

Assessing the Impact of Process-Based Method on the Writing Proficiency of Secondary School Girls in the FCT Abuja, Nigeria

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Abstract—This study investigates the impact of the Process-Based Method (PBM) on writing proficiency among senior secondary school girls in Abuja, Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Grounded in Process Writing Theory and Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory, the study adopts a quasi-experimental design to compare the effectiveness of PBM with conventional teaching methods. A sample of 120 SSII students was selected from two schools out of a population of 16,740 female students. Data were collected through essay writing tasks administered before and after a three-week instructional intervention. The instruments were validated by experts in English Language Education, while reliability was established through a pilot study, yielding a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82, confirming consistency of the tool. Analysis using t-tests at a 0.05 level of significance revealed that students exposed to PBM showed significantly higher gains in writing proficiency than those taught with traditional methods. The findings highlight PBM's potential in enhancing learners' clarity, coherence, and creativity in writing. It is recommended that English language teachers integrate PBM into classroom practice to sustain learner engagement and improve writing outcomes.

Keywords— *Process-Based Method, writing proficiency, secondary school girls, English language teaching, Abuja.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing proficiency is a fundamental component of educational success and communication, yet in many Nigerian secondary schools, the teaching of writing is often sidelined compared to other language skills. Writing is seen as a complex task that demands cognitive effort and time (Vega, and Pinzón 2019). In the field of teaching and learning, educators employ various methods and approaches to promote proficiency and fluency, each method designed to address different instructional goals and learner differences. The process approach to writing

highlights the idea that there are valuable learning processes behind every writing product according to Tustiawati & Marantika, (2023). It is believed that producing a piece of good writing is not a one-time activity. It undergoes several stages that may require several repetitions. The Process-Based Method (PBM) of writing, in particular, requires that students engage with writing as a developmental sequence—moving through stages such as planning, drafting, revising, and editing. This approach shifts the teacher's role from simply assigning a writing topic and marking the final product to actively intervening

during the writing process, offering feedback, guiding revision, and helping learners explore writing strategies that reflect their own learning styles.

PBM helps students assume more responsibility over their writing: they learn to understand their own processes, experiment with various pre-writing strategies, and revise drafts in response to feedback. Writing thus becomes more than mere symbol use (letters, punctuation) for transmitting ideas; it becomes a reflective effort to organize thoughts, perfect grammar, structure sentences, and ensure coherence, accuracy, and creativity (DiMarco, 2017). Odumuh (2020) describes writing as involving foundational pre-writing activities, correct sentence formation, coherent organization, appropriate paragraphing and accurate spelling; when these features are attended to with precision, student achievement tends to improve markedly.

Recent studies in Nigeria support the effectiveness of process-like or learner-centered approaches. For example, the *Journaling Method* was shown to significantly improve essay writing in terms of content, organization, mechanical accuracy, and idea expression among SS II students in Keana, Nasarawa State (Ogoshi, 2024). Similarly, the *Model Teaching Method* applied in Ekiti State increased essay writing performance, with rigorous reliability metrics reported (Obateru, Ogunleye, & Lawal, 2023). These findings suggest that strategies which involve drafting, peer feedback, and iterative improvements align well with PBM's goals.

When female students are taught writing through approaches such as PBM, they gain not only academic improvements but also increased self-expression, improved literacy, and enhanced future career prospects. However, cultural and socio-economic barriers continue to limit female learners' access to quality education and full participation in writing-intensive instruction. Thus, this study focuses on secondary school girls in Abuja, FCT, to examine whether PBM can significantly enhance their writing proficiency relative to traditional methods, taking into account current empirical findings across similar Nigerian contexts.

Aims of the Study

The study aimed to:

1. Assess the effect of the Process-Based Method on the writing proficiency of secondary school girls in Abuja.
2. Compare the performance of students taught with PBM and those taught with conventional methods.
3. Provide empirical evidence to guide English teachers on effective strategies for teaching writing.

Research Question

- Does the Process-Based Method significantly improve writing skills among secondary school girls compared to traditional methods?

Hypothesis

- H_{01} : There is no significant difference in writing performance between students taught using PBM and those taught with traditional methods.

II. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study assumes that improvement in students' writing proficiency results from an instructional ecosystem where the Process-Based Method (PBM) interacts with teacher practices, social collaboration, and contextual supports. The PBM, consistent with Flower and Hayes's (1981) Process Writing Theory and Vygotsky's (1978) Socio-Cultural Theory, positions writing as a recursive, multi-stage process (planning, drafting, revising) supported by scaffolding, peer collaboration, and formative feedback. Project-Based Method (PBM) conceptualised in the framework is a method of teaching as well as an intervention that develops self-efficacy and higher-order thinking. PBM also resembles the gradual release of responsibility model, where teacher modelling and scaffold gradually turn into collaboration, peer review, and autonomous production, through gradually increasing the responsibility of the learners. This systematic development empowers the learners with confidence, responsibility and ability to inquire extensively.

