

Scaffolding Techniques in Teaching Writing to First-Year University Students: An Empirical Study at a University in Hanoi



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ABSTRACT: This study explores the application and effectiveness of various scaffolding techniques in improving the writing performance of first-year university students. The research focuses on three key questions: (1) how are scaffolding techniques applied in teaching writing? (2) What impact do these techniques have on students' writing performance? (3) Which scaffolding techniques are most effective in enhancing writing skills? A quantitative research design was employed, collecting data from 114 first-year students through pre-test and post-test assessments, as well as a survey among 12 teachers. The results reveal a significant improvement in post-test scores, demonstrating the overall positive impact of scaffolding techniques. Among the techniques evaluated, Utilizing Template emerged as the most effective, showing a statistically significant impact on students' writing performance. Other techniques, such as Modelling, Guided Practice, Offering Feedback, and Peer Collaboration, did not show significant effects in this study. These findings suggest that structured guidance through templates is particularly valuable in helping students improve their writing skills, while the impact of other techniques may require a longer timeframe to fully materialize. The study highlights the importance of careful scaffolding technique selection and provides insights for improving writing instruction in academic settings.

KEY WORDS: Scaffolding techniques, writing instruction, first year university students, utilizing template, modelling, guided practice, feedback, peer collaboration.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

The importance of writing in academic settings

Writing is a fundamental skill in academic settings as it serves as a primary mode of communication, knowledge dissemination, and critical thinking. In universities, writing is not just a tool for assessing students' understanding but also a means through which students engage with academic discourse, express complex ideas, and contribute to scholarly conversations (Hyland, 2019). Academic writing involves more than merely constructing grammatically correct sentences; it requires students to develop arguments, synthesize information, and engage with sources to create coherent, well-structured texts (Elbow, 1998).

One of the most critical functions of writing in academic settings is its role in knowledge construction. Through writing, students process, reflect upon, and integrate new information, thereby deepening their understanding of subject matter. This makes writing not only an output of learning but also an essential component of the learning process itself (Graham, 2019). Furthermore, strong writing skills are linked to academic success across disciplines. Whether students are producing essays, reports, research papers, or reflective journals, writing allows them to demonstrate their analytical abilities, critical thinking, and mastery of content (Hinkel, 2011).

In addition to its academic significance, writing is a key skill for professional development. University graduates are often required to write reports, proposals, and communications in various professional fields. Therefore, developing strong academic writing skills prepares students for the demands of the workforce (Gibbons, 2015).

Overview of scaffolding techniques in teaching writing skills

Scaffolding is an instructional approach rooted in Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the importance of guided learning through social interaction and support within a learner's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). In language education, scaffolding refers to the temporary support provided by a teacher that helps students accomplish tasks they would otherwise find difficult to complete independently (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Scaffolding techniques are particularly useful in teaching writing skills, as writing involves complex cognitive processes such as idea generation, organization, and revision.

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One key scaffolding technique in writing instruction is modelling, where the teacher demonstrates the writing process through examples. By showing how to structure an essay or use appropriate language forms, students can internalize the steps and strategies for their own writing (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Modelling helps students visualize the task at hand and offers them a concrete reference point when tackling their own assignments.

Guided practice is another essential scaffolding technique, where teachers provide structured exercises that gradually decrease in support as students build their skills. For instance, teachers might begin with sentence completion tasks and progressively move to more open-ended writing prompts. This gradual release of responsibility allows students to practice in a supported environment before moving to independent writing (Donato, 1994).

Peer collaboration is also widely used in writing scaffolding. In this technique, students work together to plan, draft, or revise their writing, benefiting from peer feedback and the exchange of ideas (Hyland & Hyland, 2006). Collaborative writing tasks not only help learners refine their language use but also encourage the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Another scaffolding approach involves providing writing frameworks or templates. These tools offer students a structured outline for organizing their writing, such as templates for argumentative essays or research papers. Frameworks help learners understand the conventions of academic writing and reduce cognitive load by giving them a clear structure to follow (Walqui, 2006).

Feedback plays a crucial role in scaffolding the writing process. Teachers provide constructive, formative feedback during the different stages of writing—planning, drafting, and revising—which helps students identify areas for improvement and refine their work (Hyland, 2019). Feedback should be timely and specific, focusing on both content and language use to help students gradually internalize writing strategies.

Finally, repetition and rehearsal are essential in scaffolding writing skills. Teachers encourage students to practice the same type of writing task multiple times with slight variations. This allows learners to reinforce their understanding of key concepts and improve their writing over time (Gibbons, 2015).

