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Teachers' Use of Constructivist and Product Approaches in Developing Writing Skills in English Language in Selected Counties in Kenya

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Abstract

The performance of pupils in writing skills in English language at the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Kenya has been dismal over the years. Teachers' use of instructional approaches have a significant effect on enhancing pupils' writing skills. This study sought to assess the extent of teacher's use of constructivist and product approaches in teaching writing skills in selected primary schools. The study used quantitative approach with quasi-experimental and Solomon four-group design based on the post-positivist philosophical paradigm. The study adopted Vygotsky's social-cultural development theory, which contends that learners actively produce knowledge and meaning via their personal and social experiences. The research was conducted in four counties of Kenya: Elgeyo Marakwet, Uasin Gishu, Nandi, and Trans Nzoia, all of which have had low performance in English for a longer period. The target population consisted of fourth-grade pupils and teachers of English. The sample size consisted of eight teachers and four hundred and seventy-one pupils drawn from eight primary schools in the four counties. Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to select teachers of English and grade four pupils. Data were collected through teacher questionnaire and lesson observation guides and analyzed using descriptive statistics with frequencies and percentages. The findings were presented by means of narration, tables, and figures. It was established that on the use of constructivist approach, teachers utilized role-play, story-telling, question-and-answer sessions, role- modelling, recitation, and group discussions. Many teachers encouraged collaborative, problem-solving, cooperative learning, and classroom discourse in teaching writing. For the product approach, guided writing and adherence to sample texts based on offered samples were common. It was found out that majority of the teachers commonly utilized the constructivist approach compared to the product approach in the teaching of writing skills despite the benefit in the use of product approach on the writing output. The study recommended that teachers should maximize the use of product approach in teaching writing skills and that curriculum designers should consider bolstering the adoption of the product approach in writing skill designs. This study contributes to policy and practice endeavors in the teaching of writing skills in English.

Key words: *Constructivist Approach, Product Approach, Writing Skills, Instructional Activities, Guided-Composition*

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1.0 Introduction

Writing is an important skill that is useful throughout one's academic, professional, and personal lives. In many countries, developing learners' writing skills is an integral part of the curriculum, albeit children's struggle to produce written texts. Though the need for writing instruction has existed for many years, teaching writing was traditionally guided by rather inflexible set of beliefs until the early twentieth century and it was the teacher's duty to maintain these standards while pupils employed effective writing approaches in response to specific written texts (Nunan, 2003).

'Writing is complex, and so is the instruction that a school must provide if its students are to reach the high standards of learning expected of them' (Nagin, 2006:9). This statement underscores the importance of writing instruction in writing skills. Constructive and product-based approaches are two of the approaches used to teach writing skills. The use and extend of these approaches remain uncertain. In Kenyan primary schools, proficiency in written and spoken English is highly desired because of its benefits, such as favorable career considerations and a symbol of power, authority, and elitism. This leads to upward mobility and professional success for the individual (Lisanza, 2011). Gaining proficiency in English directly impacts learning other subjects assessed by the Kenya National Examination Council (Kimani, 2013). The cause of poor academic performance and by extension communicative competence is unknown; the need for a solution and the more reason for this study.

1.1 Problem Statement

Learners display poor written communication across the various levels of learning. Pupils in primary schools routinely demonstrate low performance in compositions and essays that assess their communication skills examinations. In writing, it is revealed that candidates spend most of their time coping with the lead sentence several times instead of constructing a piece of story according to the sentence at the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examinations. There are abounding errors of tenses and punctuation, wrongly constructed sentences and weak sentence structures, wrong spellings, and slips of omissions, (KNEC report in Atikaschool.Org & Elimuspace.co.ke, 2021). Koross, Indoshi, and Okwach (2013) examined the perspectives of both teachers and students regarding the instructional approaches employed in secondary schools to enhance writing abilities. They concluded that the inadequate development of writing skills can be attributed, in part, to the instructional approaches. Odima (2015) study on the use of the process approach in instructing writing abilities and noted that majority of teachers encountered challenges regarding writing instruction because their methodologies were inadequate.

