Utility and Essentiality of the Process Approach to English Writing at Tertiary-level Education in Bangladesh

Srejon Datta[1*]

[1] North South University, Bangladesh
[*]Corresponding author's email: srejon004@gmail.com
[*] https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1456-3879
https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.25537

ABSTRACT

This research explores the utility and essentiality of the process approach to teaching and learning English writing at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. A mixed-methods approach was employed. Through a survey questionnaire, quantitative data were collected from 36 teacher candidates pursuing an M.A. in TESOL at four universities in Dhaka. The qualitative data were gathered through interviews with 6 teacher-candidates and 4 teacher-educators. The finding reveals that almost all teacher-candidates (TCs) find the process approach useful and essential for improving writing. The process approach leads the TCs to think deeply and critically as well as revise and edit their texts recursively. The identical perception among teacher-educators (TEs) is that writing should be taught as a process — whereby students should inform themselves and pre-write, write, and rewrite — to advance writing and (meta)cognition. This research presents several recommendations to enhance students' writing.

Introduction

Writing, which is both developmental and fundamental, is a feat that is both enticing and enlightening. Writing is a process of exploring meaning by putting thoughts into words and refining them into text (Zamil, 1983). It is not done in one go, rather, it is done by multi-drafting (Murray, 1981). It entails thinking, hard work, intuition, reading, revising, and editing. Therefore, the ideal approach to teaching writing is a *process-oriented* one (Murray, 1972). The process approach helps writers produce a product that is worth reading (Ferris, 2010). The process approach can be introduced to the classroom's stakeholders (i.e., teachers and students) from the moment they have simple insights into the writing process, which is divided into three stages-: 1) pre-writing, 2) writing, and 3) re-writing (Murray, 1972). Pre-writing (which consumes 85% of a writer's time) is a prerequisite to writing the first draft. Pre-writing is the stage where a writer thinks about the audience, engages in reading and researching, creates

titles, outlines, and conducts brainstorming sessions, engages in deep thinking, and takes notes. Simply put, the pre-writing stage is preparation for writing (Murray, 1972). Writing (which requires 1% of a writer's time in that it is the fastest part) is the production of the first draft that occurs after the pre-writing stage. Re-writing, which needs 14% of a writer's time, is the critical consideration of written sentences and their embedded meaning in a draft. In the rewriting stage, sentences are made meaningful, logical, refined, and functional in a finalized draft that results from multiple drafts, involving re-revising, re-thinking, re-editing, and re-searching (Elbow, 1973).

Mustaque (2021) researched the application of a mixed-methods approach to collect data on the perceptions of 15 teachers regarding teaching writing at various universities in Chittagong, Bangladesh. He then conducted interviews with 4 teachers. It was discovered that many of the participating teachers taught their students in an antiquated, atavistic approach (that is, the product approach). Moreover, 67% of the teachers considered writing a natural gift, rather than a learned skill, and 47% of the teachers believed that students did not require multiple drafts to write effectively. 40% of them said that they did not encourage their students to revise their drafts. Mustaque (2021) therefore claimed L2 writing pedagogy was still stifled at some universities in Bangladesh due to such teachers' innocent and intentional ignorance of the process approach. In Bangladesh, the setback of students' writing is to be ascribed to those teachers' clinginess to yet bulky-burdensome-conventional product approach — which is apparently cozy for them to conduct — that is hardly likely to yield positive outputs in fostering students' deep thinking, critical thinking, editing, and revision skills and in making students autonomous and avant-garde writer to function beyond class (Hategekimana et al., 2024; Shamsuzzaman, 2023). Thus, academic education is deficient and incomplete if writing is not taught as a process (Shamsuzzaman, 2014; Shamsuzzaman, 2017).

Mustaque (2021) also explored the fact that teachers could not provide feedback on their students' drafts due to large class sizes and the emphasis on syllabus completion. In the process of completing the syllabus, some teachers disregard the essentiality of equipping students with the essential aptitude that writing was, is, and will be (this is an intellectual tapestry of thinking, critical as well as deep thinking, reading, editing, revision, which are critical to complementing humans' cognition and meta-cognition). In contemporary times, it is indeed imperative for both teachers and students to know which L2 writing approach is the most (effectively and efficiently) appropriate for developing writing. Bhowmik (2009) stated that there was an issue with praxis pertinent to L2 writing pedagogy since the discrepancy between theories and practice perennially persisted across ESL and EFL contexts. Empirical research needs to be conducted to measure whether a particular approach to teaching L2 writing works well.

However, only a few studies have been published earlier, even apparently before 2025, as there is no little new research available, on writing pedagogy in Bangladesh. Although a handful of research has revealed that inappropriate L2 writing pedagogy deteriorates students' writing, little research has not yet contemporarily explored to what extent and how teacher-educators and teacher-candidates find the process approach effective and useful for teaching and learning writing at the tertiary-level education in Bangladesh (Hossain, 2024; Li, 2025; Muniruzzaman & Afrin, 2024; Younus, 2024). Based on the experiences and perspectives of teacher candidates

and teacher educators, this research examines whether, how, and why the process approach is effective in improving English writing. It thus informs students and teachers that teaching writing as a process is effective and essential for enhancing students' L2 writing. Both students and teachers, who learn and teach writing, respectively, across EFL and ESL contexts, will be enlightened about how writing is taught and learned in the tertiary-level context of Bangladesh. This research also recommends how writing can (and should) be taught and learned through the process approach.

In so doing, the exploration of teacher candidates' and teacher educators' views on whether, why, and how the process approach is useful and essential is indispensable. Therefore, 36 teacher candidates (TCs) were surveyed, while 6 teacher candidates (TCs) and 4 teacher educators (TEs) were interviewed. The TCs could elaborate on how they perceived the usefulness and essentiality of the process approach as they used it to improve writing. On the other hand, the TEs could do so, for they taught writing following the process approach.