Overall, scaffolding techniques such as modelling, guided practice, peer collaboration, providing writing frameworks, feedback, and repetition are critical in helping students develop writing skills. By offering structured support, teachers can guide learners through the complexities of writing, enabling them to achieve greater proficiency and confidence.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

First-year university students often face significant challenges with academic writing. Many struggle with organizing their ideas logically and coherently—skills crucial for producing well-structured essays and reports. These students frequently encounter difficulties in structuring arguments, maintaining a clear flow of ideas, and ensuring coherence throughout their texts. Additionally, grammar and language use present challenges, especially for non-native English speakers or students who have not received extensive formal instruction in writing. Common issues include improper sentence structure, limited vocabulary, and inconsistent verb tense usage, all of which can obscure meaning and hinder communication.

These difficulties are further compounded by the precision, clarity, and formality that academic writing demands, expectations that many first-year students are unaccustomed to. As a result, students often feel overwhelmed by the task, leading to a lack of confidence in their writing abilities and lower academic performance.

One effective approach to addressing these challenges is through scaffolding techniques. Scaffolding provides structured support that gradually decreases as students gain proficiency. Techniques such as Modelling, Guided Practice, Peer Collaboration, and Feedback can help students improve organization, grammar, and overall coherence. By breaking the writing process into manageable steps and offering continuous guidance, scaffolding enables students to build the skills needed to independently tackle complex writing tasks. This study explores how scaffolding techniques can be used to overcome these difficulties and improve first-year students' academic writing performance.

1.3. Research Objectives

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the application of scaffolding techniques in teaching writing to first-year university students. Specifically, the research aims to explore how scaffolding techniques are implemented at a selected university in Hanoi. This includes examining the various methods employed by instructors to support students during the writing process, such as modelling, guided practice, and feedback, and how these techniques are applied to help students improve their writing skills over time.

Additionally, this study seeks to evaluate the impact of scaffolding techniques on the writing performance of first-year students. The research will assess whether students demonstrate measurable improvements in their writing abilities after receiving scaffolded instruction. By examining students' progress, the study will provide insights into the effectiveness of scaffolding in enhancing their ability to organize ideas, use correct grammar, and maintain coherence in their writing.

Finally, the research aims to identify which specific scaffolding techniques are most effective in improving the writing skills of first-year university students. By analyzing different strategies, such as peer collaboration, systematic guidance, and instructor feedback, the study will determine which approaches contribute the most to student success. These findings will help inform

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teaching practices and provide valuable recommendations for improving writing instruction in similar educational settings. Measure the effectiveness of scaffolding techniques on improving students' writing skills.

1.4. Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives of this study and gain a deeper understanding of how scaffolding techniques influence writing instruction, the research is guided by the following key questions.

- 1.1.1. *To what extent do teachers apply different scaffolding techniques in teaching writing to first-year university students at Dai Nam University?*
- 1.1.2. *What is the measurable impact of scaffolding techniques on the writing performance of first-year students?*
- 1.1.3. *Which scaffolding techniques are rated as most effective by students in improving writing skills?*

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is highly valuable for both educators and students, particularly in the context of teaching academic writing to first-year university students. By examining the application and effectiveness of scaffolding techniques, it offers a deeper understanding of how structured support can enhance writing skills. The findings will provide insights into the benefits of strategies such as *Modelling*, *Guided Practice*, and *Feedback*, helping students overcome common challenges like organizing ideas, improving grammar, and maintaining coherence.

For educators, the results can serve as a practical guide for incorporating scaffolding techniques into their teaching. Identifying the most effective methods will give instructors tools to support students' transition to university-level writing, allowing for tailored approaches that meet diverse learner needs and improve writing outcomes.

For students, the study offers long-term benefits by providing a framework to build confidence and competence in academic writing. Enhanced writing skills are crucial for success across disciplines and in professional settings. The findings will help students develop the foundational skills necessary for academic and career achievement. Additionally, this research contributes to the broader field of educational practice, offering valuable insights that can be adapted to other institutions and contexts.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Concept of Scaffolding in Education

The concept of scaffolding in education is closely related to Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory and his notion of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky defined the ZPD as the distance between what learners can achieve independently and what they can accomplish with guidance and support from a more knowledgeable individual, such as a teacher or a peer. In this context, scaffolding refers to the temporary support provided by the teacher to help students complete tasks that they would not be able to achieve on their own. As learners gain proficiency, the scaffolding is gradually removed, allowing them to perform tasks independently, thereby fostering autonomous learning.

In the ZPD, learning is most effective when students are challenged just beyond their current level of competence but are still able to succeed with appropriate guidance (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Scaffolding involves breaking down complex tasks into manageable parts, providing the necessary tools, cues, or models to help students navigate these challenges. Teachers play a critical role in identifying students' ZPDs and tailoring their support to each student's needs, ensuring that tasks remain within their capacity to understand and complete, yet still promoting intellectual growth.

Scaffolding can take various forms, including modelling, questioning, feedback, and collaborative learning. Modelling, for example, involves the teacher demonstrating how to perform a task, providing students with a clear example of the process they need to follow (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). In writing instruction, this could involve the teacher showing how to organize an essay or structure a paragraph. Once students have observed the process, they attempt to replicate it, first with guidance and then on their own as they gain confidence.