Therefore, this scenario could be attributed to inappropriate instructional approaches because the instructional approach remains fundamental. The constructivist and product approaches of teaching writing are among the numerous approaches that primary teachers can use to improve their learners' writing abilities. The argument behind this study is that learners need to acquire adequate writing skills using constructivist and product instructional approaches. It is against this backdrop, that this study sought to assess the extent of the use of constructivist and product approaches to writing skills in primary schools in Kenya.

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2.0 Literature Review

It is necessary to carefully select instructional methods attuned to the learners' needs. Incorporating both bottom-up and top-down skills is encouraged as efforts to realizing it. This recognition stems from the belief that learners must acquire expertise in both domains in order to become proficient second language writing. Cope and Kalantzis (1993, 2000) reveal that individuals can improve their social integration and receive acknowledgment by showcasing their proficiency in verbal and written communication. Effective instructional techniques should be adopted to enhance writing capabilities. The absence of sufficient instruction is a notable disadvantage for learners and this limitation impacts unfavorably on their potential career, educational, and professional endeavours; thus, limiting the scope of opportunities available to them (Celce-Murcia, 2001; Martin, 1992).

2.1 Constructivist Classroom

The constructivist paradigm posits that knowledge is actively built within the learner's awareness and understanding. It further, asserts that learning process is predominantly influenced by the learner's contextual circumstances, personal beliefs, and attitudes. Constructivism emphasizes the active and dynamic responsibilities that both teachers and students play in the learning process. Constructivism is based on the notion that individuals actively construct knowledge instead of passively receiving information from teachers (Lunenburg, 2011). It is often associated with pedagogical approaches that prioritize active learning or hands-on application. The constructivist approach (CA) encourages learners to acquire essential concepts using a variety of instructional methods. Discovery-based learning is the initial approach employed. This may include participating in activities with word strips to acquire knowledge about compound words, engaging in manipulative exercises to comprehend addition and subtraction, or conducting experiments involving different sizes of things to gain an understanding of capacity. Engaging in activities that elucidate and correct misconceptions, encouraging the consideration of diverse perspectives, facilitating conversation, and prioritizing the comprehension of concepts rather than mere memorization can also contribute to this process. Piaget (1978) advocates for the implementation of active learning tactics, including simulation and accommodation, while Vygotsky (1978) emphasises the need for social constructivism and collaborative group work, among other instructional approaches.

The 5Es are integrated into the constructivist instructional model. This paradigm delineates a sequential set of instructions that can be applied to complete programmes, specific units, and individual lessons. Bybee (2006), Boddy, Watson, and Aubusson (2003), and Bennett (2021) among other scholars, provide further insights into the 5Es constructivist paradigm. The 5Es, is a sequential approach to teaching that aims to improve English writing skills among English language learners. The model includes the *Engage* phase, which introduces the instructional activity and encourages students to connect prior learning experiences. The *Explore* phase focuses on forming a collective foundation of experiences through direct engagement with the subject matter. The *Elaboration* phase extends students' understanding of concepts, establishing

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meaningful associations and applying knowledge in practical contexts. The *Evaluation* phase encourages students to analyze their understanding and abilities, with educators assessing their progress in skill development.

2.2 Product-Based Classroom

The product approach (PA) emphasizes the activity's ultimate outcome irrespective of the process. In this strategy, learners imitate a model text in order to produce a similar one. The learner is tasked with duplicating a given composition provided by the teacher. Pattern-product techniques are seen in genres such as narration, description, and persuasion to help students learn how to write well in English composition (Raimes, 1983). It focuses on the structure and form in which the teacher is teaching. Evaluation is solely based on the final product.

Pincas (1984) argues that PA to writing promotes linguistic knowledge, particularly the effective use of vocabulary, syntax, and coherent techniques. This approach comprises four discrete stages of writing: *familiarisation*, *regulated composition*, *guided-composition*, and *unrestricted composition*. Moreover, this approach focuses on the teacher and is distinguished by prioritising classroom activities that require students to imitate and modify model texts. This approach is also known as *the controlled-to-free approach*, *the text-based approach,* and *guided-composition* (Raimes, 1983; Silva, 1990). Shahrokhi (2017) argues that employing PA in teaching causes pupils to adhere to predetermined patterns without taking into account the socio-cultural factors that influence the creation of written texts. Contrarily, Eslami (2014) argues that when students are given a model text written by a proficient and talented writer, they are more inclined to imitate the favourable qualities of writing, which ultimately enhances their own writing competencies.