Besides developing writing competence through repeated writing, revision, and direct teaching of grammar and structure (Vega and Pinzon, 2019), PBM develops critical thinking, problem-solving, and world awareness through placing the learning process within the real-world context. As it has been shown by research, in case learners are involved in meaningful projects, a dialogue, reflective practices, and formative feedback, they will gain more coherence, vocabulary range, analytical depth, and communicative competence (DiMarco, 2017; Odumuh, 2020). In addition, PBM encourages the adoption of 21st-century skills critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and global consciousness, and, therefore, equips students to engage constructively in interconnected learning spaces (Nkopuruk, 2024).

This argument is also supported by empirical research on bilingual cognition and learner development. It has been indicated that language origin plays a major role in determining how ideas in an essay are arranged and represented (Nwana and Onuoha, 2025). Their study of Igbo-English bi-lingual students shows that language interference is mediated by programmed pedagogical intervention, and that the written expression becomes clearer, more coherent and elaborates more on the same. On the same note,

studies on socio-environmental factors also show that behavioural dispositions and academic participation have strong relationships with contextual and developmental factors in the home setting (Zhiya and Nwana, 2025). This kind of finding indicates the necessity of comprehensive teaching methods that can combine cognitive, linguistic and socio-cultural aspects in developing effective writing and critical thinking skills.

The model further assumes that teacher-related factors (training in PBM strategies, ability to provide quality feedback, assessment literacy) and structural/contextual factors (class size, digital infrastructure, and socio-economic background) moderate the impact of PBM. For instance, access to digital tools or mobile-based platforms can expand revision opportunities, enabling richer cycles of drafting and feedback (Paesani & Allen, 2023; Nkopuruk, 2025; Xu et al., 2022). Conversely, lack of resources or large class sizes may constrain implementation fidelity.

Measured outcomes of PBM span multiple dimensions:

- Textual quality (organisation, coherence, and paragraph development).
- Mechanical accuracy (spelling, punctuation, and grammar).
- Rhetorical/genre control (task achievement and adherence to purpose).
- Affective outcomes (motivation, confidence, and attitudes toward writing).

Finally, the framework underscores feedback loops: early success in drafting and revision builds confidence, which increases motivation and engagement. These, in turn, foster more robust participation in subsequent cycles, further enhancing writing performance. Thus, PBM functions not only as a teaching method but as a transformative approach that develops lifelong writing skills and academic resilience, particularly for female learners often marginalised in access to language instruction.

IV. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on two interrelated theories that provide a strong foundation for understanding the effectiveness of the Process-Based Method (PBM) in teaching writing.

The first is the Process Writing Theory advanced by Flower and Hayes (1981), which conceptualizes writing as a recursive and multi-stage activity. According to this model, writing is not a linear process but one that involves planning, translating ideas into written form, and constant reviewing. This theoretical perspective underpins the PBM by emphasizing drafting, feedback, and revision as central features of effective writing instruction. Rather than viewing writing as a one-time product, the theory positions it

as a process that evolves through continuous improvement.

The second theoretical anchor is Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory (1978), which highlights the importance of social interaction, scaffolding, and guided participation in learning. Within the PBM framework, this perspective is evident in practices such as peer review, teacher feedback, and collaborative writing tasks. These forms of interaction allow learners to receive meaningful support that helps them progress beyond what they could achieve independently, aligning with Vygotsky's notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

Taken together, these theories justify PBM as an instructional approach that not only enhances the technical mechanics of writing but also nurtures learner confidence, creativity, and autonomy. By combining the recursive stages of writing with social scaffolding and collaboration, PBM provides a holistic framework for improving both the skill and the disposition of learners toward writing.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a quasi-experimental research design to assess the efficiency of the Process-Based Method (PBM) in improving students' writing. The design was appropriate as it allowed for comparison between a control group taught with conventional methods and an experimental group exposed to PBM.

The population comprised 16,740 SSII female students in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Using simple random sampling, two schools were selected, and 120 students were drawn to participate in the study. Essay writing tasks served as the main instrument for data collection. To ensure content and face validity, the essay tasks were reviewed by three experts in English Language Education and Educational Measurement and Evaluation. Their feedback guided the refinement of the test prompts and scoring rubric to ensure alignment with the study objectives and writing proficiency indicators (clarity, coherence, organization, and creativity). A pilot study was conducted with 30 students outside the study sample. Their responses were scored using the developed rubric, and internal consistency was tested using Cronbach's alpha. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.82, indicating that the instrument was sufficiently reliable for use in the main study. The intervention lasted three weeks, with four writing sessions of 40 minutes each. After instruction, students in both groups were assessed through essay writing tasks. The collected scores were analyzed using mean scores and t-tests at the 0.05 significance level to determine whether PBM had a significant impact compared to traditional methods.

V. RESULTS

The analysis showed significant improvement in the experimental group compared to the control group.