Another key scaffolding strategy is questioning, which involves guiding students through tasks by asking targeted questions that lead them to reflect on their learning and make connections (Mercer, 2000). Through this interactive support, teachers help students articulate their thoughts and problem-solve without directly providing the answers. As students become more adept at handling these cognitive tasks, they gradually move toward independent performance.

Feedback also plays an essential role in scaffolding, as it allows students to understand where they have made mistakes and how they can improve. By offering corrective feedback during the learning process, teachers provide immediate support that helps students adjust their approach to the task and refine their skills in real-time (Hyland, 2019).

Scaffolding not only supports students through progressively challenging tasks but also promotes deeper learning by encouraging reflection and independent thinking. As learners develop confidence in their abilities, the level of support is gradually reduced, fostering autonomy and mastery over the subject matter (Gibbons, 2015). This dynamic process ensures that students are continually stretched to reach their full potential while receiving the guidance necessary to overcome difficulties.

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In conclusion, scaffolding, grounded in Vygotsky's ZPD, is a vital instructional strategy that enables students to engage in tasks beyond their current abilities through temporary, structured support. As students' skills and understanding develop, scaffolding is gradually withdrawn, allowing them to work independently and become confident learners. By utilizing scaffolding effectively, teachers can ensure that learning is both challenging and achievable, ultimately leading to greater academic success.

2.2. *Scaffolding in Language and Writing Instruction*

Scaffolding in language and writing instruction is a pedagogical strategy that provides students with temporary, structured support to help them achieve learning tasks they would otherwise find difficult to complete independently. This method is especially effective in language learning and writing instruction, as both require mastering complex processes such as organizing ideas, using appropriate grammar, and developing coherence in communication. Scaffolding is closely tied to Vygotsky's (1978) theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where learners are guided through tasks that challenge them slightly beyond their current abilities, but within their reach when aided by teacher support (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976).

2.2.1. *Scaffolding in Language Instruction*

In language instruction, scaffolding plays a crucial role in helping students navigate the complexities of second language acquisition. Language learners often struggle with aspects such as vocabulary development, sentence structure, and pragmatic language use in new contexts (Gibbons, 2015). Scaffolding techniques such as modelling, interactive dialogue, and formative feedback allow students to gradually build proficiency while maintaining confidence in their learning process.

Modelling is one of the most widely used scaffolding strategies in language instruction. Teachers demonstrate language use through examples, such as showing how to form sentences, ask questions, or use vocabulary appropriately. This gives students a clear template to follow and helps them understand how language structures function in real-world communication (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006).

Interactive dialogue or guided conversation is another key scaffolding technique. Teachers engage students in meaningful conversations, asking open-ended questions and offering prompts that guide them toward using new vocabulary and grammar in context. This type of structured interaction allows students to practice language in a supportive environment, with the teacher providing corrective feedback or suggestions as needed (Mercer, 2000).

In addition to real-time interaction, formative feedback is a vital component of scaffolding in language learning. By giving students feedback during language tasks, teachers provide immediate correction and encouragement, helping students refine their skills and avoid repeating mistakes. This iterative process of trying, receiving feedback, and improving enables students to internalize language patterns and build greater fluency over time (Hyland, 2019).

2.2.2. *Scaffolding in Writing Instruction*

Writing, particularly in academic settings, presents unique challenges for learners, as it requires not only linguistic competence but also the ability to organize ideas coherently and express complex arguments. Scaffolding in writing instruction addresses these challenges by breaking down the writing process into manageable steps and providing structured support at each stage.

One of the most effective scaffolding techniques in writing is guided practice, where teachers offer systematic support in tasks such as brainstorming, outlining, drafting, and revising. By providing students with prompts and organizing frameworks, teachers help students structure their writing before they begin composing, which is particularly useful for learners who struggle with coherence and idea organization (Gibbons, 2015).

Another critical technique is peer collaboration, where students work together to plan, draft, or revise their writing. Through this process, learners can share ideas, provide feedback, and observe different approaches to writing. Peer collaboration fosters critical thinking and helps students engage with writing as a social process, where knowledge is constructed through interaction (Hyland, 2007).

Scaffolded writing assignments are also essential tools in supporting student writing development. Teachers may provide writing templates, such as outlines for essays or reports, which give students a clear structure to follow. These templates reduce the cognitive load of organizing ideas, allowing students to focus on content development and language use (Walqui, 2006).

In addition to these scaffolding strategies, teacher feedback plays a central role in writing instruction. Effective feedback highlights both strengths and areas for improvement in a student's writing. Rather than correcting every error, teachers provide targeted feedback that encourages students to reflect on their writing and revise their work independently. This process helps students internalize writing strategies and build confidence in their writing skills over time (Hyland, 2019).