Advocates of PA claim that learners can develop proficient writing skills with minimal errors by analysing the writing techniques of skilled authors prior to engaging in their own writing pursuits (Oguta, 2015). To accomplish this, students are given writing exercises that aim to strengthen the language structures they have learned by imitating and manipulating grammatical patterns. Controlled compositions entail providing students with a paragraph along with instructions on how to participate in activities such as substitutions, expansions, or completions (Eslami, 2014). The teacher stresses the importance of the components of structure, syntax, grammar, mechanics, organisation, choice of vocabulary, accuracy and eloquence.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The study used Vygotsky's social-cultural development theory (1978) which emphasises how individuals and groups of learners actively generate knowledge and interpret their experiences. It propagates the notion that although children's cognitive development may be constrained at a particular age, complete cognitive development might be achieved through the provision of opportunities for social interactions; thus, the need for facilitation and guidance.

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3.0 Materials and Methods

The study adopted the post-positivist paradigm. This is made evident by the knowledge of constructivist and product approaches which is grounded in school-based reality. Numeric data were collected to indicate the extent of the use of the two approaches. The investigation was conducted among the grade four public primary classes in four counties of Kenya: Elgeyo Marakwet, Uasin Gishu, Nandi, and Trans Nzoia. Several reasons guided the choice of the research site. Firstly, these regions are multi-ethnic in nature implying that the participants selected represented the various ethnic groups in Kenya. Secondly, there have been low academic performance at national examinations in writing skills for a longer time. Public primary schools were staffed with qualified and experienced teachers, and their instructional resources are comparable. Fourth-grade class was chosen to ensure homogeneity in learner's ability, and high engagement in writing activities.

The target population included fourth-grade learners in public primary schools and their English teachers. The accessible population consisted of eight schools, divided into two cohorts of four classes each for CA and PA. Primary schools were specifically selected for it is a foundation level of education. The eight fourth-grade teachers of English formed the teachers' accessible population for observation and thirty-five for teacher questionnaire. Teachers were purposively chosen for their experience in teaching the class. Simple random sampling (SRS) was used to get eight primary schools which were divided into two cohorts, with cohort one targeted for CA comprising four schools, and cohort two for PA consisting four schools too. SRS was also used to choose the thirty-five teachers who participated in the questionnaire. SRS technique offered advantage by ensuring that every school within the counties stood an equal chance of being selected. Stratified random sampling was used to get fourth-grade pupils and their English teachers. The investigation adopted quantitative approach which targeted objectivity in understanding the relationships between cause and effect, association, and correlation (Leavy, 2017. Data for the variables were collected via questionnaire and observation which generated numerical data that were then analysed using statistical techniques.

Observation guide was used to gather data on activities within the pedagogical approaches for both CA and PA. Through close examination, substantial amount of data was gathered that was juxtaposed with the self-reports provided by the participants. Furthermore, the act of monitoring the instructional sessions provided insights into the pedagogical approaches teachers use in writing activities. The observation schedule was used to systematically observe writing skills lessons in each of the CA and PA. The results yielded quantitative data, encompassing counts, frequencies, and percentages. Focused and non-participant observation method was used with a 35-minute class observation. The objective was to document the activities, responses, and reactions displayed during writing classes based on the two different instructional approaches under investigation.

Teacher's questionnaire facilitated collection of data from the respondents in different schools across the study counties. It consisted of closed-ended questions which sought to provide precise description of the extent to which constructivist and product approaches are used in teaching writing skills. It consisted of two sections. Section A sought the respondent's demographic

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information, while Section B consisted of a series of questions regarding the study objective. It was administered to 35 fourth-grade English teachers. It collected data about the learning activities, the instructional methods and materials, assessment and reporting systems. It was completed in about seven minutes.

The instruments underwent pilot phase in two primary schools in Baringo county. The objective of the pilot was to assess their validity and reliability credibility. Accordingly, the instruments were modified where applicable with the assistance of the experts. Furthermore, the instruments were pretested on a sample consisting of two fourth-grade primary schools in the same county which helped to assess their administration. The researcher observed two fourth-grade teachers during writing lessons, with one employing CA and the other PA. Questionnaire was given to a few other teachers of English in the schools.