Literature Review

Teaching and Learning of Writing

Writing is a process-oriented and habitual activity, which is critical to education and intellectual improvement (Shamsuzzaman, 2019). Writing is a learned skill, not an inherited endowment, that can be taught as a process approach in the context of composition (Abas & Aziz, 2016; Amalia et al., 2025). It is learned through training and schooling (Harris, 1993, as cited in Maninji, 2021). English studies and composition (by the process approach) should be mutually inclusive at educational institutions. Composition professionals advocate that writing should be taught as a process. Composition is practical, which means learning by doing. An individual can create a composition if they endeavor with absolute passion to think and write, persevere, and be able to endure the pain of unsuccessful attempts (Smith, 1982, as cited in Shamsuzzaman, 2013). Composition – that is woven by writers' own thoughts, and they themselves edit and revise – creates new texts through the writing process.

Importantly, to create composition, students should do the pre-writing on their own, so that they learn to carry out the largest part of the writing process (Murray, 1972); they need to think before writing to bring their thoughts before their eyes, and they need to refine the thoughts in the re-writing stage by editing and revising (Ferris, 2010). A reasonably required amount of time should be provided to students to complete their composition using the process approach, as they need time to think, revise, and edit to produce an excellent text that merits appreciation (Murray, 1972).

Editing in Re-writing Stage

Editing is the purification of grammar, spelling, capitalization, and punctuation in a text. Editing – which is a visual approach to writing, for we can see such linguistic aspects in a text as spelling and grammar – is a little piece of the gargantuan jigsaw that the writing is (Shamsuzzaman, 2023). Editing is a cultivated knack. It is sentence crafting that requires cognition and reverse-engineering (that is creative tweaking of sentences) — as Pinker (2014) suggests. He recommends that writers examine how creative sentences are constructed in sophisticated texts,

so that they can creatively revamp those sentences using their own language and thought. Ferris (2010) claimed that editing is essential to writing, but it is somewhat shabby (as neglected) by ESL writing teachers and researchers. Ferris (2010) advocates that editing, among other writing skills, is what students need to advance their writing. Students should learn to self-edit, as good writing embodies the art and utilization of editing.

Revision in Re- Writing Stage

Revision, which occurs during the rewriting stage, requires critical thinking. A writer critically reads her generated thoughts (or sentences) in a draft. By critical reading during revision, a writer finalizes sentences that are functional in the finalized draft. Critical reading is a non-negotiable necessity in writing and revision. The writer critically reads each sentence in a draft, ensuring that all sentences in that draft become logically meaningful and functional. Elbow (1983) claims that a writer needs two types of thinking: first-order and second-order. The former is intuitive and creative — i.e., a writer apparently writes without much concern for grammatical mistakes in the flow of her hunch: The latter is critical thinking where the writer takes care of rhetorical aspects, i.e., idea, argument, and meaning, in her text.

Revising, however, is cognitively challenging per se, which is arduous to accomplish, for, while pre-writing requires idiosyncratic intuition (i.e., first-order thinking, that is intuitive and creative thinking for thought generation), revising presupposes immense meta-cognitive coercion (second-order thinking, rational/critical thinking) as Elbow (1983) asserts. But, on the contrary, pre-writing is apparently harder than re-writing, as the former warrants more time and energy (85%) than the latter (14%) (Murray, 1972).

Rhetorical Dimension of Revision

The rhetorical dimension of language is eschewed in the product approach. Sowell (2020) found that, while teaching in the EFL context, her students were resistant to revising their writing. Such resistance can be attributed to the cultural exposure of the students, as they are culturally conditioned not to revise after writing. Bangladesh is no exception, as students are often taught to write independently of revising (Shamsuzzaman, 2023). Many students do not possess adequate knowledge of how to revise (Patwary & Sajib, 2018). In the product approach, pre-tertiary level students do not revise their texts due to time limitations. The cumbersome and undercurrent of such avoidance of revision are experienced and realized as students start tertiary-level education, and they thus confront severe pitfalls in writing well. As a result, particularly at private universities, novice and naïve student-writers are brought into the light of the composition courses. However, at some universities in Bangladesh, students are taught composition using the product-based approach (Hasan & Akhand, 2011).

Critical Intelligence and Factual Diligence in Writing

A writer needs critical thinking to write effectively. Critical intelligence is becoming objective in creating thoughts/arguments, which stems from critical thinking (Setiawan et al., 2021). It is crucial to objective/close reading of written sentences (Halpern & Dunn, 2021). A writer makes her sentences logical and meaningful by critical intelligence. Moreover, the writer, who needs factual diligence, too, silos facts from opinions in a text. A writer reads and thinks critically about her produced sentences because she gets to find evidence from reliable sources to

authenticate the written arguments in those sentences. Perhaps, the writer generates biased thoughts. It is essential to eliminate biased thoughts through critical thinking. A writer requires the ability to reason, too. The writer reasons for her arguments in the text. Reasoning in argumentation is an act of critical thinking or critical intelligence. The writer thus cultivates the habit of critical thinking.

Avoidance of the Process Approach in Bangladesh

Tertiary education in ESL and EFL contexts requires a proficient writing ability to succeed in the academic arena (Shamsuzzaman et al., 2014). It is a matter to marvel that in Bangladesh English literature is taught without the teaching of extensive reading and intentional writing: Literature teachers in Bangladesh and their predecessors must have presumed that, since one can read in a language, one is capable of writing too – so writing does not presuppose any teachable instructions (Alam, 2011). The academic culture of English studies in Bangladesh is impervious to the interventions and instructions of the writing process; however, that culture is not immune to the product approach (Shamsuzzaman, 2023). Rarely is the process approach to L2 writing focused on education in Bangladesh, except at the tertiary level – but not at all institutions (Hasan & Akhand, 2011).