2.2.3. *The Gradual Release of Responsibility*

A key element of scaffolding is the gradual release of responsibility, where the teacher provides less and less support as students gain competence. In both language and writing instruction, this approach allows learners to build independence. At first, teachers may offer substantial guidance, such as through modelling and structured activities, but over time, as students demonstrate mastery of language skills or writing processes, the scaffolding is gradually removed. Students are then able to complete tasks autonomously, using the strategies they have internalized through guided practice (Gibbons, 2015).

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In conclusion, scaffolding in language and writing instruction is an essential pedagogical strategy that helps learners tackle complex tasks by providing temporary support. In language instruction, scaffolding helps students build fluency through modelling, interactive dialogue, and feedback. In writing instruction, it guides students through the process of composing coherent and structured texts by breaking down tasks and offering collaboration and feedback. As learners progress, the support is gradually reduced, fostering independent learning and ensuring that students develop the skills necessary to succeed in academic and real-world contexts.

2.3. Challenges in Teaching Writing to First-Year Students

First-year university students often struggle with a range of challenges when transitioning to academic writing, as it requires skills that may not have been fully developed in secondary education. Common difficulties include structuring essays, using appropriate vocabulary, and applying grammatical rules. These challenges not only hinder students' ability to meet academic expectations but also affect their confidence in their writing abilities.

2.3.1. Structuring Essays

One of the most significant challenges faced by first-year students is structuring essays in a coherent and logical manner. Academic writing often requires a clear introduction, body, and conclusion, with ideas logically connected to support an argument or thesis (Hyland, 2019). Many students struggle with organizing their thoughts into a structured format, leading to essays that lack clarity or flow. This issue is exacerbated by a limited understanding of how to create effective topic sentences, transitions between paragraphs, and conclusions that reinforce their main points. As a result, their essays often appear disjointed and lack the cohesive structure needed for academic writing (Nesi & Gardner, 2012).

2.3.2. Using Appropriate Vocabulary

Another common difficulty is the use of appropriate vocabulary. Academic writing demands the use of formal and precise language, which can be challenging for first-year students, particularly those who are non-native English speakers. Many students tend to rely on informal or everyday language, which is not suitable for academic contexts (Gibbons, 2015). Additionally, first-year students often have limited exposure to the specialized vocabulary required in different academic disciplines, making it difficult for them to express complex ideas clearly. The lack of familiarity with academic language conventions can result in writing that appears simplistic or vague, failing to convey the depth of their ideas.

Moreover, students sometimes misuse complex vocabulary in an attempt to sound more academic, leading to awkward or unclear sentences. Developing a rich academic vocabulary requires consistent practice and exposure, which many first-year students may not have had prior to entering university (Schleppegrell, 2004).

2.3.3. Applying Grammatical Rules

Grammar presents another major challenge for first-year university students, particularly those who have not received strong instruction in this area during their prior education. Grammatical errors such as incorrect verb tenses, subject-verb agreement issues, and sentence fragments are common in the writing of first-year students (Hinkel, 2011). These errors can significantly detract from the clarity of their writing and make it difficult for readers to understand their arguments.

In academic writing, the proper application of grammatical rules is essential for communicating ideas effectively. However, many students, particularly those learning English as a second language, struggle with mastering the intricacies of English grammar. This includes issues like correct article usage, pronoun references, and complex sentence structures. Grammatical mistakes not only affect readability but also reflect poorly on the student's academic performance (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012).

2.3.4. Developing Critical Thinking Skills in Writing

Beyond linguistic challenges, first-year students often face difficulties in developing the critical thinking skills required for academic writing. Academic essays typically require students to not only present information but also to analyze, evaluate, and argue based on evidence (Hyland, 2019). Many first-year students find it challenging to develop strong thesis statements and support them with coherent arguments. They may also struggle to critically engage with source material, often summarizing or paraphrasing without demonstrating deeper analysis or original thought (Graham, 2019).

This issue is closely related to students' previous writing experiences, where they may have been primarily assessed on factual recall rather than critical engagement with ideas. The shift to higher-order thinking required in university writing can be overwhelming for many students, further compounding their difficulties with essay structure, vocabulary use, and grammar.

Overall, first-year university students face a range of difficulties in developing academic writing skills, including structuring essays, using appropriate vocabulary, and applying grammatical rules. These challenges can hinder their ability to produce coherent and academically rigorous work. Addressing these issues requires targeted support from instructors, including scaffolding techniques that guide students through the writing process and help them build the skills necessary for academic success. By focusing on improving structure, expanding vocabulary, and reinforcing grammatical accuracy, educators can help students overcome these common writing challenges and become more confident, capable academic writers.

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2.4. Effectiveness of Scaffolding in Writing Instruction

Numerous empirical studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of scaffolding in supporting student growth in writing proficiency. Scaffolding involves providing students with temporary instructional support that is gradually removed as they become more independent in their learning. In the context of writing instruction, scaffolding techniques such as modelling, feedback, guided practice, and peer collaboration have been shown to significantly improve students' writing skills.