Data were analyzed using quantitative descriptive statistics. The variable *teaching approach* was divided into two categories: CA and PA. It was presented in the form of numerical counts, frequencies, and proportions. Ethical issues were promoted through respecting privacy, observing data anonymity, confidentiality, and secure storage.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1.1 Teachers' Teaching Experience

The sample consisted of 35 teachers. It is established that 23% of teachers had between 0-5 years of teaching experience, 40% between 6-10 years, 9% between 11-15 years, 14% between 16-20 years, and 14% had more than 20 years. Based on this, it is clear that the sample primarily comprised teachers with experience who could actively engage their pupils in the classroom techniques with ease. The summary is provided in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Teachers' Teaching Experience

Experience	Frequency	Proportion
"0-5"	8	23%
"6-10"	14	40%
"11-15"	3	9%
"16-20"	5	14%
">20"	5	14%\
Total	**35**	**100%**

4.1.2 Frequency of Instructional Methods in CA

It is clear that most teachers very frequently use the question-and-answer (Q&A) technique (77%). Teachers reported that they frequently use role-play (51%), story-telling (63%), group discussion (71%), discovery (51%), role-modelling (46), reciting (40%) demonstration (43%), problem-solving, experiments (46%), reflections (60%), practical activities (37%), methods that encourage heuristic learning (63%), differentiated learning (77%) and one-size fit for all methods (54%). Methods that were reported to be less frequently utilised include singing (60%), inquiry-based (40%), fieldwork (66%), and e-learning (60%). All these methods enhance the diversity of learning styles and multiple intelligences. Nevertheless, there are cases in which teachers have

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reported employing a blend of them. Table 4.2 presents the frequency of instructional methods employed by teachers to teach writing skills using the CA.

Table 4.2 Frequency of instructional methods in CA

Method	Very Frequently		Frequently		Least Frequent		Neutral		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Role-Play	1	3%	18	51%	15	43%	1	3%	35	100%
Story-telling	6	17%	22	63%	7	20%	0	0%	35	100%
Q&A	27	77%	8	23%	0	0%	0	0%	35	100%
Discussion	5	14%	25	71%	4	11%	1	3%	35	100%
Singing	3	9%	9	26%	21	60%	2	6%	35	100%
Inquiry	7	20%	13	37%	14	40%	1	3%	35	100%
Discovery	1	3%	18	51%	14	40%	2	6%	35	100%
Role-modelling	5	14%	16	46%	13	37%	1	3%	35	100%
Reciting	6	17%	14	40%	14	40%	1	3%	35	100%
Demonstration	13	37%	15	43%	6	17%	1	3%	35	100%
Fieldwork	2	6%	4	11%	23	66%	6	17%	35	100%
Problem-solving	3	9%	20	57%	10	29%	2	6%	35	100%
Experiments	2	6%	16	46%	13	37%	4	11%	35	100%
Reflections	7	20%	21	60%	7	20%	0	0%	35	100%
Practical activities	6	17%	13	37%	13	37%	3	9%	35	100%

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E-Learning	0	0%	5	14%	21	60%	9	26%	35	100%
Discovery-learning, problem-solving etc.	11	31%	22	63%	2	6%	0	0%	35	100%
Differentiated learning	5	14%	27	77%	3	9%	0	0%	35	100%
One-size-fit-all	10	29%	19	54%	6	17%	0	0%	35	100%

4.1.3 Frequency of assessing writing skills in CA

On the frequency at which English writing skills are assessed, up to 74% of the teachers report assessing pupils, while 26% disagree with assessing their pupils. 49% strongly agree they conduct assessment reporting in a caring, confidential, and sensitive way to communicate the intended message without discouraging the learner, while 46% disagree with employing such reporting, and 6% are neutral. This suggests that depending on the context of reporting, teachers can reply in a soft or encouraging manner. 57% reported that they strongly agreed that feedback from assessments is for the purpose of improving the learning process, while 40% disagreed and 3% were neutral. It is also revealed that 46% develop original assessment reports, with 46% disagreeing and 8% not sure. It is also established that 63% do not use assessment templates that are readily provided, while 23% do not agree and 14% are unsure. It is also reported that 57% strongly agree that they send learners' individual assessment reports, while 40% disagree and 3% are neutral. Table 4.3 summarises the frequency of assessments of English employed by teachers of English teaching writing skills.

