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PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES AND STUDENTS' COMPOSITION WRITING PROFICIENCY IN SELECTED ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN COTABATO DIVISION

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ABSTRACT

This quantitative study examined the extent of teachers' pedagogical practices and their relationship to and influence on Grade VI students' composition writing proficiency in selected public elementary schools within the 2nd Congressional District of Cotabato Province, Philippines. Using a descriptive-correlational and multiple regression design, data were gathered from 192 Grade VI English teachers through validated survey questionnaires. Five pedagogical practices were assessed: differentiated instruction, guided writing, collaborative writing, feedback engagement, and technology integration. Students' writing proficiency was evaluated across five dimensions: content and idea development, organization and structure, language use/vocabulary, grammar and punctuation, and mechanics. Spearman correlation analysis revealed significant relationships between all pedagogical practices and most writing proficiency dimensions. Multiple regression analysis identified feedback engagement as the strongest and most consistent positive predictor across all five dimensions ($\beta = 0.695$ to 1.188, $p < .001$), while technology integration significantly predicted mechanics ($\beta = 0.230$, $p = .007$). Differentiated instruction showed a significant negative influence on content ($\beta = -0.262$, $p = .049$), organization ($\beta = -0.372$, $p = .015$), and grammar ($\beta = -0.275$, $p = .050$), suggesting implementation challenges. The overall R^2 values ranged from .340 to .666, confirming that pedagogical practices account for a substantial proportion of variance in students' writing outcomes. Findings underscore the centrality of feedback and technology integration in effective composition writing instruction.

KEYWORDS: *Pedagogical practices, composition writing, feedback engagement, differentiated instruction, technology integration, writing proficiency*

INTRODUCTION

Composition writing remains one of the most critical yet underperforming academic competencies among elementary school learners globally and in the Philippine context. As learners advance to upper primary levels, the demand to produce well-organized, grammatically accurate, and meaningful written texts becomes increasingly rigorous. Yet, studies consistently identify writing as the last of the four core communication skills to develop, owing to its complex cognitive demands (Belarmino, 2023; Ozçelik & Batur, 2023). This persistent gap between instructional expectations and actual student performance raises urgent questions about the pedagogical strategies teachers employ and the extent to which these practices genuinely influence writing outcomes.

Research on writing pedagogy has increasingly focused on identifying instructional approaches that effectively develop students' composition skills. Differentiated instruction allows teachers to tailor tasks to diverse learner needs, while guided writing provides scaffolded, teacher-directed support. Collaborative writing leverages peer interaction to co-construct texts, feedback engagement supplies critical corrective and formative information, and technology integration introduces digital tools that enhance accuracy and engagement (Bruce-William et al., 2025; Pham, 2019; Dube, 2021). Despite the theoretical endorsement of these strategies, their combined impact on specific dimensions of writing proficiency in the Philippine elementary setting remains insufficiently documented.

Studies such as Apridayani et al. (2024) and Pontillas et al. (2024) highlight that research gaps persist particularly around the measurable effects of classroom instructional strategies on learner writing performance in diverse, multilingual, and resource-constrained contexts. The Schools Division of Cotabato represents precisely such a context: public elementary schools serving linguistically heterogeneous populations with limited access to digital infrastructure and contextually appropriate learning materials.

This study was designed to address this gap by quantifying the extent to which Grade VI teachers employ five core pedagogical practices and by statistically determining the relationship and influence of these practices on students' composition writing proficiency across five assessed dimensions. The study adopted a descriptive-correlational and multiple regression design, with 192 teacher-respondents drawn from five municipalities within Cotabato Division's 2nd Congressional District.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the extent of pedagogical practices employed by teachers in terms of differentiated instruction, guided writing, collaborative writing, feedback engagement, and technology integration?
2. What is the level of students' composition writing proficiency in terms of content and idea development, organization and structure, language use/vocabulary, grammar and punctuation marks, and mechanics?
3. Is there a significant relationship between teachers' pedagogical practices and students' composition writing proficiency?
4. Do teachers' pedagogical practices significantly influence students' composition writing proficiency?

