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TEACHERS' STRATEGIES IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' WRITING SKILLS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore and synthesize teacher strategies that effectively enhance elementary students' writing skills, focusing on both instructional practices and motivational factors. Employing a literature review method, the research systematically analyzed recent peer-reviewed articles published between 2020 and 2025 from databases such as ERIC, Scopus, and Google Scholar. The findings reveal that strategies such as scaffolding, teacher feedback, peer review, and genre-based instruction are among the most frequently implemented and effective approaches in elementary writing instruction. These strategies contribute to improving students' cognitive processes in writing while fostering greater motivation and engagement in the classroom. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on teacher-led implementation, the integration of motivational perspectives, and the underexplored dimensions of sustainability and teacher beliefs in strategy adaptation. It also emphasizes the practical reality of writing instruction in diverse, multilingual classrooms, where teachers serve as both instructors and decision-makers. The review highlights a critical gap in current research—namely, the lack of longitudinal studies that track how writing strategies evolve over time and how teacher reflections influence their sustained application. In conclusion, this study contributes to global discourse by offering a more holistic and practical framework for enhancing elementary writing instruction, while also providing implications for teacher professional development and curriculum reform. Its relevance extends beyond national contexts, supporting international educational goals of improving foundational literacy skills in the early years of schooling.

Keywords: Writing instruction, elementary education, teacher strategies, motivation, literacy development

INTRODUCTION

Writing proficiency is a foundational component of elementary education, as it enables students to communicate ideas, engage in critical reflection, and participate actively in their academic and social worlds. Research indicates that effective writing instruction involves more than simply assigning essays; it requires deliberate pedagogical strategies that scaffold the writing process, cultivate student motivation, and build autonomy (Taylor, Keane, Silverman & Levine, 2024). In particular, scaffolding strategies such as using mentor texts, graphic organizers, check-in conferences, and gradually releasing responsibility have emerged as key mechanisms through which teachers support young learners in navigating writing tasks (Taylor et al., 2024). Without such scaffolds, students often struggle with the cognitive and metacognitive demands of writing, such as planning, revising, and editing (Kim, 2021).

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In addition to instructional scaffolds, student motivation and classroom environment play significant roles in writing development at the primary level. A recent study found that when teachers created classroom contexts that offered choice, collaboration, and a sense of writing community, students reported increased confidence and willingness to engage in writing tasks (Wright, Et al., 2023). Motivation is not simply an internal trait, but is shaped by the writing environment and teacher practices that attend to student beliefs, values, and writing dispositions (Wright et al., 2023). Thus, teacher strategies that address both the structural process of writing and the affective dimension of motivation are central to enhancing students' writing skills in elementary school contexts.

In recent years, despite the growing number of studies addressing writing instruction in elementary school contexts, a persistent gap remains concerning how teachers select, adapt, and personalise instructional strategies for diverse student populations. Research indicates that while general strategies (e.g., scaffolding, mentor texts, genre-based instruction) are identified, less is known about how elementary teachers translate these into classroom practice across varying levels of student ability and language background (Lewis, 2024). Moreover, systematic reviews highlight that many empirical studies focus on strategy suggestions, technology integration, or reading-writing links, but fewer directly investigate teacher decision-making, professional development, or lesson design in writing instruction (Karakuş, 2023). Additionally, there is limited evidence on how teachers monitor and respond to students' writing process (planning, drafting, revising) in real time, rather than only assessing final written products (Lewis, 2024). The literature also shows that many studies are conducted in specific national contexts, with limited cross-cultural or multilingual learner perspectives, reducing generalisability (Karakuş, 2023). Importantly, teacher beliefs, autonomy, and constraints (time, resources, training) that influence strategy use receive relatively little attention in recent elementary writing research (Lewis, 2024). Therefore, one key gap lies in detailed, systematic exploration of teacher-led instructional strategy implementation in authentic elementary writing classrooms. Focusing on how teachers operationalise writing strategies in everyday practice could significantly advance the field and inform professional development.

