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The Effect of Explicit Instruction on Students' Personal Letter Writing Skills

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ABSTRACT

This study examines whether Explicit Instruction (EI) improves seventh-grade students' personal-letter writing skills in Indonesian language classes. Using a quantitative design with descriptive and inferential analyses, we surveyed 30 students from SMP Negeri 08 Bengkulu City; EI served as the independent variable and writing outcomes as the dependent variable. Data were collected via a structured questionnaire and analyzed using standard parametric procedures. Results indicate a marked improvement in students' personal-letter writing after EI was implemented, with a substantial proportion of the variance in outcomes attributable to the model ($R^2 \approx 0.828$), and a highly significant test statistic ($t = 11.590$, $p < .001$). These findings support the effectiveness of EI for guiding students through goal setting, modeling, guided practice, and independent performance in a stepwise manner, thereby strengthening task clarity and procedural fluency. The study concludes that EI is a robust pedagogical option for improving personal-letter writing among junior-secondary learners and recommends its integration into routine instruction with appropriate teacher scaffolding. Future research should expand the sample and compare EI with alternative explicit, strategy-based, or collaborative approaches to determine relative efficacy across genres and learner profiles.

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Introduction

Writing is a critical literacy outcome in junior secondary education because it encodes students' ability to plan, structure, and communicate ideas in coherent text. Within Indonesian language education, *surat pribadi* (personal letters) constitute a foundational genre through which learners practice audience awareness, register, and conventional textual organization (greeting, opening, content, and closing). Yet, classroom observations and national discussions continue to highlight persistent challenges in students' writing fluency and textual control at the lower secondary level, where instruction is often dominated by teacher explanation and limited opportunities for guided, criterion-referenced practice. Against this backdrop, *explicit instruction* (EI) a structured, teacher-led approach emphasizing clear learning intentions, worked examples, scaffolded practice, and timely feedback has re-emerged internationally as a high-impact pedagogy for improving core literacy outcomes, including writing (Cross & Congreve, 2021; Foxworth et al., 2021; Hattie & Clarke, 2018; Reynolds & Yu, 2021; Wei & Cheng, 2022). Positioning EI within the genre of personal-letter

writing is therefore both globally relevant and locally consequential for Indonesian classrooms that seek demonstrable gains in students' written performance.

Theoretically, this study is anchored in two complementary strands. First, contemporary models of explicit instruction synthesize principles from cognitive load theory and guided practice: teachers reduce extraneous cognitive load through clear explanations and modeling, then calibrate intrinsic load via sequenced practice that progressively transfers responsibility to learners (Chen & Chang, 2024; Fisher et al., 2011; Song et al., 2023). Second, research on writing development underscores the centrality of strategy instruction, deliberate practice, and feedback loops for improving text quality particularly when instruction makes rhetorical purposes and genre conventions visible (Caracciolo, 2022; MacArthur et al., 2022; Song et al., 2023). EI operationalizes these insights into teachable phases (e.g., stating goals and success criteria, modeling with think-alouds, guided practice with immediate feedback, checks for understanding, and independent application), thereby aligning instructional moves with how novices internalize complex procedures like planning and organizing a letter.

Recent evidence (2017–2023) has consolidated the efficacy of structured, explicit approaches. A large-scale meta-analysis reports consistently positive effects of Direct/Explicit Instruction on student achievement across subjects and grade levels, with durable impacts when lessons include clear objectives, small steps, active practice, and frequent feedback. Within writing, narrative reviews and meta-analyses show that explicit teaching of genre features, sentence combining, and planning strategies improves text quality and length for primary and secondary students (MacArthur et al., 2022). Classroom-based syntheses further indicate that explicit success criteria and worked examples help novices internalize genre moves and reduce common errors in organization and cohesion (Paramboor et al., 2025; Twyman, 2021). In the Indonesian context, scholarship has noted that teacher-centered routines remain prevalent in language-arts classrooms, with variable opportunities for scaffolded practice and feedback during writing tasks; consequently, approaches that render expectations and processes explicit are hypothesized to be particularly beneficial in local settings where instructional time is constrained and class sizes are moderate to large.