Review of Related Literature

Pedagogical Practices in Composition Writing

Effective writing instruction is grounded in a range of pedagogical strategies that collectively address the cognitive, linguistic, and motivational dimensions of written composition. Bruce-William et al. (2025) established that teacher competence and instructional strategy selection significantly influence students' literacy development, including writing. Differentiated instruction allows teachers to tailor writing activities to students' varied readiness, interests, and learning profiles, thereby reducing achievement gaps in heterogeneous classrooms (Demir, 2021; Griful-Freixenet et al., 2020). Guided writing, grounded in social learning theory, provides structured teacher-directed scaffolding through shared writing and think-aloud modeling that helps students internalize the writing process (Ahmadi, 2017; Ismiati & Fitria, 2021).

Collaborative writing engages learners in peer-driven idea exchange, co-construction of text, and peer review, enhancing both creativity and technical accuracy (Pham, 2019; Villarreal & Gil-Sarratea, 2019). Feedback engagement—encompassing written comments, oral feedback, rubric-based assessment, and digital feedback tools—plays a foundational role in supporting self-regulated learning and directing students toward improvement (Andrade et al., 2021; Nicol, 2021; Smith & Lipnevich, 2018). Finally, technology integration leverages digital writing tools, multimedia platforms, grammar checkers, and online collaboration spaces to enrich the writing experience and reinforce technical correctness (Dube, 2021; Yilmaz, 2020).

Students' Composition Writing Proficiency

Writing proficiency is commonly evaluated across multiple dimensions. Content and idea development refers to the richness, relevance, and depth of ideas in a composition (Martarini et al., 2020). Organization and structure concerns the logical arrangement of ideas, use of transitions, and coherence between paragraphs (Kim & Graham, 2021). Language use and vocabulary involves the appropriateness, variety, and precision of word choice (Pablo & Lasaten, 2018). Grammar and punctuation encompasses correct sentence construction, subject-verb agreement, and punctuation use (Garduce & Baluyos, 2023; Sacal & Potane, 2023). Finally, mechanics refers to technical accuracy in spelling, capitalization, and formatting (Filomeno, 2025).

Research consistently shows that students in the Philippine elementary context struggle most with grammar, organization, and mechanical accuracy, while performing comparatively better in vocabulary and idea generation (Palaming, 2023; Pontillas et al., 2024). Instruction that integrates feedback, scaffolding, and collaborative strategies has been linked to improved outcomes across these dimensions.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-correlational and multiple regression design. The quantitative approach allowed for systematic measurement of the extent of pedagogical practices and statistical determination of their relationship to and influence on students' composition writing proficiency.

Research Locale and Respondents

The study was conducted in selected public elementary schools in five municipalities of the 2nd Congressional District of Cotabato Province: Antipas, Arakan, Magpet, Makilala, and President Roxas. The respondents were 192 Grade VI English teachers employed in Schools Division Office (SDO) Cotabato. Complete enumeration was employed to capture all qualifying teacher-respondents, supplemented by random sampling principles within each municipality.

Table 1 ***Distribution of Research Respondents by Municipality.***

Municipality	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Antipas	21	10.9
Arakan	60	31.3
Magpet	47	24.5
Makilala	68	35.4
President Roxas	51	26.6
Total	192	100.0

Note. Complete enumeration of Grade VI English teachers in SDO Cotabato's 2nd Congressional District.

Research Instruments

Two instruments were used. The first was a validated survey questionnaire assessing the extent of teachers' pedagogical practices across five parameters, rated on a five-point Likert scale (1 = Very Slightly Practiced to 5 = Always Practiced). The second was a rubric-based instrument evaluating students' composition writing proficiency across five dimensions on an equivalent five-point proficiency scale (1 = Least Proficient to 5 = Highly Proficient). Both instruments were adapted from established scales and validated by content experts prior to use.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (mean, weighted mean) were used to describe the levels of pedagogical practices and writing proficiency. Spearman rho correlation analysis was employed to determine the significance of relationships between the variables. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to ascertain the extent of influence of pedagogical practices on each writing proficiency dimension. Statistical significance was evaluated at both the 1% ($p < .01$) and 5% ($p < .05$) levels.

RESULTS

Extent of Teachers' Pedagogical Practices

Table 2 presents the weighted means and descriptive ratings for each pedagogical practice. Differentiated instruction (M = 4.35) and guided writing (M = 4.29) were always practiced, reflecting teachers' strong commitment to scaffolding and learner-centered approaches. Collaborative writing (M = 4.21) also reached the always-practiced threshold, while feedback engagement (M = 4.16) and technology integration (M = 3.61) were oftentimes practiced.

The overall mean of 4.12 indicates that pedagogical practices are generally well-employed, though feedback-related and technology-based strategies have room for greater consistency.