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Table 4.3: Frequency of assessing writing

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Assess pupils	26	74%	0	0%	0	0%	9	26%	0	0%	35	100%
Report assessment in a caring and encouraging manner.	17	49%	0	0%	2	6%	16	46%	0	0%	35	100%
Feedback from assessment meant to improve learning	20	57%	0	0%	1	3%	14	40%	0	0%	35	100%
Develop original assessment report	16	46%	0	0%	3	8%	16	46%	0	0%	35	100%
Use provided templates	8	23%	0	0%	5	14%	22	63%	0	0%	35	100%
Send individual assessment reports	20	57%	0	0%	1	3%	14	40%	0	0%	35	100%

4.1.4 Frequency of assessment methods in CA

The findings on the frequency of assessment methods indicate that the majority of teachers use written continuous assessment tests, with 49% reporting using them very frequently and 46% frequently. Home assignments are also used, with 51% of them reporting using them frequently and 43% very frequently. Performance-based assessment is reported to be 57% frequently used and 31% very frequently used. Learners' point of view method is reported to be used frequently by 54%, 20% very frequently, 23% less frequently, and 3% unsure. Journaling is the least popular assessment method, with 57% of them reporting they use it less frequently, 29% using it frequently, and 14% reporting they have no opinion about it. 31% report using anecdote records, compared to 43% who use them less frequently and 26% who have no opinion on their use.

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Profiling is reported to be used frequently by 57% of the teachers and frequently by 34%, with 6% being unsure of its usage. 40% of them use the project method frequently, 29% use it less frequently, and 29% are not sure about its use. Tests are frequently used by 54%, with 29% reporting using them very frequently and 20% less frequently. It is established that 63% reported that they employ very frequently the use of learners' own work, with 31% being frequently and 3% less frequently, with the same number applying to those who are neutral. Table 4.4 presents a comprehensive overview of the frequency with which various methods for assessing English writing are utilised.

Table 4.4: Frequency of Assessment Methods

Method	Very Frequently		Frequently		Least Frequent		Neutral		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Project-Method	1	3%	14	40%	10	29%	10	29%	35	100%
Profiling	1	3%	12	34%	20	57%	2	6%	35	100%
Anecdote records	0	0%	11	31%	15	43%	9	26%	35	100%
Journaling	0	0%	10	29%	20	57%	5	14%	35	100%
Portfolio	9	26%	16	46%	9	26%	1	3%	35	100%
Written continuous assessment	17	49%	16	46%	2	6%	0	0%	35	100%
Home assignments	15	43%	18	51%	1	3%	1	3%	35	100%
Performance-based assessment	11	31%	20	57%	4	11%	0	0%	35	100%
Tests	9	26%	19	54%	7	20%	0	0%	35	100%
Learner's work	22	63%	11	31%	1	3%	1	3%	35	100%
Learner's points of view	7	20%	19	54%	8	23%	1	3%	35	100%

4.1.4 Frequency of assessment tools in CA

Regarding the frequency of assessment tools used, written or verbal progress reports to an individual learner or group are the most preferred reporting method, with 60% and 26% of teachers using the method frequently and very frequently respectively, and 14% rarely using the method. The report card is the second most preferable method of reporting, with 40% and 37% using it frequently and very frequently, respectively, while 17% use it sparingly. In addition,

newsletters are the least popular method of reporting, with 63% reporting that they seldom use the method, 20% being neutral, and 9% using the method very frequently. 49% report using descriptive reports frequently, 9% very frequently, and 37% use them less frequently, with 6% of them being neutral. 57% use portfolio frequently, 34% use it less frequently, and 3% are very frequently. Additionally, it is revealed that 43% use websites least frequently, 40% are neutral, and 17% employed it frequently. It is indicated that formal assessment tool is used by 34% frequently, 54% least frequently, and 9% very frequently. Besides this, the informal method is revealed to be 34% frequently used, 49% less frequently used, and both very frequently and neutral reported by 9%. Table 4.5 provides a concise overview of the prevalence of writing assessment instruments.

