the flow and quality of the compositions (McCutchen, 2000). Studies have found that students with low working memory are likely to write short, make many mistakes, and have less advanced strategies than students with high working memory capacity (Olive, 2004).

Thus, low working memory capacity negatively affects writing more significantly in the case of complex writing tasks, like argumentative or analytical essays; when writing, a student has to combine information from multiple sources and think in terms of a complex line of reasoning. Working memory is essential so students can grasp relevant information while generating new ideas; in this case, the student's ideas would not be very well articulated and less coherent (Baddeley, 2003). Also, where the working memory capacity is low, students are likely to struggle in the revision process since working memory capacity is related to the ability to monitor text while coming up with improvements simultaneously (Hayes, 1996).

1.2. Poor Vocabulary Knowledge

Vocabulary knowledge is one of the essential elements that make up the writing skill as it impacts students' ability to convey concepts clearly, accurately, and with sophistication. Studies prove that a student with a broad vocabulary writes more accurately and expounds their ideas in great detail, while a student with a restricted vocabulary produces shallow work (Olinghouse & Wilson, 2013). A good vocabulary enables the writers to select the right and appropriate words to represent the intended meaning, develop more attractive work, and express their ideas to the targeted group or in the required setting. Research has found that there is a highly significant relationship between the size of the vocabulary used and different aspects of the quality of the writing, such as the degree of the syntactic elaboration, the proportion of the distinct words, and the overall organization of the text (Crossley & McNamara, 2012).

However, it is also important to note that the correlation between vocabulary level and writing skills is not only a question of the amount. The extent of the vocabulary, such

as the connotations, the collocations, and the ways of using the words in writing, is critical in writing (Nation, 2022). The students with low vocabulary depth may misuse the words, or on the other hand, they may overuse high-frequency vocabulary words, producing less quality and less meaningful writing. This is especially true for second language learners, who are likelier to have restricted vocabulary for conveying complex concepts (Laufer & Nation, 1995).

1.3. Low General Cognitive Ability

Intelligence, or the g factor, is vital to students' writing performance. The findings of numerous investigations in this area have all pointed out that higher-order thinking skills are related to positive writing performance in the different aspects of writing, such as writing organization, writing content, language use and overall writing quality. Students with better intelligence have better working memory, enabling them to manage different aspects of writing at a time, such as planning, writing and editing (Olive, 2012). Further, these students can have better verbal reasoning, allowing them to express ideas more fluently and coherently and create better arguments in their writing than other students (Nippold & Ward-Lonergan, 2010).

Thus, students with lower general cognitive skills will likely struggle with writing tasks. These problems can present themselves as poor idea generation, poor organization of ideas, or poor concentration on the task at hand, writing. Lower cognitive skills also affect students' learning and writing skills, such as grammar, syntax and problematic usage of words (Berninger et al., 2008; Sarwat et al., 2021). Besides, these students might experience difficulties developing the higher-order thinking skills crucial to writing, including analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information (Kellogg & Whiteford, 2009).

1.4. Poor Reading Ability

The correlation between reading and writing skills is very high; poor reading skills are usually followed by writing difficulties. Poor reading comprehension is a student's problem in reading comprehension and analysis of texts, which also affects their synthesis skills and the ability to write a text constructively (Graham et al., 2018). Limited reading abilities imply that students are exposed to a limited number of text structures, vocabulary, and writing styles, limiting their writing repertoire. A study by Ahmed et al. (2014) established that students who are poor readers write less cohesively, are less organized, and use lower-quality language and fewer ideas than their counterparts with better reading skills.

Furthermore, reading and writing are reciprocally related, meaning the improvements made in one area will reflect the other. Learners with a low reading

comprehension level can also find it challenging to self-edit and revise their written work because they cannot identify the logical flow and cohesion of the texts (Perin, 2019). This can lead to poor-quality written work where the ideas developed are not profound, the response to the given question is insufficient, or the arguments present contain inconsistencies.

2. Linguistic Difficulties in Writing

2.1. Lexical Sophistication and Diversity

Lexical sophistication and diversity are critical in the quality of students' writing, impacting their ability to convey their ideas coherently and compellingly to the target audience. Lexical sophistication involves using words with high difficulty in terms of the frequency of usage in the text. In contrast, lexical density involves the number of unique words used in the text. Studies have indicated that the amount and variability of the words used correlate with the quality of the texts in different contexts and grade levels (Kyle & Crossley, 2016). Using more advanced lexical resources in writing is positively associated with text extensity and readers' perceptions of increased maturity, academic appropriateness, and enhanced intellectual challenge (Crossley et al., 2014).