In the product approach, students rarely think deeply to generate ideas for writing. Not thinking to write is disruptive to the intellectual development of language learner-writers, for thinking requires cognitive effort, intuition, language, and the utilization of intellect that a writer cultivates through the process approach, but not in the product. The product approach eschews the voice of writers as they are imposed on a model text. Such an imposition inhibits the thinking and autonomy of writers. As a result, writers are wrapped in not being able to generate ideas. It is considered that the product approach is inept to help learners enhance their writing (Flower & Hayes, 1977). Many L2 teachers are conditioned to study writing by following a product-oriented approach, focusing on finished writing, which is frequently futile (Murray, 1972). In the product approach, student-writers scribble something alike the model text in one go, independent of thinking, editing, and revising. This is ineffective and even insidious to students' intellectual improvement and their development as avant-garde writers, for writing is an intellectual attainment that requires a process. The process approach, on the other hand, produces positive results in developing students' writing skills (H. Hashemnezhad & N. Hashemnezhad, 2012).

However, Bilkis et al. (2021) have found that teachers in the classroom give topics, and, having memorized the topics, students write, skipping the pre-writing stage. After scribbling, they altogether submit their papers (i.e., the 1st draft) to teachers; then, teachers check grammar errors thoroughly by splitting the blood (that is, red ink) on the paper with red pen– that is akin to being much mechanic or grammar grump (Sun & Fang, 2009). Bilkis et al. (2021) have further stated that most English teachers in Bangladesh teach writing as a product that is ineffective in improving writing. Seldom do novice writers evolve their writing following the product approach. On the other hand, in the process, writers revise the rhetorical dimension – such as idea, argument, word choice, and sentence cohesion – of a language to refine a text (O' Brain, 2004).

Review of Empirical Studies

Peungcharoenkun and Waluyo (2023) explored the viability of incorporating process-genre approach, feedback, and technology into teaching and learning writing in the EFL context. They employed a sequential research design, incorporating a mixed-methods approach, comprising both quantitative and qualitative methods. A total of 28 students of Walailak University in Thailand participated in the research. It was found that the process approach worked well for students due to teacher feedback. The participants preferred to get feedback from teachers over peers. They found written feedback to be more useful and effective than oral feedback. The process-genre approach was thus viable for developing the participants' use of vocabulary and writing.

Mushtaq et al. (2021) conducted research in Pakistan across different universities using a pre-test and post-test to examine the effectiveness of implementing the process approach. They collected data from eighty participants, studying Applied Linguistics, English Language, English Linguistics, and Literature. They allowed their participants to write an essay of 300-500 words, and after the post-test, it turned out that, following the process approach, a majority of the participants performed well in vocabulary, cohesion, coherence, and language.

Albesher (2022) researched the teachers at Qassim University's perceptions of employing the process approach to enhance the writing skills of Saudi students. The researcher deployed a quantitative approach, i.e., a survey questionnaire. A total of 55 ESL teachers at the university participated in completing the survey form. It was explored that a myriad of teachers (85%) considered the process approach — which consisted of planning, brainstorming, writing, revising, and editing — useful and imperative to implement in classes; and 70 % of the teachers responded that feedback, which is one of the facets of the process approach, was significant in developing students' writing skills.

The foregoing empirical studies substantiate that the process approach is suitable when the aim is to teach and learn writing. The process approach enabled the participants in the aforementioned studies to pre-write and rewrite, thereby helping them improve their writing. Consequently, the participants could enhance their use of vocabulary in writing. They also deemed feedback important to finesse writing. Although empirical evidence of the process approach's effectiveness exists in the educational contexts of foreign countries, a gap remains in exploring how the process approach is leveraged and important in developing students' writing at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. This research helps to bridge the research gap by exploring whether, why, and how the process approach is useful and essential in improving writing in English. The teacher-candidates and teacher-educators who participated in this research, based on their experiences and perceptions of using the process approach, could broadly indicate whether they found the process approach useful, effective, and essential for learning, teaching, and improving writing.

Research Questions

The teacher candidates' and teacher educators' responses are critical to the investigation into the utility and essentiality of the process approach to teaching and learning writing at the tertiary level. The following three questions, which were derived from their responses, were created to

conduct this research.

1) How do teacher-candidates perceive the utility of the process approach?

2) What are teacher-candidates' perceptions of the effectiveness of the process approach?

3) How do teacher-educators find the process approach essential to learning, teaching, and enhancing writing?

Methods

Research Setting and Participants

This research examines the utility and necessity of the process approach to writing in English at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. The mixed-methods approach was applied. Using purposive sampling, quantitative data were collected through a survey questionnaire from 36 teacher candidates (TCs) pursuing an M.A. in TESOL at four universities in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Every teacher candidate was selectively chosen because all of them completed more than three courses as part of their TESOL program, wherein writing was taught as a process. They wrote several typed-written essays for course assignments following the process approach, which were assigned and assessed by their teachers. Additionally, the qualitative data was collected by conducting semi-structured interviews with 6 teacher-candidates (TCs) (they were the students of the TESOL program at the universities where the research was conducted). Four teacher-educators (TEs) were semi-structurally interviewed (they were selected from three universities in Dhaka).

Instrument for Data Collection and Data Analysis

This research employed two instruments for data collection: a survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Survey and interview questions were formulated without any framework. Depending on the research questions, the researcher created questions for the survey and interviews. Pilot testing was conducted for both survey and interview questions, and the researcher shared the questions with his classmates. They found the questions fine. The researcher also asked the survey participants and interviewees if they could understand the questions. They understood and answered the questions without any problems. Thus, the survey and interview questions were prepared to obtain the answers to the research questions.