Table 4.5: Frequency of assessment tools

Method	Very Frequently		Frequently		Least Frequent		Neutral		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Descriptive reports	3	9%	17	49%	13	37%	2	6%	35	100%
Portfolios	3	9%	20	57%	12	34%	0	0%	35	100%
News-letters	3	9%	3	9%	22	63%	7	20%	35	100%
Websites	0	0%	6	17%	15	43%	14	40%	35	100%
Informal	3	9%	12	34%	17	49%	3	9%	35	100%
Formal	3	9%	12	34%	19	54%	0	0%	34	97%
Written/ verbal	9	26%	21	60%	5	14%	0	0%	35	100%
Individual Report card	13	37%	14	40%	6	17%	2	6%	35	100%

4.1.5 Frequency of methods for reporting assessment in PA

Under PA, guided compositions are the most popular methods of reporting assessments of writing skills, with 60% and 40% of the teachers reporting using the method frequently and very frequently respectively. Adherence to the sample method is the second most popular technique, with 46% reporting both frequent and very frequent use, and 9% using it less frequently. 20% indicated that they use samples provided in reporting assessments, 63% use them frequently, and 17% employ them less frequently. 60% of the teachers report analysing attempted tasks as their frequently used method in reporting assessment, with 29% using it very frequently and 11% least frequently. Grade performance based on the sample provided is reported to be very frequently utilised by 51% of the teachers, 43% used it frequently, and 6% used it least frequently. It is indicated that 43% frequently report learners' performance to stakeholders using report forms or slips, 37% use it less frequently, 14% use it very frequently, and 6% are unsure. Table 4.6 presents

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a concise overview of the frequency at which assessment methods for writing abilities are reported within the context of the PA.

Table 4.6: Frequency of methods for reporting assessment in PA

Method	Very Frequently		Frequently		Least Frequent		Neutral		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
Sample text	12	34%	20	57%	3	9%	0	0%	35	100%
Samples adherence	16	46%	16	46%	3	9%	0	0%	35	100%
Guided-composition	14	40%	21	60%	0	0%	0	0%	35	100%
Sample provided	7	20%	22	63%	6	17%	0	0%	35	100%
Analyse attempted tasks	10	29%	21	60%	4	11%	0	0%	35	100%
Grade performance based on sample provided	18	51%	15	43%	2	6%	0	0%	35	100%
Report learners' performance to stakeholders using report forms/slips	5	14%	15	43%	13	37%	2	6%	35	100%

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4.2 Findings of Observation Schedule

4.2.1 Results of the Observations Made on CA

Based on the classroom observations, the following were made regarding the observed aspects of the two approaches. Within the CA, it was observed that pupils were introduced to instructional tasks by tying content to prior knowledge/concepts through the introduction of *celebration* categories. It was observed that pupils were encouraged to explain/recount their ideas in class. This was implied through the use of the question-and-answer (Q-A) technique. By assigning composition writing assignments, the expected learning outcomes of the writing lessons can be clearly identified. Through Q-A sessions, the teacher sought learners' perspectives on their preferred writing-related learning activities. Pupils were permitted to develop their own writing skills by being provided with assignments to complete. Learners were observed devising and monitoring their own assignments through role-play.

It was revealed that the teacher was the chief resource for learners though explanation of the act of *celebration*; hence demonstration of being an effective facilitator. It was also observed that pupils were at liberty to collaborate with one another and take charge of their writing. Additionally, it was noted that the teacher failed to facilitate engaging discussions activities that would enable pupils to engage in negotiation, interaction, and collaboration in their respective writing tasks. It was evident that the teachers did not incorporate any enjoyable activities into their lesson plans though they facilitated all writing-related activities. Through Q-A, it was seen that learners generated discussion about the topic prior to beginning writing exercises. During writing tasks, appropriate feedback was provided for the pupils' efforts. Teachers incorporated group/pair work as a means of fostering democratic involvement, active participation, and promotion of social connections. In the realm of writing proficiency, it was observed that teachers fostered pupils' involvement in diverse range of activities, such as problem-solving and collaborative learning.