Nevertheless, learning lexical sophistication and diversity is difficult for many students. Limited exposure to advanced vocabulary, lack of confidence in using less familiar words, and insufficient practice in different kinds of writing may negatively affect the students' lexical growth (Kim et al., 2018). In addition, it is also essential to note that the correlation between the lexical measures and the quality of the writing is not always positive; the use of complex words without adequate contextual or rhetorical need can negatively affect the overall organization and cohesiveness of the writing.

2.2. Syntactic Complexity

The component of syntactic complexity is critical in the students' writing difficulties as they transition through academic years. This aspect of language proficiency relates to the capacity to build and understand phrases of different levels of complexity, such as the compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences. It has been established that students experience difficulties using coordinate and subordinate conjunctions and appropriate conjunctions and coherence in more complex sentences (Beers & Nagy, 2009). Therefore, it may be seen that their writing is fragmented or excessively basic and does not contain the subtlety expected in academic writing.

In addition, learning syntactic complexity is associated with developing the cognitive level and the amount of contact with syntactic structures. Students not exposed to the higher syntactic forms through their reading or other day-to-day language

experience will struggle to use these structures in writing (Crossley et al., 2014). This difficulty can be very apparent to second language learners or students from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

2.3. *Grammar and Mechanics*

Grammar and mechanics are essential writing subskills that can be problematic for learners at any grade level. These elements involve many grammar items and other language conventions such as verb tense, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. It has been found that students often have problems with these features, especially when writing from a context where they are more casual to one where they are formal (Truscott, 1996). Grammatical and mechanical mistakes may hinder effective and efficient communication and readability of the students' work and reduce the work's overall credibility. Furthermore, the cognitive load in managing these writing technicalities may overwhelm the students and diminish their capacity for higher-order issues like content generation and reasoning.

The issues concerning grammar and mechanics are even more complex because of language dynamics and the impact of digital technologies. This might make students unable to differentiate between using these in casual online communication and the stricter rules that apply to academic writing (Lenhart et al., 2008).

2.4. *Cohesion and Coherence*

Coherence and cohesion remain some of the major problems most learners face in their writing projects. These elements are essential in developing clear and logical texts with a proper structure for readers to understand. Cohesion can be defined as the organizational features of the text that relate ideas within and between sentences and/or paragraphs: transitional words/phrases, use of pronouns, and lexical repetition. Coherence, in this case, refers to the general logical connection from one idea to another and how ideas are grouped in the given text. In their writing, students can have difficulty providing a coherent and cohesive line of thinking, creating a messy set of ideas and concepts that readers cannot easily understand (Crossley & Mcnamara, 2010).

One of the fundamental challenges that learners experience is the inability to construct and develop proper cohesive relations in their work. They may use connectives to excess and, as a result, come up with monotonous writing, or they may underutilize the connectives and end up with a document that has no smooth transition from one idea to another. Also, students misuse the pronouns and often make references that are unclear to the reader. Coherence is one area where students experience difficulty presenting their ideas sequentially without frequently switching between or expanding on one idea before moving to the next. The absence of such a general structure can confuse the readers as to

the direction the writer is taking them in, reducing the impact of the written work (Lee, 2002). Moreover, students may fail to address local and global coherence, which results in good connections between the sentences and proper local coherence but an overall lack of organization and precise objectives (Graesser et al., 2004).

3. Affective Difficulties in Writing

3.1. Writing Anxiety

The affective factor of writing anxiety is one of the most common concerns that affects the students' writing ability as well as engagement with the writing processes. This psychological barrier presents itself as an irrational concern, fear or anxiety confined to the writing task. Writing anxiety is characterized by apprehension and distress, which students going through it describe as fear, low self-esteem, and even pain when they are required to write. This anxiety has resulted in procrastination, avoidance of writing tasks, and compromising the quality of the written work (Cheng, 2017). It has been found that writing anxiety is quite common in students of all class levels, from the primary level to the tertiary level, and is most keenly observed in high-stakes writing contexts like examinations or essential academic assignments.