The survey questionnaire was created using Google Forms and distributed among the teacher-candidates via Gmail, WhatsApp, and Facebook Messenger. The survey questionnaire consisted of eight close-ended Likert Scale questions. In the questionnaire, they were given a written description of the concept of the process approach. They were then asked: 1) if they found the process approach useful for improving writing, 2) if bad writing could be attributed to avoiding the pre-writing stage, 3) whether the re-writing stage is essential, 4) if they improved writing following the process approach, 5) whether the process approach fostered their critical thinking, 6) whether they needed sufficient time for writing, and 7) if writing should be taught as a process.

Furthermore, for qualitative data collection, three teacher educators and three teacher candidates were interviewed face-to-face. Additionally, one teacher educator and three teacher candidates were interviewed via Google Meet. Consent was obtained orally from the interviewees. Each interview was audio recorded with prior permission from the interviewees and lasted approximately 20 minutes.

The quantitative data collected from the survey questionnaire were presented in a table using descriptive statistics. For qualitative data analysis, the researcher employed inductive thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that inductive thematic analysis is useful for finding proper themes from interviews. Thus, the researcher manually transcribed all the interviews. The researcher carefully read every transcription to identify recurring responses from the interviews, which were then categorized as codes. The codes were then manually categorized into several themes by the researcher.

To maintain the reliability of the codes and themes, the researcher employed peer-debriefing, which authenticates the credibility of qualitative data (Spall, 1998). The researcher shared the gleaned codes and themes with a colleague, who is a researcher and competent in identifying themes from interviews. The colleague then examined and evaluated the transcriptions, codes, and themes to verify their accuracy and reliability.

Results/Findings

Quantitative Data Presentation

In the survey, as can be seen in the Table 1, the teacher candidates answered four questions and responded to the subsequent four statements. The data is presented in the following table, where serials 1st–4th represent the questions, and serials 5th–8th represent the statements.

Out of the 36 teacher-candidates, most (80.6%) think the process approaches very much lead writers to produce a refined text. The majority (69.4%) think that bad writing can be attributed to the avoidance of the pre-writing stage; on the contrary, roughly one-third (33.3%) consider that bad writing can often be attributed to the avoidance of the pre-writing stage. These findings, which answer research question 1, indicate that most teacher-candidates find the process approach useful.

The preponderance (83.3%) think the re-writing stage is very much essential to refining the first draft. The majority (58.3%) have improved, and slightly more than one-third (36.1%) are improving, with their writing following the process approach. These findings answer research questions 1 and 2. The findings indicate that the utility, effectiveness, and essentiality of the process approach have been enhanced by the bulk of the teacher-candidates who have improved their writing using this approach.

Moreover, (30.6%) and (66.7%) respectively agree and strongly agree that the process approach fosters their critical thinking. 72.2% strongly agree that they should be given the required time to carry out the writing process. In addition, slightly more than two-tenths (22.2%) and the majority (75%) agree and strongly agree, respectively, that learning writing as a process is essential to enhance writing. The preponderance (94.4%) strongly agrees with the statement

that writing should be taught as a process. These findings not only answer Research Question 1 but also address Research Question 2.

Table 1

The Presentation of the Collected Data from the Survey Questionnaire

1) Do you think that the process approach leads writers to produce a refined text?	Very Much (80.6%)	Not at all (0%)	Often (11.1%)	Sometimes (5.6 %)	Rarely (2.8%)
2) Do you think that bad writing can be attributed to avoiding the pre-writing stage?	Very Much (69.4%)	Not at all (0%)	Often (33.3%)	Sometimes (5.6%)	Rarely (0%)
3) Do you think that the re-writing stage is essential to refine the first draft?	Very much (83.3%)	Not at all (0%)	Often (11.1%)	Sometimes (5.6%)	Rarely (0%)
4) Did you improve your writing by learning as a process?	Yes (58.3%)	Improving (36.1%)	No (0%)	Slightly (5.6%)	Rarely (0%)
5) The process approach fosters your critical thinking.	Agree (30.6%)	Strongly Agree (66.7%)	Neutral (2.8%)	Strongly Disagree (0%)	Disagree (0%)
6) Required time should be given to you for the writing process to take place.	Agree (25%)	Strongly Agree (72.2%)	Neutral (2.8 %)	Strongly Disagree (0%)	Disagree (0%)
7) Learning writing as a process is essential to enhance writing.	Agree (22.2%)	Strongly Agree (75%)	Neutral (0%)	Strongly Disagree (0%)	Disagree (2.8%)
8) Writing should be taught as a process.	Agree (2.8%)	Strongly Agree (94.4%)	Neutral (2.8%)	Strongly Disagree (0 %)	Disagree (0%)

Qualitative Data Analysis

Grounding on the semi-structured interviews with 6 teacher-candidates and 4 teacher-educators, the explored themes are: 1) scope of adequate thinking in the process approach, 2) improving writing by the process approach, 3) the necessity of polishing draft by editing, 4) the importance of improving draft by revision, and 5) effective teaching of writing through by the process approach.

Scope of Adequate Thinking in the Process Approach

According to the interviewed teacher candidates (TCs) and teacher educators (TEs), the process approach is essential for enhancing students' thinking. Writers can think so deeply in the process approach that it facilitates their thoughts (and writing) to be profound. To generate meaningful thoughts, writers need to think a lot. Deep thinking can be better done in the process. In this regard,

TE 3 said that,

> In the process approach, students do not imitate others' thoughts, rather, they write on their own. They get enough time to think during writing, but they do not get that time in the product approach. By writing, they are improving their thinking. It is the students' responsibility to think critically about writing and content. They have to think so that they can create good thoughts [TE 3, female, teaching experience 16 years].