It was discovered that learners are guided partially through the writing process/drafts through Q-A and that pupils were asked to write about authentic situations that arose from the topic, which was a *celebration* in which they had attended. It was observed that pupils did not share their work within their groups and that pupils wrote final drafts based on peer and group feedback, primarily through homework. It was also observed that learners received feedback from both their teacher and colleagues. There was no extension, assignment, or additional activity based on the writing given to the pupils. Neither parental involvement nor community service learning were included in the assignments or additional learning activities provided by teachers.

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Table 4.7: Results of the observations made on CA

Aspect	Present	Notes
Learners are introduced to the instructional task and make connections/prior knowledge or ideas is provided	Yes	The teacher introduced the concept of celebration.
Learners are encouraged to explain or narrate their ideas in class.	No	
The expected learning outcomes for the writing lesson are clearly identified.	Yes	By way of giving them an assessment through writing composition.
The instructor seeks feedback on the writing skills activities preferred by my learners.	Yes	Done through Q-A
The background knowledge on the topic activated through a variety of media (charts, pictures, mind maps, anticipation guides etc).	Yes	Done based on use of learner's prior knowledge of *celebration*
Learners are allowed to create own writing knowledge.	Yes	When they are given the work/assessment to do
Learners take responsibility for monitoring and developing own tasks.	No	
The teacher is the chief resource for learners.	Yes	Especially in explaining the act of *celebration.*
Learners are free to collaborate and take control of learning.	No	
Teacher encourages interactive conversations and groups to allow learners to negotiate, interact, and collaborate on their individual ideas for writing purposes.	No	
The teacher encourages learning through fun activities.	No	
The teacher facilitates writing activities.	Yes	
Prior to the learners beginning the actual writing task, there is plenty of discussion surrounding the topic.	Yes	Through Q-A
During the writing lessons, appropriate feedback is provided for the learners' attempts.	No	
Writing lesson emphasizes democratic engagement, active participation, and social interaction.	No	
Pupils engage in a variety of activities: groupwork, problem-solving, collaborative-learning, etc which improve writing proficiency.	No	
Learners are guided through the writing process/ writing drafts.	Yes	Partially through Q-A
Learners write in accordance with the authentic contexts that arise from the writing topic.	Yes	
Learners exchange their work.	No	
Learners write final drafts based on peer/group feedback.	No	
Teacher and peers provide feedback.	No	
Extension/assignment/Further activity given	No	
Parental involvement activity or community service-learning activity	No	

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4.1.2 Results of the Observations Made on PA

It was observed in every instance that a sample text was available for use, and that teachers made appropriate use of it to stimulate pupils' thoughts about the task at hand: celebration. Pupils were instructed on writing based on the sample, primarily through model-based question-answer. It was also evident that pupils were taught how to write guided compositions by observing writing mechanics, spelling, handwriting, and general strategies, while emphasizing the use of readable handwriting and celebration-related descriptions. Pupils wrote based on the model text, and it was also evident that teachers provided pupils with a list of new words derived from the model text. The teacher was also observed analyzing how the pupils attempted written assignments based on the provided example. Teachers, however, failed to assess written assignments by assigning a grade and providing comments. Table 4.8 gives a summary of the observations made under PA.

Table 4.8: Summary of the results of the observations made on PA

Aspect	Present	Notes
There is a sample text for use.	Yes	The teacher provokes learners' thoughts about *celebration*.
Learners taught about writing based on the sample	Yes	Q-A used based on the sample text.
Learners taught to write guided-composition (mechanics, spelling, handwriting, and general strategies).	Yes	Use of good hand-writing was emphasized and the descriptions about *celebration* was evident.
Pupils write based on sample.	Yes	Learners given a list of new words from the text.
Teacher analyzes the pupils' attempted written tasks based on the sample.	No	
Teacher assesses the written task, awards a mark, and makes their remarks.	No	

4.3 Discussion

CA agrees with the findings of the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD, 2017) which established that learners have the potential to create and modify their own knowledge with the help of more knowledgeable other (MKO). Zone of proximal development (ZPD) and scaffolding principles aid this process. Teachers and learners have mutually dependent responsibilities, with teachers serving as facilitators and learners optimizing the use of instructional resources in a self-directed learning environment.