Group	Pre-test Mean	Post-test Mean	Mean Gain	t-value	p-value
Experimental	42.3	68.7	+26.4	4.75	0.001
Control	43.1	52.5	+9.4		

Since $p < 0.05$, the null hypothesis was rejected. This indicates that PBM significantly improved students' writing proficiency in content development, organization, and mechanical accuracy.

VI. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The results of this study confirm that the Process-Based Method (PBM) significantly enhances writing proficiency compared to conventional approaches. Students taught with PBM demonstrated stronger coherence, better paragraph development, and improved mechanical accuracy, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling. These improvements reflect the emphasis of PBM on iterative drafting, revision, and feedback, which enable learners to internalize writing as a process rather than a one-off task. The findings corroborate earlier works (DiMarco, 2017; Odumuh, 2020; Odumuh, 2021)), which showed that process-oriented instruction promotes self-expression, critical thinking, and creativity in student writing.

Beyond technical gains, the study revealed that PBM fosters learner autonomy and confidence. Students were encouraged to take responsibility for their writing, experimenting with strategies during the pre-writing, drafting, and revising stages. This shift aligns with Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory, where learning is mediated by interaction and scaffolding. The collaborative elements of PBM—such as peer review, group discussions, and teacher feedback—acted as scaffolds that supported learners' development beyond their current levels of competence. Such social engagement not only enhanced language accuracy but also broadened learners' awareness of audience, purpose, and style in communication.

Importantly, this study highlights the transformative potential of PBM for female learners. In the Nigerian context, where cultural and socio-economic barriers have historically limited girls' access to education, equipping female students with strong writing skills can help bridge gender gaps in both academic and professional spheres. Improved writing proficiency translates to greater academic achievement, stronger participation in discourse, and better career opportunities. This aligns with findings by Ogoshi (2024) and Obateru, Ogunleye, and Lawal (2023), who demonstrated that structured writing approaches enhance female students' performance and confidence. By reinforcing literacy and self-expression, PBM empowers female learners to challenge traditional stereotypes and actively contribute to nation-building.

The study further demonstrates that PBM is not only a pedagogical strategy but also an inclusive approach that reduces inequities. By focusing on continuous feedback and multiple drafts, PBM provides all learners—regardless of prior ability or background—opportunities to succeed. In this sense, PBM supports educational equity by creating a learning environment where students are not judged solely on a final product but are assessed on their growth and development throughout the writing process.

Nevertheless, the findings position PBM as an effective and contextually relevant method for enhancing writing instruction in Nigerian secondary schools. It combines cognitive, socio-cultural, and affective benefits, making it a holistic approach that addresses both skill development and learner empowerment.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study provides strong empirical evidence that the Process-Based Method (PBM) significantly enhances writing proficiency among secondary school girls in Abuja. By emphasizing iterative drafting, feedback, and revision, PBM moves writing instruction beyond product-focused evaluation, equipping learners with essential skills in coherence, organization, and mechanical accuracy. Beyond technical proficiency, PBM nurtures confidence, creativity, and critical thinking, positioning learners to become more effective communicators in academic and real-world contexts. Grounded in Vygotsky's Socio-Cultural Theory, the findings demonstrate how collaborative activities such as peer review and teacher scaffolding create meaningful opportunities for learners to progress beyond their current abilities. Importantly, this study underscores the role of PBM in bridging gender gaps by empowering female students with literacy skills that are crucial for academic achievement, professional mobility, and participation in civic life. The implications extend beyond the classroom: adopting PBM can support Nigeria's broader educational goals of equity and inclusion by providing girls with the tools to challenge stereotypes and compete effectively in knowledge-driven environments. As such, the Process-Based Method should not only be viewed as a classroom strategy but also as a transformative approach to teaching and learning that promotes lifelong literacy, self-expression, and nation-building.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study point strongly to the need for the adoption of the Process-Based Method (PBM) in

English classrooms. Teachers should integrate PBM into writing instruction to promote not only clarity and coherence but also creativity and self-expression. By focusing on drafting, revising, and feedback, PBM encourages learners to see writing as a developmental process rather than a one-off task.

To make this possible, teacher training is essential. Professional development workshops should be organized to equip teachers with the knowledge and strategies required to implement PBM effectively. Such training would help teachers move beyond traditional product-based instruction and embrace practices that foster student-centered learning.

In addition, there is a need for curriculum integration of PBM at the national level. Embedding this approach in the Nigerian secondary school English curriculum would ensure consistency in pedagogy across schools and guarantee that learners nationwide benefit from its advantages. This step would also standardize writing instruction and reduce reliance on rote learning methods that have proven less effective.

The study also highlights the importance of gender-focused interventions. Special emphasis should be placed on supporting female learners, who historically face cultural and structural barriers to education. By empowering girls with effective writing skills, PBM can help close gender gaps and improve their chances of academic success and professional advancement.

Finally, there is scope for further research. While this study concentrated on female students in Abuja, future studies could extend the investigation to male learners and other regions of Nigeria. Longitudinal studies may also explore the long-term effects of PBM on learners' writing proficiency and overall academic achievement, providing a broader basis for policy and pedagogical decisions.

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