The effects of writing anxiety include the following: It is complex and affects students' academic and career prospects. High level of writing anxiety is characterized by conditions such as writer's block where the students are unable to write, or come up with ideas on what to write. This anxiety can also affect the cognitive functions that are required in writing including strategizing, planning, and editing (Huerta et al., 2017). Moreover, writing can cause students to doubt their writing skills; thus, anxious students will perform poorly, making them anxious (Woodrow, 2011). This cycle can be very destructive, especially in academic institutions where writing significantly influences students' performance in different fields. This type of writing anxiety also has a chronic character, which can result in long-term avoidance of courses or professions that require significant writing, thus restricting students' choices.

3.2. Low Motivation

Low motivation is an affective loss that negatively impacts the students' writing processes and outcomes. This absence of motivation or desire to approach writing tasks can originate from multiple causes, such as perceived difficulty, lack of concern with the content, or previous unpleasant writing experiences. Low motivation is seen in students' inability to start writing, sustain the writing process, and complete writing tasks (Troia et al., 2013). This motivational deficiency can cause reduced effort, poor interaction with the writing process, and poor quality of written work. Furthermore, low motivation can

worsen other writing problems because students will not look for assistance, write more, or reflect on how they can improve.

The problems that stem from low motivation in writing are not only limited to the specific writing assignments but can impact students' further development on many levels. Lack of motivation leads to using coping mechanisms such as delaying writing tasks, producing substandard work, or even lacking work (Collie et al., 2016). It results in a vicious cycle where low performance due to low motivation enhances the student's lack of interest in writing tasks. Besides, low motivation in writing can be transferred to other areas of learning since writing is a core competency in most fields. Consequently, students with a low interest in writing may be placed in a disadvantageous position, especially where a course requires much writing, which may affect the student's performance and educational advancement in the future (Graham et al., 2018).

3.3. *Low Self-Efficacy*

Self-efficacy is another affective factor that, on the negative side, leads to students' writing difficulties. Self-efficacy is essential to writing performance and refers to the extent of confidence that a person has regarding his or her capacity to perform a specific task (Pajares, 2003). Low writing self-efficacy means that the students lack confidence in their ability to produce good written work; they are likely to experience high levels of anxiety when they are required to write something. This lack of confidence can be expressed in the following ways: procrastination, avoidance, giving up and the ability to easily quit whenever they encounter a problem in the writing process (Yan, 2024).

The effects of low self-efficacy on writing go beyond the current writing task in question. Low writing self-efficacy is defined as the feelings of frustration, stress, and even fear among learners when writing (Sanders-Reio et al., 2014). Such negative feelings can produce a cycle within the learner where negativity and perceived incompetence will produce poor results, which will justify a learner's poor self-efficacy. Furthermore, low self-efficacy will also pose a problem with students' use of writing strategies and self-regulation in writing, consequently affecting their writing quality (Ekholm et al., 2015).

3.4. *Negative Attitudes Towards Writing*

Negative attitude towards writing affects the students' writing ability and interest. Such attitudes may be rooted in prior negative experiences, perceived writing challenges, or the lack of desire to write as a means of communication and creativity (Graham et al., 2018). Students with negative attitudes towards writing often approach the writing process as a boring, uninteresting or even punitive experience as opposed to a beneficial tool of communication as well as learning. This may cause lack of motivation, low work

rate, and the desire to avoid any writing-related activities as much as possible, affecting their writing skill and academic performance (Hidi & Boscolo, 2006).

Hence, negative attitudes towards writing are not limited to the performance of a specific task. Students with such attitudes may develop more writing anxiety, which they may express as bodily harm, mental jamming, or avoidance when faced with writing tasks (Daly & Wilson, 1983). Also, negative attitudes generate a vicious circle where the student's poor performance strengthens negative perceptions, worsening the student's attitude towards writing. This cycle can persistently impact academic performance in different subjects because writing is essential in most fields (Ekholm et al., 2018). In addition, these negative attitudes are not necessarily left behind in childhood but may follow one into adulthood, thus affecting one's career decisions and freedom of self-expression.