Table 2: ***Extent of Teachers' Pedagogical Practices in Composition Writing.***

Pedagogical Practice	Weighted Mean	Description
Differentiated Instruction	4.35	Always Practiced
Guided Writing	4.29	Always Practiced
Collaborative Writing	4.21	Always Practiced
Feedback Engagement	4.16	Oftentimes Practiced
Technology Integration	3.61	Oftentimes Practiced
Overall Mean	4.12	Oftentimes Practiced

Note. Scale: 4.21–5.00 = Always Practiced; 3.41–4.20 = Oftentimes Practiced; 2.61–3.40 = Moderately Practiced.

Level of Students' Composition Writing Proficiency

Table 3 summarizes students' writing proficiency levels. Content and idea development (M = 3.82), organization and structure (M = 3.70), language use/vocabulary (M = 3.70), and mechanics (M = 3.52) were rated proficient. Grammar and punctuation (M = 3.30) reached only moderately proficient. The overall grand mean of 3.61 indicates a generally proficient but unevenly developed writing competence, with grammar and organizational coherence identified as areas most in need of instructional attention.

Table 3: ***Level of Students' Composition Writing Proficiency.***

Writing Dimension	Weighted Mean	Description
Content and Idea Development	3.82	Proficient
Organization and Structure	3.70	Proficient
Language Use/Vocabulary	3.70	Proficient
Mechanics	3.52	Proficient
Grammar and Punctuation Marks	3.30	Moderately Proficient
Grand Mean	3.61	Proficient

Note. Scale: 4.21–5.00 = Highly Proficient; 3.41–4.20 = Proficient; 2.61–3.40 = Moderately Proficient.

Relationship Between Pedagogical Practices and Writing Proficiency

Spearman rho correlation analysis (Table 4) revealed statistically significant relationships between most pedagogical practices and composition writing proficiency dimensions. Feedback engagement yielded the strongest correlations ($r = 0.705$ to 0.820, $p < .01$) across all five dimensions, confirming its paramount role in writing instruction. Collaborative writing also produced strong positive correlations ($r = 0.539$ to 0.638, $p < .01$). Technology integration ($r = 0.448$ to 0.515, $p < .01$) and guided writing ($r = 0.253$ to 0.384, $p < .01$) demonstrated moderate but significant correlations. Differentiated instruction showed the weakest though still significant correlations with select dimensions ($r = 0.155$ to 0.180, $p < .05$). These findings led to the rejection of the null hypothesis that no significant relationship exists between teachers' pedagogical practices and students' composition writing proficiency.

Table 4: ***Spearman Rho Correlation Matrix: Pedagogical Practices and Composition Writing Proficiency.***

Pedagogical Practice	Content	Organization	Vocabulary	Grammar	Mechanics
Differentiated Instruction	0.180*	0.149	0.155*	0.125	0.161*
Guided Writing	0.384**	0.371**	0.357**	0.326**	0.253**
Collaborative Writing	0.615**	0.638**	0.605**	0.632**	0.539**
Feedback Engagement	0.760**	0.791**	0.762**	0.820**	0.705**
Technology Integration	0.515**	0.508**	0.450**	0.476**	0.448**

Note. *$p < .05$; **$p < .01$ (two-tailed).

Influence of Pedagogical Practices on Writing Proficiency

Multiple regression analysis (Table 5) confirmed that pedagogical practices collectively exerted a significant influence on all five writing proficiency dimensions. The R^2 values ranged from .340 (language use/vocabulary) to .666 (grammar and punctuation), indicating that pedagogical strategies explain between 34% and 67% of the variance in students' writing performance. Across all dimensions, feedback engagement was the strongest and most consistent positive predictor, with t-values ranging from 5.494 to 9.194 (all $p < .001$). Technology integration emerged as a significant positive predictor of mechanics ($\beta = 0.230$, $t = 2.732$, $p = .007$). Differentiated instruction showed a significant negative influence on content and idea development ($\beta = -0.262$, $t = -1.982$, $p = .049$), organization and structure ($\beta = -0.372$, $t = -2.463$, $p = .015$), and grammar and punctuation ($\beta = -0.275$, $t = -1.918$, $p =$

.050). Guided writing and collaborative writing did not reach statistical significance in the regression models, though their positive coefficients suggest directional contributions.