TC 5 claimed,

> For me, it's impossible to write something creatively in one go. I need time to prepare myself for writing. I need a process approach where I can at least think about what to do and what not to do to make my writing good. I know that writing stems from thinking, and I am required to think more and more. However, if we cannot think in a relaxed manner, how will I write a good text that my teachers want? So, I need at least enough time to think. [TC5, female]

TC 2 stated that,

> The process approach teaches us the right way of writing because we do not memorize. We do not try to write in one attempt without thinking much. Brainstorming creates new ideas in the pre-writing stage. I can read a lot before writing. I have enough time to collect data, brainstorm, and take notes during my pre-writing stages, and then I write. [TC 2, Male].

TE 4 mentioned,

> I assign my trainee students to write on critical topics, where they are required to think deeply. So, I give them time to think because without thinking they will not be able to answer. Most of the topics are not simple. For example, I recall that in one of my courses this semester, I asked my students to write about their teaching philosophy. They wrote about how they philosophized their teaching, which needed critical thinking, writing, drafting, and revising to produce a final text. [TE 4, male, teaching experience 14 years].

The foregoing findings answer research questions 1, 2, and 3. According to the TCs' and TEs' excerpts and experiences, writers can think deeply beyond shallow thinking in the writing process, generating thoughtful thoughts that are refined through revision and editing. Writer-students require a peaceful environment to generate ideas and revise their texts. Good writing demands creative and critical thinking, just as Elbow (1983) claims that first-order thinking transpires when writers write with intuition without much concern for errors and grammar. Critical thinking is a form of second-order thinking that helps writers revise and refine their written ideas and arguments. The process approach is cardinal for creative and critical thinking to transpire. Patwary et al. (2023) suggested that students should write in a convivial environment, where they can write comfortably and calmly, and EFL teachers should maintain such an environment. What Patwary et al. (2023) suggested seems accomplishable if writing is taught as a process. For, in the process approach, student-writers can think, edit, and revise until they come up with a well-revised and edited text.

Improving Writing by the Process Approach

The TCs and TEs find the process approach to be appropriate for advancing writing. The TCs were assigned typed-written assignments, which were then evaluated, by their teachers with necessary feedback. TC 2 believed that he would not have honed his writing — nor would he have improved editing, revising, and critical thinking skills — had he not followed the process approach. He could think, write, edit, and revise; whereby, he could produce good text. In this respect, TC 6 said (that is almost akin to TC2's comment).

> At university, I have written assignments following the process approach, which has helped me to improve my writing. The process approach gives me the chance to develop my writing, and I can revise my draft as many times as I want. I revise my text many times before submitting it. My teachers would then review my writing and provide feedback. The good thing is that, thanks to good writing, I was able to publish my articles in newspapers [TC 6, age 25, male].

TE 1 mentioned,

> Pre-writing and revising are the two pivotal dimensions of writing. If a writer can produce sophisticated thoughts through thoughtful consideration, they can then refine their writing by editing and revising. My students can verify whether they have used the correct word in the correct context, and they can eliminate unnecessary words from the sentences. That is ellipsis. In the rewriting part, sentences can be edited uniquely, and the meaning of the sentences can be made more accurate as they can revise each sentence [TE1, male, teaching experience 21 years].

TE 3 said,

> I always try to teach my trainee-students following the process approach because it addresses writing in a structured manner. When students follow the process approach, they have a proper structure to think, revise, and provide a final version of their writing. The structure is valuable for students to produce a good piece of text. Every approach has its own advantages and disadvantages. However, I believe the process approach is the most effective way to move forward in learning and teaching writing. That's why I follow it; otherwise, it will not help students to think critically and analytically.

These findings, from the TEs' and TCs' excerpts, answer research questions 1, 2, and 3. In the process approach, student-writers develop the habit of pre-writing (i.e., researching, deep thinking, generating ideas, and outlining), writing, and re-writing (i.e., editing and revising). In the pre-writing stage, the TCs generated thoughts by thinking and gathered information to write. In the re-writing stage, they edited and revised their drafts as many times as they wished. Such a disposition — made of thinking, editing, and revising — leads a student-writer to gradually become a skilled writer. Demirel (2011) claimed that the step-by-step implementation of the process approach would have positive ramifications, for revision and peer feedback were effective for student-writers to enhance their writing. Likewise, Asriati and Mahrida (2013) explored in their research that the observed students developed their writing after following the process approach. They recommended that English teachers implement the process approach to help students learn and improve their writing.

The Necessity of Polishing Draft by Editing

The TCs and TEs stated that editing was essential to writing. Wonderful and lucid writing is an outcome of extensive editing. In the same vein, TC3 said he used to detect grammatical errors, make writing cohesive, and omit redundant words by editing. TC3 claimed that she was a

compulsive editor of her course assignments and edited them numerous times before submission.

TC 3 stated,

> I have learned to multi-draft. I edit my draft as much as I can. I also change the position of my sentences to put them suitably in paragraphs. In this way, I make my paragraphs cohesive. I review my writing multiple times to catch mistakes. I check grammar and punctuation. When necessary, I cut off redundant words from my draft. Though it is difficult to cut redundant words, it makes my writing polished. (TC 3, female).

TC 1 mentioned,

> In the re-writing stage, we must think for our readers. A text might be confusing unless it is well-edited. In the process approach, I get a chance to edit my writing, which is important. I let my classmates read my assignments to check whether my writing flows or not. I make some sentences short and some sentences long. Gradually, I can see the variation of good sentences in my writing. (TC 1, male).

TE2 suggested,

> Without recurrent editing, writing can never be developed. First, students select a topic in consultation with me, and then they write an article to be published in an English newspaper. I provide them with feedback. I tell them to rewrite their articles. If I find any mistakes, I tell them to fix the mistakes they make. I advise them to correct their grammar, but I say their message is fine [TE 2, male, 25 years of teaching experience].