4. Effective Strategies for Supporting Writing Development

4.1. Strategy Instruction

Strategy instruction is a valuable method of enhancing students' writing skills by explaining to them particular ways and procedures of writing. This method entails equipping the students with plans for organizing their writing, composing, rewriting, and proofing their work, as well as self-regulation strategies for writing (MacArthur & Philippakos, 2013). Through the use of these strategies, students gain a better perspective on how to write, and this, in a way, boosts their confidence as well as their competency levels. Teaching writing strategies often revolves around the teacher's demonstration or explanation of the strategies and then gradually handing over the responsibility of applying the strategies to the students' writing tasks (de Smedt et al., 2019).

Several studies have revealed positive outcomes of strategy instruction concerning multiple aspects of students' writing. For example, Graham et al. (2012) found out that strategy instruction positively impacted on quality of students' writing. Subsequent research has also provided more evidence for these effects, proving that strategy instruction can enhance writing quality aspects such as organization, content, and style (Rodríguez-Málaga et al., 2021). Moreover, studies reveal that strategy instruction is most effective for lower-achieving writers and students with learning disabilities, as it assists in closing the gap between the student's achievement and their capability level (Gillespie & Graham, 2014). As strategy instruction helps students acquire specific procedures for dealing with writing assignments, students can write independently and effectively.

4.2. Collaborative Writing

Collaborative writing is one of the methods of enhancing the students' writing skills using the principles of cooperation and knowledge construction. This approach involves the students working in pairs or small groups to plan, write, revise and edit their works with the help of their partners in such a manner that allows them to share ideas and develop them (Storch, 2019). Collaborative writing enables students to receive input from other students, feedback, and a chance to explain their train of thought. The social aspect of writing not only improves the quality of the content but also improves students' problem-solving, communication, and interpersonal skills, which are crucial in academic life and future careers (Yim et al., 2017).

Studies have shown that peer cooperation is practical in different learning environments, particularly collaborative writing. Chen & Yu (2019) showed that collaborative writing enhanced the students' writing performance more than individual writing assignments. The advantages of this approach are not only in the quality of the writing; the practice of collaborative writing enhances students' interest, drive, and confidence in writing (Zhang & Zou, 2022). Moreover, new technologies and internet-based applications have enriched collaboration in writing, where students can share their ideas immediately through synchronous and asynchronous collaboration that can cross space and time boundaries (Li & Kim, 2016). Apart from supporting the cooperative process, these technologies introduce new forms and means for feedback, reflection, and revision, thus improving the learning outcomes' effectiveness in the collaborative writing tasks framework.

4.3. Technology-Enhanced Writing Instruction

Technology-Enhanced Writing Instruction (TEWI) has been recognized as a practical approach to meeting students' writing difficulties and enhancing their writing performance. This approach incorporates different technologies, software, and other online resources in the writing process, which allows the students to approach the writing process more creatively, including planning, writing, rewriting, and sharing the final work with others (Zheng et al., 2016). TEWI covers a broad spectrum, which ranges from word processors with enhanced editing options, digital graphic tools, web-based applications for collaboration, feedback systems, and even artificial intelligence writing tools. It also pointed out that these technologies can support various aspects of the writing process, give feedback at the right time, and make writing more interactive and fun for students (Allen et al., 2014).

Studies have revealed that TEWI can positively affect the students' writing performance. Morphy and Graham, in their meta-analysis, revealed that word processing on its own has a moderate positive impact on the quality of students' writing. Later

research works have investigated the impact of higher-generation technologies. For example, Gonzalez-Ledo et al. (2015) showed that digital graphic organizers positively impacted the students' writing organization and coherence. Furthermore, research has revealed that automated writing evaluation systems give quick and valuable feedback that helps to enhance different parameters of writing skills (Stevenson & Phakiti, 2014). Using technology in writing also enhances the students' interest and motivation because it conforms to their abilities and expectations of using technology in learning (Williams & Beam, 2019). In addition, it can help teachers manage students' learning differences since it can support different learning styles.

4.4. Targeted Vocabulary Instruction

Another essential approach for effective vocabulary use is the targeted vocabulary approach, which aims to strengthen the students' writing skills by improving their lexical resources and ability to use lexical items in writing. This approach entails direct and intentional instruction of essential words in the writing activities, subject matters that students are involved in, and cross-content academic words (Nagy et al., 2012). Thus, when the teacher directs students' attention to the meanings, usage, and relations between words, students can expand their vocabulary, employ it when writing, and express themselves more appropriately. Explicit teaching of the targeted words can involve direct instruction, discussion of context, semantic webs, and word emphasis through using the words in different contexts (Graves, 2016).