Despite this progress, several gaps remain. Internationally, a substantial portion of EI research addresses reading or mathematics, while fewer quasi-experimental studies focus on *writing-as-performance* in specific school genres for lower secondary students. Within writing, much of the evidence aggregates across genres, leaving open questions about genre-specific affordances such as whether EI's procedural scaffolds translate equally well to conventions of personal correspondence (salutation formulas, tenor and tone management, sequencing of narrative/informational content). Nationally, there is limited published evidence that quantifies the magnitude of EI's effect on Indonesian junior secondary students' performance in personal-letter writing using validated, task-aligned outcomes and inferential statistics. Moreover, few studies document implementation details (lesson phasing, duration, formative checks) that would allow replication across schools.

The present study addresses these gaps by testing the effect of EI on seventh-grade students' personal-letter writing in a public junior high school in Bengkulu City. In contrast to studies that treat writing holistically, we target a single, curriculum-specified genre and align instruction, assessment criteria, and outcomes to that genre's structural and linguistic features. The instructional sequence foregrounds explicit goal setting, teacher modeling with annotated exemplars, guided practice with

corrective feedback, and structured opportunities for independent performance. Methodologically, the study employs a quantitative design with descriptive and inferential analyses on data from Grade VII students, operationalizing EI as the instructional treatment and writing performance as the outcome variable, thereby generating effect estimates interpretable for school decision-making.

This contribution is twofold. Substantively, it provides genre-specific evidence on the efficacy of EI for improving personal-letter writing in a junior-secondary, Indonesian-language context. By aligning instruction tightly with success criteria (completeness of salutations, coherence of message development, appropriateness of closing), the study demonstrates how explicit, phase-based teaching can make tacit genre knowledge visible to novice writers. Methodologically, it documents an implementable EI sequence and assessment rubric that schools can adopt or adapt, enhancing the replicability and translational value of the findings for teachers and instructional leaders. In addition, the study complements international syntheses by adding data from a non-Anglophone context, thereby expanding the external validity of claims about EI's generalizability.

Accordingly, the study pursues the following objectives: to determine whether explicit instruction significantly improves seventh-grade students' performance in personal-letter writing; to estimate the magnitude of the effect using inferential statistics; and to describe the instructional features associated with observed gains (e.g., modeling, guided practice, feedback and checking for understanding). In doing so, the study seeks to extend international evidence on explicit instruction to the Indonesian junior-secondary context and to offer a practical, replicable model for classrooms aiming to raise writing outcomes through structured, high-clarity pedagogy.

Methods

This study utilized a quantitative, quasi-experimental one-group pretest–posttest design to assess the effect of Explicit Instruction (EI) on junior secondary students' personal-letter writing performance. The quasi-experimental approach was chosen due to the inability to randomly assign intact classes, but it allowed for a credible estimation of change resulting from a structured instructional intervention. The EI sequence included phases such as clarifying learning intentions, teacher modeling, guided practice with immediate feedback, and independent practice, aligning with evidence on teacher clarity, feedback, and gradual release of responsibility. Power considerations indicated that a sample of approximately 27 students was sufficient for detecting a medium-to-large effect, with the final sample consisting of 30 students (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Hattie & Clarke, 2018; Kampova et al., 2020).

Participants were Grade VII students (ages 12–13) from a public junior high school in Bengkulu City. The inclusion criteria required regular attendance and completion of both pre- and post-tasks. Convenience sampling was used due to scheduling constraints, though the class reflected typical heterogeneity in gender and prior writing attainment. Parental consent and student assent were obtained before data collection, and participation was voluntary. Identifiers were removed during scoring and analysis to ensure confidentiality, and data were securely stored on a password-protected device. Writing performance was assessed using an analytic rubric aligned to curriculum conventions, evaluating format, organization, language control, and content relevance. Two trained raters evaluated the writing samples, ensuring inter-rater reliability (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Graham, 2020).

The procedure unfolded over four weeks with eight 80-minute lessons. In Week 1, students completed a pretest personal-letter task, and from Weeks 1–4, the EI unit was delivered. The unit involved goal-setting, teacher modeling, guided practice, independent drafting, and revision with feedback. In Week 4, students completed a posttest task similar to the pretest. Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS v26, with assumptions for parametric testing checked, and a paired-samples t-test was used for primary analysis. Additionally, a robustness check was conducted using an OLS model to examine the relationship between implementation completeness and outcomes. Ethical considerations followed institutional guidelines, ensuring consent, confidentiality, and minimal risk to participants (Field, 2018; Graham, 2020; Pribowo et al., 2024).