Learners undergo self-and-peer-assessment as a result of CA focus on techniques that facilitate interaction between individuals and their environment, rendering the assessment process reflective and meaningful (Huang, 2002; Brown, 2005). These strategies include involving pupils in group activities, facilitating peer-correction, and fostering the cultivation of attitudes rooted in self-awareness (Zulela & Rachmadtullah, 2019). According to the guidelines set forth by KICD (2017), a range of instructional approaches are suggested which include role-play, story-telling, Q-A, discussions, singing, inquiry, discovery, role-modelling, recitation, demonstration, fieldwork, problem-solving, experiments, reflection, and e-learning. The results are consistent with the viewpoints expressed by CA advocates, as supported by KICD (2017) and Brown (2005). It is imperative for the teacher to actively encourage the use of CA in improving pupils' writing skills.

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PA to Writing places emphasis on the ultimate outcome of the writing process, namely the written text that serves as an exemplar for the student (Eslami, 2014; Saed & Saekheir, 2011). It allows learners to access a model text authored by a proficient and skilled writer, which serves as a valuable resource for studying, reading, and emulating the exemplary elements of writing proficiency. Consequently, this facilitates the development of learners' own writing abilities, ultimately leading to their proficiency as writers. The implementation of PA enables pupils to enhance their writing skills by studying and emulating the writing styles of proficient authors before embarking on their own writing tasks (Oguta, 2015). This minimises errors and promotes effective writing among learners because the sample text in question exhibits coherence and is devoid of errors (Eslami, 2014). PA comprise several stages. Firstly, learners were provided with instruction on writing skills using a sample text as a reference. Secondly, they were guided in composing written pieces, focusing on various aspects such as mechanics, spelling, handwriting, and general strategies. Thirdly, on completion of their written tasks, the teacher conducted an analysis of the pupils' attempts, drawing comparisons to the sample text. Fourthly, the written tasks were then assessed, and feedback in the form of grades and comments was provided to the learners. The results of the classroom observation indicated that with the use of sample text, learners acquired writing skills more effectively. They possess a high level of comprehension and proficiency in meeting the set expectations.

5.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

The written output is the primary focus of the PA which maintains that writing is a systematic procedure that strives to produce a polished and finalised piece of work. To generate the anticipated composition, learners need to employ their linguistic abilities, sentence constructions, and diverse lexicon from the practice of the concepts in the model context. The approach is beneficial because it allows pupils to methodically learn how to employ specific pattern-product techniques while writing compositions, particularly narrative, descriptive, and argumentative essays. In addition, pupils learn to adapt their vocabulary and sentence structures to the different text types, which also helps them become more grammatically aware. PA is primarily teacher-centered and is suitable for instructing fourth-grade pupils in English writing because learners at this stage still require guidance within their ZPD. Piaget (1978) maintains that children are unable to successfully engage in specific tasks until they have attained a level of psychological development that is deemed mature. The teacher should do their best to fulfill their duty of scaffolding.

It is through CA that the pupil is prepared for problem-solving in uncertain settings. This is feasible when pupils engage with the phenomenon or text through social interaction or introspective thought. CA incorporates the learners' prior knowledge, advocates for teachers to allocate additional time to topics of student's interest, and enables instructors to focus on essential details. Within CA it is common for pupils to engage in frequent collaborative groupwork and benefit from the cultivation of their social skills as they engage in mutual support of their academic endeavours and demonstrate a respectful attitude towards each other's opinions. Through

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CA learners gain by getting a new understanding of the knowledge of writing tasks, involvement in cooperative learning, engagement in discussions and meaningful ideas, exchange of ideas on writing tasks during discussions and linking ideas with the learning contexts and elimination of the examination-oriented view. In a constructivist classroom setting with a higher number of pupils, teachers have challenges in customising the CA to suit the unique needs of each learner due to variations in their prior knowledge. This may present challenges to pupils in the lower elementary grades who possess limited familiarity with language structures which could strain their level of participation in the writing activities.

5.2 Recommendations

Teachers should use a combination of a product-oriented and constructivist-based approaches as a pedagogical model to instruct and improve writing abilities; notwithstanding, the fact that PA should form the foundational approach. The synergy of the combination of these two approaches should enhance writing skills.

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Conflict of interest

The authors hereby declare no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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