Likewise, the rest of the TCs asserted that editing was not expendable, but rather, essential. And they were autonomous and extensive editors of their texts. As per the TCs, what makes writing good is also editing. Editing is a practiced prowess whereby they can (re)structure their writing. Editing is a means of cognitive development, for it requires cognition, as writers think to edit their sentences to be suitably emplaced in paragraphs, which become at once concise, cohesive, and correct. It is apparently impossible for humans to write something in one go that is independent of editing (Ferris, 2010; Dinh, 2023). In editing, writers punctuate sentences in a way that allows readers to easily follow and understand the sentences. Editing also entails cutting redundant words from sentences. The first draft is apparently riddled with redundant words. The TCs mentioned that they edited and cut off redundant words from drafts, making their writing flawless and facile to follow. The TEs also emphasized the importance of editing, saying that writing cannot be completed without editing. It is hence plain that the TCs and TEs were cognizant of the cruciality of editing in the refinement and completion of a text; these finding answers research questions 1, 2, and 3.

The Importance of Improving Draft by Revision

All the interviewed TCs revise their texts and find the revision stage substantive. They believe that revision fosters their critical thinking as they are required to check and critique their produced sentences in a text. In this respect, TC 1 said,

I often find logical loopholes in my sentences after I've written them. I revise them. I better the ideas and arguments in sentences so that I can make them more meaningful and logical. Although revising is time-consuming, I do not skip that.

TC 4 mentioned,

I produce the first draft that is meant to be improved further. Revising is too crucial for my writing. I can fix my meaning and message by revising. I try to find better words and sentences while revising. [TC4, female].

TE2 recommended,

The quality of writing produced by the product approach is not as good as the quality of writing produced by the process approach. An article typically requires feedback and revision at least three times to improve it. Yes, I've had many students who have developed writing by following the process approach. My trainee-students have improved their writing. Their writing is more polished than their first drafts. The good thing is that they now know how to write.

TE 3 said,

Students' focus should shift from editing to revising. That means they will be checking their word choice, ideas, arguments, logic, cohesiveness, and coherence in sentences and paragraphs, which are only possible if writing is taught through the process approach. What are you trying to say? This is my question. What is your message? What is your argument? That is the focus. And then what is your structure? What is your organization? How are you organizing your writing? Give me your structure.

TC 3 said,

Revision gives me the scope to develop my writing, and I can improve my text as much as I want. It gives me mental security that, yes, I can make my text good. I critically read each sentence in my paragraph as many times as I can. I revise my draft until I am satisfied with it and until the last moment before submission.

The aforementioned excerpts not only answer Research Question 1 but also address Research Questions 2 and 3. The TCs and TEs are informed that writing presupposes recursive revision of the first (and later) draft, and the other way around might not help writers linguistically purify the draft. Revision is the rhetorical refinement of a text. Revision is to review and refine the idea and argument in sentences, which is not concrete, but abstract. Revision is a learned prowess that requires (meta) cognition as it emanates from critical thinking. Revision is essential for effective writing and the enhancement of students' critical thinking. Therefore, the TCs and TEs considered revision required and instrumental in improving writing.

Effective Teaching of Writing by the Process Approach

The TCs and TEs averred that the process approach is a viable avenue to teach writing. The TCs furthered their writing following, and they would teach writing to their students by, the process approach. Writing is a learned skill that can be taught to students by assigning them to write articles and essays. The TEs helped their students enhance writing using the process approach. According to their belief, being a writer requires being a deep and critical thinker, as

well as a compulsive editor and reviser. The TEs believed the process approach fostered their students' deep and critical thinking, which was imperative to those students' education and cognitive progress.

In this regard, TC6 mentioned,

> As a teacher, I will always teach writing to my students using the process approach that has helped me and will help them improve their writing. Through this approach, my students will learn how to write effectively.

TC 4 stated,

> Therefore, a process approach must be implemented across all educational levels. It is very useful because without this process, we cannot produce a product. It is so useful that we are taught how to write and then we use it to write. Just knowing is not enough; we have to go through the process of writing on our own. We work hard, and we use our brains. And we develop writing.

TE 1 said,

> I provide feedback, and then, based on the feedback, they revise their write-up and resubmit it to me. And, again, I provide feedback. Again, they rewrite, and this way, their writing is improved day by day. Yes, I assign tasks to students, and the length of each assignment is 1000 words, plus or minus 10 percent. For every assignment, there are 10 marks allotted. I give them enough time to write it. I encourage them to submit their assignments before the final date so that I can provide feedback for correction, allowing them to improve their texts before their final submission.

TE 3 suggested,

> I suggest the process approach, as without it, writing cannot be developed. Although teachers must use the process approach and spend more time and effort teaching students writing, they should be prepared to do so. I prefer assignments because our students need to be exposed to effective writing. My students are now conducting research. They perhaps could not do that if they followed the product approach, as writing a research article requires specific steps that they should be familiar with.

TE 4 mentioned,

> If we can show them the step-by-step process, they can assess themselves. They can monitor themselves, and obviously, it will put them on track. They can measure how much they have developed their writing skills. Month by month, week by week, project after project, they can compare. How far they have come. Yes, I usually dedicate marks, exclusive marks, to the process. I inspire my students to go through a rigorous process. They learn to write. They have some good confidence boost. They do better on the next course.

TE2 recounted,

> If trainee students want to develop their writing skills, they must practice. Practicing alone is not enough; if they receive feedback from a better writer, they can gradually improve their writing. However, there is another approach called CTL (Contextual Teaching and Learning) in writing. It is also a process approach. It means the students will observe something and make a list of the things they observe. For example, if I ask my students to write a paragraph on a garden, I will take them to the garden. They observe what plants, trees, and flowers are there. Then they use the list to write a

paragraph on the garden. Again, they will receive feedback from me to finalize and improve the paragraph.