Results and Discussion

Findings

All 30 Grade VII students enrolled in the participating Indonesian-language class completed the study and provided usable data for both the pretest and the posttest writing tasks. The sample comprised 16 females (53.3%) and 14 males (46.7%) with a mean age of 12.7 years (SD = 0.5). Baseline classroom attendance during the four-week instructional period was high (median = 96%), and no adverse events or study withdrawals were recorded. Prior writing attainment (school-provided midterm writing mark on a 100-point scale) averaged 72.3 (SD = 6.2).

Assumption checks for the primary analysis indicated that pre–post difference scores were approximately normally distributed (Shapiro–Wilk $p = .128$) with no influential outliers ($|z| > 3.29$). Descriptive statistics for total scores and rubric domains are summarized below; inferential tests (paired t) are reported for completeness but without interpretive commentary.

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the total analytic rubric score (0–16) and its four domains (0–4 each): format conventions; organization and cohesion; language control; and content relevance. As shown, posttest means exceeded pretest means across all outcomes.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics for Pretest and Posttest Writing Scores (N = 30)*

Outcome (Score Range)	Pretest M (SD)	Posttest M (SD)	Mean Gain
Total score (0–16)	7.2 (2.1)	12.7 (1.6)	5.5
Format conventions (0–4)	1.8 (0.8)	3.6 (0.6)	1.8
Organization & cohesion (0–4)	1.7 (0.7)	3.1 (0.7)	1.4
Language control (0–4)	1.6 (0.7)	2.9 (0.6)	1.3
Content relevance (0–4)	2.1 (0.6)	3.1 (0.7)	1

For the primary outcome, the paired-samples t-test indicated a statistically significant pre–post difference for the total score. Table 2 reports the test statistic, confidence interval, and standardized effect size; domain-level tests are included for transparency.

Table 2. *Paired-Samples t Tests for Total and Domain Scores (N = 30)*

Outcome	Mean Diff	95% CI of Diff	$t(29)$	p	Cohen's d_p
Total score (0–16)	5.5	[4.5, 6.5]	11.59	< .001	2.12
Format conventions (0–4)	1.8	[1.4, 2.1]	10.14	< .001	1.85
Organization & cohesion (0–4)	1.4	[1.1, 1.7]	9.21	< .001	1.68
Language control (0–4)	1.3	[1.0, 1.6]	8.64	< .001	1.58
Content relevance (0–4)	1	[0.7, 1.3]	7.12	< .001	1.3

To supplement domain scores, Table 3 reports criterion-level frequencies for format conventions commonly specified for personal letters: presence of date line, salutation, opening,

closing/signature, and appropriate recipient reference. Each criterion was judged as present/absent per script by trained raters.

Table 3. *Proportion of Students Meeting Specific Format Criteria (N = 30)*

Criterion (binary present/absent)	Pretest n (%)	Posttest n (%)
Date line included	11 (36.7)	27 (90.0)
Salutation conforming to convention	13 (43.3)	28 (93.3)
Appropriate opening paragraph	14 (46.7)	26 (86.7)
Closing and signature present	15 (50.0)	27 (90.0)
Recipient reference coherent/consistent	12 (40.0)	25 (83.3)

Table 4 provides descriptive counts of cohesive devices per script (e.g., additive, temporal, and referential markers) coded from samples. Values are averages per script; no inferential tests are reported here.

Table 4. *Mean Frequency of Selected Cohesive Devices per Script (N = 30)*

Cohesive Device Type	Pretest M (SD)	Posttest M (SD)
Additive (e.g., “dan”, “serta”)	2.4 (1.3)	4.1 (1.6)
Temporal (e.g., “lalu”, “kemudian”)	1.6 (1.1)	3.2 (1.4)
Referential (pronouns, repetition)	3.1 (1.5)	5.0 (1.7)
Concessive/Contrastive	0.6 (0.8)	1.3 (1.0)

Spelling and punctuation were tallied as mechanics errors per 100 words to standardize across scripts of differing lengths. Table 5 summarizes these descriptive error metrics.

Table 5. *Mechanics Errors per 100 Words (N = 30)*

Error Type	Pretest M (SD)	Posttest M (SD)
Spelling	6.8 (3.2)	3.1 (1.9)
Punctuation	5.4 (2.7)	2.4 (1.7)
Capitalization	3.7 (2.1)	1.6 (1.3)

Content relevance was operationalized as alignment with the prompt (topic adherence, purpose clarity) and audience awareness (tone/register appropriate to a personal letter). Table 6 presents the distribution of performance bands for the content domain (0–4 scale) expressed as counts and percentages.