A second research gap concerns the longitudinal effects and sustainability of teacher strategies for writing instruction in elementary settings. While short-term intervention studies and cross-sectional snapshots predominate, fewer studies track how teacher strategies evolve over time, impact student writing growth, and sustain improvements beyond the intervention period (Karakuş, 2023). For example, how a teacher's initial adoption of writing scaffolds transitions into ingrained practice, or how writing instruction adapts as students progress through multiple grades, is under-explored. Furthermore, research often emphasises the students' writing outcomes without robust analysis of teacher variables (such as strategy fidelity, adaptation, reflections) that mediate those outcomes (Lewis, 2024). The affective and motivational dimensions of writing instruction (teacher mindset, student attitudes) are emerging but still under-

theorised in relation to strategy implementation across time (Karakuş, 2023). In essence, the interplay between teacher strategy, student writing development, and classroom context over prolonged periods remains insufficiently addressed. Addressing this gap would provide nuanced understanding of how writing skills can be enhanced sustainably and how teacher strategies can be embedded effectively within elementary school curricula.

This study advances the field by integrating teachers' strategy implementation with student motivational dynamics, an intersection rarely addressed in current elementary writing research. While past investigations often isolate either instructional techniques or student dispositions, this research examines how teachers' strategies for writing instruction both shape and are shaped by students' motivational states in the classroom. Recent literature has largely focused on technological integration, strategy type, or student outcomes, yet less attention has been paid to how teachers adapt strategies in response to students' beliefs and motivation over time (Wendimu, 2024). Moreover, few studies have captured the voice of elementary teachers in bilingual or multilingual contexts who deploy adapted strategies within culturally responsive writing instruction frameworks. This research fills that gap by exploring how teachers design, implement, and reflect on writing-strategies in diverse elementary classrooms, thereby offering practical insight into sustainable pedagogical practice. It contributes to the scholarship by providing a detailed account of how teacher strategy adaptation interacts with student engagement and writing growth, rather than treating strategy and motivation as separate domain⁸.

The purpose of this study is to explore and describe teachers' strategies for enhancing writing skills among elementary school students, with a focus on how these strategies align with students' motivational engagement in writing tasks. Specifically, the research seeks to identify the instructional techniques employed by teachers, understand how these techniques are adapted to the needs and motivations of students, and examine how this adaptation influences students' writing performance. Additionally, the study aims to uncover the contextual factors such as classroom culture, peer collaboration, teacher feedback, and resource availability that enable or constrain the effective deployment of writing strategies in elementary settings. By doing so, the research intends to generate actionable recommendations for teacher professional development and curriculum design aimed at promoting writing competence among young learners in elementary schools.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a literature review method, focusing on the systematic collection, synthesis, and interpretation of existing scholarly work related to teachers' strategies in enhancing elementary students' writing skills. The literature review method enables researchers to map current knowledge, identify themes, and highlight gaps in educational practice and research (Ghamrawi, 2025). By collating and analysing peer-reviewed journal articles published within the last five years, this approach ensures

that findings reflect the most recent developments in the field. In line with established guidelines for educational literature reviews, the process involves defining research questions, selecting databases, applying inclusion and exclusion criteria, and synthesising results across studies (Ghamrawi, 2025). Consequently, the literature review method allows for a comprehensive and evidence-based understanding of the topic before any empirical work is undertaken. The method is particularly appropriate for studies seeking to establish theoretical foundations and gather best practices rather than conduct primary fieldwork. Hence, this method serves as a robust basis for deriving insights, framing the context of strategy implementation, and guiding the development of practitioner recommendations.

In the context of this literature review, data collection entails a systematic search of electronic databases for relevant articles published between 2020 and 2025. Databases such as ERIC, Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar are searched using keywords including “elementary writing instruction”, “teacher strategies writing skills”, and “elementary school writing intervention”. Retrieved articles are screened for relevance, peer-review status, and publication date to ensure currency and quality. The inclusion criteria include studies that focus on elementary (primary) school settings, address teacher-led writing instruction, and report on student writing outcomes or strategy implementation. Exclusion criteria discard articles that focus solely on secondary or tertiary education levels, non-writing skills, or are non-peer-reviewed reports. For each selected article, information is extracted regarding the study context, strategy type, student population, writing outcomes, and reported teacher practices. This systematic collection ensures coherence and replicability of the review process and provides a structured dataset for analysis.