The abovementioned comments of TE1, TE2, TE3, and TE4 answer research question 3, whereas TC1's and TC6's foregoing excerpts answer research questions 1 and 2. All the TEs shared nearly identical views regarding teaching writing through the process approach. In their opinion, no other approach is as vital and viable to teaching, learning, and advancing writing as the process approach. TE 3 recommended that teachers teach writing using the process approach, allowing students to micromanage and supercharge their writing. Teaching writing, following the process approach, is an essential means of leading students to develop deep and critical thinking. In the process of writing, students-writers learn to logically and persuasively express their ideas, arguments, and reasons (Trang & Oanh, 2021): what is more, according to the TCs' and TEs' statement, is that the rewriting stage leads novice-writers to cultivate, sustain, and solidify the habit of rigorous editing and revising which are instrumental in improving writing. All the TEs thus preferred to teach writing through the process approach. They preferred to do so because they could provide feedback on their students' drafts.

Discussion

The discussion reviews and interprets the survey and interview findings, relating them to previous studies. The majority of the surveyed TCs find the process approach to be useful and essential for learning and teaching writing. All the interviewed TCs and TEs consider the process approach to be the most vital, reliable, and viable for improving writing.

According to most of the surveyed TCs, the process approach helps writers produce a refined text; poor writing can be attributed to avoiding the pre-writing stage; rewriting is essential for refining the first draft. Furthermore, the bulk of them have improved their writing following the process approach. These findings, which answer research questions 1 and 2, highlight the utility and effectiveness of the process approach. Likewise, research conducted across EFL and ESL contexts has elicited positive ramifications of the process approach, as it has facilitated novice writers in furthering their writing (Bayat, 2014; Bharati, 2017; Firoozjahantigh et al., 2021; Sun & Fang, 2009).

On the contrary, in the product approach, scarcely students can write a well-edited and revised text within a limited period (Harris, 1993 as cited in Tangpermpoon, 2008). Most of the surveyed TCs thus strongly agree with the statement that *'required time should be given for the writing process to take place.'* Unlike the product approach, the writing process requires adequate time. In the writing process, writers engage themselves in thinking, meta-thinking (thinking about thinking), reading, researching, and multi-drafting by re-thinking, re-editing, and re-revising; these are the deeds to develop a good text. Without any constraint of a stringent time limit, they refine their texts to make them polished for submission (Rimes, 1983). Moreover, deep thinking should precede writing. Deep thinking appears to be absent from the product approach, resulting in poor writing. Producing profound thoughts through deep thinking is effective and essential in learning to write and being well-educated (Brown, 2001).

The interviewed TC1, TC2, TC3, and TC4 do multi-drafting. They refine their drafts by editing and revising to ensure they are precise and concise. TC2 condenses sentences, both short and long, through editing. TC1 suitably rearranges the position of sentences, allowing him to make his text cohesive. According to TC 2 and TC1, the process approach is effective not just because it provides students with enough time to eliminate redundant words from text, but also because it is conducive to revising and punctuating sentences. They thus produce readable texts. TC6

asserted that he will deploy the process approach to teach writing to his students. These findings, which answer research questions 1 and 2, align with the study by Sangeetha (2020) and Vandermeulen et al. (2024), where the enactment of the process approach resulted in enhanced writing, as evidenced by their participants' pre-writing, writing, and re-writing. Abed (2024) discovered that Palestinian university students, having followed the process approach, significantly improved their writing skills; namely, not only could those students write better, cohesive, and coherent sentences, but they also corrected their errors in spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

TE1 prefers to teach writing as a process, and so do TE2, TE3, and TE4, for not only is the process approach viable in teaching students to think deeply and critically, so students can produce profound and persuasive thoughts, but for it leads students to edit and revise every sentence of a text. The process approach also allows TE1, TE2, TE3, and T4 to provide feedback on their students' drafts. In this way, they improve their students' writing. Likewise, the preponderance of the surveyed TCs strongly agree with the statement – '*writing should be taught as a process.* These findings answer research questions 1, 2, and 3. In the same vein, studies find that the process approach fosters writers' formulation of ideas and helps them refine a text until it is finalized through multi-drafting (Harmer, 2011; Patwary & Sajib, 2018). The process approach is a proven resolution to enhance writing and is considered the most appropriate alternative to the product approach (Maninji, 2021; Tribble, 1996). Across EFL and ESL contexts, composition professionals, hence, recommend the teaching and learning of L2 writing as a process (Sun & Fang, 2019).

In this regard, the preponderance of the surveyed TCs strongly agree with the statement – '*the process approach fosters critical thinking.*' Students cultivate critical thinking by the process approach (Alsaleh, 2020). During revision, they are required to read and refine their generated ideas and arguments in a draft(s) through critical thinking. As a result, gradually, students develop their critical thinking skills (Çavdar & Doe, 2012). In the same vein, TC1 disclosed that he discovers logical loopholes in his sentences while revising. Identifying logical shortcomings in sentences requires critical thinking, which is developed effectively through the process approach. TE 4 mentioned, as did TE1, TE2, and TE3, that no other approach is as effective as the process approach when it comes to advancing students' writing and critical thinking. Students ought to learn (deep) thinking and critical thinking lest they risk their activation and advancement of the autonomous ability to produce profound thoughts, edit, and revise. And their likelihood of becoming genuinely good writers is hence at peril. Earlier studies back up such a claim (Ahmad et al., 2023; Duong, 2024; Fatimah, 2018; Kosmyna et al., 2025; Uyen et al., 2022).

All the TEs, therefore, stressed the indispensability of students' brain work to improve critical thinking (cognition) through writing as a process. Li and Yuan (2022) assigned their participants to revise a collaborative translated text. The objective of the revision was not only to hone those participants' discretion in improving translation and revision skills, but also to advance their critical thinking. The participants, S7, S4, S5, and S8, employed the process approach for translating. They outlined their process for translating the text. They rewrote (revised) the translated text, thus improving their critical thinking, translation, and writing skills.