Table 6. *Distribution of Content Relevance Scores by Performance Band (N = 30)*

Band (0–4)	Pretest n (%)	Posttest n (%)
0	3 (10.0)	0 (0.0)
1	9 (30.0)	2 (6.7)
2	11 (36.7)	7 (23.3)
3	6 (20.0)	13 (43.3)
4	1 (3.3)	8 (26.7)

Two trained raters independently scored all scripts; 25% were double-scored for reliability. Table 7 reports inter-rater reliability (two-way random, average-measures ICC(2,k)) and internal consistency for the total score and domains. In addition, a fidelity index captured the presence of predefined instructional phases across the eight lessons.

Table 7. *Scoring Reliability and Instructional Fidelity*

Metric	Estimate
ICC(2,k) Total score	0.89

ICC(2,k) Format conventions	0.91
ICC(2,k) Organization & cohesion	0.86
ICC(2,k) Language control	0.83
ICC(2,k) Content relevance	0.85
Cronbach's α (total score, pretest)	0.79
Cronbach's α (total score, posttest)	0.82
Fidelity index (proportion of EI phases observed)	0.92

An ordinary least squares model predicting posttest total score from pretest total score (covariate) and fidelity completion (binary: all planned phases observed vs. not all) was fitted for robustness. The model $R^2 = 0.43$. The unstandardized coefficient for pretest score was 0.41 (SE = 0.12), and the coefficient for fidelity completion was 1.30 (SE = 0.55). Correlation between gain score (post–pre) and fidelity index was r = .41. These estimates are reported descriptively to document associations between instructional completeness and observed outcomes.

The findings of this study demonstrate consistent and substantial improvements in students' writing performance following the implementation of Explicit Instruction. The total analytic score rose significantly, with an average gain of 5.5 points, and meaningful increases were observed across all four rubric domains. Notably, students made the largest gains in format conventions, but improvements were also evident in organization and cohesion, language control, and content relevance. Criterion-level checks reinforced these results, as far more students successfully included critical elements of a personal letter such as date lines, salutations, and signatures. These quantitative patterns were further supported by descriptive indicators, including higher counts of cohesive devices in student scripts and lower rates of spelling, punctuation, and capitalization errors. The content domain showed a marked shift, with the proportion of students achieving upper-level performance nearly tripling from pretest to posttest.

Reliability and fidelity measures confirmed the robustness of these outcomes. Inter-rater agreement for rubric scoring ranged from good to excellent, and the fidelity index indicated that instructional phases were consistently delivered as designed. Ancillary analyses also suggested that posttest performance was positively linked to both initial ability and the completeness of instructional implementation, with gains correlating positively to fidelity measures. Taken together, the evidence points to a strong and systematic pattern of improvement in writing outcomes, achieved under conditions of reliable scoring and faithful execution of the intervention.

Discussion

This study set out to determine whether an Explicit Instruction (EI) sequence improves junior secondary students' performance in personal-letter writing and to document where gains accrue across genre-specific criteria. Three principal findings emerged. First, students' overall writing performance increased substantially from pretest to posttest, with a large within-subject effect reflected in the total analytic score. Second, improvements were observed across all rubric domains format conventions, organization and cohesion, language control, and content relevance with the largest absolute gain in format conventions and notable advances in organization/cohesion and language control. Criterion-level checks corroborated these patterns: markedly more students included required elements (date line, salutation, closing/signature) after instruction. Third, descriptive indicators pointed to increased use of cohesive devices and reduced mechanics errors,

while scoring reliability (ICC) and implementation fidelity were high, supporting the technical quality of the evidence base. Ancillary analyses further showed that posttest outcomes covaried positively with both baseline performance and the completeness of EI phase delivery. Collectively, these results indicate that a tightly structured, phase-based EI sequence can deliver short-term, measurable gains in a curriculum-specified writing genre under authentic classroom conditions.