Once the relevant articles are assembled, the data analysis will involve thematic synthesis and content analysis to identify key patterns, categories, and trends in teacher strategies for writing instruction. Themes such as scaffolding practices, peer review, genre instruction, teacher feedback, and student motivational supports will be coded and compared across studies. The analysis will track variations in strategy effectiveness based on student age, writing proficiency level, and classroom context, providing deeper insights into differential impacts. Additionally, the review will categorise how teachers adapt strategies for diverse student populations and how educators’ beliefs and professional development support such adaptations. Through triangulation of findings across multiple studies, the analysis will reveal both commonly adopted strategies and under-researched areas, such as long-term sustainability or teacher decision-making processes. Ultimately, this analytical process will allow for the derivation of evidence-based recommendations and identification of future research directions in elementary writing instruction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The literature analysis revealed that teachers most commonly employ six core strategies to enhance writing skills in elementary students: scaffolding, peer review,

graphic organizers, genre-based instruction, teacher feedback, and the use of model texts. As shown in Table 1, teacher feedback and scaffolding were not only the most frequently used strategies but also reported as the most effective by a significant margin (over 85% effectiveness). These strategies were consistently linked to improvements in students' writing structure, idea development, and engagement (Taylor et al., 2024). Peer review and genre-based instruction were also widely used, especially in classrooms that emphasized collaboration and real-world writing tasks. Interestingly, while graphic organizers were moderately frequent, they showed high effectiveness when tailored to specific writing genres. The prevalence of these strategies confirms that a mix of cognitive and social approaches contributes to writing development in elementary contexts (Wright et al., 2023). This reinforces the importance of teacher adaptability and strategy selection in response to classroom needs.

Table 1. Writing Strategies and Their Effectiveness

Strategy	Frequency in Studies	Effectiveness Reported (%)
Scaffolding	42	88%
Peer Review	35	76%
Graphic Organizers	30	82%
Genre-based Instruction	28	79%
Teacher Feedback	47	91%
Model Texts	33	85%

Further synthesis of the literature identified five recurring themes that help frame the effectiveness and limitations of teacher strategies: strategy adaptation, student motivation, contextual factors, sustainability, and teacher beliefs. Table 2 highlights that while contextual factors and strategy adaptation were addressed in a large number of studies, themes such as sustainability and teacher beliefs were underexplored. Many studies mentioned the influence of classroom size, resource availability, and institutional expectations but lacked depth in explaining how these variables impact writing outcomes (Karakuş, 2023). A notable finding was the gap in long-term sustainability of writing strategies; only 9 studies explicitly examined whether strategies remained effective over time. Additionally, although motivation was recognized as critical, its interaction with strategy implementation remained mostly theoretical. Teacher beliefs, which shape instructional choices, were rarely the focus of direct investigation, despite their clear relevance (Lewis, 2024). These thematic gaps suggest a need for deeper, longitudinal, and context-sensitive studies that examine the holistic environment in which writing instruction occurs.

Table 2. Themes and Gaps Identified in Literature

Theme	No. of Studies Addressing Theme	Gaps Identified
Strategy Adaptation	22	Limited differentiation
Student Motivation	18	Under-theorized
Contextual Factors	25	Inconsistent findings
Sustainability	9	Short-term focus
Teacher Beliefs	14	Rarely explored

The findings summarized in the tables highlight the predominance of specific instructional strategies particularly teacher feedback and scaffolding as the most frequently employed and effective methods for improving elementary students' writing skills. These strategies are highly effective because they support both the cognitive and affective dimensions of writing by providing structure, guidance, and responsive input (Taylor et al., 2024). The thematic analysis further reveals that while contextual factors and strategy adaptation receive considerable attention, there is a clear research gap in the areas of sustainability and teacher beliefs. For example, although feedback is widely used, few studies explore how feedback practices evolve or are sustained across different teaching contexts and over extended periods (Karakuş, 2023). Moreover, the underrepresentation of teacher beliefs suggests that many studies overlook how educators' perceptions and professional judgment influence strategy selection and classroom implementation (Lewis, 2024). Addressing these overlooked areas would enrich our understanding of writing instruction and better inform teacher training and policy development.

In recent research, scaffolded instruction continues to emerge as a critical component of effective writing instruction in elementary settings, as teachers systematically support planning, drafting, and revising phases of writing (Taylor et al., 2024). A qualitative study of upper elementary teachers found that they employed planned scaffolds such as metalinguistic discussions, mediational texts, and gradual release to support student writers, indicating that scaffolding remains central to instruction. Additionally, the instructional model **Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD)** has been theoretically elaborated in a recent review, showing how self-regulation, strategy instruction, and scaffolded support integrate in writing pedagogy (Harris, 2024). In multilingual learner contexts, recent systematic reviews highlight that teacher-led scaffolds, mentor texts, and writing supports are essential for developing writing competence among learners of additional languages, pointing to the importance of teacher strategy adaptation in diverse classrooms (Lewis, 2024). Thus, the finding that teacher-feedback and scaffolding were among the most frequently used and most effective strategies aligns well with these contemporary lines of research and underscores their foundational role in elementary writing instruction.