2.4.1. Modelling and Guided Practice

One of the key findings in scaffolding research is the effectiveness of modelling and guided practice in helping students develop writing proficiency. Studies show that when teachers model the writing process, students are better able to understand the steps involved in producing well-structured essays (Gibbons, 2015). By observing how teachers organize ideas, structure paragraphs, and use transitions, students can internalize these strategies and apply them in their own writing. Guided practice, where students are given structured exercises to practice writing tasks, has also been shown to significantly enhance their ability to write coherent and organized texts (Hyland, 2019). This gradual release of responsibility, where teachers provide more support in the beginning and then reduce it as students gain confidence, allows students to take ownership of their writing over time.

2.4.2. Feedback and Peer Collaboration

Empirical research has also highlighted the role of feedback and peer collaboration in scaffolding writing instruction. In their study, Hyland and Hyland (2006) found that formative feedback, where teachers provide targeted comments on students' drafts, helps students identify their weaknesses and improve their writing in subsequent revisions. Feedback is especially effective when it focuses on both the content and language of the writing, helping students improve their argumentation as well as their grammar and vocabulary use. Importantly, feedback needs to be specific and timely to maximize its impact.

Additionally, peer collaboration has been shown to be a valuable scaffolding technique in writing instruction. Studies indicate that students benefit from working with their peers to brainstorm ideas, revise drafts, and provide mutual feedback. In a study by Rollinson (2005), peer feedback was found to not only improve the quality of students' writing but also to encourage critical thinking and reflective learning. When students collaborate in writing tasks, they engage in meaningful dialogue that helps them refine their arguments, clarify ideas, and improve overall writing coherence.

2.4.3. Effectiveness of Writing Templates and Outlines

Another scaffolding strategy that has proven effective is the use of writing templates and outlines. These tools provide students with a clear structure for organizing their writing, reducing the cognitive load associated with managing multiple aspects of the writing process simultaneously. According to a study by Walqui (2006), students who used writing templates to guide their essay structure showed significant improvement in their ability to organize ideas and maintain coherence throughout their writing. This structured support was especially beneficial for students who struggled with the complexity of academic writing tasks, as it allowed them to focus on content development while following a clear organizational framework.

2.4.4. Long-Term Impact on Writing Proficiency

Research also suggests that scaffolding has a lasting impact on students' writing proficiency. A longitudinal study by Graham and Perin (2007) found that students who received scaffolded instruction in writing demonstrated sustained improvement in their writing skills over time, even after the scaffolding had been removed. This indicates that scaffolding not only helps students in the short term but also builds a foundation for long-term success in academic writing. The gradual reduction of support as students become more confident writers enables them to apply the strategies they have learned independently in future writing tasks.

Empirical studies consistently demonstrate the effectiveness of scaffolding in improving student writing proficiency. Techniques such as modelling, guided practice, feedback, peer collaboration, and the use of writing templates provide students with the structured support they need to develop their writing skills. As students receive tailored guidance and feedback, they gradually build the confidence and competence to write independently. The positive impact of scaffolding extends beyond immediate writing tasks, contributing to long-term improvements in students' academic writing performance.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design to explore the application and effectiveness of scaffolding techniques in teaching writing to first-year students of English at Dai Nam University. The study aims to quantify the extent to which scaffolding techniques are applied in writing instruction, their impact on students' writing performance, and the specific scaffolding techniques perceived as most effective by students and teachers. Data will be collected using surveys from both students and teachers, and writing assessments will be used to evaluate the impact of scaffolding techniques on student writing performance.

3.2. Participants

The participants of this study include 114 first-year English students and 12 English language teachers at Dai Nam University. The students represent a diverse range of writing proficiency levels and are enrolled in writing courses, while the teachers are

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responsible for providing writing instruction to these students. The sample was selected through convenience sampling, as all participants were readily available within the course framework.

3.3. Data Collection Methods

To collect data, two primary instruments will be used: surveys and pre- and post-intervention writing assessments. The student survey is designed to measure the frequency with which students experience specific scaffolding techniques in their writing classes (such as modelling, guided practice, feedback, and peer collaboration) and their perceived effectiveness in improving writing skills. The teacher survey will quantify how frequently teachers apply scaffolding techniques and gather their perceptions of how effective these techniques are in enhancing students' writing performance.

In addition to surveys, pre- and post-intervention writing assessments will be conducted to measure the impact of scaffolding techniques on students' writing proficiency. At the start of the study, students will complete a pre-test, which will consist of a 300-500 word argumentative essay. This will serve as a baseline measure of their writing skills, evaluated using a standardized rubric assessing organization, coherence, grammar, vocabulary, and argumentation. After the implementation of scaffolding techniques in the writing instruction over a period of 11 weeks, a post-test of similar format will be administered to measure any improvements. The total score for each test will be out of 25 points, allowing for direct comparison between pre- and post-intervention performance.