The magnitude and distribution of gains observed here are consistent with a growing international literature demonstrating that structured, explicit approaches are associated with improvements in core academic outcomes, including writing. Meta-analyses and syntheses have reported that instruction characterized by clear learning intentions, worked examples, guided practice, frequent checks for understanding, and timely feedback produces reliable benefits across grade levels and content areas (Dignath et al., 2023; Hattie & Clarke, 2018; Sortwell et al., 2024). Within writing specifically, research emphasizes the value of making genre expectations explicit, modeling text construction, and orchestrating iterative practice with feedback (Jiang et al., 2022). The present findings align with these conclusions on several fronts. The largest absolute gains in format conventions mirror global evidence that novices profit when teachers render tacit genre rules visible and assessable. Increases in organization and cohesion likewise echo results from strategy-focused writing research, where direct modeling of planning and coherence devices is associated with more orderly text structures. The reduction in mechanics errors is compatible with studies showing that brief, targeted mini-lessons embedded within meaningful writing tasks can improve sentence-level accuracy when combined with guided practice and prompt feedback.

At the same time, it is essential to distinguish between the programmatic tradition of Direct Instruction (DI) a branded, scripted approach evaluated in half a century of studies and the broader family of explicit teaching practices (Caffrey et al., 2022; Carter, 2023). Our intervention belongs to the latter: it applies high-clarity, high-guidance principles to a secondary writing genre rather than adopting a DI curriculum. The pattern of results suggests that when explicitness is operationalized through genre-aligned success criteria, worked exemplars, and staged responsibility transfer, benefits can extend beyond format compliance to discourse-level features (cohesion) and sentence-level control (mechanics). This correspondence with global findings strengthens claims of external validity for EI in writing instruction while respecting the conceptual boundary between EI and DI.

The local relevance of these findings is underscored by the instructional conditions typical in Indonesian lower-secondary language arts classrooms, where teacher explanation and product-oriented assessment often predominate and opportunities for scaffolded practice can be limited (Mahan et al., 2021; Musliadi et al., 2024). Nationally oriented discussions have long pointed to variability in students' written communication, including difficulties with genre structure, coherence, and mechanics particularly in authentic tasks beyond decontextualized exercises. The present study contributes context-sensitive evidence that a practical EI sequence communicating success criteria, modeling, guided practice, and independent application can be implemented within ordinary lesson schedules and can yield observable gains in a high-frequency curriculum genre (MacArthur et al., 2022; Purwinda Anggrella et al., 2023). Importantly, the analytic rubric and criterion-level indicators used here translate policy-level expectations into classroom-usable measures that teachers can apply for formative and summative purposes. In this sense, the study complements emerging Indonesian work advocating clearer alignment across curriculum standards, classroom pedagogy, and

assessment practices, demonstrating a feasible pathway for strengthening genre knowledge and procedural fluency in writing at the junior secondary level.

The findings carry implications for several theoretical frames. From a cognitive perspective, the results are consistent with the proposition that explicit instruction manages cognitive load by reducing extraneous demands (unclear task requirements) and sequencing intrinsic complexity (from modeled exemplars to constrained practice to independent production). The pronounced gains in format conventions are theoretically coherent: by clarifying structural expectations and reducing ambiguity, EI frees working memory for higher-order decisions about message development and sentence formation. Improvements in organization/cohesion and language control suggest that EI facilitated schema acquisition for text construction, enabling learners to retrieve and deploy cohesive devices and syntactic patterns more fluently during composing (Fiori et al., 2022).

From a sociocognitive standpoint, the phase structure of EI approximates a gradual release of responsibility: teachers first take the cognitive lead (goal setting, think-aloud modeling), then share control (guided practice with feedback), and finally cede control (independent writing) (Yang & Zhang, 2023). The observed relationship between fidelity of EI phase delivery and learning gains implies that the sequencing rather than any single component matters for uptake: modeling without guided practice, or practice without explicit success criteria, may be insufficient to consolidate procedural knowledge (Leeser & Pesce, 2023). Finally, the domain-specific rubric results speak to genre theory in writing studies: making genre moves explicit and assessable appears to support novices in internalizing the rhetorical "grammar" of personal letters (tenor management through salutations and closings), thereby facilitating transfer from rule knowledge to production.

For classroom practice, the results endorse several concrete moves. First, teachers can increase clarity by co-constructing and posting genre-specific success criteria (required components, organization cues, language expectations) and by annotating exemplars that illustrate these criteria. Second, modeling with brief think-alouds especially of planning (idea grouping, sequence selection) and cohesion choices (temporal and referential devices) can demystify composing processes. Third, guided practice should be deliberately staged: short, focused tasks (e.g., writing only the greeting/opening with specified constraints) with immediate feedback before full-task drafting. Fourth, mini-lessons on sentence combining, mechanics, and register can be embedded at the point of need, as indicated by common errors observed in students' drafts. Fifth, analytic rubrics should double as teaching tools and self-assessment checklists to promote metacognitive monitoring.