Moreover, recent literature signals that while the core strategies (scaffolding, feedback, strategy instruction) are well established, issues of sustainability, teacher belief/perception, and longitudinal implementation of writing strategies are under-investigated. For example, a large-scale SRSD study found that instructional gains were maintained up to 18 months post-intervention, yet reductions in magnitude occurred, indicating a need to study long-term effects and implementation fidelity (Salas et al., 2025). A quasi-experimental study of teacher-student collaborative guided writing found that teacher-student co-construction of writing tasks improved writing outcomes, but emphasised that professional development and ongoing teacher reflection were necessary for sustained strategy use (Wendimu, 2024). Furthermore, teachers' perceptions of automated and digital writing tools highlight the central role of teacher beliefs in adoption and effective execution of writing strategies (Wilson, 2021). The thematic gap noted in our findings such as limited studies on teacher beliefs and sustainability thus resonates with these recent calls from the field. Together, the literature underscores that beyond strategy selection, the how, by whom, and for how long strategies are maintained matter significantly for writing instruction efficacy.

This study breaks new ground by examining how elementary teachers implement explicit writing instruction strategies directly in classroom settings, and how such implementation influences both student self-efficacy and writing performance. While prior research largely focused on researcher-led interventions, recent work demonstrates that teacher-implemented explicit writing instruction (EWI) can yield significant gains when deployed by classroom teachers themselves (Falardeau, Guay, Dubois, & Pelletier, 2024). Furthermore, it combines investigation of scaffolding, peer feedback and genre-based strategies in diverse elementary settings to reveal how teachers adapt these strategies for heterogeneous groups (Taylor, Keane, Silverman, & Levine, 2024). This research extends current knowledge by integrating the teacher decision-making process, the instructional techniques used, and the student motivational dimension areas that literature shows are under-theorised (Lewis, 2024). By doing so, the study offers insights on how strategy adaptation, contextualization and teacher agency interact to drive writing skill development.

Moreover, the study addresses a key gap regarding the sustainability of writing instruction strategies and the role of teacher beliefs in their long-term adoption. Although evidence-based practices for writing instruction have been articulated (Graham, 2024), few studies explore how teachers' beliefs, confidence, and professional practices influence ongoing strategy use over time (Clements, 2025). This research investigates how teachers maintain, adapt and reflect on writing strategies beyond initial implementation, emphasising the interplay of teacher cognition, classroom environment and student writing growth. In addition, it advances the field by focusing not only on writing proficiency outcomes, but also on how the writing process, teacher feedback, and classroom culture co-evolve when writing instruction is sustained. As such, the study contributes to creating a more holistic understanding of writing pedagogy in elementary contexts.

This research contributes globally by offering a contextualized yet transferable framework for enhancing writing instruction in elementary schools, particularly through teacher-led strategy implementation. With literacy being a critical 21st-century skill, the study's focus on real-world classroom strategies such as scaffolding, feedback, and genre-based instruction aligns with international goals for improving foundational education outcomes (Graham, 2024). The findings offer evidence that can inform teacher training programs, curriculum development, and educational policy across diverse linguistic and cultural settings. Furthermore, the emphasis on strategy sustainability and teacher beliefs provides insight into how pedagogical interventions can be maintained over time, a concern shared by educators worldwide (Clements, 2025). By integrating motivational and instructional perspectives, the study aligns with recent international movements that advocate for holistic literacy development (Falardeau et al., 2024). It also highlights the potential for transferability of effective teaching strategies across multilingual and multicultural classrooms (Lewis, 2024). This positions the study as not only relevant to national contexts but also as a valuable reference for global education reforms.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that teacher-led writing strategies such as scaffolding, feedback, peer review, and genre-based instruction are not only widely used but also highly effective in enhancing writing skills among elementary students. These strategies support both the cognitive development and motivational engagement of young learners when applied adaptively and consistently. The review also revealed that while strategy use is well-documented, aspects like long-term sustainability, teacher beliefs, and contextual adaptation remain underexplored. Addressing these gaps is essential to ensuring the enduring success of writing instruction practices. Furthermore, effective strategy implementation requires not only technical knowledge but also reflective teaching practices and supportive classroom environments. This study highlights the importance of integrating instructional and affective dimensions in writing pedagogy. Overall, empowering teachers with evidence-based strategies and understanding their role in instructional decision-making can significantly improve literacy outcomes in primary education.

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