The data collection process will begin with the administration of the pre-test writing assessment to establish a baseline for student writing proficiency. Over the course of the study, teachers will apply scaffolding techniques, including modelling, guided practice, feedback, and peer collaboration, during their instruction. At the end of the study, the post-test writing assessment will be administered to evaluate the impact of these techniques on student writing performance. After the post-test, both students and teachers will complete their respective surveys to provide data on the frequency and perceived effectiveness of the scaffolding techniques.

3.4. Data Analysis

For data analysis, paired t-tests will be used to compare the pre- and post-test writing scores to determine whether there is a statistically significant improvement in students' writing performance following the application of scaffolding techniques. Descriptive statistics will be employed to analyze the survey data, summarizing the frequency of scaffolding techniques and their perceived effectiveness as reported by both students and teachers. Additionally, regression analysis will be conducted to explore the relationship between the frequency of scaffolding techniques used in the classroom and improvements in writing performance.

4. FINDINGS

4.1. How teachers of varieties of teaching experience use scaffolding techniques

The ANOVA results (Table 1) for Modelling show a statistically significant difference in its use between different experience groups, with a p-value of 0.029, which is below the 0.05 threshold. This suggests that the way modelling is applied as a scaffolding technique varies meaningfully between the groups. The F-value of 5.384 further confirms that these differences are significant, indicating that teachers with different levels of experience use modelling differently in their instruction.

For Guided Practice, the results also indicate a statistically significant difference between the experience groups, with a p-value of 0.021. This shows that the use of guided practice varies between the groups, and the observed differences are unlikely due to random chance. The F-value of 6.107 reinforces this finding, highlighting that the differences in guided practice across experience levels are meaningful.

In contrast, for Offering Feedback, there is no statistically significant difference between the groups, as indicated by the p-value of 0.161. This suggests that teachers with different levels of experience use feedback similarly, and any variations observed are not statistically significant. The F-value of 2.250 supports the conclusion that the differences in feedback use are not substantial.

The results for Peer Collaboration show a statistically significant difference between the groups, with a p-value of 0.033. This indicates that the use of peer collaboration as a scaffolding technique varies meaningfully between the experience groups. The F-value of 5.100 further confirms that these differences are significant, suggesting that more experienced teachers may use peer collaboration differently than less experienced ones.

Finally, for Utilizing Templates, the p-value of 0.180 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference between the experience groups. This suggests that teachers with different levels of experience use templates in similar ways, and the F-value of 2.085 shows that the differences observed are not meaningful.

In summary, there are statistically significant differences in the use of Modelling, Guided Practice, and Peer Collaboration between different experience groups, while Offering Feedback and Utilizing Templates are used similarly across groups regardless of experience.

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Table 1: The use of scaffolding techniques among teachers

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Modelling	Between Groups	5.583	2	2.792	5.384	.029
	Within Groups	4.667	9	.519		
	Total	10.250	11			
Guided practice	Between Groups	4.750	2	2.375	6.107	.021
	Within Groups	3.500	9	.389		
	Total	8.250	11			
Offering feedback	Between Groups	2.750	2	1.375	2.250	.161
	Within Groups	5.500	9	.611		
	Total	8.250	11			
Peer collaboration	Between Groups	8.500	2	4.250	5.100	.033
	Within Groups	7.500	9	.833		
	Total	16.000	11			
Utilizing template	Between Groups	3.167	2	1.583	2.085	.180
	Within Groups	6.833	9	.759		
	Total	10.000	11			

Table 2 reveals the overall use of scaffolding techniques and perceived effectiveness of scaffolding techniques. The results for the dependent variable Use of Scaffolding Techniques (Use ST) show differences in the use of scaffolding based on the years of teaching experience. The comparison between teachers with 0-2 years and 3-5 years of experience shows no statistically significant difference in their use of scaffolding techniques, with a mean difference of -0.73333 and a p-value of 0.119. This suggests that both groups use scaffolding techniques at similar levels. However, a statistically significant difference is observed between teachers with 0-2 years and 6-10 years of experience, with a mean difference of -1.46667 and a p-value of 0.003. Teachers with 6-10 years of experience use scaffolding techniques significantly more than those with 0-2 years of experience. Additionally, the difference between teachers with 3-5 years and 6-10 years of experience approaches significance (p-value = 0.078), indicating a potential trend where more experienced teachers may use scaffolding techniques more frequently.

For the dependent variable Perceived Effectiveness of Scaffolding Techniques, the results show no statistically significant difference between teachers with 0-2 years and 3-5 years of experience, with a mean difference of -0.13333 and a p-value of 0.580. This indicates that both groups have similar perceptions of the effectiveness of scaffolding techniques. However, a statistically significant difference is found between teachers with 0-2 years and 6-10 years of experience, with a mean difference of -1.03333 and a p-value of 0.001, showing that teachers with 6-10 years of experience perceive scaffolding techniques as significantly more effective. Additionally, the comparison between teachers with 3-5 years and 6-10 years of experience shows a statistically significant difference, with a mean difference of -0.90000 and a p-value of 0.002, further indicating that more experienced teachers view scaffolding techniques as more effective.