Studying the effectiveness of the approach has shown that the choice of specific words positively affects the quality of writing. According to Olinghouse & Wilson (2013), vocabulary knowledge significantly influences writing performance regarding various text forms. Additionally, explicit and systematic teaching of specific words and their meanings has been found to enhance the number of different words used in the students' writing as well as the quality of the writing as a whole, including such features as content elaboration and structure (Dobbs & Kearns, 2016). It is not only the knowledge of individual words being developed but also students' metalinguistic awareness and word choice for different writing purposes and readership (Brindle et al., 2016). Moreover, direct instruction of specific words is beneficial for ELL students and other students from multilingual backgrounds; this way, the gap in the vocabulary used in writing is closed, and students' performance is enhanced (August et al., 2014).

4.5. Mindfulness and Anxiety Reduction Techniques

Two of the approaches highlighted as new and promising in dealing with the psychological factors that hinder students' writing include mindfulness and anxiety reduction. These approaches aim to improve concentration, decrease stress, and improve

the attitude to writing. Other strategies include the use of brief meditation breathing exercises that can assist the students in dealing with anxiety and other negative emotions that are often linked to writing assignments (Britt et al., 2018a). Thus, including these techniques in the teaching of writing enables the teaching of writing in a way that is less stressful to students. Furthermore, methods to reduce anxiety, such as cognitive restructuring and progressive muscle relaxation, can help manage writing apprehension and develop a more positive attitude toward writing tasks among students (Akinsola & Nwajei, 2013).

Some studies have indicated that writing performance can be enhanced when mindfulness and anxiety reduction strategies are used. Drewery et al. (2022) have established that students who underwent a mindfulness-based intervention had better writing self-efficacy and less writing anxiety. In the same way, Strickland et al. (2023) established that applying short mindfulness interventions before writing activities enhanced creative thinking and minimized writer's block among a group of college students. They also help control the affective factors that determine writing performance and assist in acquiring self-regulation skills. Reducing students' anxiety levels and regulating their emotions in response to the writing tasks can prevent the negative impact of such emotions on the quality of writing and enhance students' attitudes toward writing and their willingness to engage in the writing processes in various academic settings (Britt et al., 2018a).

4.6. *Authentic Writing Tasks*

Authentic writing assignments have received much attention as a helpful approach to tackling students' writing difficulties and improving their writing abilities. These tasks include getting students to write in contexts that mirror real-life writing contexts, thus providing meaning and real-life use outside the classroom (Duke et al., 2006). For example, students can blog about things they care deeply about, thus gaining experience and feeling first-hand how vital, informative, engaging content is. This includes writing business emails and memos so students can learn how to communicate professionally. Motivation and interest in writing will likely be enhanced when students are given real audiences, realistic contexts, and factual purposes for writing. The real-world writing assignments can be of different types, for instance, writing letters to the heads of communities, designing flyers for events in the community, writing articles for school newspapers, or developing content for websites or social media accounts (Graham, Liu, Aitken, et al., 2018). It is helpful for students to see how writing skills can be applied, making them think about audience, purpose, and genre more consciously in their writing.

Studies have shown that engaging students in authentic writing activities enhances their writing achievement and their perceptions toward writing. Purcell-Gates et al.

(2007) also revealed that students who wrote in context and completed other meaningful literacy activities had better writing progress than students who wrote in isolation and performed other formal writing exercises. In addition, Behizadeh & Engelhard (2014) found that using authentic writing tasks enhanced students' perceived authenticity of writing assessments and their writing performance and motivation. Using authentic writing tasks is about skills development, critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills, which are crucial for academic and career success. As a result of linking the writing done in class with that done in other spheres of life, authentic writing tasks equip students with various writing.

4.7. Individualized Feedback

Feedback is an effective strategy for enhancing students' writing skills since it is personalized and thus can be tailored to meet each student's needs. This approach requires identifying individual student needs and issues in their writing and then providing specific feedback, advice, and corrections relevant to the identified problems and the student's writing objectives (Ferris, 2014). The feedback given to a specific student can be based on content, organization, style, grammar, and mechanics of writing, depending on the student's level of writing and the goals of the particular writing assignment. Thus, when the teacher provides concrete suggestions on what has been done wrong and how and why it has been done wrong, it allows the student to learn from his mistakes and avoid the same mistakes in the future (Wisniewski et al., 2020).

