

# Using Digital Tools in Responsive And Genre-Based Writing Approach for First-Year University Students

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## Abstract

Writing in English helps students to express their feelings and communicate their ideas while interacting with their readers. In this session, the speaker will share a lesson plan discussing the responsive writing approach to help English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students in a higher education setting write meaningfully, meet their particular writing purpose by implementing their readers' preference for the specific genre (i.e., a procedural text) that becomes the final product of their writing, and have opportunities to explore and express their ideas by writing creatively. The lesson plan provides pre-activities, main activities, and reflection at the end of the lesson, supported by various digital tools. Digital literacy may be a concern in this lesson plan because the students need to work collaboratively using *Google Slides* and other supporting digital tools. However, the students are expected to collaboratively use *Google Slides* as the primary digital tool in writing the procedural text. Because writing is more challenging than other language skills, hopefully, the teachers' stimulators in responsive writing will guide the students in writing a procedural text. My presentation will interest EFL teachers looking for a creative teaching technique and ideas for teaching a procedure text supported by various digital tools.

**Keywords – Responsive writing, Genre-based writing, Digital Tools, Procedural Text, EFL Teaching and Learning**

## Introduction

Writing is a language skill that can be more of an endeavour in language learning, and it is learned by university EFL students, especially those majoring in English education. The lecturer can use many approaches to teaching writing to have students write well, and one of the approaches is responsive writing. According to Abeywickrama and Brown (2018), in responsive writing, students create a simplified discourse by connecting phrases and sentences to form paragraphs, which means this approach enables students to organize their thought effectively and express themselves clearly in writing a paragraph. The statement is similar to what Brown and Lee (2015) call guided writing, which requires students to respond to teachers' stimuli. In guided writing, teachers encourage students to respond and participate

actively in the writing process, which can lead the students into collaborative writing. Thus, responsive writing empowers students to engage in the writing process actively and allows them to improve their language competence, write more effectively, and enhance their creativity.

In addition to responsive writing, this lesson plan also uses a genre-based writing approach. A writing genre is distinguished by its characteristic structure and format, which are adjusted to match the standards or expectations of certain discourse communities, and students need to pay attention to the structures, which are called the norms of the composition (Harmer, 2015). According to Matsuda and Silva (2018), genre-based writing includes a variety of genres or forms of writing that shift focus from the writer to the reader, which

means the students have a good chance or opportunity to investigate the discourse characteristics through genre-based writing. In line with what Brown and Lee (2015) believed, genre-based writing also enables students to concentrate on the unique characteristics and features which enable them to understand how to communicate effectively. Research conducted by Haerazi and Irawan (2019) and Nagao (2018) also found that students are benefited when they understand the general structure of the writing genre. Moreover, this paper would like to present one lesson plan that provides readers with responsive, genre-based writing integrated with various technology tools: *google docs*, *classtools*, and *LiveWorksheets* as adapted from a book chapter written by Kurniawan and Januardi (2023) for first-year university students, and the lesson plan should interest EFL teachers and lecturers who are willing to teach writing using responsive and genre-based writing approaches.

## Method

The writer did not use qualitative or quantitative methods. Similar to Mali (2022), this paper aims to provide a lesson plan and practical insights for teaching writing procedural text to first-semester university students. Hopefully, at the end of the lesson, students will be able to recognize and point out features of a procedural paragraph and write a procedural paragraph collaboratively.

## Teacher's Preparation

To be well-prepared, a teacher needs to carefully plan and organize the lesson, become competent about the subject matter, and comprehend the learning objectives. The teacher also needs to understand the needs of the students. Moreover, teachers must carefully design meaningful learning experiences and facilitate students in the classroom.

Teachers must be aware of their student's level of digital literacy and might give the students instructions and additional time to get along with the tools. The teachers may need extra time to plan and create online activities (Castillo-Cuesta et al., 2021). In the lesson plan, the writer suggests various technology tools:

### *Google Slides*

(<https://www.google.com/slides/about/> )

The use of *Google Slides* goes beyond just being a tool for making slideshows for teachers; it also has many potentials for engaging students' interest and promoting group writing. By using visual aids, multimedia components, and interactive features, a slideshow can also be used in the classroom to engage students. For instance, *Google Slides* has many advantages for group writing projects. The sharing feature promotes a collaborative and interactive writing environment by allowing students to modify the same page simultaneously. Students can share ideas, give real-time comments, and collaboratively construct written texts. Teachers can encourage collaborative writing skills by using *Google Slides*' features, allowing students to actively participate in the writing process and develop their teamwork through meaningful group projects. Teachers can also show the students' group progress in front of the class by clicking the grid view, as shown in Figure 1.