In conclusion, the results suggest that teachers with 6-10 years of experience not only use scaffolding techniques more frequently but also perceive them as significantly more effective than teachers with 0-2 years or 3-5 years of experience. Although the difference between 3-5 years and 6-10 years groups in the use of scaffolding techniques is not statistically significant, there is a noticeable trend. However, the perceived effectiveness of scaffolding techniques shows a clear difference between these experience levels, with the most experienced teachers (6-10 years) consistently rating scaffolding techniques as more effective.

Table 2: The use of scaffolding techniques and perceived effectiveness

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Use of ST	Between Groups	4.437	2	2.218	8.138	.010
	Within Groups	2.453	9	.273		
	Total	6.890	11			
Perceived effectiveness	Between Groups	2.830	2	1.415	17.525	.001
	Within Groups	.727	9	.081		
	Total	3.557	11			

4.2. Impact of Scaffolding on Writing Performance

The paired samples test compares the pre-test and post-test scores of 114 students to assess whether there is a significant difference in their performance following an intervention. The results (Table 3) show a mean difference of -1.439, indicating that,

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on average, students scored 1.439 points higher on the post-test compared to the pre-test. The negative sign reflects the expected improvement in post-test scores after the intervention. The standard deviation of the difference is 1.297, suggesting moderate variability in how much students' scores changed between the two tests.

The 95% confidence interval for the mean difference, ranging from -1.679 to -1.198, does not include zero, confirming that the observed difference between the pre-test and post-test scores is statistically significant. The t-value of -11.843 further emphasizes the substantial size of the difference in relation to the variation in the data. The degrees of freedom (113) are derived from the sample size (114), providing context for the statistical calculations.

Most importantly, the p-value is 0.000, which is well below the typical threshold of 0.05. This highly significant result indicates that the difference in scores between the pre-test and post-test is not due to random chance. The students' performance significantly improved after the intervention, as demonstrated by the considerable increase in mean scores from the pre-test to the post-test.

In conclusion, the paired samples test reveals a statistically significant improvement in students' performance, suggesting that the intervention had a positive impact on their learning. The consistent increase in post-test scores provides strong evidence of the effectiveness of the teaching methods or instructional strategies applied during the study.

Table 3: Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	Lower			
Pair 1	Pre-test Post-test	-1.439	1.297	.121	-1.679	-1.198	-11.843	113	.000

4.3. Identification of Effective Scaffolding Techniques

The regression analysis results provide insights into how different scaffolding techniques predict students' post-test scores (Table 4). The constant in the model has an unstandardized coefficient of 1.066, meaning that when all other independent variables are held at zero, the predicted post-test score is 1.066. This constant is statistically significant, as indicated by its p-value of 0.008. This suggests that even in the absence of the scaffolding techniques measured, students are expected to achieve some baseline level of performance on the post-test.

For the scaffolding technique of Modelling, the unstandardized coefficient is 0.035, but its p-value of 0.748 indicates that it is not statistically significant. This suggests that modelling, while slightly positively associated with post-test scores, does not have a meaningful impact on student performance when other factors are considered.

Similarly, Guided Practice shows an unstandardized coefficient of -0.021, but its p-value of 0.831 suggests that this variable is also not statistically significant. The negative coefficient implies that guided practice may have a slight negative association with post-test scores, but this result is not strong enough to be considered meaningful.

Offering Feedback has an unstandardized coefficient of 0.083 and a p-value of 0.424, indicating that while feedback has a small positive effect on post-test scores, this effect is not statistically significant. This suggests that offering feedback does not substantially influence students' post-test performance in this model.

For Peer Collaboration, the unstandardized coefficient is 0.020, and the p-value is 0.866, which shows that this technique also does not significantly affect post-test scores. The minimal positive impact of peer collaboration is statistically insignificant, indicating that it does not play a major role in predicting post-test outcomes.

The standout finding in this analysis is the effect of Utilizing Template, which has an unstandardized coefficient of 0.600 and a highly significant p-value of 0.000. This means that using templates has a strong, positive, and statistically significant impact on students' post-test scores. The standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.610) shows that this variable has the largest effect on post-test performance among all the scaffolding techniques measured.

In conclusion, while most scaffolding techniques (Modelling, Guided Practice, Offering Feedback, and Peer Collaboration) do not have significant effects on post-test scores, Utilizing Template emerges as a crucial factor in improving students' performance. This result highlights the importance of incorporating templates into instructional strategies to enhance student learning outcomes.