Previous studies have indicated that individual feedback is an efficient way to enhance students' writing skills. Graham et al. (2015) pointed out in their meta-analysis that feedback was a positive factor in the quality of writing regardless of the grade level. Moreover, research has shown that feedback specificity and timing are essential to feedback efficiency. For example, Bitchener & Knoch (2010) observed that feedback designed and directed at particular accuracy features produced permanent gains in the students' writing. Moreover, technology has opened new opportunities for feedback, namely, computer-based feedback systems that can provide students with individualized feedback in the form of immediate and detailed comments on their writing (Stevenson & Phakiti, 2014). However, it is crucial to understand that feedback utilization is another process that depends on students' activity; therefore, providing the students with a possibility to discuss the received feedback and apply it to their writing is vital to enhance the feedback impact on the students' development (Carless & Boud, 2018).

DISCUSSIONS

The analysis of this literature review shows that students' writing challenges are complex and encompass the cognitive, linguistic, and affective domains. These

challenges significantly affect the students' writing abilities and their academic achievements. The review highlighted several strategies that may help tackle these concerns and promote writing skills.

The cognitive factors associated with writing difficulties include low working memory capacity, poor vocabulary knowledge, low general cognitive ability, and poor reading ability, all pointing to the fact that writing is a cognitively demanding task. The present study supports the cognitive process theory of writing espoused by Hayes & Flower (2016), which underlines the use of cognitive resources as key factors influencing the writing process. As highlighted in the review section, working memory has been shown to influence the quality of writing, in support of which more work by Olive (2012) found that working memory constraints greatly influence the quality and fluency of written production.

Concerning lexical aspects, lexical sophistication, syntactic complexity, and grammar and mechanics issues in writing are revealed. The issues discussed in the present review regarding achieving cohesion and coherence in written texts are also significant. These observations can be explained through the study by Crossley & McNamara (2016), showing how cohesion and coherence are highly related to writing fluency.

The affective factors, such as writing anxiety, low motivation, low self efficacy and negative attitude toward writing highlight the psychological dimension of writing difficulties. Such results are consistent with the work of Pajares (2003) who argued that self-efficacy plays a significant role in writing output. The reduction in students' performance and their willingness to participate in writing tasks due to writing anxiety, as mentioned in the literature review section, is also supported by Cheng (2017), who stated that anxiety affects students writing and leads to avoidance behaviors.

In this review, several potential interventions were pinpointed that could help overcome these writing issues. Strategy instruction was identified as one of particularly effective strategies, which is in line with Graham & Harris (2017) who indicated that strategy instruction leads to an improvement in the quality of writing among students of different grades. Moreover, according to Chen & Yu (2019), as highlighted in the above review, collaborative writing was observed to improve writing performance and student engagement.

Technology in writing effectively enhances the writing process and has been referred to as TEWI. This concurs with Zheng et al. (2016), who conducted a study to show the impact of using technology on students' writing performance. As noted in the review, the incorporation of authentic writing tasks is further endorsed by Behizadeh & Engelhard (2014), who stated that using authentic writing tasks improved the perceived authenticity of writing assessments and writing performance among students.

The findings of the present review are also in line with the recommendations Wisniewski et al. (2020) made regarding the significance of individualized feedback for enhancing writing performance. The possibility of using mindfulness and methods of anxiety decrease to eliminate writing anxiety corresponds to the work of Britt et al. (2018), who showed that short mindfulness practices can improve creativity and minimize writer's block.

CONCLUSION

This paper discusses the challenges students face in writing and the strategies that should be taken to address them which is informative to educators, researchers, and policymakers. The interaction of cognitive, linguistic, and affective components suggests that writing must be taught holistically. The writing issues have been solved through targeted instruction, collaborative writing, technology integration, and feedback strategies. Despite the importance of such approaches, the intervention outcomes may differ depending on the context and students. Since writing remains relevant in various spheres of academic and professional activity, it is necessary to continue investigating the difficulties experienced by the students and search for efficient solutions based on further research findings. Therefore, the findings of this study call for the inclusion of specific writing intervention programs in the curriculum and teachers' professional development to assist learners in improving this critical skill for academic and career achievement.

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