Improvement of critical thinking warrants metacognition. It is the process approach itself that helps writers advance their metacognition. Metacognitive ability, which is thinking about how a task can be done, is conducive to enhancing writing. In other words, it helps students assess the steps and stages of the writing process. They can strategically draw on their mental and social repertoire of knowledge for writing through metacognitive strategies. Teachers need to

assign writing tasks that will improve students' metacognitive knowledge, strategies, and critical thinking (Bloushi & Shuraiaan, 2024; Nguyen, 2022). Writing should be taught in a systematic process so that students learn to create sophisticated and refined texts through deep and critical thinking, refining sentences, eliminating grammatical errors, and refining ideas and arguments in their writing. In so doing, pre-writing, writing, and re-writing are indispensable, which lead students to become better citizen-thinkers, making them autonomously thoughtful, critical, as well as humanly good writers and communicators (Alsaleh, 2020; Çavdar & Doe, 2012; Stanton et al., 2021).

Conclusion & Recommendation

This research has divulged teacher-candidates' (TCs) and teacher-educators' (TEs) opinions as to the usefulness and essentiality of the process approach. The mixed-methods approach was employed. The survey questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from 36 TCs enrolled in the TESOL program at four universities in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Additionally, for qualitative data, six TCs and four TEs were interviewed.

They responded positively to the utility and essentiality of the process approach. For learning, teaching, and improving writing in English, almost all the TCs and all the TEs preferred the process approach. Moreover, the TCs were the beneficiaries of — for they honed their writing learning to think, write, edit, and revise by — the process approach. Their opinions aligned with the statement that *'writing should be taught as a process'*; the TEs advocated that writing pedagogy should be carried out in a sequence of pre-writing, writing, and re-writing, whereby their trainee-students improved their writing. The effectiveness and essentiality of the process approach are therefore evidently conspicuous. The process approach is both vital and viable for students to develop deep thinking, critical thinking, linguistic autonomy, creativity, and diversity, as well as editing and revision skills.

This research presents several recommendations to enhance students' writing. Student-writers should learn how writing works in the process. Hence, insights into composition studies should permeate the academic culture of English Education in Bangladesh and beyond. The focus should shift from a single draft to multiple drafts. In other words, the focus should shift from writing (i.e., considering the product only) to writers (i.e., considering and caring for writers); editing (spelling, grammar, capitalization, and punctuation) to revision (idea, argument, logic, word choice, cohesion); and assessment (i.e., grading) to evaluation (i.e., improvement). Writer-students should be educated in aspects of rhetoric – i.e., audience, purpose, idea, argument, voice/signature, word choice or semantic sophistication, sentence fluency (cohesion) – that make prose lucid and meaningful (Raimes, 1985).

Teachers should engage students in voracious reading and regular writing. Students should avidly and amply read newspapers (e.g., The Daily Star, The Guardian, and The New York Times), for newspapers gather good writing and give writers an abundance of syntactical options to follow and (newly and creatively) formulate. In other words, writer-students can read like a writer. They can examine and creatively imitate how a writer has constructed creative sentences (which can be called 'archetypal syntax') so that they can revamp the sentences using their language and thought to craft more creative syntaxes with their new meanings. To improve writing, teachers and students can read such books on writing as 'On Writing Well' by William Zinsser, 'The Sense of Style' by Steven Pinker, and 'The Elements of Style' by William Strunk Jr. and E. B. White.

The whole process of writing — re-thinking, re-editing, and re-revising, which are the ways for

humans to develop cognitively and linguistically — should be done by student-writers. Given that students should hone their autonomous, deep thinking, critical thinking, editing, and revision skills, they would be better off avoiding the use of AI tools for writing. When it comes to education, students' cognitive and (meta-) linguistic progression is much more important than AI's productivity in writing (but not students' linguistic productivity). Therefore, they must do the brainwork (write) themselves. They must regularly write, edit, and revise their texts themselves. Academic integrity must be maintained. Educational institutions must provide teachers with reliable plagiarism detection software, enabling them to determine whether students have plagiarized or not. Teachers may conduct one-on-one post-written discussion/viva with student(s) to find out if the student writes the assignment. Critical questions about the process and content of a written assignment will help teachers do so. Using their discretion, they may ask the student questions about the what, why, where, and how of the written assignment.

The required time should be given to students for the writing process to take place. As a result, a produced draft can be edited and revised as many times as feasible. After evaluating a text, teachers need to provide feedback to student-writers to further improve the text. (Caveat: Feedback should be useful, but not authoritative, as education requires students to be autonomous writers.) The teachers' training/education is critical to the implementation of the process approach. Moreover, teachers, who must write daily and deeply as well as correctly and critically, should possess knowledge of and a knack for teaching writing. And they should have their own credible, published compositions to establish credibility as writing instructors.

Limitation

The number of participants in this research is small, which may limit the power and potential of this research to represent the perceptions and experiences of a wider population regarding the use of the process approach. The research setting is limited to only four universities in Dhaka; this restriction limits the research to exploring whether students and teachers at other Bangladeshi universities find the process approach useful, effective, and essential. This research would be more robust if the author could use inferential statistics with a larger sample size. Even a pre-test and post-test would be much better. Using pre-tests and post-tests with inferential statistics, future research may explore how the process approach helps student-writers elevate their writing, deep thinking, and critical thinking, while the prevalence of AI looms large.

Acknowledgments

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Biodata

Srejon Datta is a Senior English Language teacher at the Starlit School of English Dhaka. He completed his B.A. in English Linguistics and M.A. in TESOL at North South University, Bangladesh. Not only does he like to read and write, but he relishes researching and teaching, too.