Table 5: ***Summary of Multiple Regression Results: Influence of Pedagogical Practices on Composition Writing Proficiency.***

Writing Dimension	Strongest Predictor (β)	t-value	p-value	R^2	F-value
Content & Idea Devt.	Feedback Engagement (0.845)	7.111	.000**	.587	45.538
Organization & Structure	Feedback Engagement (1.102)	8.110	.000**	.634	55.398
Language Use/Vocabulary	Feedback Engagement (0.978)	7.651	.000**	.340	35.887
Grammar & Punctuation	Feedback Engagement (1.188)	9.194	.000**	.666	63.939
Mechanics	Feedback Engagement (0.695)	5.494	.000**	.516	34.150

Note. **p < .01. Technology integration also significantly predicted Mechanics (β = 0.230, t = 2.732, p = .007). Differentiated instruction showed significant negative effects on Content (β = -0.262, p = .049), Organization (β = -0.372, p = .015), and Grammar (β = -0.275, p = .050).

DISCUSSION

The finding that feedback engagement consistently emerges as the most powerful predictor of all writing proficiency dimensions is firmly grounded in the theoretical and empirical literature. Nicol (2021) and Andrade et al. (2021) emphasized that constructive feedback strengthens self-regulated learning and enables students to refine their ideas with clarity and depth. Smith and Lipnevich (2018) similarly demonstrated that targeted feedback provides concrete guidance that translates into measurable writing improvement. The strong beta coefficients observed in this study (0.695 to 1.188 across dimensions) validate these theoretical propositions within the specific context of Philippine public elementary schools. When teachers consistently provide written comments, oral feedback, and structured opportunities for self-assessment, students are better equipped to understand their writing errors and apply corrections systematically across all aspects of composition.

The significant positive contribution of technology integration to mechanics performance is consistent with Dube (2021) and Yilmaz (2020), who documented the value of digital tools in

supporting technical accuracy. Grammar checkers, spell-check tools, and digital formatting features provide immediate, objective feedback that reinforces mechanical conventions. This finding suggests that even limited technology use—such as the multimedia tools reported in the survey (M = 4.30)—carries meaningful instructional value for students' technical writing accuracy.

The unexpected negative influence of differentiated instruction on content development, organization, and grammar deserves careful interpretation. Suprayogi et al. (2017) and Gheyssens et al. (2020) cautioned that differentiated instruction is theoretically promising but practically challenging, often failing without sufficient teacher training, clear scaffolding frameworks, and adequate preparation time. In the Cotabato context, where teachers manage large, multilingual, and heterogeneous classes with limited resources, differentiation that is inconsistently applied may fragment instructional coherence, leading to weaker writing outcomes in the very dimensions it theoretically aims to support. This finding is not a rejection of differentiated instruction as a concept, but a call for more structured, rubric-anchored, and scaffolded implementation.

The non-significance of guided writing and collaborative writing in regression models, despite their strong positive correlations, likely reflects multicollinearity with feedback engagement—which dominates the explanatory variance. Both strategies, when combined with robust feedback, are expected to contribute to writing improvement; their individual regression coefficients may understate their actual instructional value. Pham (2019) and Ismiati and Fitria (2021) documented the effectiveness of these strategies under optimal implementation conditions, suggesting that contextual constraints in Cotabato schools may limit their maximum potential impact.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that teachers' pedagogical practices significantly shape students' composition writing proficiency in Grade VI public elementary classrooms in Cotabato Division. Feedback engagement is the most powerful and consistent pedagogical predictor of writing outcomes across all five dimensions assessed, underscoring its indispensability in composition writing instruction. Technology integration provides meaningful support specifically for mechanical accuracy. Differentiated instruction, though widely practiced, requires more carefully structured and scaffolded implementation to avoid counterproductive fragmentation of instructional focus.

The findings carry clear implications for educational policy and teacher professional development. Schools and divisions should prioritize systematic, high-quality feedback practices—including rubric-based assessment, individual written comments, and structured revision cycles—as the cornerstone of composition writing instruction. Technology integration programs that extend beyond multimedia presentation to include student-interactive writing and editing tools should be expanded. Professional development for differentiated instruction must be contextualized, scaffolded, and embedded in practical classroom frameworks appropriate to large, heterogeneous, and resource-limited Philippine elementary settings.

Future research should explore the longitudinal effects of sustained feedback-centered writing instruction, the role of mother tongue-based approaches in supporting English composition development, and the specific mechanisms through which collaborative writing and guided writing contribute to proficiency gains when feedback quality is controlled.

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