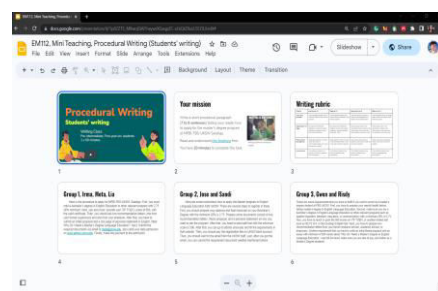


Figure 1. Grid view of Google Slides

## Classtools

(<https://www.classtools.net/>)

*Classtools* is a website for teachers that provides templates for creating games and quizzes. By giving templates for making games and quizzes, *classtools* is used extensively in this lesson plan to create an online cloze test that is useful for assessment tools in which students are tasked with filling in the blanks in a text that can be seen in Figure 2. Teachers can create interactive cloze tests that promote active learning and reinforce students' comprehension and language skills. Teachers can choose the text passage to stimulate students' learning and decide which gaps should be filled. This flexibility ensures that the Cloze test aligns with the learning objectives and assesses students' understanding. In this lesson plan, the text selected should be procedural text, and the gaps the students should fill are the time-order transition words as the components of a procedural text.

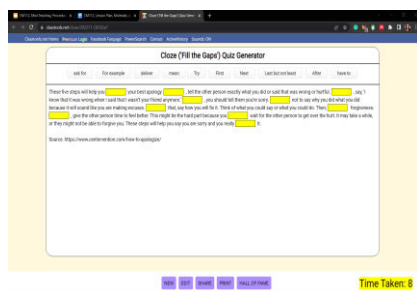


Figure 2. Online cloze test using *Classtools*

## LiveWorksheets

(<https://www.LiveWorksheets.com/>)

*LiveWorksheets* is a website that provides interactive online exercises which include self-correction. This website provides sounds, videos, drag-and-drop exercises,

multiple choice, and more. In this lesson plan, this website is used for creating drag-and-drop exercises for the third main activity, which can be seen in Figure 3. Through the use of *LiveWorksheets*, teachers may create dynamic, interactive learning assignments that can encourage students to participate actively. The built-in self-correction ability of *LiveWorksheets* is one of its benefits. With this feature, students may get immediate feedback on their answers and see which part of the text they can improve. The aim of using *LiveWorksheets* in this lesson plan is to facilitate the students in arranging sentences into a paragraph which can help to give insights for the students in making a correct, coherent procedural paragraph.

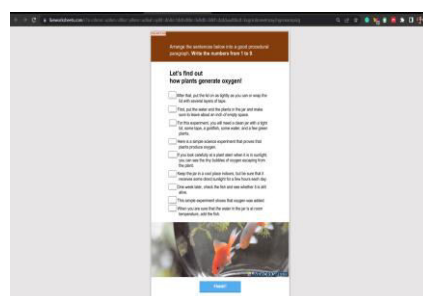


Figure 3. Re-arranging a procedural paragraph using *LiveWorksheets*

## Lesson Plan

This lesson plan aims to teach writing to Indonesian EFL students, especially first-semester university students. Because this lesson plan is genre-based, the topic of this lesson plan will be focused on procedural text with a time allocation of 50 minutes for one meeting. Hopefully, at the end of the lesson, students will be able to point out features of a procedural paragraph and write a procedural paragraph collaboratively.

Like Yuliansyah and Ayu (2021), this lesson plan consists of three steps of

teaching: pre-teaching, main activities, and post-teaching.

### Pre-teaching

Teachers must create a friendly and welcoming classroom environment during the opening or pre-teaching phase to encourage EFL students' participation and prepare them for the next session. Using emojis is one of the forms of communication that is efficient in creating a friendly learning environment. Research conducted by Velendia (2008) stated that an initial greeting or warm-up activity could significantly enhance learners' motivation and readiness for the next session. In line with this, the lesson plan presented uses a well-known or popular messaging app, e.g., Whatsapp and encourages students to share one or two emojis to represent their feelings. The use of social media, e.g., Whatsapp, Telegram, or online sharing platforms, might inspire students and foster a friendly environment.

### Main activities

The main activities of this lesson plan started with inviting students to share their experiences. To be able to build students' knowledge at the beginning of the class or to trigger students' curiosity before the class, the teacher invites students to share their experiences about following certain processes or reading any procedural information. After asking the questions, the teacher shows some pictures related to procedural text or information that might be well-known or familiar to the students. For example, how to be happy, as shown in Figure 4.



Figure 4. How to be happy (retrieved from <http://www.incidentalcomics.com/2018/04/how-to-be-happy.html>)

After students gain insights through pictures and triggering questions, the teacher provides three model paragraphs to shape their understanding of the procedural paragraph they will create. In the first model paragraph, students are invited to read and analyze the components of the procedural paragraph. In this session, students are expected to draw their attention to the topic, supporting ideas, time-order transition words, and instructional verbs or expressions.