Table 4: Scaffolding techniques Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		

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	(Constant)	1.066	.392		2.720	.008
	Modelling	.035	.108	.032	.322	.748
1	Guided practice	-.021	.100	-.020	-.214	.831
	Offering feedback	.083	.104	.085	.802	.424
	Peer collaboration	.020	.116	.018	.169	.866
	Utilizing template	.600	.079	.610	7.584	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Post-test

5. DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore the application and effectiveness of various scaffolding techniques in improving first-year university students' writing performance, addressing three key research questions: (1) how are scaffolding techniques applied in teaching writing to first-year university students? (2) What impact do scaffolding techniques have on students' writing performance? (3) Which scaffolding techniques are most effective in improving writing skills?

The findings suggest that scaffolding techniques were applied in varying degrees, with Utilizing Template emerging as the most frequently and effectively used technique. While other scaffolding strategies such as Modelling, Guided Practice, Offering Feedback, and Peer Collaboration were also applied in writing instruction, they did not show statistically significant effects on students' post-test scores. This suggests that while these techniques are commonly incorporated into writing lessons, they may not be as immediately impactful in enhancing students' writing performance compared to the use of structured templates.

The second research question, focused on the impact of scaffolding techniques on students' writing performance, was answered through the analysis of pre-test and post-test scores. The significant improvement in students' post-test scores indicates that scaffolding techniques overall had a positive effect on their writing proficiency. The paired samples test revealed a significant difference between pre-test and post-test scores, showing that the instructional interventions led to meaningful improvements in writing ability.

However, when examining the effectiveness of individual techniques, only Utilizing Template was found to have a statistically significant positive impact on post-test scores. This result highlights the practical value of structured templates in helping students organize their thoughts and structure their writing more effectively. Modelling, Guided Practice, Offering Feedback, and Peer Collaboration, while valuable in educational theory and practice, did not yield significant improvements in post-test performance within the study's timeframe. This could be attributed to a variety of factors, such as the duration of the study or the complexity of implementing these techniques effectively in a short period.

One possible explanation for the strong impact of utilizing templates is that this technique provides students with a clear and immediate structure, helping them manage the cognitive load associated with organizing and writing academic texts. Other techniques, such as modelling and guided practice, may require more time to show measurable effects, as students need time to internalize and practice these strategies before they can fully improve their performance.

6. CONCLUSION

This study provides important insights into the application and effectiveness of scaffolding techniques in teaching writing to first-year university students. In response to the first research question, it was found that scaffolding techniques were applied with varying frequency and intensity, with Utilizing Template being the most prominently used and impactful technique. For the second research question, the paired samples test demonstrated that the use of scaffolding techniques overall led to significant improvements in students' writing performance, as evidenced by the increase in post-test scores.

Regarding the third research question, Utilizing Template was identified as the most effective scaffolding technique for improving writing skills. The structured guidance that templates provide helps students organize their writing more clearly and confidently, which likely accounts for its significant impact. Other techniques, such as Modelling, Guided Practice, Offering Feedback, and Peer Collaboration, did not show statistically significant effects on writing performance, suggesting that these strategies may require more sustained implementation to demonstrate their full potential.

In conclusion, the study highlights the importance of carefully selecting and applying scaffolding techniques to enhance student learning. While a variety of techniques are beneficial, the use of templates proved to be especially effective in this study. Educators should consider incorporating this strategy more frequently in writing instruction to provide students with a clear framework for developing their writing skills. Further research could explore the long-term effects of different scaffolding techniques and their applicability in diverse instructional contexts to gain a deeper understanding of their impact on student outcomes.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Teacher Surveys

Objective: To measure the extent of scaffolding techniques applied in teaching and their perceived effectiveness.

Section 1: Demographics

1. How many years have you been teaching writing?
 1. 0-2 years
 2. 3-5 years
 3. 6-10 years
 4. 11+ years
2. What types of courses do you teach?
 1. General Writing
 2. Academic Writing
 3. English for Specific Purposes (ESP)
 4. All above

Section 2: Use of Scaffolding Techniques

Please indicate how often you use the following techniques when teaching writing, using a scale from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always)

#	Question	Ratings				
	How often you use the following techniques when teaching writing?					
1.	Modelling how to write (e.g., showing students how to structure essays)	①	②	③	④	⑤
2.	Providing guided practice for students	①	②	③	④	⑤
3.	Offering feedback during the writing process	①	②	③	④	⑤
4.	Using peer collaboration in writing tasks	①	②	③	④	⑤
5.	Utilizing writing templates or outlines	①	②	③	④	⑤

Section 3: Perceived Effectiveness of Scaffolding Techniques

Rate the effectiveness of each scaffolding technique in improving students' writing skills on a scale from 1 (Not Effective) to 5 (Highly Effective)

#	Question	Ratings				
	How effective are the following techniques in helping you improve your writing?					

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1. Modelling	①	②	③	④	⑤
2. Guided practice	①	②	③	④	⑤
3. Feedback	①	②	③	④	⑤
4. Peer collaboration	①	②	③	④	⑤
5. Use of templates/outlines	①	②	③	④	⑤



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