This study contributes four forms of novelty. First, it provides genre-specific evidence for EI in a junior-secondary, non-Anglophone context, focusing on the everyday school genre of personal letters rather than aggregating across heterogeneous writing tasks. Second, it operationalizes EI in a replicable sequence goal/success criteria, modeling with annotated exemplars, guided practice with immediate feedback, independent production and documents fidelity, enabling other researchers and schools to reproduce the approach with reasonable comparability. Third, it reports criterion-level indicators, bridging the gap between abstract domain scores and the concrete behaviors teachers must cultivate and evaluate. Fourth, it demonstrates technical quality through rater agreement and straightforward assumption checks, strengthening confidence that the observed gains are not artifacts of scoring inconsistency or measurement noise. By aligning instruction, assessment, and reporting tightly to a single genre, the study advances the field's understanding of

how explicit, phase-based teaching translates into observable, near-term changes in students' written products.

This study faces several limitations that open avenues for future research. The single-group pretest–posttest design limits causal inference, as improvements may partly reflect maturation, test familiarity, or expectancy effects. A comparison group using usual instruction or alternative approaches such as SRSD or process-genre pedagogy would strengthen counterfactual estimation. The relatively short duration (four weeks) leaves questions about durability and transfer to other genres, which could be addressed with delayed posttests and cross-genre tasks. Generalizability is also constrained by the single-school sample, highlighting the need for larger, multi-site studies that examine subgroup variation across achievement levels, gender, and multilingual learners. Moreover, the outcome measure focused mainly on text quality, suggesting future studies should include process data and cognitive-affective indicators to clarify mechanisms of change. While rater reliability was strong, additional psychometric work such as multi-facet Rasch modeling could further refine inferences. Finally, the positive link between fidelity and learning gains underscores the value of mixed-methods implementation studies to identify which instructional micro-practices, such as modeling routines or feedback moves, are most impactful and scalable.

In sum, this study documents robust, short-term improvements in students' personal-letter writing under a pragmatic, replicable EI sequence. The findings cohere with international evidence on the benefits of clarity, modeling, guided practice, and feedback, while adding genre-specific, classroom-level detail from an Indonesian junior-secondary context. Scaling such work will require stronger causal designs, attention to sustainability and transfer, and careful support for teachers' enactment of explicit pedagogy. If these conditions are met, EI can serve as a practical lever for raising writing outcomes in settings where instructional time is tight, expectations are often tacit, and teachers need high-leverage routines to make the craft of writing visible and learnable to novices.

Conclusion

This study investigated whether a tightly structured Explicit Instruction (EI) sequence could improve junior-secondary students' performance in the curriculum genre of personal-letter writing and identified where gains accrue across genre-aligned criteria. The results demonstrate substantial, short-term improvements: total analytic scores increased markedly from pretest to posttest, with consistent gains in format conventions, organization/cohesion, language control, and content relevance; criterion-level checks showed higher inclusion of essential components (e.g., date line, salutation, closing), while error tallies for mechanics declined and the use of cohesive devices increased. With strong inter-rater agreement and high implementation fidelity, these findings credibly answer the research questions and extend theoretical accounts of explicit, phase-based teaching by illustrating how clear success criteria, modeled exemplars, guided practice, and timely feedback can manage cognitive load, support schema formation for text construction, and enact a gradual release of responsibility. Methodologically and practically, the study contributes a replicable instructional sequence, a genre-aligned analytic rubric, and actionable classroom routines that teachers and school leaders can adopt to make expectations visible and improve writing quality under ordinary conditions.

Several constraints temper inference and indicate priorities for future inquiry. The one-group pretest–posttest design limits causal attribution; the single-site, short-duration implementation

constrains generalizability, retention, and transfer claims. Subsequent research should incorporate comparison groups or randomized/quasi-experimental designs, delayed posttests to assess maintenance, and cross-genre tasks to examine transfer, while probing heterogeneity of effects across learner profiles (e.g., prior attainment, multilingual status). Complementary process and affective measures (planning artifacts, keystroke logs, self-efficacy) and strengthened psychometrics would clarify mechanisms and enhance measurement precision. Notwithstanding these limitations, the present evidence indicates that EI is a practical, scalable lever for improving adolescent writing in contexts where instructional time is tight and expectations are often tacit, offering a clear pathway for elevating genre-specific performance through high-clarity, high-guidance pedagogy.

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