In the second model paragraph, students are expected to do an online cloze test of a procedural text. This activity aims to recall students' memories of the components. The cloze test was created using *classtools* website, and the link will be shared through the WhatsApp group. After students finish the second model paragraph, students are expected to do an online arranged sentence created using *LiveWorksheets*. In this section, students might discuss their work in groups with classmates. All the links related to online activities were shared using the class WhatsApp group.

At the end of the main activity, students are expected to create a procedural paragraph using *google slides*. The teacher facilitates and provides students with the Google slide. The students just need to write collaboratively on the page

provided. For the graded exercise, students are asked to write a short procedural paragraph with the criteria:

1. Consisting of 7 to 9 sentences
2. Using the theme: How to apply for a graduate university program according to this brochure (<https://fbs.uksw.edu/pages/magister-pendidikan-bahasa-inggris>)
3. Being given 20 minutes to complete the writing task, and the results are enclosed on *google slides*

Thus, to effectively engage students in the process of learning procedural writing, the main activities integrate various online activities and technological tools. The main activities also offer chances for interaction, analysis, practice, and collaboration, which might empower students to become more confident writers.

### **Post-teaching and reflection**

In the post-teaching or closing activity, the teacher invites students to share what they have learned and collaboratively reviews the lesson with the students. The sharing and reviewing session might engage students and teachers to reflect on what they have learned together. This reflection could be informal, just as a brief discussion about what students found challenging or interesting. Reflection enables students to engage in metacognition and interpret their experiences. Reflection also helps students gain more self-assurance, trust, and the capacity to express their genuine concerns and interests in writing (Sudirman et al., 2021). Hopefully, students will be able to reinforce and deepen their understanding of the material and express their interest in writing through this reflection.

### **Assessment**

Both formative and summative assessments are used in this lesson plan.

According to Mahshanian et al. (2019), formative assessment is a technique used by teachers as the teaching activity designer to gather data that can be used to revise the instruction and to make the lesson more effective and efficient. On the other hand, a summative assessment is conducted after the teaching and learning process is complete to verify the students' progress. In this lesson plan, the formative assessment can be seen in the second and third main activities, Followed by the summative assessment can be seen in the graded activity, writing a procedural text in *google slides*.

The graded activity in this lesson plan concentrates on helping students improve their writing abilities by having them utilize *google slides* to create a brief procedural paragraph. The criteria of students' graded assessment have been developed, including the topic, how ideas are organized and how the paragraph is logically sequenced, how the words are chosen, the spelling, and the conventions. By following the steps of this lesson plan activities, students will improve their writing abilities and show what they learn about the procedural text. Besides, the students also might show their teamwork in creating the paragraph.

### **Considerations and Conclusions**

The genre-based writing approach may seem too focused on the product, and the text production might be rushed, especially with limited time. Brown and Lee (2015) encourage teachers to help students develop a clear, well-organized, and effective piece of writing by guiding them through the writing process and helping them focus on the products. In addition, genre-based writing also needs to pay attention to the cycle of writing: prewriting, drafting, and revising, in contrast with the process-based approach. Therefore, writing stages must be explained to students and incorporated



into the writing process if the teachers can extend the allocated time.

Another consideration is that when students are from different backgrounds, using digital tools might be challenging because some students may still need to become familiar with the tools or need more expertise in accessing the technology. Besides, digital literacy also might be an issue that could arise if students need to become more familiar with the technology. Students might need additional time to finish the writing assignments.

This essay offers practical ideas on implementing digital technologies to develop and create responsive, genre-based writing. The responsive writing approach deals with sentences that compose a paragraph. It aims to help learners write more meaningfully, not in isolated sentences and contexts, and meet particular purposes by considering the readers of the specific genre that becomes the product of their writing. Students must also focus on the macro skills when writing responsively, such as using the appropriate forms and conventions of the discourse, accomplishing the communicative function of the genre, and conveying links and connections between ideas. Additionally, students are required to complete a limited discourse-level composition. Digital resources are used to increase student motivation, include them in different activities, and enable them to work with their classmates to develop the required writing genre.

Teachers should prepare themselves as well as the lesson, and several problems about the approach and the incorporation of technology should be considered. This lesson plan is intended to help students connect what they learn in class to their real-world experiences, which might motivate them to write more efficiently, purposefully, and meaningfully.

The writer welcomes readers to promote and develop teaching writing using technology through this article. Technology can improve students' writing skills, and it can give them access to plenty of materials, and make them easier to work together with their friends.

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